



**Ecton Mine
Educational Trust**

Reg. Charity No: 1112892

Chairman's report for 2019

It has been another successful year for the Trust. We witnessed

- **healthy visitor numbers** - thanks largely to the continued endeavours of Ecton Hill Field Studies Association and the National Trust. The UNEXMIN submersible robot trials augmented the overall total,
- **the continued improvement in the trust's financial position**, resulting to a large extent from fee sacrifice by the trustees and advisers, for much of the professional and technical work which was undertaken before, during and after the UNEXMIN trials,
- **some recent strong appointments to our team of trustees and advisers**,
- **and the detailed investigation (during the UNEXMIN final trials in Deep Ecton in May) of depths** in the mine revealed much historic evidence that had been submerged and unseen for the previous 150 years.

The death of our treasurer, Reginald Wynniatt-Husey in August, after a long and brave fight against cancer, was the great sadness of the Trust's year.

The total visitor-day-footfall for 2019 was augmented unusually by the UNEXMIN trials. Visits by our longer-standing users over the year amounted to 647. UNEXMIN preparations for the trials and the trials themselves augmented that figure by 504, bringing the total to 1,151. During part of April, and for the whole of May, non-trial visits had to be curtailed. On the other hand, between 13th and 30th May the number of EU scientists working in and around Deep Ecton, or in the control room in the Geoff Cox Centre, averaged 26 a day. Before and after the trials there was much additional activity in the mine, making it ready beforehand, and clearing up afterwards. We are indebted to friends who joined us to help man the safety arrangements during the trial, again without payment. The finances are healthy for a number of reasons. Income from visitors is important and is divided between hosting organisations and the Trust. It is essential for the maintenance, safety and support of the mine and the Geoff Cox Centre, and the upkeep of various other features - including the dressing floor, and entry points to the mine across the hill.

The UNEXMIN project had an important impact on the Trust's finances. Involvement in UNEXMIN brought the Trust both costs and income. Constructing and making safe a large underground space in the heart of the hill, including the launch sites for the robots, was a costly undertaking in terms of time and materials. Such things as communications equipment, wiring, signage, extra safety equipment, and materials for the construction of launch sites had to be purchased, and permissions had to be sought from the relevant bodies. That the Trust emerged from the project in a sound financial condition, safely and with new land purchased, says much for the ability and diligence of the whole of the home team. The two robot prototypes, launched from our specially prepared underground sites, revealed great detail but did not reach over halfway to the bottom of the mine. Trustees Richard Shaw and Nick Hardie were particularly crucial to the success of this part of the venture. We have permission from Historic England to leave the launch sites in place for similar trials for the next five years.

Safety, as ever, was the priority throughout the whole operation. The Trust was obliged to satisfy not only the scrutiny of the UK Mines Inspectorate, but also the requirements of a full EU ethical review. The EMET trials home team was led by Peter Huxtable and together with the Mine Manager, Graham

Woodrow, they masterminded the success of the Trust's involvement in the trials. They were well supported by other Trustees and Advisers, especially those with the necessary professional skills and qualifications. Throughout the UNEXMIN project our key link with the EU and with other participants has been our Adviser (and now EMET Trustee) Steve Henley. Our archaeological Adviser, John Barnatt, assessed and wrote up the fascinating discoveries that were made, and Trustee Richard Shaw did likewise for geology. For more detailed information on the trials and the archaeological findings/assessments please visit the EMET website.

The UNEXMIN project is now over and a commercial company is being formed to develop and exploit the robots' commercial potential. It is to be based in Hungary and, notwithstanding Brexit, EMET is entitled at a relatively small cost to purchase a 4.3% ownership of the Company. It is hoped that by next year's AGM this follow up venture will begin showing signs of fulfilling its potential.

The sad loss of our treasurer Reg Wynniatt-Husey robbed us of a great friend and supporter. His accounting skills and knowledge of charity law were invaluable to the trust, especially one like ours with limited resources. He transformed and modernised our procedures and interpreted the complex EU protocols with the demands of charity law so we remained compliant. Currently we are paying an accountancy firm to assist and advise Andrew Mann who has taken over supervision of the accounts until we find another qualified accountant prepared to become a trustee or adviser.

There were also other trustee and adviser changes during the year. Refreshing the composition of the Trustee and Adviser body is essential for a Trust such as EMET and this year we have made some very good appointments. For details go on line to either The Charity Commission or to Companies House. The EHFSA member of the Trust - and reluctant but highly efficient temporary secretary for the last 5 years Peter Kennett will retire later in the year. His cheerful, loyal and diligent commitment has been second to none. The Chairman retires at the AGM. It has been a privilege to serve the Trust during such a significant decade.

The Ecton Hill Partnership ensures that there is a forum in which those official bodies that are involved in the hill can meet and discuss matters of mutual interest. In addition to EMET, the partnership's membership includes Ecton Hill Field Studies Association (EHFSA), the National Trust, Historic England, the Peak District National Park, Natural England and other agencies. The Trust continues to be indebted to all those involved, especially EHFSA and the National Trust for their work in arranging and conducting visits, for helping us keep the Trust successful forward looking and safe.

Signed:

Hugh Carson Chairman

4th February 2020