

West Somerset Mineral Railway - Bearland Chimney



Bearland Ventilation Chimney is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and was on the Buildings at Risk Register. It was built in 1860 by The Brendon Hills Iron Ore Company and is said to be the only complete example of its kind to remain in the West Country.

Identified as being in very poor condition in 2002, it became the driving force behind a bid by The Exmoor National Park Authority, Forestry Commission and others to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to conserve and provide access and interpretation works to three iconic sites relating to the former West Somerset Mineral Railway.

Jonathan Rhind Architects were appointed to stabilise, repair and conserve the chimney; a far from easy task given its isolated location on a steep slope amidst thick forestry land and the presence of a potentially unsafe, in-filled mine shaft on the hillside just below it. The work concluded in September 2008.

Rob Wilson-North, Head of Historic Environment at Exmoor National Park Authority said "It's great to see such good progress being made to this wonderful example of Victorian engineering and we look forward to being able to make the site more accessible to people".



West Somerset Mineral Railway Langham Engine House



The ruins of the Engine House had been the subject of excavation by The Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society and Exmoor Mines Research Group in the mid/late 1990's. They comprise, inter alia, the remnants of a boiler and engine house (originally with 25 inch beam engine), chimney, water reservoir, balance bob, flywheel pit and gantry piers.



As part of the Heritage Lottery funded West Somerset Mineral Railway project, Jonathan Rhind Architects supervised the re-excavation of the ruins and the consolidation of the archeologically interesting features. This necessitated close liaison with the parties undertaking the access and interpretation works.

