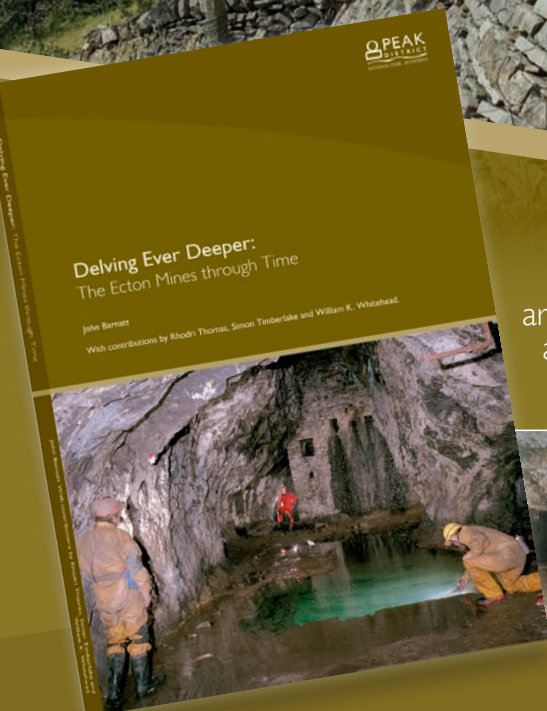


Delving Ever Deeper: The Ecton Mines through Time

**A NEW BOOK ON THE ECTON COPPER MINES,
DETAILING THE OUTCOMES OF OVER 15 YEARS OF
SURVEY AND RESEARCH.**



This is one of the most comprehensive archaeological studies ever undertaken at a major historic mine in Britain. It details both surface and underground remains.

by John Barnatt
with contributions by Rhodri Thomas, Simon Timberlake and William K. Whitehead.

The Ecton mines are one of the most important historic mining sites in Britain, long worked for copper and to lesser extent for lead and zinc. In the second half of the 18th century, the rich Deep Ecton working was the deepest mine in the country. The 1788 Boulton and Watt engine house on the ridgetop is believed to be the earliest surviving example in the world for winding out ore.

A significant development in understanding Ecton has come with the recognition of copper extraction in the Bronze Age; only the second site in England where this has been identified.

In the 1660s-70s AD the ridgetop mines were among the first in Britain to use gunpowder for blasting. In the 18th and 19th centuries the two exceptional mines, Deep Ecton and Clayton, used state-of-the-art solutions for raising ore and pumping out water. Engines were powered by horses, water and steam. At Clayton Mine from 1814 there were underground steam engines

utilising the old pipe-workings as chimneys to avoid suffocation.

Deep Ecton Mine earned the Duke of Devonshire a fortune between 1760 and 1790. Thereafter it was a shadow of its former self, with miners working the slim pickings left by previous generations. Clayton Mine was worked to a similar great depth between 1805-20, when the Ducal Estate worked mines across the hill as a whole, in an attempt to revitalise mining at Ecton. From 1826 to 1889 work was undertaken by a series of private companies raising funds on the back of Ecton's past reputation.

This volume is not a history of the people and profit from the Ecton Mines, which have been described elsewhere, but rather a detailed study of mine workings as physical entities and a search for understanding of why they look as they do, what each element was used for, and how and when they were created.

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