

3 *Wealth from the ground*

Mining in Cornwall

The mineral wealth of Cornwall has been, and still is, prodigious. *Table 1* below shows the total values, at 2003 prices, of all the minerals that have been extracted from the Cornubian orefield.

The Cornubian orefield* is by no means exhausted, although nowadays china clay is the most important mineral extracted; as the table shows, the value of china clay extracted has now overtaken all the other minerals put together. Current production of china clay is just over two million tonnes a year and is now Britain's second most important mineral export, after petroleum. The main use for china clay is in paper. Small quantities of china stone, a granite with a very low content of iron-bearing dark minerals, are still produced from the St Austell granite for use in ceramics, although not as much as in former years due to imports of feldspathic material from Scandinavia.

Table 1 Mineral production from the Cornubian orefield* from B.C. to 2003

Commodity	Total production (tonnes)	2003 unit value (£/tonne)	Total production value (2003 prices) m = million
China clay	170,000,000	£80	£13,600m
Tin metal	1,600,000	£3,000	£4.800m
Copper metal	1,000,000	£1,125	£1,125m
China stone	5,000,000	£80	£400m
Arsenic	250,000	£700	£175m
Lead metal	350,000	£325	£114m
Zinc metal	130,000	£530	£69m
Silver metal	450	£130,000	£58m
Iron ore	2,000,000	£15	£30m
Barytes	450,000	£50	£22m
Tungsten ore	5,600	£3,000	£17m
Manganese ore	100,000	£100	£10m
Gold	1	£9.5m	£9.5m
Pyrite	150,000	£15	£2.2m
Fluorspar	10,200	£150	£1.5m
Others (U, Ni, Bi, Co, Sb, Mo, Ra)	–	–	£1.0m
TOTALS	181,000,000		£20,434m

* The Cornubian orefield includes the whole of Cornwall and those mineralised areas associated with the Dartmoor granite. In addition to the commodities listed above, much granite and other rocks have been quarried for constructional use.