



## Historic Helston hill protected for future generations

10th November 2023

**We are excited to announce that we have purchased Tregonning Hill, near Helston to protect it for future generations.**

This great granite hill overlooking Mount's Bay has a diverse archaeological landscape with monuments dating back to the Bronze Age and is known as the birthplace of the British china clay industry. Much of the site is designated a Scheduled Monument and all of it is within the Cornish Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

This acquisition aims to safeguard the 70-acre site's future and ensure that it remains free to visit for people 365 days of the year.



The property on the summit and eastern slopes of the hill was put on the market this summer, sparking a great deal of public interest and receiving national media attention. It was reported that the sale attracted a varied range of interest, including potential buyers who were considering it as an investment, a site for an alternative healing retreat and even an engagement gift.

Our CEO, Cathy Woolcock said: “Tregonning Hill is considered to be of huge archaeological value to Cornwall’s heritage and history, so we’re incredibly proud to now be its custodians. The strength of feeling its sale has provoked and the support we have received both from Historic England and the public to purchase it has been truly overwhelming. Its acquisition has been a huge focus for us over the last few months, and we’re so pleased to be able to share this news. Thank you to everyone who has helped and supported this project, especially Simon and Barbara Maddison, whose immense generosity made the purchase of the hill possible!”

The site has a multi-period archaeological landscape which includes a wide range of historic monuments, while the summit of the hill is crowned spectacularly by the hillfort known in legend as Castle Pencair.

The landscape also contains barrows; two rounds (later prehistoric enclosed hamlets); a very well-preserved medieval strip field system; extensive mineral working and prospecting pits; and part of a china clay works notable for being the place where William Cookworthy discovered china clay. It is even believed that John Wesley preached at the site.



The hillfort on Tregonning Hill was first described in detail in 1851 by Richard Thomas, who also noted that it was traditionally ‘the home of giants’.

It is also home to a tall granite cross, the memorial to those brave men of Germoe who died in the First and Second World Wars, and a Bristol Beaufort bomber crashed into the hill in 1941, killing all four on board.



The site is currently on the Heritage at Risk Register.

Cathy explained: “The hill’s story spans a huge breadth of Cornish history which is why it has such complex needs. Like many of the sites we care for, it is also important ecologically – partly designated both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation – which requires significant expertise to manage. All of these factors made Tregonning Hill a perfect fit for our portfolio and we’re so pleased that we can make sure it gets the care it deserves.”

Cornwall Heritage Trust is a small independent charity whose mission is to preserve and strengthen Cornwall’s unique heritage. We have been protecting Cornwall’s heritage for nearly 40 years and do this through our grant schemes, education programmes and care of historic sites across Cornwall.

This collection of sites has grown significantly over the last 18 months and in order to support this increase we have launched a Historic Sites Fund. Every penny donated will directly help us to purchase and manage historic Cornish sites which need help and we are hugely grateful for any support.

[https://www.cornwallheritagetrust.org/historic-helston-hill-protected-for-future-generations/?fbclid=IwAR1hFljdn5R\\_rIwIVz-Wif5gY90Rkj4VULnH4H6sXr8s6FC3tiduAOVUtL4](https://www.cornwallheritagetrust.org/historic-helston-hill-protected-for-future-generations/?fbclid=IwAR1hFljdn5R_rIwIVz-Wif5gY90Rkj4VULnH4H6sXr8s6FC3tiduAOVUtL4)