

Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter November 1976

Newsletter Editor H. Houghton.

New Members

British Museum (Ass) General Library, British Museum (Natural History)
Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.
P.J. Challis (Ass) 43 Fieldway, Liverpool L15 7LU. Tel 051-709-9754.
W.J. Hill (Full) 5 Ingledew Cres. Leeds LS8 1BP. Tel Leeds 665017.
G.F. Hopwood (Full) 25 Athlone Rise, Garforth, Leeds LS25 2LU.
Tel. Business 0937-3541.
R. Hotston (Full) The Pines, Holmbush Way, Midhurst. Tel. Midhurst 4115.
J.S. McNeil (Fam) 12 Woodville Road, Brierfield, Nelson Lancs. BB9 5RW.
D.T. Pollitt (Full) 10 Ashley Close, Rochdale, Lancs OLL1 3EP.
Tel. 0706-43283.
D.M. Schofield (Full) 21 Park Lane, Blaxton, Doncaster.
A.E. Shayler (Full) 44 Zetland Road, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 3QD.
T.M. Stokes (Full) 10 Gaskell Close, Silverdale, Lancs.
K.S. Stokes (Fam) as above.
D.C. Wilkes (Full) 26a Bangor Avenue, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0AY.

Changes of Address

D.H. Platt 5 Kirkstall Drive, Barnoldswick, Colne. BB8 6EZ. ^{B' Lick} 2898
I.J. Wright 96 Norwich Road, East Broyle Farm, Chichester. Sussex.
T.G. Ziemba c/o Ortiz, 58 High Street, Wigton, Cumbria.

The Librarian would like to bring to the attention of all members that the Society library is sitting on his shelves waiting for readers. Anyone wishing to borrow books please contact A.P. Finch, 10 Exeter Crescent, Killinghall, Harrogate HG3 2TF either by post or by calling at above address.

MEETS FOR 1977.

Would any member willing to lead meets in 1977 please contact Secretary, Mrs. L. Finch, 10 Exeter Crescent, Killinghall, Harrogate, HG3 2TF stating dates, places etc., as soon as possible after receiving this newsletter.

The Hon. Sec. would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. W.J. Houston for sending her a key which is thought to be a miners' locker key, found at Haile Moor hematite mine, Egremont. After writing to various places, at last she received a reply from the Curator, Mr. H. Fancy, Whitehaven Museum, in Cumbria. As this is the nearest museum to Egremont she is on behalf of the Society going to donate the key to this museum. This is a newly formed museum

or more correctly they are the successors to the old Whitehaven Museum which closed over 20 years ago. Consequently they have a certain amount of material already, but are anxious to develop their various collections. The long term project of the museum is a possible industrial museum, with a strong bias towards mining on the sites of two former collieries, Duke Pit and Wellington Pit, which are situated a couple of hundred yards from the museum. They hope to acquire an extremely important exhibit from the Science Museum, London, the former Heslop beam engine which was built in and used in the area.

Mr. Fancy would be delighted to hear from any member who might be able to advise or assist the work in any way, in particular any specimens, documents, and copies of photographs relating to mining past and present in that area. Even if you cannot assist in any way she feels sure that the museum will be well worth a visit next year.

Full postal address as follows:- H. Fancy, Curator, Whitehave Museum, Market Place, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7JG.

We have received a letter from Mr. Harvey about Wanlockhead. At the moment the museum trust have a party of lads working at the Smelt Mill under the job creation scheme, so this has enabled a big work programme. Old crumbling foundations are being repaired and repointed, and the big wheel pit has been found and cleared to the delight of all concerned. A chunk of the wheel has been found at the bottom of it, but its preservation is a problem.

Annual Dinner - 2nd October, - 1976.

H. Houghton.

Held this year at Harefield Hall, Pateley Bridge.

50 members and guests attended this medieval nosh, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The mead, wine and ale flowed freely! - The entertainers tried to entertain and the food was scattered with gay abandon.

Unfortunately the 5 courses took so long that we didn't have a lot of time at the end of it to do justice to the speechifying and presentations etc. The guest of honour, Mr. Peter Brears, the Curator of the Castle Museum, York, forfeited his speech in favour of a ½ hour Bar Moot Court, during which the Founders Cup was awarded to Adrian Finch for contributions to the Society, whilst the President's Piton went to Ian Cornwall for his sacrifice to the Society. The award for the greatest act of ineptitude etc., the Golden Chicken, was finally won(?!), by a short egg, by the President Mike Gill after a very gallant but vain fight, whilst Golden Eggs were awarded to all and sundry, contenders or not.

Sunday was declared a non-event - cos Summer had finished and we got wet.

Editors Report

British Mining No.3 will be the last Memoirs of this size since, due to

Various problems with binding allied to the fact that typesetting is carried out on larger plates already, it has been considered more economic to change to the A4 size. Whilst not as compact and easy to fit into a bookcase, we would have had to change to this size eventually and it has been decided to take that step in 1977. The larger size will however, be of greater advantage as regards to maps and plans which will benefit from this increase in format. All intending contributors should please note the above when submitting any illustrative drawings.

Another addition to Mr. J. Foster-Smith's series on the non-ferrous mines of Wales is planned for the Spring and this next part will deal with Anglesey and Caernarvonshire.

Contributions for the 1977 Memoirs are, as always, very welcome and may I remind members that contributions on any area within the U.K. can be featured. It is still apparent that many members are currently engaged in new and exciting projects and such items should be publicised through the medium of the Memoirs.

May I finally make a plea on behalf of our Treasurer and those engaged in dispatching your Society publications - particularly the latter. Much time and effort is involved if members do not renew their subscriptions promptly. Whilst every effort is made to prevent them, mistakes can occur, which may lead to offending members not receiving any publications at all in such circumstances. Remember, a quick trip to the post box may well save someone a lot of time - their own freely given time.

R.H. Bird.

Volume 5 of the Memoirs of the Cleveland Industrial Archaeological Society is now available and once again has a bias towards Mining and will prove a valued addition to knowledge of the Cleveland Hills Mining Field. This edition continues the high standard of production and presentation of material. Format A4, 41 pages, 7 plans and 8 line drawings. Price £11. Copies obtainable from Mr. A. Shayler, 44 Zetland Road, Redcar, Cleveland.

Virtuous Lady Mine

Further to the first Meet Report in the August Newsletter, we now quote an extract from a letter from Roy Shambrook on the above subject:-

"The name was bestowed on the mine in honour of Elizabeth I - the virgin queen - so Mrs. Oxenford informs me, and indeed local legend has it that copper from the mine was used on Sir Francis Drake's Ships and on those of Sir John Hawkins - a fellow Plymothian; also Kingston Down Nr. Kit Hill was supposed to derive its name from "HENGIS" - a Viking marauder, whilst Caradon is alleged to be a corruption of "CARACTACUS" - a Celtic Chief.

Hurst Meet Report - Sept 11/12

R.G. Guthrie.

To say that we had 36 hours of miserable cold wind and wet doesn't make very interesting reading, so on Saturday we compiled the following screed:-

Day the one, minus one. Dawn broke clear and bright, offering promise of superlative conditions for the Guthrie led meet. As 186 Station Road receded over the Eastern horizon and the magnificent slopes of the Pennines hove in sight to the West, the sun hanging like a polished brass mirror in the Southern heavens, our hearts were filled with joy and anticipation. This euphoric condition was unfortunately to fade with the declining sun and the onset of the Yorkshire monsoon.

Being a conscientious meets leader and knowing full well the needs of the disciples, a temple was sought and found with great rejoicing in a room of the Green Dragon. This necessitated the crossing of the Red Sea (nom de plume Shaw Beck) without the aid of Moses. This temple dispensed the Fountain of Life, though a free house cash was demanded by Harry, the high priest, who made offerings to the Till. At curfew time, knowing that absent disciples would now be off the streets, my wife and I didst regain our chariot to do battle with spirits, wraiths and mists conjured up by darkness to bring confusion and dread to our minds as we sought sanctuary in the settlement of Reeth where our caravan rested beneath the sacred apple tree, which in turn took exception to our presence and didst discharge its sacred fruits on to the roof of our flimsy shelter. The crashing of this bombardment drove us from the arms of Morpheus before the dawn of day as the tempest struck with renewed zeal. Rain fell in continuous streams, the winds of wrath concentrated their full force (10) on our humble lodging, breaking both trees and morale at the same time.

Undaunted, being meet leaders, we once more braved the perilous crossing of the raging waters of Shaw Beck and again approached the temple, the doors of which were firmly barred against us. The stalwart Lancastrians, J.Walker, M.Goth and A.Mackereth duly appeared complete with frail canvas shelters to compete with the raging elements and a bombardment of falling apples. The Yorkists however were conspicuous, as were the Northern group, by their absence.

The Fremington pass being blocked by a fallen tree of large dimensions, these worthies didst seek succour and respite in a wayside inn, namely the Bridge Inn at the Grinton waterhole. Here a brief meal was taken together with good ale lasting more than 3 hours.

Sunday Day 2 was Just? possible when we left Washfold to walk with a tail wind to Sleil Gill along the line of Racca vein. The wind was easing slightly for the return but it was cold and definitely everyone moved rapidly. After food at the vehicles, the shelter of the trees in the beck floor and the energy used following its course to the dam with its leat to the dressing floor and Prys (Princes) Level, we were warm and enjoying the beauty around. Princes Level was entered to the fall on the right branch on the vein. The dressing floor did not get surveyed which was unfortunate as this was the object behind the meet.

Presidents Talk-in November 6th at Skipton.

H. Houghton.

About 30 members attended this illustrated beanfeast (Pie and peas really.

but still!!!...)). They came from all points of the Earth, exotic places like Glasgo; Edinbro; New Romney, Kent; some even came from Lancaster, Manchester and Leeds. We even had a contingent from the Gateway to Europe (sounds better than Hull).

The afternoon officially started at 3.45pm, the result of a contender for next years Golden Chicken wanting to be nominated in good time? A key finally arrived and so the programme did not, after all, have to be held in the car park.

In the main hall considerable interest was shown in an exhibition of photographs, maps and plans and prints etc. The magic lantern show covered such subjects as - Mammoth cave, Kentucky; waterfalls and volcanoes in Iceland; soot and boilers down Chimney Shaft; a Goth-type ornithological guide; slate mines in Wales; engines and machinery in Swaledale and Cornwall; and Smelt mills at Cononley.

When darkness fell the streets of Skipton were illuminated by the NMRS firework bonanza, such as had never been witnessed there before. The common or garden type firecracker paled into insignificance compared with the 'Cornwall' patented home made cascade fountain and the 'Gill' drain-tester smoke canister carrying rocket - even if this latter never took off (we'll get even yet, Mike). The climax to the display being by a spectacular ex-naval parachute distress flare. It is rumoured that the life boat was launched on the Leeds/Liverpool canal, but this was never confirmed.

A certain member had to be restrained from letting off his home made bangers, because of the fact that young children were present, also the craters left would have made the car park unusable.

This was followed by a stupendous 4 course meal of pies, peas, gravy and cup of tea.

The following has been submitted By the Secretary for inclusion:-
General Meeting held at Skipton 7th November, 1976.

17 members stayed on to this Meeting.

Towards this time of year things are quiet so officers had very little to report. Thanks to PDMHS we are receiving a number of enquiries for membership. After a visit by three members to the previous librarians address we now have a few additions to the library - these are The Shropshire Lead Mines by F. Brook and M. Allbutt; Shropshire Mining Club year book; The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales, part 2, by D.E. Bick. Also a donation has been made by a non-member Science and Art of Mining dated 1892. A report is at the moment being compiled on the Chimney Shaft excavation - this article will appear in a publication next year.

The Society had received a letter from the School Museum and Resource Service, this body of people want permission to make copies of two articles which have appeared in publications. As the copy right belongs to the author

and not the Society, we set about the task of discussing this request with them, both authors showed no objection to their work being copied, as long as a donation or fixed fee was paid to the Society.

Mines of Mendip.

A. Finch.

On the 18th September, 1976 a party of three - Mike Gill, Lynda Finch and myself, Adrian Finch, visited the Mendip Hills of Somerset for a weeks holiday and to have a look at the mining remains.

Documentation of the area as regards mining is poor being limited to MINES OF MENDIP by GOUGH. There are four main areas, Shipham, Harptree, Priddy and Charterhouse. Shipham appears to have been mainly concerned with the mining of Calamine for the production of brass in neighbouring Bristol, we were unable to find any surface remains, mainly as Mike had turned nature boy and was more interested in collecting nuts from trees. There are two or three open shafts noted in the local cave guide.

All that remains of the West Harptree mines is a prominent chimney stack in the middle of a Forestry plantation on the edge of the hills, the flue had presumably been demolished during planting; further down the hill, slag heaps mark the position of the smelt mill.

The Charterhouse area is marked on the map as a Roman Lead mining settlement, pigs of lead having been found in the area. It consists of an area of tips and slag heaps, we found one open shaft approximately 30 feet deep and a series of six flues running parallel to each other about 20 metres long. This presumably formed one or maybe two continuous winding condensers as part of the smelt mill. There is an adjoining miners cottage reputed to be haunted. Following the mining ground down the valley towards Velvet bottom there runs a double flue for some distance on the right.

In the final area, Priddy, there are numerous pock marks in the fields around the village suggesting shallow pits. A mile up the road towards Wells are the remains of the St.Cuthberts Lead Works. This is a complicated area consisting of a number of different flues running through the area, building remains, slag heaps and water reservoirs. The curator of Wells museum was kind enough to give us a photocopy of the lead works as it used to be. This is the only area of any great mining interest on Mendip and would well repay a survey as no one else appears to have done any research there.

The Box stone mines near Bath were visited, the underground workings are quite extensive and show clearly the methods used to remove large blocks of the Oolitic Limestone.

A visit was made to the small lead mining area in the Quantock Hills, the only visible remains being one and a half engine houses; however the ale was good.

In short there is not a lot of mining remains to be seen in Mendip but would amply reward anyone still interested in caving and surveying the St.Cuthberts Lead Works.

Information

One of our Hon members Mr Russell Bayles, who is a director of Dorothea Restoration Engineers Ltd., - a firm primarily concerned with the renovation of all types of industrial plant and equipment of an historic nature - tells us of an exciting project which is envisaged to take place probably next year. Due to limitations of space at South Crofty tin mine, Cambourne, allied to the fact that the situation is not freely accessible to the public moves are afoot to transfer the large 80" Cornish Pumping engine at the mine to another site at Tregurtha Downs where it will be re-erected in its old house. This latter site, now owned by the National Trust (who also own the engine) will eventually become an open air museum concerned with the Cornish mining industry.

Although still at the planning stage, such a move will not be without difficulties since the bob weighs in excess of thirty tons and the cylinder, nozzles and other gear has been estimated to weigh a similar amount. The present engine house is, of course, beside the shaft, the latter currently in use as a man winding shaft so that removal of the engine would have to take place at a time when the mine was temporarily shut down. The task of hoisting it from the house is complicated by virtue of the fact that the headgear obstructs operations and it has been considered that the only feasible method of removal would be to lift the bob and component parts through the roof - unlike the old method of extraction through the back wall.

It has been suggested that if the project goes ahead, the engine when re-erected will also have a compliment of boilers in an adjacent boiler house so as to be as complete an installation as possible. Whether it will be eventually steamed is, of course, not decided.

Such a move will be a unique occurrence in this latter half of the century since although smaller engines have been transferred to museums and similar sites in the past, no one has contemplated the transshipment of an engine of this size before. The fact that the Dorothea Restoration Engineers have been asked to quote for the job speaks volumes for the organising abilities and technical know-how of the Company. Among other contracts this company have undertaken is the renovation of a vertical colliery winding engine at Bestwood, Notts; the complete overhaul of a large steam navvy - or shovel - at Leicester Industrial Museum (there are only two working examples of such a machine, the other one being resident at Beamish Open Air Museum); the erection and commissioning of a beam engine at Wollaton Park, Nottingham, together with numerous other contracts of a similar nature.

The 80" South Crofty engine was built by the Copperhouse Foundry in 1854. She worked originally at Alfred Consols near Hayle and was subsequently removed to Wh. Abraham where she worked until 1875. Thereafter she was bought by the adventurers of Tregurtha Downs for a reworking of the sett. Here she survived a fire which completely gutted the engine house and continued pumping sporadically after minor repairs until 1902. The following year she was bought - for a song - by South Crofty for new Robinson's shaft at which site she continued to give sterling service until 1955 when she made her last

stroke after her task was taken over by electric pumps - the last Cornish engine to stop in the south west. It is fitting, therefore that this fine and faithful engine should spend her retirement giving pleasure to countless visitors from home and abroad who, one hopes, will be able to come and admire her in her old house.

The cost of the removal will be borne by the National Trust and the English Tourist Board. I am sure that we would all wish Mr. Bayles and his colleagues every success with this remarkable venture.

The following has been received from a new member - D. Schofield.

Two thousand yards under the Pennines, the steady drip of water the only sound, we stop near the edge of an open shaft beckoning downwards to unspeakable horrors perhaps Charon waits to ferry us across the Styx to the gates of Hell.

Through me you pass into the city of eoe;
I am the gateway to eternal pain;
The gateway to the souls of the lost.
Justice was the spur to my mighty creator;
To rear me was the task of power divine.
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.
Before me, of things created there were none,
Save things eternal, and eternal I endure.
Abandon hope, all you who enter here.

We have entered a world of permanent night, of total all pervading blackness, it is uncanny, it seems to close in around you and hold you in its grasp. No ray of sunshine has ever penetrated these subterranean regions, there are no stars, we could be a thousand miles from the world above, that unutterably grey world of the everyday. In this dark silent world I am reminded of those who made this journey possible.

Members will be sorry to hear that our Treasurer, Mrs. Jennifer Griffin, is undergoing enforced hospitalisation and I'm sure will join me in wishing her a speedy recovery.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are again due for renewal on 1st January, 1977. In view of the above news please help us by sending your remittance, along with the renewal form, as early as possible to Jennifer's address (shown on the form). You will of course bear with us if we are not able to send receipts etc., as soon as we would like.

The Annual General Meeting is to be held at the Scout Hut, behind the Devonshire Hotel on Newmarket Street, Skipton on 6th February, 1977 at 2.00pm. Anyone who wishes to stand for election to any honorary post of the Society (or nominate others) is invited to return the enclosed nomination form.

Committee Meeting December 3rd. at 29 Parkside Road, Leeds 6.
Committee Meeting January 7th at 10 Exeter Cres. Killinghall. all welcome 8.30.

The following is abstracted from a letter received from a Mr A.Woodrow of Co. Down.

A holiday at Glengariff is a safari to be remembered for the scenery from the mountain passes is on a par with Switzerland and from this centre you can fan out to see many of the old copper setts still sporting engine houses and stacks. These lie within a twenty mile radius and armed with a picnic lunch we saw eight of the old setts, Ballycummisk, Cappaghglass, Cosheen, Crookhaven, Kilcrohane, Allihies and the barytes mines of Mount Gabriel and Derreenaloman. Allihies of course was king of them all, being a vast complex of six or seven mines spread over several adjoining townlands, and having been worked as late as 1922 by the Kelly Bros, held more in the way of surface evidence than the others. Mines apart, the area is truly lovely. We made two separate visits to Allihies and found the relics in the same state as portrayed by the book. (Britain's Old Metal Mines - R.H. Bird).

Towering above Allihies village, the Mountain mine is an impressive sight against the background of the slate mountain. You can drive your car right up the winding dirt road into the heart of the mine. We parked on a wide level shelf beside the portal into what I took to be the day level or tramming exit and here one sees the piles of old core samples of slate, sandstone and quartz, this last being the Gangue of the district. Further up the loop road and above this locus is a vast open gunnis with a great glory hole at its western end where they have obviously cut rich almost at grass. All unguarded and lethal as are the shafts. Directly up mountain from here are the two engine houses, bigger structures than I would have expected by comparison with the holding down bolts on the engine loading. Up mountain you can see the yellow spoil outside the open adit from which they worked the Commanmoor lode. To your left lying east is the Caminches engine house, you have to leave your car on the country road but the access track is clearly defined and a five/ten minute walk. There are numerous open shafts and adits over the whole area and in the meadows south of the village lies the Kealogue engine house. We are not explorers but with the gear I imagine you could go into the adits. She is watered up possibly to day level though it is difficult to say as we took no soundings.

Ballycummisk proved disappointing as only spoil remains and the Kilcrohane mines which ran in a line lay along cliffs below the county road and a natural barrier of breast high fern is apt to be dangerous when a stranger does not see his footing so these we viewed from the road - shafts only. If you go down to Crookhaven, do not miss Mizzen Head - the ruins of the site where Marconi sent out his first telegraph to the States. A mine lies there also but we did not manage the time to trace it. Crookhaven itself, the mine is worth seeing. Do not be put off by "Private property" notices in Ireland. At Crookhaven, this notice on a smallholding gate is merely to discourage incomers and the mine lies just inside this gate and if you push through and ask, you will get the impression that the notice is probably of no legal worth at all.

Silvermines village and district are worth seeing and even on the village green there is a Cornish Engine House and beyond what looks like the remains

of a mill if the piles of calcined stones are bigger than the clinker of a boiler house. Most smelting ceased in Ireland around 1780 but there may have been some exceptions. Avoca is rich and worth a visit particularly if you obtain permission to go through the old Margeret Adit at Ballygahan and down the Knight tunnel to see the vast gunnises cut in modern mining, cavities that put Dolcoath into the purple shade.

We have seen Silvermines, Southwest Cork, Avoca and the Lead at Glendalough but this last shows little more than spoil and is not worth detour for no ruins remain.

In Ulster, the only ruins left are those of the lead mines of Newtownards Mining Company, so there is little worth seeing otherwise.

In the south you will have a 'mining holiday' you are not likely to forget.

Footnote: Mr Woodrow is Co-author of a forthcoming publication entitled: 'The Mineral Measures and Communications of Ulster' to be published by H.M.S.O. in late Spring 1977.

Just to prove that we don't have them all in our Society, this was seen apertaining to another Society which shall remain nameless.

"We turned back at a roof fall last trip because one of our party is terrified of roof falls, the first sign of one and he is off, we had to follow him in case he did something daft. This same fellow fell 50 feet at Kettleness, got trapped by the tide at Runswick Bay, knocked himself out in a mine in Weardale, and has been knocked off his cycle twice in one week, I think that he may possibly be accident prone, but he does take exceedingly good photographs!"

OR

"Will the member who descended the main shaft of the Beavor Mine a fortnight ago and has not been seen since, please send in his report".

Finally a thought to ponder - "will members please fall down shafts that lead somewhere, in this way we can recover the body and do a bit of exploration at the same time!"

For Sale and Wanted.

There are still a few Society car stickers and metal lapel badges available. Car stickers 40p collected, 50p posted. Badges 35p collected, 45p posted. Enquiries to Sec. or P.R.O.

A member has $3\frac{1}{2}$ cwts of carbide to dispose of - I can pass any orders on to him.

PRO - H. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY. Tel 758505.