

A photograph of three people in suits and sunglasses carrying a large red flag on a city street. The man on the left is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a brown tie, with dark sunglasses. The man in the middle is wearing a dark suit and dark sunglasses, looking upwards. The woman in the foreground is wearing a dark suit, a blue and white striped tie, and bright yellow sunglasses. They are walking past a brick wall on the left and a city street on the right.

PAUL FARMER

AFTER THE MINERS' STRIKE

A39 AND CORNISH POLITICAL THEATRE
VERSUS THATCHER'S BRITAIN

VOLUME 1



<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

©2023 Paul Farmer. ©2023 Rebecca Hillman (Preface). ©2023 Mark Kilburn 'Plays' section



This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Paul Farmer, *After the Miners' Strike: A39 and Cornish Political Theatre versus Thatcher's Britain. Volume 1*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023,
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0329>

Copyright and permissions for the reuse of this image is provided in the caption and in the list of illustrations. Every effort has been made to identify and contact copyright holders and any omission or error will be corrected if notification is made to the publisher.

Further details about the CC BY-NC license are available at
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Digital material and resources associated with this volume are available at
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0329#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-912-5

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-913-2

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-914-9

ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-915-6

ISBN XML: 978-1-80064-917-0

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-918-7

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0329

Cover image: A39 in street theatre mode at Camborne Trevithick Day, 1985

Cover design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

PLAYS

ONE & ALL!

An unofficial history of Cornish tin mining

by Paul Farmer and Mark Kilburn

ACTOR 1..... Sue Farmer

ACTOR 2Paul Farmer

ACTOR 3 Mark Kilburn

STAGE MANAGEMENT, TECHNICAL & ADMIN Lucy Kempton

SONG—'CARNKIE HILL' (*Trad.*) VOICE (ACTOR 1), GUITAR
(ACTOR 2), MELODICA (ACTOR 3).

It being in spring season, the small birds they were singing
Down by a shady arbour I carelessly did stray
Where the thrushes they were warbling, the violets they were
charming
For to view two lovers talking a while I did delay

She said, 'My dear, don't leave me all for another season.
Though fortune may be pleasing I'll go along with you.
I'll forsake friends and relations, and quit this Cornish nation,
And to the bonny Fal banks forever I'll bid adieu.'

He said, 'My dear, don't grieve me, or yet annoy my patience.
You know I love you dearly although I'm going away.
I'm going to some foreign nation to purchase a plantation,
For to comfort us hereafter all in Americay.

'The tin lords and their agents, their bailiffs and their beagles,
The land of our forefathers we're forced for to give o'er;
And we're sailing o'er the ocean for honour and promotion
And we're parting with our sweethearts, it's them we do adore.'

If you were in your bed lying and thinking of dying
One sight of the bonny Fal banks, your sorrows you'd give o'er
And if you were but one hour all in her shady bower
Pleasure would surround you, you'd think on death no more.

So fare thee well, sweet Carnkie Hill, where oft times I have wandered
I ne'er thought in my childhood days to part you any more,
But we're sailing on the ocean, for honour and promotion
And the bonny boat is sailing way down by Meneage shore.

EXIT ACTOR 3.

SCENE: INTRODUCTION

ACTOR 1: Look up at the hillsides in almost any part of Cornwall and you will see the remains of some forgotten tin mine. Although operations continue at places such as Geevor, South Crofty, Wheal Maid and Wheal Jane, a large majority of the mines stopped their pumps in the late nineteenth century. The great days are long gone.

Tin mining in Cornwall can be traced back to pre-Christian times. As tin is a major constituent of bronze it was traded with the Phoenicians before 1100 BC, making it Britain's oldest export. In fact, Ding Dong mine in Penwith is said to have been worked over two thousand years ago.

Because tin is needed to make alloys such as pewter and brass, and a whole host of other commodities such as illuminated manuscripts, solder, even telecommunications, tin mining has always been an important industry; so important that by the twelfth century the tin miners—or tanners—had an autonomous parliament and judicial system, known as the Stannaries. The tanners were given special rights. They were exempt from military service, for instance; excused from paying church taxes and had the right to work on unenclosed land under a system known as 'bounding'.

ACTOR 2: In those days tin miners would scratch about the surface looking for 'lodes'—vertical layers of tin ore. Legend has it that they were led to the lodes by phosphorescent moorland lights or information from dowzers or diviners. Some would listen for the underground knockings of the buccas, or mine spirits, also known as knackers. In later years exhausted mines would be termed 'knacked' or 'knackered'.

As the hillside lodes became exhausted shafts were sunk underground and tin mining as we know it began. This was probably in the fifteenth century. An eighteenth-century historian, Hals, described a mine as a 'place deadly that bringeth danger; wet, deep and miserable occupation to the labouring tanners therein, wherein great numbers of them are infected by the damp with incurable disease, others slain by accident and come to untimely deaths'.

As their digging took the miners beneath the natural level of water in the rock, flooding became a problem and methods of drainage had to be devised. 'Adits', or tunnels, were dug into the lowest part of the mines, also providing ventilation. For instance, the Great County Adit was enlarged for fifty years until it covered thirty square miles and forty-six mines from Redruth to Poldice.

Deeper mines were baled by the by the 'rag and chain pump', or by horse whim, which hoisted buckets of water on a rope wound round a drum turned by horses. The limitations of these simple machines determined the depths to which the mines could be sunk.

Then came the Industrial Revolution.

SCENE: SERVING THE STEAM

ENTER ACTOR 3 AS THE MINE CAPTAIN

MINE CAPTAIN: Oi... you lot! I'm the captain of this mine and I look after the everyday running of the place. My duty is to, er... [CONSULTS PAPERS] 'See that every man fills his appointed place and time. Now on a superficial survey this inspection and the fines that are levied on defaulters may seem severe, especially as the men who neglect their labour cease to earn wages when they are idle. But it must be recollected that the regular expense of the mine in engines, coal and other concomitant disbursements will admit of no suspension. And, consequently, if the idle were to be encouraged general confusion would ensue and, in proportion to their neglect of labour, the best mine in the county would inevitably sink'. In other words, you lot had better pull your socks up. The Adventurers and Mineral Lords reckon you've been having too much time off. That might have been alright in the olden days, before we bought all this modern machinery, but we've got to feed these machines coal, whether you're working or not—else the mine will flood, and we can't have that now can we?

TINNER 1 (played by ACTOR 1): What about our days off?

MINE CAPTAIN: The expense of pumping the mine goes on whether you're working or not.

TINNER 2 (ACTOR 2): Do we have to work St. Piran's Day?

MINE CAPTAIN: Aye.

TINNER 1: And Jeu Whydn?

MINE CAPTAIN: Aye.

TINNER 2: What about St. Paul's Pitcher Day and Picrous Day?

CAPTAIN: The mine must still be pumped.

TINNER 1: But you'll give us New Year's Eve and New Year's Day off?

MINE CAPTAIN: From now on you'll get Christmas Day and Good Friday and like it.

TINNER 2: What about Whitsuntide?

TINNER 1: What about Midsummer Day?

TINNER 2: And what about Parish Feast Day? We always have three or four days for the Parish Feast Day!

TINNER 1: And Black Friday!

MINE CAPTAIN: From now on you'll be working.

TINNER 2: Now look. We tanners have always had time off. It's at our own expense, isn't it? If we don't dig tin we don't get paid. We like having time off—for our hobbies.

MINE CAPTAIN: Well that was alright In the old days, before we started investing In all this ere magical machinery. Your lives will have to change to suit the new engines. I mean, nowadays we've got things like Thomas Savery's steam-pressure pump. Now this is placed at the bottom of the shaft, but you might find it uses up all the oxygen.

TINNERS 1 AND 2 GASPING FOR BREATH.

It's not quite perfected yet. It's also known as the 'Miner's Friend'. Then there's Thomas Newcomen's much improved pumping-engine.

TINNERS 1 AND 2 APPLAUD.

With this you tanners can dig tin at 90 fathoms.

TINNERS 1 AND 2 BEGIN TO REGISTER DISAPPROVAL.

And then, with the machine invented by Boulton and Watt, you tanners can dig tin at 200 fathoms.

TINNER 2: But that's twelve hundred feet!

MINE CAPTAIN: And over here we have the 'Cornish Boiler' invented by Richard Trevithick.

MINE CAPTAIN STANDS PROUDLY OVER TWO CHAIRS. AS HE SPEAKS ACTOR 1 AND ACTOR 2 MANIPULATE CHAIRS AS IF THEY WERE A MACHINE.

With this twelve- to sixteen hundred gallons of water can be pumped out of the mine every minute. (TO ACTORS) Ere—steady on. It's not a toy, you know! (SWITCHES OFF MACHINE).

TINNER 2: Look, coming back to our days off. What about Friday-in-Lide?

MINE CAPTAIN: (CONSULTING PAPERS) Friday-in-Lide?

TINNER 1: Yes. That's the first Friday in every month when a boy is sent to the top of the hill to see how long he can sleep. . . .

TINNER 2: And the length of time he sleeps determines the length of our afternoon nap.

MINE CAPTAIN: There will be no Friday-in-Lide!

TINNERS 1 & 2: No Friday-in-Lide?

TINNER 2: Well how are we going to know the length of our afternoon nap?

MINE CAPTAIN: There will be no afternoon nap!

EXIT MINE CAPTAIN.

ACTOR 1: Up until the early nineteenth century tin mining had lived in the shadow of the copper industry. But this changed when China began importing vast quantities of Cornish tin for use in religious ceremonies. This 'China contract' lay in the hands of the East India Company, which enjoyed a complete monopoly of all official trade with China. Between the years 1789 and 1813 over 18,500 tons of tin were shipped to Canton, worth a total of £1.4m.

ACTOR 2: But there were initial problems with the contract. The prevailing duty of three shillings and four pence per hundredweight would have eaten deep into the company's profits or, alternatively, the price paid to the Adventurers—rich people who bought the shares of tin mines and divided the vast profits between themselves. In other parts of the world these people were known as Capitalists.

ACTOR 1: Now in normal circumstances this problem would have been overcome simply by paying the tin miners less for their labour. But these were not normal circumstances. The starving populace were taking up arms against the Corn Laws. Concessions had to be made. So off went a delegation to London to petition the Government. The delegation was received and the duty subsequently removed. All was well. The East India Company made their huge profits, the Cornish gentry retired to their mansions with their necks intact, the Government had done a little more to stem the revolutionary tide and the Cornish miners were left with little more than a nose for tin.

ENTER ACTOR 3 AS MINERAL LORD.

EXIT ACTOR 1.

SCENE: I'M A LORD OF THE MINERALS AND I'M OK

*SONG 'MINERAL LORD SONG' (M. Kilburn). GUITAR
ACCOMPANIIMENT.*

MINERAL LORD: [SINGS] I'm a Lord of the Minerals and I'm OK
I sleep all night and I hunt all day
People come to see me from miles around

I sign them up and send them underground
 They work all day in the grime and dust
 And if they behave I'll throw them a crust
 I very rarely see them 'cause I don't like walking
 I'd rather sit at home and let my money do the talking

REPEAT VERSE 1.

*ENTER ACTOR 1 AS WOMAN PEASANT. SHE IS CARRYING
 A CHILD WRAPPED IN A BLANKET. DIALOGUE SPOKEN
 OVER CONTINUING GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENT.*

WOMAN PEASANT: Ere, my good Lord. Would you kindly bless my baby? He's only two weeks old.

MINERAL LORD: Certainly, madam. I hope he'll be going down Dolcoath mine when he's older?

WOMAN PEASANT: Oh, yes sir.

*MINERAL LORD KISSES THE CHILD'S FOREHEAD. SMILES.
 THROWS THE CHILD OVER HIS SHOULDER.*

MINERAL LORD: (SINGS) But if you want more money or some form of compensation
 And you're thinking of complaining, or taking strike action
 Well I'll stop that, so don't you worry
 'Cause I'll send you to the workhouse with an empty tummy

REPEAT VERSE 1. (ALL). END OF SONG.

MINERAL LORD: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name's Lord Knacker and I own large tracts of land in Cornwall which I lease to mining companies for huge sums of money. Of course, I don't actually live in Cornwall—in fact, I've only ever been there once, grouse shooting—or was that Scotland? I never can remember. Anyway, I live in London and rule the country—but I know these little bits of Cornwall are mine because daddy gave them to me, and he won them in a game of skittles at Balmoral one afternoon. But never mind all that. I'm here to tell you all about those tin mining chappies.

*ACTORS 1 & 2 SIT THE MINERAL LORD ON A CHAIR.
THROUGHOUT HIS SPEECH THEY CLEAN HIS SHOES,
BRUSH HIS JACKET ETC.*

MINERAL LORD (cont'd): Throughout history they've been portrayed as healthy, self-reliant, contented individuals living in quaint little cottages. But, quite frankly, that couldn't have been further from the truth. They went about their labour in appalling conditions. There were no safety regulations or anything, poor devils. And many were children, sometimes as young as eight years old. The children had to work, along with their mothers—known as Bal Maidens—because the men's wages were so poor. The men could be paid in one of two ways: tutting, whereby they would be paid hourly; or as tribute workers, whereby they would bid at public auction for tracts of land and, acting as self-employed sub-contractors, be paid in accordance with production. Of course, if they found a particularly large seam of tin the management would simply re-assess the value. In other words—pay them less.

*ACTORS 1 AND 2, HAVING FINISHED TENDING THE
MINERAL LORD, ARE PAID. NOT ENOUGH.*

ACTOR 2: With the price of tin creeping lower and lower so the mines began to close—seven major mines closing in 1842 alone, including Polgooth, Wheal Kitty, Rosewall Hill and Polbreen.

ACTOR 1: Sick of poor wages and appalling working conditions miners began taking action. At Consols, in Gwennap, a major strike broke out. Two hundred men marched to Carn Brea to get the men there to join them and form a miners' union.

MINERAL LORD: (READS) 'An address from the Mayor and Magistrates of Helston and the Magistrates of the West Division of Kirrier, to the Miners and Labouring Classes.

'The Mayor and Magistrates express their sincere regret and concern at the present high price of the necessaries of life. They have already endeavoured to lessen this distress by raising money in several parishes. But nothing they can do can altogether remove the evil, till it shall please Providence to give a cheaper supply of food.

'However, they must at the same time exhort the people to bear their distress with patience, for the Magistrates have sufficient means placed at their disposal to repress acts of violence and punish the wrongdoers'.

EXIT MINERAL LORD

ACTOR 2: In June, 1847, tin and copper miners gathered in Penzance. Over three thousand began marching through the streets.

ACTOR 1: Troops were sent from Pendennis Castle to stop the march and two hundred special constables sworn in.

ACTOR 2: Even a gradual upturn in the industry did nothing to improve the mineworkers' conditions. In 1853 a strike broke out in Penwith, the men there demanding....

ENTER ACTOR 3 WITH BANNER.

ACTOR 3: '...That the price of the pennyweight of tin paid to miners be raised from sixteen pence to twenty pence on account of the high price of tin and the huge profits being made by the mine company'.
(BEGINS TO UNFOLD BANNER).

ACTOR 1: The strike spread rapidly and many mine companies acknowledged the workers' grievances.

ACTOR 2: But some refused and the leaders of the strike at Penwith were victimised....

ACTOR 3: ...resulting in over two thousand men marching through St. Just with a banner, upon which was inscribed the word—'Union'!

UNION BANNER HELD ALOFT.

SONG—*MY MASTER AND I* (*Trad.*), GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENT.

ACTOR 1: (SINGS) Says my master to me, 'Is it true what I'm told,
Your name in the book of the union's enrolled?
I shall never allow that a worker of mine
With wicked disturbers of the peace shall combine.

'I give you fair warning, mind what you're about—
I shall put my foot on it and trample it out.
Which side your bread's buttered I'm sure you will see,
So decide now at once for the union or me.'

Says I to my master, 'It's perfectly true
That I'm in the union, and I'll stick to it too.
And if between union and you I must choose
I've plenty to gain and I've little to lose.'

I give you fair warning, mind what you're about—
I shall put my foot on it and trample it out.
Which side your bread's buttered I'm sure you will see,
So decide now at once for the union or me.

EXIT ACTOR 2.

SCENE: METHODISM

ACTOR 1: John Wesley had brought Methodism to Cornwall in 1743
and reinforced it with between thirty and forty further visits before
his death in the late 1780s.

SONG—'JOHN WESLEY' (*Trad.*) SUNG BY ACTOR 3. GUITAR
ACCOMPANIMENT. VERSES BETWEEN NARRATION.

ACTOR 3: (SINGS) John Wesley was a minister who lived in days of
yore
He often wore an old brown coat as buttoned up before.

ACTOR 1: After initial hostility on the part of the mining communities,
Methodism was adopted as the dominant creed, partly as a reaction
against the corrupt tithing practices of the Church of England.

ACTOR 3: (SINGS) John Wesley had another coat of quite a different
kind
Instead of buttoning up before, it buttoned up behind.

ACTOR 1: Part of this corruption manifested itself in the form
of absenteeism on the part of many vicars who would accept

responsibility for several parishes in order to gain the income from the tithes—or church taxes—demanded of the parishioners. Because the vicars were unable to fulfil their duties over so many different parishes, people complained that children were dying unbaptised and corpses were remaining unburied until becoming noisome....

ACTOR 3: ... or smelly.

(SINGS) John Wesley had three daughters fair and they was tall and thin

He took them to the river's bank and pushed the buggers in.

ACTOR 1: The regularity of the Methodist way of life, with its emphasis on work, thrift and temperance, suited the employers very well. The discipline of Methodism reflected the new industrial discipline which prevailed after the Industrial Revolution.

ACTOR 3: (SINGS) John Wesley had an old straw hat without nor crown nor brim

It wouldn't have been much use to thee and t'was no use to him.

ENTER ACTOR 2 AS THE REV. ISAIAH PRIOR.

ACTORS 1 AND 3 QUICKLY TAKE UP A KNEELING POSITION.

REV. PRIOR: Brethren! There is a dreadful Hell, and everlasting pains, where sinners must with Devils dwell in darkness, fire and chains.

TINNER 1 (ACTOR 1): Blessed be his name.

TINNER 3 (ACTOR 3): God grant It.

TINNER 1: Praise the Lord, that's so.

REV. PRIOR: Let us raise our voices in jubilation to the Lord. I give you hymn number twenty-seven: The Good Old Way.

TINNERS 1 AND 3 TAKE DEEP BREATH.

REV. PRIOR: Not so fast! Not so fast! It has been drawn to my attention that you have withdrawn your labour up at the mine; have demanded better wages and conditions and profaned your throats with the Devil's music. Is this true?

TINNER 1: Well, yes.... But we're only on strike a bit.

REV. PRIOR: How dare you! How dare you come here in this unholy state of mind? Forsake the way of the banner, the way of the 'strike'! In the sight of God virtue is demonstrated only through work! Nothing but damnation and cold, deep, dark despair can result from this defiance of the Adventurers and Mineral Lords who give you the chance to redeem yourselves in the cleansing fire of toil. The Good Old Way!

ALL: (SING) 'THE GOOD OLD WAY' (Trad.) ACAPELLA. Lift up your hearts, Emanuel's friends
And taste the pleasure Jesus sends
Let nothing cause you to delay
But hasten in the good old way
For I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul
I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul
For I know I have and I feel I have
A sweet hope of glory in my soul

*TINNERS 1 AND 3 'LA' HYMN THROUGHOUT SERMON
(WHICH IS BASED ON A SERMON BY BILLY BRAY OF
TWELVEHEADS)*

REV. PRIOR: Now, brethren, this evening I am going to talk to you about heaven. 'Heaven?', you say, 'What do us, a parcel of people from [Truro] know about heaven?' I know, I know, let's ask Abraham about it. He's been up there a good while. (USING HANDS AS SPEAKING TRUMPET) Abraham! What sort of a place is heaven? Tell us something about it, will you? And here is our reply: 'Glory upon glories, my son'. Glory upon glories! So says Abraham. And now let us ask Elijah, that great prophet Elijah. 'What have you got to tell us? What have you got to say to us Elijah?'

ACTORS 1 & 3 STOP SINGING

REV. PRIOR: (GREAT POWER) 'Come down, thou great Jehovah! Come down and bring your stone hammer along with thee! Smash the hard hearts of this wicked and perverse people!'

ALL: (SING) For I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul
 I have a sweet hope of glory in my soul
 For I know I have and I feel I have
 A sweet hope of glory in my soul

EXIT REV. PRIOR AND ACTOR 1.

SCENE: SLUMP & EMIGRATION

ACTOR 3: By 1867 poverty in Cornwall was so severe the Mining Journal wrote: 'Distress In the county from starvation is too appalling even for publication.' For many the only escape from the Parish Workhouse was emigration. Between February 1836 and February 1838 ten thousand people left Cornwall on ships bound for Southern Australia. Sponsored by the Government these vessels sailed from Fowey, Hayle, Padstow and Penzance and, for the lucky few with money, the Government sold land at £1 per acre.

EXIT ACTOR 3.

ENTER ACTOR 2 WHO INTRODUCES THE WELL-KNOWN SINGING DUO 'THE COUSIN JACKS', ABOUT TO GIVE THEIR LAST PERFORMANCE ON CORNISH SOIL BEFORE DISAPPEARING OVERSEAS FOREVER.

ENTER ACTORS 1 AND 3 AS 'THE COUSIN JACKS'.

SONG—'THE TINNERS' JIG' (P. Farmer). GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENT.

INTRO.

This is called the Tinnners' Jig, we do it by the sea
 And then we climb on board a ship, and wave goodbye to all we know
 We've all heard about this thing they call prosperity
 It seems to have run out round here, and so we have to go
 And we sing—

CHORUS:

Never been to Truro, but I've been to Wallaroo
Cousin Jacks are digging all the way to Timbuctoo
There's no life for us in Kernow, they won't give a dog a bone
And if we're very lucky one day we'll come back home.

2. Goodbye wives and mothers and goodbye to all the kids
And when the Captain comes on board we'll ask him where this ship
is bound
What good is wealth in foreign climes? Our hearts are Cornish tin
The industry we help create will one day crush our own.
(And we'll sing...)

CHORUS..

MIDDLE 8:

All along the shorelines you can see the families waving goodbye
They say, 'Good luck, good fortune, learn to write soon.'
But the departing tinnners are so sad, you can see they feel their lives
are ending
Haggard faces, dark-rimmed eyes, it certainly seems that they must
die soon
But maybe they can live a little longer and some money to their
families be sen-ding

3. This called the Tinnners' Jig, it means we're sad to go
Don't want to travel overseas, this land is ours we have to leave
How much is a man worth, is that only gauged in gold
And souvenirs we bring home, some exotic mine disease?
(And we'll sing...)

CHORUS

REPEAT CHORUS:

Never been to Truro, but I've been to Wallaroo
Cousin Jacks are digging all the way to Timbuctoo
There's no life for us in Kernow, they won't give a dog a bone

And If we're very lucky one day we'll come back ho, ho ho home, ho,
 ho ho home,
 Home.

EXIT ACTOR 2.

*'THE COUSIN JACKS' CRY, WRING OUT THEIR
 HANDKERCHIEVES ETC.*

SCENE: THE TRUE STORY OF ROSEVEAR

ACTOR 3: And now, ladies and gentlemen, pray lend us an ear
 And we'll tell you a true story about one Rosevear.

ACTOR 1: Rosevear was a policeman, so stout and so bold
 Each night through the streets of St. Austell he strolled.

ACTOR 3: First he'd walk up them, and then he'd walk down
 And no-one caused trouble in that quiet little town.

ENTER ACTOR 2 AS CONSTABLE ROSEVEAR.

CON. ROSEVEAR: One night whilst patrolling my orderly beat
 A party of tinnerns I did happen to meet
 They looked very angry, they looked very grim
 I could see by their faces they was not after tin
 I approached them on Fore Street in an orderly manner
 'What brings you,' I asked them, 'from Gwennap and Lanner?'

TINNER 1 (ACTOR 1): Our children are hungry, we cannot buy corn
 We are marching to Charlestown the merchants to warn
 To sell us grain at prices that we can afford
 And no profiteering from selling abroad.

CON. ROSEVEAR: So that is what brings you out marching at night!
 I'm afraid I must tell you it just is not right.
 In the eyes of the law this is an illegal picket
 And if you don't disperse quickly you'll be on a very sticky wicket.

TINNER 3 (ACTOR 3): Well come along with us and make sure of fair
 play

For we have brought money, a fair price we'll pay.

CON. ROSEVEAR: So off we went to Charlestown, a-singing of songs
I knew that those merchants would not do us wrong

ALL (SING): Oh I do like to be beside the seaside
Oh I do like to be beside the sea
Oh I do like to stroll along the prom, prom, prom
Where the brass bands play, diddly-um-pom-pom

TINNER 1: We came to the warehouse where they stored the grain
Bought from Cornish farmers for the merchants' gain.

TINNER 3 (ACTOR 3): We called on the merchants to open up the door
And sell us grain at prices that we paid before.

CON. ROSEVEAR: I knew they'd play fair, some mistake it must be
These are men of honour, these are the gentry.

TINNER 1: But there was no answer, so we called out again:
'Don't force us to violence, we are honest men!'

CON.ROSEVEAR: But still came no answer, so I shouted too:
'Please sell these men grain, they have money for you'.
But they looked down in silence and the door it stayed firm:
'These people are hungry and a deaf ear you turn!
Their children are starving and you have the grain
Oh, we must take action, though it causes me pain!'

ALL: So we smashed down the doors and laid hands on the grain
And with no further trouble went home again

CON. ROSEVEAR: We are talking of justice and this lesson is taught:
There are laws more important than those made in court.

ACTOR 3: But the end of this story, we are sorry to say
Is that Rosevear was arrested the very next day.

ACTOR 1: For his bad example he was hanged in the town,
Then strung up in chains on St. Austell down.

PAUSE. CON. ROSEVEAR HANGING.

ACTOR 3: 'To all the labouring men and tradesmen that are willing to save their wives and children from the dreadful condition of being starved to death by the unfeeling and griping farmer and merchant. This is to give notice to all persons of this parish to attend at Churchtown, Saturday 14th Instant...'

ACTOR 1: 'And all that have got firelocks are to bring them for there we do intend to muster and be independent ourselves; and them that have not any firelocks are to provide themselves with staffs, nine feet long, fix spears in the end of the same and them that refuse to their peril be it. So One and All!'

ALL: So One and All!

EXIT ACTOR 1 AND CONSTABLE ROSEVEAR.

SCENE: THE GREAT TIN BOOM

ACTOR 3: The reputation of the Cornish miners had, by this time, spread far and wide. Starting life in the industry early—at perhaps nine or ten years of age—the Cornish miner gained a practical, working knowledge of the industry unrivalled elsewhere. The harsh working conditions moulded workers who were fearless, courageous and cunning. Tales of the Cornish miner's strange, almost instinctive methods of working abounded.

One such story was told by a government surveyor engaged by a Cornish mine during the 1860s. Having taken a long time to find the solution of a difficult calculation, eventually worked out with the aid of trigonometry, the surveyor was astonished to find that a Cornish miner had reached the same solution in almost half the time. 'How did you do it?' he asked. The miner, nudging his companion, replied: 'I tell 'ee. I mizured 'im up braave an' careful, an' I found the lunth o' him was two shovel hilts, three picks, a mallet, four li'l stones an' as far as I could spit jus' zackly.'

Little wonder, then, that people used to say: 'Wherever there's a hole in the ground you can be sure to find a Cornishman at the bottom of it'.

EXIT ACTOR 3. ENTER ACTORS 1 AND 2 (WITH MANDOLIN).

ACTOR 2: And then, in 1870, came—The Great Tin Boom!

TRIUMPHANT CHORD.

ACTOR 1: Civil war in Malaya meant no more cheap imported tin!

TRIUMPHANT CHORD.

ACTOR 2: The good ol' US of A, investing heavily in the new canning industries, began buying vast quantities of Cornish tin!

TRIUMPHANT CHORD.

ACTOR 1: 'Cornwall will be the new El Dorado'....

ACTOR 2: ...said the Mining Journal in 1872.

BOTH: 'There will be prosperity for everyone!'

ACTOR 2 MUSIC—BOSCASTLE BREAKDOWN.

ACTOR 1—CLOG DANCE.

ACTORS 1 & 2 FREEZE AS MUSIC ENDS.

ENTER ACTOR 3 AS MINERAL LORD, SMOKING A CIGAR.

DURING FOLLOWING SPEECH ACTORS 1 & 2 EXIT. THEY RE-ENTER AS ADVENTURERS, ALSO SMOKING CIGARS. THEY REPOSITION THE CHAIRS AS IF ROUND A BANQUETING TABLE. THIS IS DONE NOISILY AND DRUNKENLY. THEY SIT, PATTING THEIR STOMACHS.

MINERAL LORD: (TO AUDIENCE) The Great Tin Boom of 1870 to 1875 brought huge profits for the London speculators and Cornish adventurers. At the quarterly Count House dinners—a legitimate item of mine expenditure, to which the miners were not invited—Adventurers would enjoy the news of the mines' splendid dividends while supping a sparkling 'Chateau Knackeur' and gorging themselves with extravagant foods from the mine's own pewter dinner service. And in 1872 there was plenty to cheer about.

ADVENTURERS: Ra ra ra! (ETC.)

MINERAL LORD GOES TO THE HEAD OF THE BANQUETING TABLE AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE APPLAUSE OF THE ADVENTURERS, WHO LOUDLY PUNCTUATE HIS SPEECH WITH CRIES OF DELIGHT.

MINERAL LORD: My Lords, ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the quarterly account-house dinner of the Wheal Do 'Em Mine here in (Redruth). This year, Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, has been an exceptional year for the mine, and indeed for the Cornish tin industry generally. At the risk of boring you all (CRIES OF 'NO! NO!' FROM THE ADVENTURERS) I would like to read out a few figures. (PRODUCES PIECE OF PAPER). Here are some of the profits paid out to Adventurers in other mines: Wheal Kitty, of St Agnes, paid £8590; Cook's Kitchen paid £9187; Carn Brea paid £15,500; Dolcoath paid £45,645 and Tincroft paid £48,000. But tonight I am pleased to announce that Wheal Do 'Em Mine here in (Redruth) will exceed even these payments. I am proud to announce that we will be paying £60,000 in the form of a 25% profit!

UPROAR. ADVENTURERS SING 'FOR HE'S A JOLLY GOOD KNACKER', CHEER, STAMP, WHISTLE.

MINERAL LORD MODESTLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE APPLAUSE.

ADVENTURER 2 (ACTOR 2): I say, Lord Knacker, hope you don't mind me asking....

MINERAL LORD: Not at all, old boy. What is it?

ADVENTURER 2: Weil, I was just wondering.... What have we given to these tin mining chappies? (INDICATES AUDIENCE).

MINERAL LORD: What have we given them? Why, buggar all!

ALL: (LAUGH UPROARIOUSLY.)

ADVENTURER 1 (ACTOR 1): Well, that's not strictly true. We have given them a few things—hookworm, for example; a disgusting disease, the result of poor sanitary conditions underground.

ADVENTURER 2: And we gave them the five-week month, whereby they worked a whole month every year for—nothing at all!

ADVENTURER 1: We gave them the Poor Law!

ADVENTURER 2: We gave them the Workhouse!

ADVENTURER 1: We gave them faulty gunpowder that ruined their health.

ADVENTURER 2: Ah, but we gave them a life expectancy of 25 whole years.

ADVENTURER 1: We gave them money to spend... .

ADVENTURER 2: Where?

ADVENTURER 1: At the company store!

ALL LAUGH UNCONTROLLABLY

MINERAL LORD: (TO AUDIENCE) But remember —

ALL ADVANCE TO AUDIENCE, FIXED SMILE ON THEIR FACES.

ALL: What's good for us (POINT TO THEMSELVES) is good for —

MINERAL LORD & ADVENTURER 2: Youuuuuuuuuuuuuuu....

*MINERAL LORD & ADVENTURER 2 POINT AT AUDIENCE
AND HOLD 'YOU', THE NOTE FALLING SLOWLY IN PITCH
AS THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT.*

*ADVENTURER 1 BECOMES GRANDMA, ARRANGES CHAIRS
BACK TO BACK, SITS IN ONE FACING THE AUDIENCE.*

EXIT BACKWARDS MINERAL LORD AND ADVENTURER 2.

SCENE: DEATH & WAR

LIGHTS UP BUT NOT MUCH.

GRANDMA: (TO AUDIENCE) Well, you're all growing up now and it's time one or two things were explained to you. So your mother has asked me to have a word with you all. After all, that's what your old granny's here for, isn't it?

Weil, as you know, back in the old days—this is about, oh, 40 years and more ago, around 1870— we all earned our money at the Bal, the tin mine. You would all have been working there by now, if it was worth digging the stuff up. Everywhere you looked round here in those days you'd see a working mine—all down the Tuckingmill Valley, all over Carn Brea, all around Carn Marth. There was Wheal Providence, there was Great Wheal Vor, Grenville United, the Bassets, besides Dolcoath and Crofty and so on. Anyhow, I'm going to talk about your Grandfather now.

MUSIC STARTS—ACTOR 2, GUITAR.

You see, he couldn't find work in any of those mines I just mentioned. The Captains didn't like him. He was once seen reading a book, so they said he was a troublemaker—anyhow, he couldn't find work this side of Penwith, and he ended up in a four-man pair in St Just. One day, they were down in the very lowest level of the mine; it hadn't long been opened up; and the big steam pumps they had to keep the mine free of water—well, they just weren't big enough. The water come in and it trapped them. They all drowned. Twenty men down there, there were. Like poor lost sailors under the sea. And dark... very, very dark. I often picture him down there, his hair floating in the dark. Of course, you never knew him.

Anyway, they come and told me. I was a Bal-maiden up to the mine. The captain came. He gave me the rest of the day off to mourn your grandfather. It was late afternoon, nearly an hour and a half, they gave me.

But I consoled myself: I thought I'd give him a proper miner's funeral, with a double row of singers walking slowly before the coffin, all led by the elders of the chapel.

MUSIC STOPS.

GRANDMA: (SINGS *A Funeral Hymn for a Believer* (Charles Wesley))

Ah, lovely appearance of death!
What sight upon Earth is so fair?
Not all the gay pageants that breathe,
Can with a dead body compare.

MUSIC RESTARTS.

GRANDMA: Oh yes, us miners know all about funerals. We've had a lot of practice, you see. But your grandfather never got his funeral. The adventurers of that mine, they wouldn't put themselves out to rescue him even after he was dead. They abandoned that level, and him, and them.... They're still down there to this day, all twenty of them.

MUSIC STOPS.

Well, perhaps he was lucky dying when he did so he couldn't see what happened next: the Great Slump, when the price of tin collapsed on the 'International Markets', whatever that means. And now there's a great war to start soon, they do say; the war to end wars. I suppose some of you will be off soon across the Tamar, off to fight the Russians or the Germans or the French or the Americans, whoever it is this time.

*BLACKOUT. LOUD MARCHING RHYTHM ON SIDE DRUM
(ACTOR 3, DRESSED AS MINERAL LORD).*

*GRANDMA ARRANGES CHAIRS SIDE BY SIDE, BACKS TO
AUDIENCE. EXIT GRANDMA.*

*ENTER MINERAL LORD PLAYING DRUM. LIGHTS UP.
DURING THE FIRST PART OF THIS THE LIGHTS ARE
FLASHED TO SIMULATE EXPLOSIONS.*

ENTER ACTORS 1 & 2 DRESSED AS MINERS, MARCHING IN FILE. THEY LOOK AROUND IN CONFUSION AS THEY MARCH.

MINERAL LORD WATCHES THE MINERS SMUGLY AS THEY MARCH UP THE AISLE AND BACK AGAIN, BAFFLED AND TERRIFIED. THEY MARCH BEHIND THE CHAIRS AND KNEEL DOWN. IN TIME TO THE DRUM, IN TURN THEY RISE AND SHOOT IMAGINARY RIFLES OVER THE PARAPET FORMED BY THE CHAIRS. THEY EACH DO THIS THREE TIMES, THE RECOIL KNOCKING THEM BACKWARDS.

WATCHED FROM THE SIDE OF THE STAGE BY THE MINERAL LORD, STILL IN TIME TO THE DRUM, THEY CRAWL OUT FROM BEHIND THE CHAIRS AND ADVANCE BENT DOUBLE TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE. AS THEY INSPECT THEIR SURROUNDINGS, THEY WALK BACKWARDS INTO EACH OTHER AND STRAIGHTEN UP IN SURPRISE.

THE DRUMBEAT BECOMES STACCATO MACHINE GUN FIRE. BOTH ARE SHOT. THEIR BODIES CONTORT AS THE BULLETS HIT THEM.

AT THE END OF A SHORT BURST, THE DRUM STOPS, THE MINERS FREEZE. THE MINERAL LORD PLAYS MORE BURSTS UNTIL BOTH HAVE COLLAPSED ON TO GROUND. SLIGHTLY LONGER PAUSE.

THE MARCHING RHYTHM BEGINS AGAIN. THE MINERS HELP EACH OTHER UP, SEVERELY INJURED, STAGGER BACK TO CHAIRS. THEY STAND IN FRONT OF THE CHAIRS, FACING THE AUDIENCE, THEIR LIMBS AT ODD ANGLES.

THE MINERAL LORD PLAYS A FINAL ROLL ON THE DRUM AND PUTS IT DOWN. HE STANDS ON THE CHAIRS, WHICH NOW FORM A SPEAKING PLATFORM. HE GIVES THE MINERS EACH A UNION JACK ON A STICK AND A PARTY BLOWER.

MINERAL LORD: Rejoice! Rejoice!

MINERS BLOW BLOWERS AND WAVE FLAGS MISERABLY.

MINERAL LORD: Ladies and Gentlemen, we are gathered here today to pay tribute to the brave men and women of our mining communities who left their homes to fight in an unknown country for Freedom and Democracy. Of course, ladies and gentlemen, it was one of the saddest moments of my life when I realised that I was unable to join these brave men and women on the field of battle and partake of their glory, having instead to discharge a deeper duty here at home....

TELEPHONE RINGS.

MINERAL LORD: Ah, do excuse me. (HE LIFTS HIS TOP HAT. UNDERNEATH, STRAPPED TO HIS HEAD, IS A SMALL TELEPHONE. MINERAL LORD LIFTS THE RECEIVER.) Hello, Knacker here. Stock Exchange? (It's the Stock Exchange, ladies and gentlemen). What's that you say? Shares plummeting? Sell the armaments factory. Invest in pharmaceuticals... BUPA and bandages, that sort of thing. (REPLACES RECEIVER AND HAT.) Ladies and gentlemen, I do apologise... Rejoice, rejoice!

*MINERS, BAFFLED BY THE TELEPHONE INTERLUDE, WAVE
FLAGS, BLOW BLOWERS AND FORGET ABOUT IT.*

MINERAL LORD: As I was saying... we are gathered here today in recognition of these brave fellows who have fought in this, the War to End All Wars, so that we may be free and that our heritage and traditions—our nation's greatest treasures—may remain intact in the face of —

TELEPHONE RINGS.

MINERAL LORD: Excuse me... (TAKES RECEIVER) Hallo, Lord Knacker... Who? Oh, Wall Street. How are you? (Ladies and gentlemen, it's my old friend Wall Street). What? Tin prices tumbling? Close down the mine, lock stock and barrel! Invest in.... (LOOKS AT MINERS) Invest in rubber dollies and lead soldiers.

HANGS UP, REPLACES HAT.

I must apologise, ladies and gentlemen... Rejoice, rejoice!

MINERS WAVE FLAGS, BLOW BLOWERS.

MINERAL LORD: And so we come to the end of our small show of recognition. I would like to welcome you, my little heroes, home to a land fit for heroes!

MINERS CHEER UP.

MINERAL LORD: A land of full employment, a land in which you can hold your head up and say: 'This is what we fought for!'

MINERS REJOICE.

MINERAL LORD: 'This is what we lived for!'

MINERS REJOICE.

MINERAL LORD: 'This is what we died for!'

MINERS REJOICE.

MINERAL LORD: I would like to tell you that, my little heroes, but unfortunately it would be a great big fib. Instead we consign you to another twenty years of depression, mass unemployment, soup kitchens and forced emigration.

Finally, let us all join together and sing... the Tin National Anthem.

ALL STAND TO ATTENTION.

ALL: (SING) God save our gracious Tin,
 Long live our noble Tin,
 God save our Tin (na na na na na na)
 Send it victorious, happy and glorious,
 Long to reign under us,
 God save our tinnnnnn....

*THEIR VOICES FALL AWAY LIKE A MACHINE RUNNING
 DOWN. THEY HANG THEIR HEADS AND FREEZE.*

SCENE: 'CAMBORNE TRAM'.

A MINER'S GARDEN, POOL.

MINER 2 PRODUCES A COPY OF THE CAMBORNE & REDRUTH PACKET. HE WALKS FORWARD, SURVEYING HIS GARDEN, SHAKING OUT THE PAPER.

MINERAL LORD AND MINER 1 EXIT. THEY BLOW BIRDWHISTLES BACKSTAGE.

MINER 2 BREATHES DEEPLY AND COUGHS. HE LOOKS ROUND.

MINER 2: (CALLS OSL) Morning George! Lovely morning, eh? (CALLS OSR) Morning Bert? Bert? Oh dear. (CALLS OSL) Bert is bad again George.

COUGHING, HE ARRANGES THE CHAIRS BACK-TO-BACK AND SITS IN THE FORWARD ONE. HE READS THE NEWSPAPER, BUT THE COUGHING BECOMES WORSE UNTIL HE CHOKES. HE LEANS BACK IN HIS CHAIR, FIGHTING TO BREATHE, SILENT, A LOOK OF PANIC ON HIS FACE.

ENTER DOCTOR KNACKER (ACTOR 1) AND DOCTOR BENEFACTOR (ACTOR 3). BOTH WEAR GLASSES AND WHITE COATS.

DOCTOR KNACKER: Ah yes, here he is. Good morning, Mr Treworthal. No, don't bother to get up.

THROUGHOUT THE SCENE MINER 2 STRUGGLES TO COMMUNICATE TO THEM THE PHRASE 'I CAN'T BREATHE'. HOWEVER HE IS INCAPABLE OF SPEECH AND THEY IGNORE HIS GESTURES.

DR. BENEFACTOR: (PEERING AT MINER 2) I say! how interesting.

DR KNACKER: Oh yes. You will of course note the complexion, all white and pasty?

DR B: Ooh yes. (HE PRODS MINER.)

DR K: Also the hollow cheeks, the black-rimmed eyes. Note the flush.

DR B: He does have a very nice garden though, doesn't he?

DR K: We are not here to study his garden, Doctor Benefactor.

DR B: Sorry, Doctor Knacker.

DR K: Now: from these signs, what would you say this man did for a living?

DR B: Oh, well... pale face, hollow cheeks, black-rimmed eyes, difficulty breathing.... He was a tin miner, obviously. (SHOUTS) Not any more though, eh, old chap?

DOCTORS LAUGH.

DR K: Certainly not. What we are witnessing here is the 'Camborne Tram Syndrome'.

DR B: The 'Camborne Tram Syndrome'? That is a very strange name for a disease. (TO MINER. SHOUTS) I was just saying to Doctor Knacker here that your illness has a very strange name.

DR K: No no no. 'Camborne Tram' is not the name of a disease.

DR B: Oh. What is it then?

DR K: It's the name of a tram. There goes one now.

ALL WATCH TRAM DRIVE OVER HEADS OF AUDIENCE.

DR B: (WAVING TO TRAM) Coo-ee!

DR K: Doctor Benefactor! Please!

DR B: Oh. So you are saying that this man is turning into a tram?

DR K: Of course not.

DR B: No, no. Of course not. What are you saying exactly?

DR K: What I am saying, Dr Benefactor, is that if you travel on the top deck of the tram which runs between Redruth and Camborne, you can see into the gardens of all these new bungalows. In every one you will see a man like this: grey faced and struggling for breath. Look at him. Suffocating, he is.

DR B: Yes. But he does have a very nice new bungalow. (TO MINER, SHOUTS) I'm saying you have a very nice house!

DR K: And so he should have. He probably has more money than you and I put together.

DR B: Really?

DR K: Yes indeed.

DR B: (SHAKING MINER'S HAND) Very pleased to meet you!

DR K: Quite. These bungalows were all built by miners who emigrated to South Africa, made a bit of money, and have returned to spend their twilight years in the old country.

DR B: Twilight years? I thought you said he was only 42.

DR K: Nevertheless, I think he is about ready to kick the old bucket.

DR BENEFACTOR DRAWS DR KNACKER AWAY, TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.

DR B: Dr Knacker, what exactly has he got?

DR K: What has he got?

DR B: Yes. What has he got?

DR K: (CONSPIRATORIALLY) About ten thousand pounds.

DR B: Really?

DR K: Yes. A very Interesting case.

DR B DRAWS DR K EVEN FURTHER ASIDE.

DR B: What illness does he have?

DR K: Illness? Oh, illness! Weil, he was a tin miner, remember. They usually die of some pulmonary or lung disease. I mean, it could be pleurisy or bronchitis or bronchial pneumonia.

DR B: Oh dear.

DR K: But I don't think it is any of these.

DR B: That's good. (GOES BACK TO MINER.) Good news, old chap. Dr Knacker thinks you do not have pleurisy or bronchitis or bronchial pneumonia. You're very lucky, for a miner.

DR K: And I don't think it is silicosis.

DR B: Well, what is it, then?

DR K: Let us examine him. You can draw your own conclusions.

THEY GRASP THE MINER FIRMLY AND TAKE HIS PULSE, ONE ON EACH ARM. THEY PULL OUT HIS TONGUE AND GENERALLY EXAMINE HIM AS IF HE WERE A DUMMY, HURTING HIM AND NEARLY THROWING HIM FROM HIS CHAIR.

DR K: Say 'Ninety-nine'.

MINER 2: (MURMURS INAUDIBLY.)

DOCTORS ARE PUZZLED. DR BENEFACTOR PUTS HIS EAR TO THE MINER'S LIPS.

DR B: Ah. He says 'ninety-nine'.

DR K: That's all right, then. Now for the chest.

THEY PUT THEIR EARS TO MINER'S CHEST.

DR B: Good heavens! It sounds like a ton and a half of Nutty Slack being tipped into a cellar.

DR K: Quite.

THEY LISTEN AGAIN.

DR B: Now it sounds like a traction engine crashing into a pile of scrap metal.

DR K: An excellent diagnosis! He has 'Rocks on the Chest'.

DR B: Really? (HE PEERS DOWN THE FRONT OF THE MINER'S SHIRT).

DR K: Dr Benefactor, it is no use looking down his shirt. The 'rocks' are inside his lungs.

Dr B: Eurr!

DR K: Little quartz crystals from the Rand gold mines.

DR B: Little quartz crystals all clogging him up.

DR K: This disease is also known as 'The Miners' Con'.

DR B: Oh yes: The Miners' Con. Wasn't that what most of them got from breathing in the fumes of cheap candles and their own gunpowder?

DR K: The very same. And you can see them like this all along this road and every other road where tin miners are to be found.

THE MINER IS APPROACHING A CRISIS

DR B: Still, at least it gives him something to look forward to.

DR K: What can that be?

DR B: Dying.

MINER DIES.

DOCTORS COVER HIS FACE WITH HIS NEWSPAPER.

DR B: Tell me, Dr Knacker: is there ever any chance of recovery?

DR K: There will be no recovery for the tinnners.

FREEZE.

SCENE: NO RECOVERY FOR THE TINNERS

ACTOR 2 EMERGES FROM THE NEWSPAPER AND ADDRESSES AUDIENCE. DOCTORS ARRANGE CHAIRS AS A SPEAKING PLATFORM AND EXIT.

ACTOR 3 ENTERS DURING THE FOLLOWING SPEECH.

ACTOR 2: Far from a recovery, there was a continuation of the decline which had begun in the 1870s. Between 1873 and 1878 one hundred and fifty tin mines closed, and by the end of the first decade of the new century there were nine left. It is estimated that in the second half of the nineteenth century 170,000 people emigrated from Cornwall, the equivalent of nearly half the current population.

ACTOR 3: 1920 saw the stoppage of the pumps at Dolcoath, the mine which had dominated the Cornish tin industry for more than half a century. It was seen as the end of an era.

ACTOR 2: At this time, in an act of desperation reminiscent of the China Contract—and now—a delegation was sent to London to ask for Government assistance. None was forthcoming.

ACTOR 3: By March 1921 there was only one working mine in the whole of Cornwall: Giew. In Camborne and Redruth alone over 2400 miners were unemployed. Funds were allocated for emigration, a small number of public works initiated, but for many the Soup Kitchen was the only relief.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Ah, lovely appearance of death!
 What sight upon earth is so fair?
 Not all the gay pageants that breathe
 Can with a dead body compare.

ACTOR 3: 1925 saw the reopening of a few mines, including South Crofty and East Pool & Agar, but no real recovery.

ACTOR 2: Frustration at management methods, which are acknowledged to have contributed to the downfall of the industry, plus resentment of declining standards of living for the tin miners still in work, led to

much industrial action at this time—right up until the outbreak of World War Two....

SCENE: THE 1939 SOUTH CROFTY STRIKE

ENTER TELEVISION REPORTER (ACTOR 1) WITH MICROPHONE.

EXIT ACTORS 2 & 3

TELEVISION REPORTER: Good evening. I am standing outside South Crofty mine works where today the month-old dispute took a most unpleasant turn, with police dispersing a body of strikers with a baton charge. The dispute started when men downed tools after management refused to recognise the Union's demand for a guaranteed minimum wage. I have here with me the manager of the mine....

ENTER MANAGER (ACTOR 2). HE WEARS A GREEN PLASTIC BAG OVER HIS HEAD.

REPORTER REMOVES BAG. MANAGER LOOKS ROUND GRIMLY, SEES TV CAMERAS AND SMILES FALSELY.

TELEVISION REPORTER: Can I ask you, sir, for your comments on this morning's incident?

MANAGER: Oh, absolutely disgraceful, and can I just say that I think the police are doing a marvellous job in the face of this unwarranted intimidation by a few mindless thugs. We cannot afford to pay higher wages; it is as simple as that.

But let me just say this: we will stand behind any miner who wishes to work—in fact we are offering a cash incentive to those who ignore the strike call. Those who do not report for work by Friday will lose their jobs.

MANAGER STEPS BACK.

ENTER UNION OFFICIAL (ACTOR 3) CARRYING PAMPHLET.

REPORTER: Thank you very much. I also have with me the local representative of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The national newspapers this morning claimed that you had a hair transplant as recently as 1935 and that you use a well-known brand of aftershave in order to bolster your macho image. Can you cast any light on these allegations?

UNION OFFICIAL: Eh? Look, I'm not here to talk about what –

TELEVISION REPORTER: Can you answer the question please?

UNION OFFICIAL: I'd much rather talk about the current dispute here...

TELEVISION REPORTER: Well quite frankly I am not prepared to go on like this for the next hour. I have asked you a simple question and would like a simple answer.

UNION OFFICIAL: I'm not prepared to discuss my private life on television.

TELEVISION REPORTER: Very well. Can I ask you why you called this strike?

UNION OFFICIAL: I didn't call this strike. I carry out the wishes of the members of this union. If I may, I'd like to read out part of a pamphlet circulated by the union entitled 'Tyranny of Cornish Tin Employers'. 'For years miners in the Camborne/Redruth area –'

TELEVISION REPORTER: And now I'll hand you back to the studio in London.

MANAGER STANDS ON THE CHAIRS.

UNION OFFICIAL AND TELEVISION REPORTER STAND BEFORE THE CHAIRS FACING THE AUDIENCE.

MANAGER: (TO AUDIENCE) As manager of this mine I would like to thank you men who have continued to work throughout the past few difficult months. Thank you very much. When the trouble is over we will not forget you. In fact, in addition to the usual bonus paid to you for working there will be another dip in the Lucky Bag soon!

APPLAUSE.

MANAGER: Now it has been pointed out, by a few malcontents and subversives, that were the mine to close down—temporarily!—through shortage of labour, you men would not be able to draw Dole!

TELEVISION REPORTER AND UNION OFFICIAL LAUGH AND ENCOURAGE AUDIENCE TO DO SO.

MANAGER: (SUDDENLY SERIOUS) Well, that is true, yes. But I can assure you that we have plenty of money—in London. And we shall see you through!

UNION OFFICIAL KNEELS. TELEVISION REPORTER STANDS BEHIND HIM, MANAGER ON CHAIRS BEHIND HER. DURING THE FOLLOWING SPEECH THE TELEVISION REPORTER SLOWLY SHAKES HER HEAD, THE MANAGER SLOWLY NODS.

UNION OFFICIAL: (RECITES THE PAMPHLET) ‘Tyranny of Cornish Tin Employers: for years, miners in the Camborne/Redruth area have been forced to work under abominable conditions. Huge fortunes have been made in the industry and the money has been taken out of the country and invested in other parts of the world where native labour has been exploited. Employers in Cornwall who are continually pleading poverty have been the recipients of huge profits from abroad. South Crofty profits have been between 16 and 25% in the last 5 years but many a time men have found their wages lower than in any other British industry.’

EXIT TELEVISION REPORTER AND MANAGER. UNION OFFICIAL (ACTOR 3) RISES.

ACTOR 3: (TO AUDIENCE) The South Crofty mine strike of 1939 lasted from January right up until the outbreak of the Second World War in September, making it one of the longest disputes in the industry’s history. Ironically, the war put an end to the problem of low wages, for the time being at least. By 1943 the average wage for underground workers at South Crofty was 66 shillings a week, almost 50% higher than the Union’s original claim.

And now—we have a little music for you.

SCENE: NEARLY UP TO DATE

ENTER ACTOR 1, AND ACTOR 2 WITH MANDOLIN

ACTOR 1: (SINGS 'TRE BOSVENEGH' (TRAD.)) Y tryga mowes yn
 Bosvenegh,
 Ow holon glan re wrussa tulla,
 Ny vuf-vy brewys nefra an keth
 Mes moy ha moy y's cavath whath.

Yn Bosvenegh pan dremenys-vy,
 Y'n gweder, ow hares welys-vy;
 Oll yn snodys lowen gwyskys,
 Moy tek es blejen yn me hevellys.

EXIT ACTOR 1. MUSIC CONTINUES.

ACTOR 3: This song is called 'Tre Bosvenegh', which is Cornish for Bodmin Town. The Cornish language has been out of everyday use now for 200 years. The blame for its death has been laid at the door of the Commissioners of the Church of England who refused to allow the Book of Common Prayer to be translated into the language in retaliation to one of the periodic—and highly successful—Cornish military excursions into England.

But of course neither Cornish culture nor Cornish music is dead. For tonight we have a special guest for you. Taking time off from recording her show for Radio Cornwall, all the way from Penzance—ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce—Miss Brenda Woodburner. (APPLAUDS)

*ENTER BRENDA WOODBURNER (ACTOR 1). SHE
 ACKNOWLEDGES THE APPLAUSE.*

ACTOR 3 PICKS UP GUITAR.

BRENDA: Hallo! Thank you, thank you, my dear friends. Well, it's lovely to be here. Hope you like my new frock. Tonight I've brought along my two boys to play for us. Say hallo, boys.

ACTORS 2 & 3: Hallo boys.

BRENDA: Ooh, they're sharp, aren't they? Well now, we're all going to sing that old favourite of us all, and we want you to all join in with 'Lamorna'.

SINGS 'LAMORNA' (TRAD.)

So now I'll sing to you,
It's about a maiden fair,
I met the other evening at the corner of the square.
She'd a dark and roving eye,
And her hair was covered over;
We rowed all night in the pale moonlight,
Away down to Lamorna.

ALL: (SING) T'was down in Albert Square,
I never shall forget,
Her eyes, they shone like diamonds,
And the evening it was wet, wet, wet.
Her hair hung down in curls,
Her face was covered over,
We rowed all night in the pale moonlight,
Away down to Lamorna.

EXIT ACTORS 2 & 3.

ACTOR 1 REMOVES BRENDA COSTUME.

ACTOR 1: There are now several tin mines in operation in Cornwall. There is Geevor, near St Just; Wheal Concord; South Crofty; Wheal Pendarves; Wheal Maid and Wheal Jane, which incorporates Mount Wellington. All except the first two are owned by the multinational company Rio Tinto Zinc. Wheal Jane is the biggest producer of ore and when opened in 1971 was the first major new mine in Europe for over fifty years.

And now here for your entertainment—a Cornish Bard of the Gorsedh.

EXIT ACTOR 1.

SCENE: ODE TO WHEAL JANE

ENTER CORNISH BARD (ACTOR 3). HE WEARS A DUSTBIN LINER BEARING THE CROSS OF ST PIRAN, ENORMOUS SUNGLASSES AND A LARGE BONNET TOPPED OFF WITH A CORNISH CHOUGH.

BARD: (TO AUDIENCE) Fellow Bards of the Gorsedh, it is a great honour to me to be invited here tonight to recite my latest poetical work on an aspect of Cornish life which we all feel it our duty to defend. I hope you like our new line, the 'Cornish Chough Bonnet'. You will find them on sale at the interval and I'm sure they're going to be a big hit with the visitors.

And now: my new ode.

CLEARs THROAT. DECLAIMS:

Where the raped Carnon River flows onward,
Through those banks that are scraped and are bare;
On the great rolling hills above Bissoe,
My own true love will be found there.
Take it away, Bard!

ENTER ACTORS 1 & 2 WITH INSTRUMENTS. THEY PLAY A TWELVE-BAR ROCK'N'ROLL VERSE, WHILE ALL THREE JIVE AND DUCKWALK.

THE VERSE FINISHES WITH AN ARPEGGIO AND THE POEM BECOMES A MUSIC-HALL MONOLOGUE ACCOMPANIED BY ACTORS 1 & 2 WITH LOTS OF GAGS.

BARD: (RECITES) Oh, there is a girl that I long for,
I long for with might and with main.

Her mouth, it is just like a chasm,
And her breath, it smells just like a drain.
But I love, how I love all her fixtures,
Her pitheads, they drive me insane.
They don't call her 'Deep Throat' for nothing, I know,
For the name of my love is—Wheal Jane!

Oh, she is the flower of Cornwall,
And she is Kernow's bright young thing.
She'll save the whole Cornish economy,
If they don't close her down in the Spring.
Oh the cream of the youth come to woo her,
Round the main shaft they make their devotions
And in her intestines two hundred each shift,
Give her heartburn with all their explosions.

Corrugated blue sheds on the skyline,
Like some great Shakespearean actor,
A rattling, roaring soliloquy,
Beautiful like a nuclear reactor.
'To be or not?' is the question,
From the mines that are old, knacked and buried
But she's not concerned with historical stuff,
If she was, she might be very worried.

Rio, Tinto and Zinc are the owners,
Of this lovely young Cornish maiden;
But RTZ are multi-national,
More powerful than Ronnie Raygun.
They own all the zinc and the copper,
They own the gold of Cape Town,
And when any poor country stands in their way,
It finds itself having a breakdown.

Yes, they own tin mines in Malaya,
Burro Burra, even Wallaroo.
And now things are just like the old days,
Emigration and depression too.
The Adventurers are Rio Tinto,

Prince Charles is the mineral lord,
And when there's a cut in tin prices, I know,

(MUSIC STOPS)

My love will be put to the sword!

DISCHORD. ALL FREEZE.

SCENE: THE TIN CRISIS

EXIT BARD. ACTOR 2 PLAYS GUITAR.

ACTOR 1: March 1985: A39 Theatre Group gives the first performance of 'One and All!'; the price of tin stands at an all-time high of ten thousand pounds per tonne.

MUSIC STARTS

ENTER ACTOR 3

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Cornishman in Pendeen bus queue,
Reads the Western Morning News:
'The Market's closed, no time for tin';
But he's at the mine and digging, digging,
He's at the mine and digging, digging....

MUSIC CONTINUES.

A CAPTION IS DISPLAYED:

'LME-WORLD TRADING PLACE FOR TIN'.

ACTOR 1: On Thursday, October 24th came the news that the London Metal Exchange had suspended all dealings in tin after the price fell by three hundred pounds a tonne in the course of the morning. At the time of the suspension the price stood at £8140.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Meanwhile, a man in chalk-striped suit,
Ignoring the telephone,
Hands together, miles away

Telex machine is ticking, ticking;
Telex machine is ticking, ticking.

CAPTION: 'EEC = CONSUMER. IT GAINS FROM LOW PRICE'.

ACTOR 3: The International Tin Council (ITC) comprises sixteen tin consuming nations and six producers. For many years it has borne the responsibility for protecting tin from a severe drop in price by export controls, and by buying on the International Markets to keep tin scarce and so of high value.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Young executives all round,
Watching him just sitting dreaming,
Hang on the word to 'buy' or 'sell':
But will the Government intervene?
Will the Government Intervene?

*CAPTION: 'BUFFER STOCK MANAGER BUYS TIN TO KEEP
PRICE HIGH'.*

ACTOR 1: On that morning of October 24th, the Buffer Stock Manager of the ITC suddenly announced that he had no more money to buy—or to pay for tin that LME brokers had already bought on his behalf. The result was panic and uproar; and the scene was set for the slump which could ruin the Cornish mining industry yet again. The Western Morning News said: 'This is the equivalent of a natural disaster'.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) The mercenary for adventure,
Running tin to Singapore,
Makes his living breaking treaties....
While the price is falling, falling;
The price of tin is falling, falling.

*CAPTION: 'ITC OWES: £550m TO LME BROKERS; £350m TO
MERCHANT BANKS'.*

ACTOR 3: Since trading in tin was suspended there have been many 'Emergency' sessions of the International Tin Council, none of which have produced any result, members often being unable to agree on a joint statement. But still the Buffer Stock Manager owes £900 million.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) All the banks were lending money,
 Secured on the stockpiled tin,
 Brought to make demand and high price,
 With the stockpiles growing, growing;
 With the stockpiles growing, growing....

CAPTION: 'ITC FOLDS–LME FOLDS–CITY OF LONDON...?'

ACTOR 1: Because of this, it is feared that many LME brokers will be ruined by the default of the ITC and there is a reluctance to trade on the London Metal Exchange which is described as 'dying on its feet'. So the British government is the only ITC member to have stated a willingness to underwrite a rescue mission and guarantee the existing liabilities—in other words to save the credibility of the LME and the City of London.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Miners in Brazil and China,
 Digging tin outside the scheme,
 Undermine the stockpile's value...
 Now will the Government intervene?
 Will the Government intervene?

MUSIC STOPS.

CAPTION: 'THE GREAT DEBATE'.

ACTOR 1: So what is the great problem that has caused tin trading to be suspended for so long?

ACTOR 3: The governments that are members of the ITC are the guarantors for its debts and are looked to for repayment now the ITC is in default.

ACTOR 1: But they say they cannot confirm that they will pay until they know the exact amount of money in question.

ACTOR 3: But there will be no set value for their debts until tin trading begins again and it becomes clear how far the price of tin has fallen.

ACTOR 1: But trading will not begin again until the ITC governments have told the world what they intend to do about their debts.

ACTOR 3: And the governments say that they cannot confirm that until they know the exact amount of money in question.

ACTOR 1: Etcetera....

ACTOR 3: Etcetera.

MUSIC STARTS.

CAPTION: 'CORNISH MINES NEED £7500 PER TONNE TO KEEP GOING'.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) Malaysian just wants a living,
The Thai just wants to feed his kids;
Cornishman knows throughout history,
Cousin Jack was digging, digging;
Cousin Jack was digging, digging....

ACTOR 3: Meanwhile in Cornwall experts are predicting a five-year slump with prices as low as £3500 per tonne.

CAPTION: "'OFFICIAL" UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE 27,209'.

ACTOR 1: Camborne Town Council has estimated unemployment at 30% if all the mines close.

ACTOR 2: (SINGS) If the ITC collapses,
The banks will get their stockpiled tin,
Rush to sell at any value —
With the mines not worth exploiting,
With the mines all closing... closing....

CAPTION: YELLOW DISC BEARING THE WORDS 'TIN NOT DOLE'.

ACTOR 3: Will the Government subsidise the Cornish mines during the coming slump? Perhaps this is best answered by its stand against 'uneconomic' pits during the 1984—85 Miners' Strike. On the economic criteria so dear to its heart, it will save the LME and the City and leave the Cornish miners to their free market fate.

ALL: (SING) Who will save the Cornish miner?

Men in London, still serene,
 They don't answer easy questions....
 But will the Government intervene?
 Will the Government intervene?
 Will the Government intervene?

MUSIC-FULL STOP

SCENE: EPITAPH?

ACTOR 1: Come all good Cornish boys, walk in.
 Here's brandy, rum and shrub and gin,
 You can't do less than drink success,
 To Copper, Fish and Tin.

ACTOR 2: 'Copper, Fish and Tin': almost within living memory, nearly everyone in Cornwall was concerned for their livelihood with at least one of these. Now all three have declined grievously to be replaced, to an extent, by China clay and tourism.

ACTOR 1: But unemployment in Cornwall is over 20%, making it one of the worst hit regions of the British Isles. For those in work, Cornwall has the lowest average wage in Britain. In the summer, it was announced that the government was withdrawing development status from Truro and St Austell; and when Kerrier District Council requested special Urban Aid, Environment Minister George Younger rejected their appeal, saying:

ACTOR 3: (GEORGE YOUNGER) The Situation Is Not Bad Enough.

ACTOR 1: Then Employment minister Peter Morrison, who visited Camborne, Redruth and Penwith in 1985, was asked by a reporter from Radio Cornwall what hope he could offer to the unemployed in Cornwall. He replied:

ACTOR 3: (PETER MORRISON) Look. I believe in your area. Do you believe in your area? Well, do you? Because if you believe in your area then others, too, will... believe... in your area....

ACTOR 2: Whatever that means. But in spite of this, Mrs Thatcher recently pointed to Cornwall as the most shining example of the Government's employment policies. At the Conservative Trade Unionists' conference she spoke of the thousands of people in Cornwall working on the Community Programme for three months or six months, cleaning riverbanks and clearing footpaths.

ACTOR 1: (MARGARET THATCHER) People ask, 'Why can't we give the unemployed something useful to do?' Well, the Community Programme is doing just that. It means new hope for the unemployed.

ACTOR 2: Cornwall now has the tidiest graveyards in Western Europe.

ACTOR 1: Although unemployment is very high and wages are very low, houses in Cornwall are very expensive, because local buyers are competing with those who buy holiday cottages, retirement homes and weekend retreats to escape the hurly-burly of business life up-country. The policy of selling Council homes means that the stock of rented accommodation for those who cannot compete in the property market is continually diminishing.

ACTOR 2: What remedies are available for these ills? Well the Western Morning News recently reported great surprise on the part of the Department of Employment in Camborne and Redruth that the five hundred people made redundant from the Compair-Holman's factory were reluctant to take jobs paying over £200 a week in the South East of England. But the manager of the Jobcentre pointed out that this was usually the way with redundant Cornish people—at first....

ACTOR 3: So, for the young people of Cornwall who have to face these problems there is the simple, traditional alternative. They can always get on their bikes—and emigrate.

*ACTOR 2 PLAYS GUITAR TO ACCOMPANY 'CRAIGIE HILL'
(TRAD.)*

ACTOR 1: (SINGS) The tin lords and their agents, their bailiffs and their beagles,
The land of our forefathers we are forced for to give o'er;

And we're sailing on the ocean for honour and promotion,
And we're parting from our sweethearts, it's them we do adore.

So fare thee well sweet Carnkie Hill, where oft-times I have wandered.
I never thought in my childhood days to part you anymore.
But we're sailing on the ocean for honour and promotion,
And the bonny boat is sailing down by Meneage shore.

BLACKOUT. THE END.