

NEWS SHEET

DEC 1975

President Mr.D.M. Goth A.M.I.E.

Apologies to all members for the lateness of this newsletter.

Now that we have a volunteer for PRO, newsheets should appear at regular intervals again. As you know Derrick Platt has been responsible for PRO, but due to pressure of work etc., has of late found it too much of a burden to do both Newsheets as well as all the rest of the PRO work. The solution - Derrick to do the main of the PRO as before, and me to do the newsletter and gradually take over the rest of the job. So in future please send all contributions to H.HOUGHTON, 29 PARKSIDE ROAD, MEANWOOD, LEEDS LS6 4LY. Tel. Leeds 758505.

Whilst on the subject of change of Officers:-

LIBRARIAN is now Mr.A. FINCH, 10 EXETER CRESCENT, KILLINGHALL, HARROGATE, N.YORKS.

MEMOIRS EDITOR is Mr. M.C. GILL, 38 MAIN STREET, SUTTON, KEIGHLEY BD20 7HD.

PUBLICATIONS AFTER SALES is now being handled by Mr.R.G. GUTHRIE, 186 STATION ROAD, BILLINGHAM. TS23 2RT. Tel. Stockton 554437.

#### FOR SALE

We now have available N.M.R.S. car stickers, to be had by one and all for only 40p each if collected or 50p if posted. These can be had from the SEC. Mr. I.D. FRANCIS, 16 GREEN TERRACE SQUARE, SAVILE PARK, HALIFAX. or from Mr. M.C. GILL.

#### WANTED

The Society would like to procure 4 Nissen Hut Sections. If anyone knows of any needing a good home please contact MIKE GILL or JIM DICKINSON.

#### 1976 MEMOIRS

Articles are now needed as soon as possible for the next memoirs, all contributions to the Editor.

#### YORKSHIRE DALES RAILWAY SOC.

We have been asked by the above Soc. to help out with an Industrial Archaeology Weekend in Oct.'76. We have offered to help with guides and advice, so if anyone is willing to help please let us know. More details later when received.

## MEET IN WEST COUNTRY

One member requests a meet in this area, if anyone fancies going on a private meet down there, they can be put in touch via D. Platt.

## DEVON MEET

This meet is now on and we have received an offer for meet leader. Quote 'The dates which you suggest - from the 20th to the 26th March next will suit me fine, or the week or so previous to that will also be okay.'

The six days allotted, should be ample for an itinerary to cover the Teign Valley, The Tamar and Tavy etc and East Cornwall. Moreover when I write to Owen, I may suggest that he and I share the itinerary between us.

Camping wise, if this could be arranged from the Camping site book fine, if not, let me know. Next door to a Pub - an excellent idea.

Meanwhile, I will get a 100 or so copies made of my survey notes/maps of the Caradon and Phoenix Mines made, for distribution to members at the Meet.'

Owen Baker is Plymouth Mining Club Chairman and the above extract came from Roy Shambrook an associate member.

## MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTIONS

BARRY R. PYATT

Following my election to the Society, subsequent discussions held at the monthly meeting in Cononley on November 7th, and the immediate interest shown, I should like to put forward some proposals regarding the nature of this enterprise.

The Society is well placed with its pool of knowledge to provide material for a number of interesting and possibly profitable motion picture productions. Classification and grouping may be formulated as follows.

### Divisions

- a) Archival
- b) Educational (Authoritative)
- c) Educational (Commercial)
- d) General Interest

### Consequent Sub-Divisions

Archaeological, Geographical, Geological, Historical, Industrial, Technological, Topographical etc.

### Outlets for Direct Income

- a) Educational Authorities
- b) Local Television
- c) Tourist Sales
- d) Other organisations on sale/rental basis

### Outlets for Indirect Income

- a) Support for sponsored Society Lectures
- b) Continuous presentation at Tourist Information Centres under

possible sponsorship of the National Parks Commission. (Loop film or VCR/VTR - more dramatic than carousel type slide shows currently being used).

#### Outlets at no Income

The proposed system would enable outlying members of the Society to see and hear the activities of their organisation. This could be presented as a news film at six monthly intervals featuring short but salient articles of about 2 minutes duration average on a 10 minute reel. Under this heading would come all material used as archival stock for the Society records.

#### Motion Picture Format Discussion

- a) 8mm Standard commag
- b) 8mm Super Commag/Commopt
- c) 16mm Commopt
- d) Video Cassette
- e) Video Tape

In view of the present state of technology and the confusion of standards, the apparent advantages of VCR and VTR are somewhat overridden by the incompatibility of the various systems - this situation may change, and in any event, magnetic and optical storage systems are transferrable in both directions. Motion picture film has a number of salient points, not least of which is its universal compatibility with available equipment.

Whilst it would be the place of the professional pundit to demand 16mm, the fact is that even standard 8mm will resolve a picture far superior to a colour television - a media accepted by millions.

It is proposed that a motion picture work should be accomplished on either or both of the 8mm formats, as it has the advantages of

- a) Universal domestic use
- b) Economic capital & material
- c) In the case of super 8mm, the introduction of the wide angle shutter and higher film speeds has meant that underground filming has become easier, and also direct lip-sync recording is more practicable.
- d) 8mm format can be inter-duplicated, and printed up to 16mm or transferred to VCR/VTR, although some stretch printing may be involved.

The total empirical economics are currently being re-assessed by myself for presentation at a later date, but in view of the interest already shown, I should be glad of any enquiries and /or suggestions forwarded to the following address:-

(N.M.R.S.)  
9 Denbrook Walk,  
Bradford BD4 0QS  
W. Yorks.

Any such material will be collated and discussed open forum at the monthly meetings.

In conclusion, I should like to make clear that this activity requires much organisation and planning, such that even a 10 minute reel may take weeks or months to prepare and film. I am therefore proposing a tiny acorn, which, if support is sufficient could well grow into a mighty oak, in terms of kudos and hopefully, finances. It should also be noted that the producer(s) retains copyright on the film, subject to negotiation.

After finding out that he would be the only one attending, if the dinner was held on a Thursday night, Mike hurriedly re-arranged it for the following Saturday, so making it possible for 50 members and friends to be present.

After a very good meal of Xmas fare we all adjourned to an upstairs room for a speech by the President, during which he presented the N.E. Section with the President's Piton, for work done during the current year in the Alston area. Derrick Platt was awarded the Founder's Cup for his contributions to the Society.

This heralded the Craven Barmoot Court being convened to judge upon the merits of each contestant for the distinction of holding the Golden Chicken award for the next 12 months. From among the 5 contestants the award, after much argument, deliberating, speculation and above all totally unbiased adjudicating, was eventually awarded by himself to himself, the President, the winner for the second year running.

After the pomp and solemnity of the Court, one of our joint guests for the evening - David Pownall, the author of the book 'The African Horse' - captivated his audience by reading an amusing chapter from his book. Our other guest Mr. W.T. Shaw spoke shortly due to failing health, contenting himself by being entertained in delightful female company. The remainder of the evening and early morning being spent socialising in the Bar.

Sunday dawned, as did some of those camping at Barnies and eventually, after the lost being found, we all congregated at Lindal - in-Furness. From there we were conducted down 'Daylight Hole', everyone being suitably impressed by the monstrous entrance to this Hematite mine. When all were covered in varying shades of redness we progressed to 'Pick Shaft', where those who went underground had a pleasant? grovel and crawl to be rewarded by some good examples of Hematite Beds.

The day ended on a sad note, because Mac broke his ankle and it took 4 baths to restore a black and white Collie from a mock-up of a Red Setter.

Report of Northern Area

R.G. Guthrie

Hudgill Rig Level - Opened 30th May '75 until 11th August '75.

When explored during this period it was the most perfect example of a pick level I have ever seen owing to being driven almost entirely in a hardish shale and being sealed off from water and air disintegration.

West from portal 70 yards to South branch 156 yards long to forehead near a 16 foot pit. W.N.W. branch 40 yards to forehead. Wooden rails laid at time level was dug are still in place. Some wrought iron wear strips are also still visible.

### Allenheads (Beaumont Mine)

New levels at foot of incline on 13th Oct. '75 were driven Westwards beyond Craigshield Shaft up to which a 60' ventilation rise to Crankley level was driven. Eastwards a short ventilation crosscut connects with Low Underground Shaft.

### Sraith Vein

Much more material, rails, compressor and other equipment are on the site but alterations to planning permission have slowed the work done.

### Stanhope Burn

The old binysteads at Shieldhurst are being used again to sort out and grade spar and rubbish brought out of this level. Hope Level is being refurbished again.

### News from Wanlockhead

Bill Harvey.

The formation of the Wanlockhead Museum Trust was mentioned in the December 1974 N/L, and the Trust has since had a most successful year. With the help of a grant from the Scottish Tourist Board, G. Downs-Rose, the Trust advisor, has arranged the purchase and restoration of a derelict miner's cottage in Gold Sear's Row as the main museum building. Over the summer, the cottage has been re-roofed, a new floor laid, and windows and doors fitted. The Council for Museums and Galleries in Scotland have advised on the arrangement of a display of material illustrating the history of mining in the area, and, in addition, a part will be set up as the kitchen in a miner's cottage. Work on the furnishings will begin shortly, and it is hoped to have all ready by next spring. The Trust have also taken on the responsibility for the 18th Cent. Miners' Library, and have obtained a grant from the Pilgrim's Trust to restore it. As well as housing the valuable collection of books, the Library will be a repository for manuscript material and mine plans etc.

The long term objective of the Museum Trust is the combination of the housed collections with an Open Air Museum of Mining. Part of this will be the old smelt mill at Pates Knowes. Preliminary excavations of the site by members of Summer Schools of Industrial Archaeology have uncovered some of the walls and other foundations, and also a number of cast iron hearths, work stones, sumps, etc. The finding of these metal parts is particularly valuable for they seldom survive, and, in order to realise the potential of the site as an historic attraction, it has been taken over by the Museum Trust. The Trust not only intend to arrange to finish the excavations, but eventually to re-build one or more of the ore hearths.

It is hoped to complete the excavations next summer. This will not be on a summer school basis as before, but will be a more informal affair with small parties spread over some weeks. Those taking part will not be expected to pay for the privilege, and it is intended to have some mechanical aids in the removal of the considerable amount of spoil still on the site.

to keep the project in mind when making plans for 1976, and there will be further information in a later N/L.

### The Ballycorus Smelter.

Bill Harvey

I recently had the opportunity of making a brief visit to the old lead smelter at Ballycorus, a low hill about 10 miles south east of Dublin, and not far from the resort of Bray.

The remains are in a remarkably good condition, and although the actual smelting houses are now part of a plastics factory, many of the original buildings remain. They not only housed the furnaces, but also a silver hearth, a plant for making red lead, and a mill for sheet lead.

Across the road from the factory, a fine line of flues can be seen, and we followed them for about half a mile up the hillside. The flues at this point are above ground level and about 8' high by 6' wide. They are massively built and have little openings at intervals along the sides, presumably for clearing out the fume. An interesting feature was the provision of ramps over the flue. Higher up the hillside, we lost the flue among gorse bushes and broken ground, and when we picked it up again it was now partially underground, and was smaller in section. The flue ended in a fine chimney. This is on top of the hill and a prominent landmark. It is made of granite blocks and the wall at the base looked all of 4' thick. There was once a stair of slabs set around the outside, but much of this is now broken.

The Ballycorus smelter is mentioned by Dr. R. Kane in his 'Industrial Resources of Ireland', published in 1845. At that time the smelter was taking ore from the Luganure mine in Wicklow, and the Caimine mine near Wexford. Although Dr Kane mentions ore veins in Ballycorus hill, it does not seem that the smelter was built only to use them. We noticed some hollows which could have once been adits to the vein, and there is a ruined engine house and chimney among some farm buildings, and which might have once been for pumping.

Dr Kane writes that the smelter made 588 $\frac{1}{2}$  tons of lead in 1843, selling at £17 per ton, and this took 551 tons of coal, costing 12/- per ton. It seems to have been the only smelter working in Ireland at that time. Lead was mined in a number of places, but the ore could have been shipped to Chester and, or, Bristol.

There is again considerable mining activity in Ireland, and a proposal to build a smelter near Cork is having a mixed reception.

### A Trip to Mammoth Cave, Kentucky.

Jerry Landless

I had written to Mammoth Cave National Park way back in 1973 for information on the cave and at that time had no intention of going. I left the R.A.F. in July this year and having lots of money and no job, I decided to go and look at the cave as a tourist!!!

I flew out on July 22nd arriving at Mammoth Cave National Park Hotel

on the 23rd somewhat shattered but as I was there to see the cave off I went on the self guided historic tour. This is one and a half miles long and takes about two hours, it uses the only natural entrance used by tours today, all other tours ie. scenic, frozen niagra, lantern and the wild cave tour all use man made entrances. I went on them all!!!

The historic tour leads you firstly down 38 steps into a bedding plane type passage 8' high by 25' wide continuing for some 300', it opens out into a huge room, the rotunder, basically circular with two large (40' square) passages leading off at right angles to each other.

This was the room in which the majority of the sault petre mining in the 1800's was carried out, with leaching vats and wooden pipework still in place. The floor is artificially high, built up as the waste earth was pushed aside and has been built about 10' from the original floor level, no problems though the roof is still 40' above you.

Our tour takes us down the left hand passage, past more leaching vats to an exhibit of an old indian who was found mummified in the far reaches of the cave. He is an Adena indian about 2000 years old, would have stood 5' 4" high, he was crushed whilst mining for gypsum, for what use no one really knows. His lighting is quite simple, a bundle of canes tied together, they burn at a very predictable rate of 1' an hour with lots of smoke and not much light. Further into the cave one climbing pole can be seen and sticks wedged into the roof of a high passage, for what gypsum was used for they went to a great length to get to it. One theory is that when gypsum was broken off two salts were formed, another theory is that it was used as a strong laxative, being taken in solution, but that can not be all, can it!!

We now turn down a small passage behind the coffin rock and a short decent takes us into the wooden bowl room so called because an old indian bowl was found here, it's a small chamber by comparison about 30' across by 10' High. A staircase leads off to our right and descends 12' or so, which takes us into a much narrower passage 12' wide by 7' high, across side saddle pit and minervas dome to bottomless pit. The pit is 150' deep and the bottom could not be seen by the early explorers with the greas type lamps. This was a real barrier until Stephon Bishop, a slave and the best guide to be had way back in the 1840's (he did a hand sketch of the cave in 1845 from memory of the 30 miles of passage in only two days) he got a ladder across the pit some thirty feet wide.

His rewards were great for as one proceeds through fat mans misery and great relief hall (now a loo 230' underground) to river hall he came to a major junction, to the left is the way to the main drain, Echo river. This way is now gated and the only way is up. When the spring floods are on this chamber can get flooded, extraordinary considering it is 48' above the river, the highest the river has risen is 57'.

Ascending the steps to our right we take a large loop to mammoth dome, you enter at the bottom, above is an impressive 200 or so feet of rock beautifully sculptured into large natural pillars. The way on is not for the faint hearted tourist, it's up 138 steps like a fire escape, the view from the top is magnificent. One is now in a bedding plane type passage and it opens out into a huge passage, and you are back to the rotunda and out to the main entrance.

The other tours are good, but only a variation on a theme, with the exception of the frozen niagra which has the best decoration available to the tourist, and the wild cave tour which is normal caving as we know it, if rather tame.

I was fortunate in contacting a member of the cave research foundation, Diana Daunt, she took me to parts of the cave not normally visited by 'Tourists'.

A visit to Echo River proved very interesting with a trip to cascade hall, the exit point of the notable Mammoth, Flint Ridge link up, (a trip which took 18 hours hard caving). I also enjoyed a trip to Floyd Collins Crystal Cave, Floyd's coffin is in the cave for all to see, the cave is not now open to the public.

The best trip by far was to New Discovery ( a part of Mammoth cave only shown to V.I.P's, only thanks to Diana it was possible for me to see it), this is a near virgin cave with a small path so minimum damage is done. Alas some vandals have got in and walked over virgin ground, a terrible shame. The trip takes you past one magnificent rimstone pool about 30' long by 4' high but now dry, the climax of the trip was to 'paradise' a passage fully worthy of its name, it is a gypsum covered passage with long, some 2', slender formations and all variations to the cotton wool type. At one point before 'paradise' there is a cluster of gypsum needles, one 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' long, I was lucky enough to get a good photo of them.

This is only a short discription of Mammoth Cave, with 189 miles of passage it's difficult to have anything but. Two weeks is not enough, the Americans have the answer, they get paid to survey the cave as a summer job!!

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#### LATE NEWS

#### TREASURER

Mrs Jennifer Griffin has volunteered to take over this post and can be contacted at:-

19 WESTFIELD TERRACE, BAILDON, SHIPLEY.BD17 5EY.

The Society wishes to thank Mavis Jackson for her work and appreciate all her efforts in the past.

#### 1975 MEMOIRS

Mike says that these are now near completion and should be in the post within the next few weeks.

Sorry for the delay, due to circumstances beyond our control, but they should be worth waiting for.

## Mine Safety

The points mentioned in the list below are a few of the most obvious dangers which will confront the explorer of old mine workings. Many of these dangers are not readily apparent to the casual visitor.

1. Bad air is often present in old workings and this is particularly insidious since its effects are often gradual and not appreciated until it is too late to escape.

2. The older mines were often driven in soft ground for ease of driving, and such ground is now often unstable and liable to collapse.

3. An accumulation of mud or water on the floor of a tunnel may well disguise the fact that there are open, but water filled workings, winzes or shafts in the bottom of the level.

4. Where a tunnel is dry underfoot, the floor may be set on old timbering which was set above open stopes and is now rotted to the point where it is liable to sudden collapse.

5. Ladders and stagings in old workings have probably been in place in a damp atmosphere for many years and have most certainly become rotted to a dangerous state.

6. Old shafts are particularly dangerous, since even though they may appear to be soundly walled or timbered when looking down from the top, such walling was often set upon a timber frame, and this will probably be rotten, thus rendering the whole structure unsound. In addition, old shafts are particularly liable to an accumulation of either poisonous or explosive gases.

The exploration of old mine workings is little covered by any published advice and assistance to those who wish for experience. It is not possible in a few paragraphs to cover every possible situation encountered underground, but the following hints are offered.

1. NEVER explore old mine workings alone.

2. ALWAYS tell someone responsible outside where you are going and what you hope to achieve, after obtaining permission to explore the mine.

3. ALWAYS carry a candle or safety lamp with you. Also have plenty of matches with you in a watertight container.

4. ALWAYS Test the atmosphere by lighting a candle or safety lamp from time to time, especially if you feel no ventilation current in the mineworking. If a candle or safety lamp will not burn GET OUT AT ONCE. A carbide lamp will not suffice for this purpose since it will continue to burn when the atmosphere is not fit to breathe.

5. NEVER interfere with old hopper mouths or timbers as they may be rotten and disturbance may cause a serious collapse.

6. ALWAYS keep an eye on the floor of the tunnel as well as the top. Beware of any open holes in the floor, as there are often false floors around shafts and sumps.

7. ALWAYS carry a stout stick or shovel if the tunnel has a stream of water or soft mud in it. Use the stick to poke the floor ahead of you, as you go. A ducking in such conditions may well be exceedingly dangerous.

8. NEVER try to climb up or down old ladders.

9. NEVER try to descend an old shaft or winze until a candle or safety lamp has been lowered to ascertain that the air is breathable.

10. ALWAYS carry some food and drink with you on such explorations in case you become trapped and have to wait rescue. An ex-army watertight ammunition tin is particularly suitable for this purpose. Suitable foods are dates, milk chocolate, cheddar cheese, butter and sweet biscuits.

11. ALWAYS wear suitable clothing to protect you against dirt, cold or wet, and ALWAYS wear a safety helmet underground. Remember that all mines have a very high humidity.

12. Remember that your carelessness in omitting any reasonable precautions may lead to extreme danger or loss of life not only to yourself, but to other persons who may have to rescue you or your body from a mineworking.

IF IN DOUBT - DO NOT GO UNDERGROUND

(based upon an article by J.R. Foster-Smith in N.C.M.R.S. Transactions 1, 2. 1964)