

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

The rediscovery of churchite in Cornwall.

AFTER the lapse of just over one hundred years, the rare yttrium phosphate, churchite,¹ has been rediscovered in Cornwall, at Tretoil mine, about 5 miles north-west of Lostwithiel.

Churchite was first described by A. H. Church and named by C. G. Williams in 1865, the few known specimens having been collected some years previously, in Cornwall, by R. Talling, of Lostwithiel, the well-known Cornish mineral-dealer; but beyond revealing that it was near Lostwithiel, in a copper-lode, Talling never divulged the exact locality, which has so far remained unknown.

The similarity between the matrix of the old specimens and certain veinstone occurring at Tretoil mine and the fact that there are few copper-lodes near Lostwithiel and that two were worked at Tretoil mine up to about 1862, had led Sir Arthur Russell, who has in his possession what remains of Church's original specimens, to wonder whether this mine might possibly have been Talling's locality. Having examined Sir Arthur's specimens and also visited Tretoil several times, I was likewise struck by the similarity of the matrix and some of the veinstone at this mine. Both of us have searched for churchite on a number of occasions, hitherto without success, but on a visit to Tretoil last autumn I succeeded in collecting a small specimen of whose identity, even at the time, there was no doubt; subsequent examination confirmed that it is churchite. The matrix is almost identical with that of the old specimens, and the mineral itself, which is quite fresh, and was investing the side of a small cavity, is exactly similar; these facts would now seem to provide reasonable grounds for supposing that Tretoil mine was also the original locality and that Sir Arthur's guess was right.

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¹ See G. F. Claringbull and M. H. Hey, *Min. Mag.* 1953, vol. 30, p. 211, where the earlier and other references may be found, and where a new analysis is given.