



THE
OLD
MINERAL
LINE

How to find us

To Chargot Woods

By bus

For up to date information check the Travel Line website at www.travelinesw.com or the Exmoor National Park website at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/getting-around.

By car

To Raleigh's Cross Inn: Leave the M5 at Junction 25 (Taunton) and follow the signs to the A358 towards Minehead. Approximately 1 mile (1.6 km) after the sign for Bishops Lydeard, turn left along the B3224 for 8 miles (12.8 km). The Inn is on the left hand side at a crossroads.

From Raleigh's Cross Inn to Langham Engine House: Pass Raleigh's Cross Inn on your left, continue along the road (now the B3190) and at the junction at Beulah Chapel take the right hand road (B3224). Continue for approximately 5 miles (8 km). The Chargot Woods car park for Langham Engine House and Bearland Ventilation Flue is on your right.

On foot

Many of these sites are accessible by foot following public rights of way. Ordnance Survey map OL9 covers Exmoor National Park, and includes the Brendon Hills and Watchet. Other maps are also available from most Tourist Information Centres. Chargot Woods car park is: OL9 Grid reference ST 975 355.

Contacts

For more information about the Forestry Commission and its other sites please visit www.forestry.gov.uk. Visit www.westsomersetmineralrailway.org.uk for further information about the history of the Mineral Line. Watchet Market House Museum has an interesting display of Mineral Line artefacts. For opening hours please visit www.watchetmuseum.co.uk.



Large font versions of these leaflets are available to download from www.westsomersetmineralrailway.org.uk.



THE
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Langham Hill and Bearland Wood



A hidden heritage

A hidden heritage

West Somerset Mineral Railway

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An introduction to Langham and Bearland

Welcome to Chargot ...

... a peaceful place with a lively history. Explore all that remains of a way of life that was difficult, dangerous, and ultimately doomed to failure.

In 2008 the West Somerset Mineral Railway project conserved the remains of Langham Engine House and Bearland Ventilation Flue, key pieces in the story of the Old Mineral Line. The trails on Forestry Commission land will help you explore these industrial remains.

Miners' Trail

Distance: 1¼ miles / 2 km

Difficulty: Strenuous

Set off on this circular trail and appreciate the challenges the engineers faced in this undulating landscape with superb valley views. Take an optional short walk to see the chimney stack of Bearland Flue, and learn why it was a lifeline for everyone who worked the mine.

Two steep slopes make this a more demanding walk. Mostly well surfaced, but rough in places.

Langham Engine House Trail

Distance: ¼ mile / ⅓ km

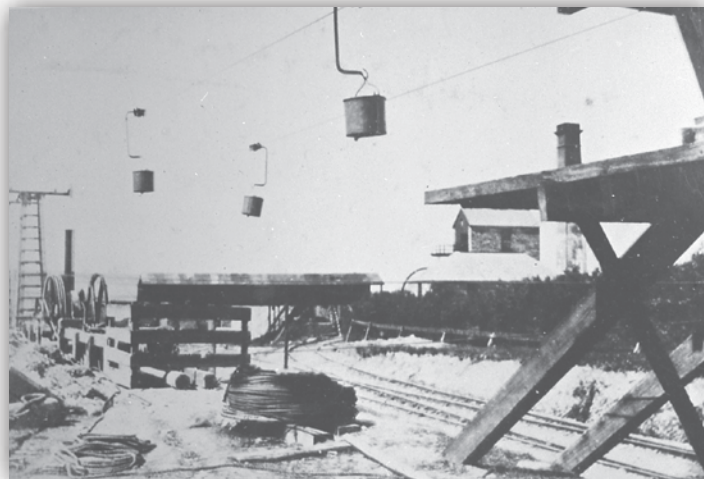
Difficulty: Easy

Discover the dark secrets of this once busy engine house, in use for less than a decade before being dismantled and re-built at Burrow Farm just 1.8 miles (3 km) away.

Level and well surfaced, this trail is suitable for all abilities, wheelchairs and pushchairs.

You are welcome to explore the rest of the woodland at Chargot and Kennisham Hill.

- Visitors are requested to use caution when exploring West Somerset Mineral Railway sites.
- Children should be kept under close supervision and should not be allowed to climb on walls or banks.
- Take care on uneven ground.
- Stout footwear is strongly advised.



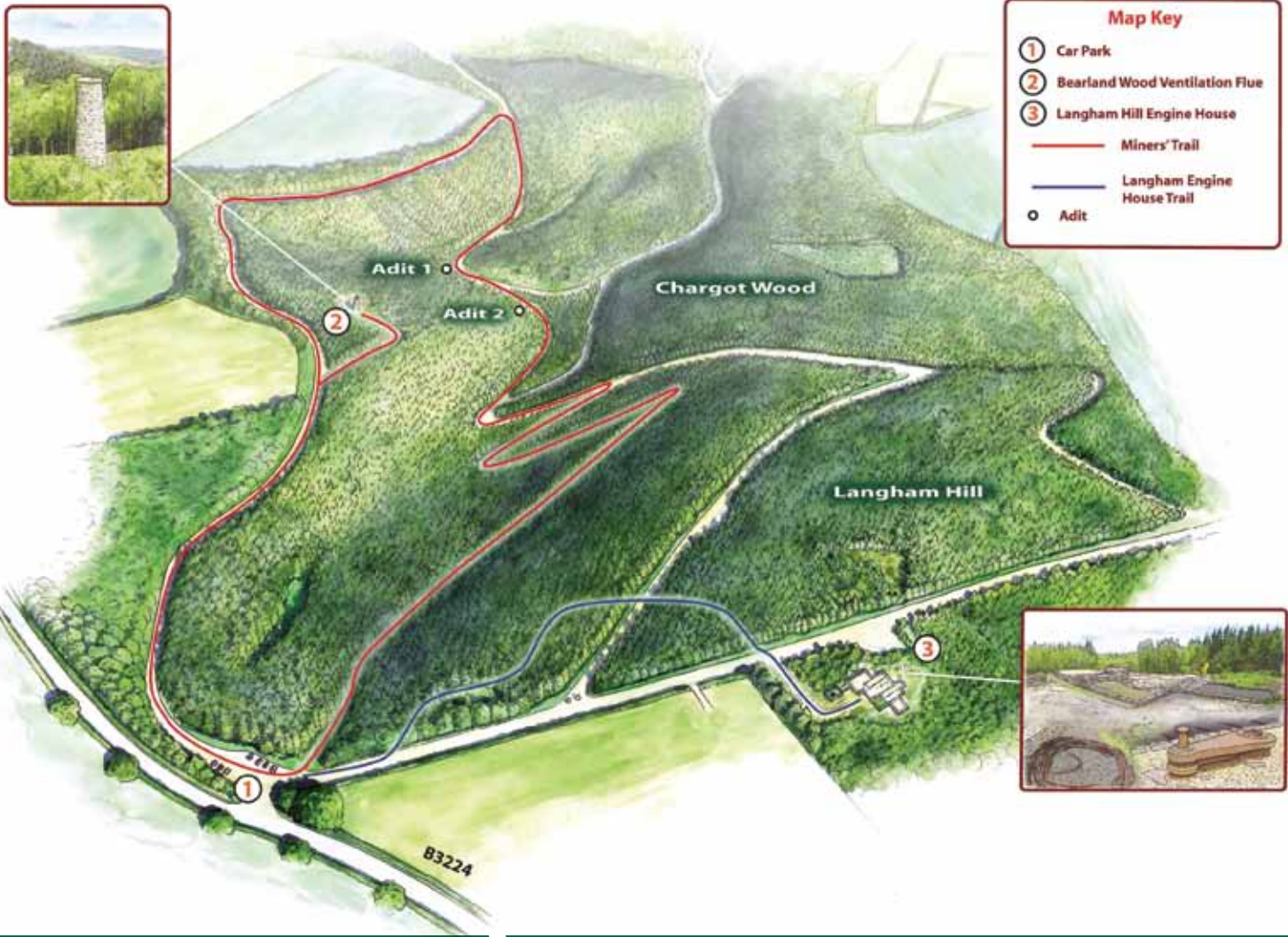
Langham Hill - the aerial cableway and the disused engine house c.1877.
Photograph courtesy of Mike Jones.

Cover image: Bearland Wood Ventilation Chimney. Photograph courtesy of ENPA.

West Somerset Mineral Railway

At Chargot Woods

THE
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Map Key

- ① Car Park
- ② Bearland Wood Ventilation Flue
- ③ Langham Hill Engine House
- Miners' Trail
- Langham Engine House Trail
- Adit





West Somerset Mineral Railway

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Bearland Wood Ventilation Flue

Conserving the Ventilation Flue

The Bearland Ventilation Flue is the only one of its type in south west England. It was used to remove foul and poisonous gases from the mines.

What was its purpose?

The purpose of the flue (or chimney) which was constructed in 1860 was to remove foul and poisonous gases from the mines. Foul air was a frequent problem for the miners working underground.

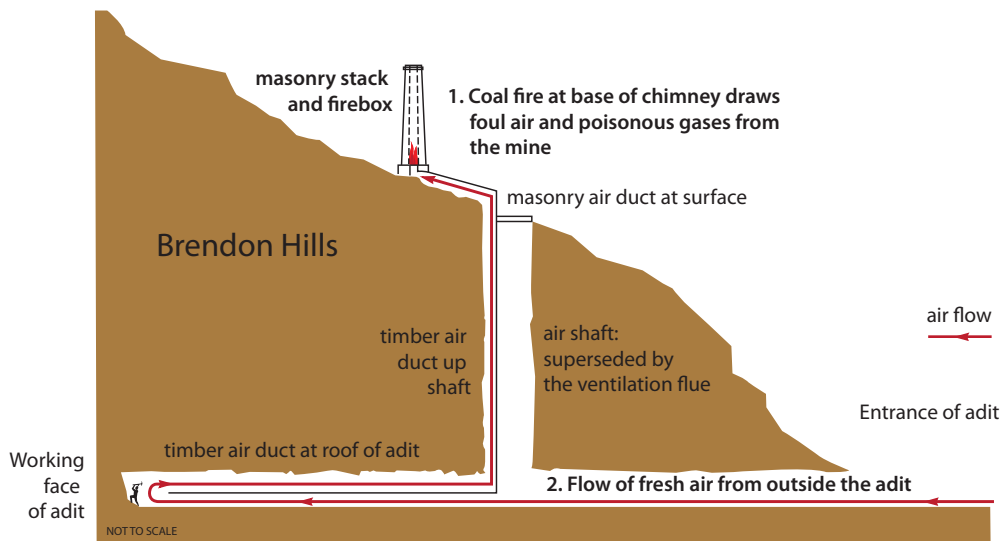
The general manager of the WSMR mines Morgan Morgans decided that productivity would be improved if smoke and fumes from the rock blasting could be cleared more quickly, as he hoped that the adit (a horizontal entrance to a mine) would eventually extend for more than half a mile into the hillside.

How did it work?

From the base of the chimney a timber duct about 30 cm square went down an air shaft (now visible as a depression) a few metres to the north, and at the bottom, turned along the roof of a long adit that was driven into the hillside.

A coal fire was lit at the bottom of the chimney stack, and the rising hot air from the fire drew foul air out of the pit, enabling fresh air to be drawn into the adit from outside. The fire was maintained at the base and closed with a door to make sure that the air to make the fire was only drawn from underground.

By 1864 no iron ore had been found in the Bearland Wood adit, and the flue was abandoned.



The workings of the Ventilation Flue. Drawing by Pete Rae, ENPA.

Bearland Chimney being conserved in 2008. Photograph courtesy of ENPA.





Langham Hill Engine House

The Engine House was built in 1866 by the general manager of the mines Morgan Morgans to unite mines which had already been sunk in the area.

What was the Engine House for?

A second-hand steam powered beam engine brought over from Wales pumped water and wound iron ore up from the mine shaft, now enclosed by the fence.

Ladders were the only means by which miners could go underground. Each ladder rested on a timber platform, so if a miner fell he would only fall as far as the next platform down, rather than the 200 metres (650 feet) depth of the mine shaft.

Trams ran down the steep shaft on rails, where miners loaded them with iron ore. After being hauled back to the surface by the beam engine, the ore was then tipped into the railway wagons which eventually re-joined the West Somerset Mineral Railway.

An artist's reconstruction of the Engine House. Drawing by Anne Leaver.

Key

- 1 The coal-fired boilers raised steam to drive the beam engine.
- 2 The beam engine drove the flatrods.
- 3 The flatrods passed down the shaft and worked a pump far underground which kept the mine free of water.
- 4 A pair of winding drums hauled the trams loaded with ore up and out of the mine shaft.
- 5 The mine shaft.
- 6 The gantry where the ore was tipped into the waiting wagons of the Mineral Line.
- 7 A reservoir for the boilers.

In 1878 everything here was dismantled and taken by rail to Burrow Farm less than two miles (3 km) away where the building was rebuilt and the engine re-assembled.

The aerial cableway

150 metres to the east of the Engine House an aerial cableway conveyed iron ore from a mine more than half a mile (1 km) to the west. The ore was placed in buckets about half a metre in diameter and half a metre deep, which were suspended from thick cable. Some of the cable can still be viewed today.

For more information

Please visit www.westsomersetmineralrailway.org.uk.

Due to dangerous conditions underground the former mine sites have been filled in and are not accessible to the public.

