

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF MINING HERITAGE

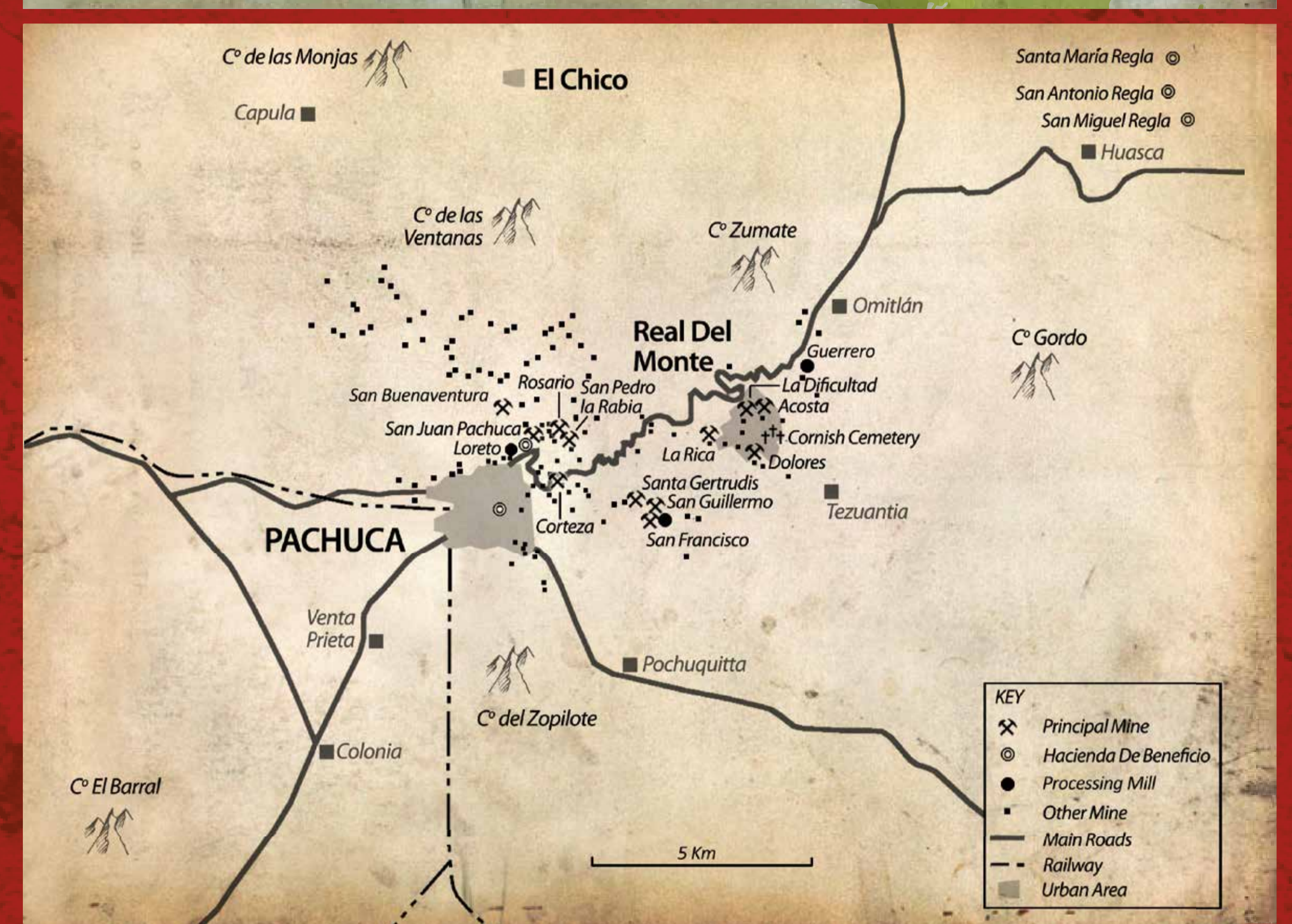


“So rapid were the changes of Government in those days, that when we went down the mine in the morning, we did not know what regime we should be living under when we came up at night.”

Captain John Penberthy

It is said that the Spanish Conquistadores came to Mexico for gold, but stayed for silver. Several mines in Cornwall, including the eighteenth-century Wheal Mexico at Geevor and its mid-1830s namesake in Mount's Bay, Penzance, were named after this famous mining country, which is currently the world's largest silver producer. Although the majority of the Cornish migrants who worked in the Real del Monte-Pachuca district were from Cornwall's Central Mining District, the Penwith district also features in the remarkable story of what is now known as 'Mexico's Little Cornwall'.

Some of the first migrants to venture there were from Lelant, and numerous steam engines and other equipment was exported to various mines from the great foundries of Harvey's of Hayle, and Sandys, Carne and Vivian at Copperhouse. The most famous man to have left Penwith is Halsetown-born Captain John Penberthy, who spent sixteen years in the Pachuca district during a period of great civil and political upheaval. In the 1860s and 70s, Mexico was arguably the most dangerous country in the world for Cornish migrants. Penberthy witnessed his friend murdered in front of him, survived being kidnapped by republican army deserters, an assassination attempt, numerous gunfights with bandits, and a near-fatal shoot-out in the main street of Real del Monte.

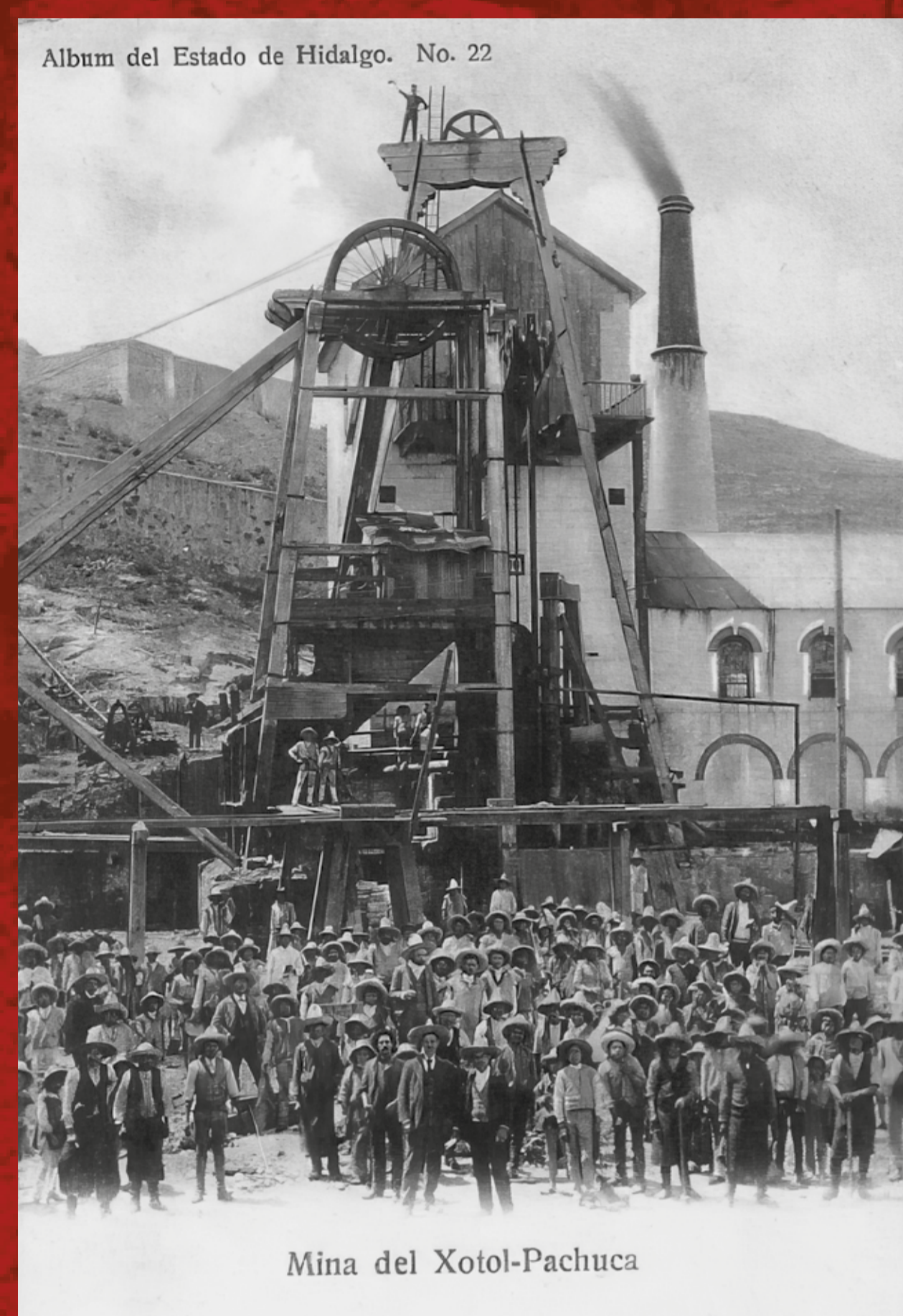


Maps: Dr Martin Critchley



Captain John Penberthy (1839-1914) seen here in his early seventies when managing the Providence Mines, Carbis Bay, followed in his father's footsteps when he migrated to Mexico in his late teens. During his sixteen years there, he rose through the ranks to become the agent of all the mines belonging to the Real del Monte and Pachuca Mining Company in Real del Monte. A man who never lost his nerve in a crisis, he remarked, "I saw some pretty rough times under Miramón, Juárez and Maximilian. I carried my life in my hands there."

Portrait by Herbert Lanyon, The St Ives Archive



Album del Estado de Hidalgo, No. 27

The Cornish and Mexican workforce of the Maravillas y Annexas Mining Company celebrate the starting of the 60-inch Harvey's of Hayle steam engine on the Xotol Shaft of the La Luz Mine, Pachuca, on 6 May 1891, in the presence of the State Governor of Hidalgo and other dignitaries.

Sharron Schwartz Collection



In 1841, the Cornish Arms public house at Trelyon near St Ives was being run by Lelant blacksmith, John Glasson (1800-1870). He was one of the first group of nine Cornishmen to have arrived at the Real del Monte mines in 1824. The following year, he recommended to the management that his younger brother Jacky (Jakeh), also a blacksmith, be recruited. Both men served out their contracts and returned to Cornwall before 1830. When John died, Jacky took on the pub. It remained in the Glasson family until the 1890s. Ainsley Cocks Collection



Above: Acosta Villa, Bodriggy, Hayle, was named after the Mina Acosta at Real del Monte. This was the former residence of engine fitter, William Francis Blamey, who was born in Real del Monte. Copper Terrace at Copperhouse, Hayle, once boasted a property named Velasco House, home of Grace Arthur (née Uren). She was born in 1853 at the Hacienda Velasco near Real del Monte where her father worked. Sharron Schwartz Collection

Text: Dr Sharron P Schwartz



www.cornishmining.org.uk
www.cousinjacksworld.com

The Mina Acosta, Real del Monte, which lent its name to Acosta Villa in Hayle, is now a mining heritage attraction like Geevor Tin Mine. The engine house accommodated an 85-inch Harvey's of Hayle engine.

Ainsley Cocks Collection

