

Library

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

Newsletter

December 1977

"The time has come", the Treasurer said, "for you to pay your SUBS". Fortunately/unfortunately (depending on whether you're paying or receiving) now is the time to renew your membership for 1978.

The completed renewal form (see last page) should be sent to Jennifer as soon as poss., 'cos your money is already spoken for, and it's expensive sending reminders.

- - -

Proposed Amendment to Constitution

In accordance with item 27, the Hon Sec gives notice of this proposed change to Item 8 in view of the likelihood of a continuance of the arrangement first experienced this year with regard to Mr Foster-Smith's work.

"..... unless said publications be partly or wholly subsidised by private subscription other than society funds, in which case a minimal charge, at the editor's discretion may be levied per copy in addition to the annual society subscription. Provided also that members and associates have an option to purchase or refuse said copies and that the subscriber to any such volume, by whose significant finance the volume is produced, receives no return of capital, either by lump sum or royalty other than the usual gratis copies presented to authors of society monographs".

- - -

A Christmas Message from the Editor

Publications Leaflet

The enclosed leaflet details published and forthcoming British Mining Monographs and is included for your information. Additionally, it would be helpful if this leaflet could be circulated among your friends and acquaintances who are not society members but who may be interested in buying our publications. By obtaining advance orders (as well as sales of existing stock) this gives the editor a better idea of the sales potential and consequently the printing requirements for each issue. Certain volumes - the Teign Valley Lead Mines for instance - ultimately proved to be very popular and unfortunately we were unable to satisfy the demand, since reprinting was out of the question, and still is. A good volume of sales will help to keep printing costs down which will benefit your society and consequently help to 'peg' subscription rates in the future. It is envisaged that demand for the 'Conlig' and the 'Llandudno' monographs will be quite heavy and we don't want to be under supplied again. Needless to say, it is unnecessary for members to reserve a copy.

Memoirs 1978 (B.M. No.8)

Winter is again upon us and this is an ideal time of the year to sit down in the long evenings and write up all those notes which have been gathered during the summer. The inclusion of notes in the Memoirs of recent visits to mines and their condition of access (similar to work done in the past by Messrs Cannell, Jackson and Co.) are invaluable to members who are planning to visit different mining fields. Such notes - which need be very brief - often save considerable time and effort. Moreover, now is the time to start that historical dissertation you have always been thinking about,

so 'get writing'..... Closing date for copy for the next Memoirs is the end of June,
-- there is no excuse, timewise!

British Mining No.6

"The Mines of Merioneth" is now printed and bound and ready for despatch. Those who have ordered it will find it enclosed with this newsletter. However those who have not ordered it are reminded that this publication is available at 90p post paid to all members and associates. If you have not already ordered a copy but would like to do so, please make use of the tear-off slip on the enclosed publications leaflet; preferably cash with order please with a notation 'member' or 'associate'.

- - -

List of New members as additions to the Members list.

Full

D.E.BICK	Pound House, Newent, Glos GL18 1PS.
G.A.COX	Mineral Industry Manpower and Careers Unit, Prince Consort Road, London SW7.
R.V.DAVIS	Dawns Farm, Orton, Penrith, Cumbria.
A.ETHERIDGE	410 Blackburn Road, Darwen, Lancs BB3 0AG
M.H.P.GREEN	'Moss House', Warton Crag, Carnforth.
G.C.NEWALL	59 Seatown, Cullen, Banffshire.
P.D.NIGHTINGALE	16 Lynwood Avenue, Darwen, Lancs BB3 0JA.
L.M.SCARR	Cravenholme, Bainbridge, Leyburn, Warks DL8 3EG.
J.SHAMBROOK	40 Keats House, Porchester Meads, Southend Road, Beckenham, Kent.
J.C.R.WEEKS	13 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LD.

Associates

LEEDS CITY LIBRARY,	Leeds 1.
M.F.MacLEOD	Hillbarns, Aberlemno by Forfar, Angus, Scotland DD8 3PH.
C.J.WILLIAMS	12 Wold Court, Harwarden, Deeside, Clwyd.

Overseas

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY LIBRARY,	National Centre Mail Stop 950, 12201 Sunrise Valley, Reston, Virginia 22092, USA.
---------------------------------	---

Changes of Address

C.DICKINSON	42 Mendip Avenue, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS22 0HW.
SHEFFIELD CITY LIBRARIES	c/o M.L.HUDSON, Bibliographic Services Div., Central Libr: Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1XZ.
M.R.SMITH	22 Southbourne Close, Eastcote, Pinner Middlesex.

- - -

Mr.G.E.Lees of Anglesey has sent the following:-

"Ref. British Mining No.4

I refer to the entry under HOLYHEAD page 6, location not known. I believe the location may be at the head of COPPER MINE CREEK which is north of Porth Dafarch on the west side of Holy Island.

This is shown on Anglesey Sheet XI SW Revision of 1923 with 1949 Additions Scale 6 inches to 1 mile. Published by O.S. 1953.

At the head of the creek is a mass of overgrown bushes and vegetation (unusual for this coast!) which could conceal the mine entrance. Further investigation of the site by an expert is suggested."

- - -

Recorder

The Committee is sorry to have received the resignation of Mike Gill from the post of Recorder, and would like to thank him for all the work he has done for the Society in the past.

If anyone thinks they have the knowledge and time to run the recorders office and would be prepared to have their name nominated at the A.G.M. please contact:- Lynda Finch, 10 Exeter Crescent, Killinghall, Harrogate.

- - -

Hebden Gill Meet Report - 11th September.

J.H.McNeil

This meet was attended by four members who were conducted round the various levels and buildings in the Gill. On the way to the Bolton Gill Shaft members were dispatched into Charger and Bottle levels with the exception of the meet leader, who knew that there was nothing in there to see. The remains of the aerial ropeway were visited on the return trip down the valley.

After lunch members assisted with the society winch at Banks shaft on Greenhow Hill where the weather was up to the usual Greenhow standard.

- - -

150th Anniversary of a North-Country Mineral Proprietor: J.C.Swan

27th September 1977 saw the 150th anniversary of the birth of John Cameron Swan of Newcastle upon Tyne. In the second half of the 19th century Swan was involved with many mining ventures, some based in the northern Pennines and others conducted overseas. In his earlier life - particularly during the 1850's and 60's - when the chemical trade on the Tyne was flourishing, Swan was engaged in making chemicals, but then as the trade declined he came to rely increasingly upon raw mineral commodities. In Britain, he was for some years chairman of the Green Hurth Mining Co Ltd (of upper Teesdale), and early in this century he became deputy chairman of the Weardale Lead Co Ltd. He was also the driving force behind the Nenthead & Tynedale Lead & Zinc Co Ltd, 1882 to 1896. His trading company dealt in Flourspar from the northern dales and in barium minerals from Settlingstones Mine. For a short time around 1900 he mined barytes at Duneen Bay, Co Cork (where renewed prospecting activity is currently under way).

J C Swan's interests in overseas mining included manganese in Chile and France, iron ore in Spain, and gold in South America. (In the 1880's he was said to be the first to bring manganese ore - wanted by the growing European steel industry - from Chile.) He traded in guano, sodium nitrate, and salts such as potassium chloride from the Stassfurt deposits in Germany. Towards the end of his life, with his white beard, Swan made a patriarchal figure: he died in 1916, at a ripe age. To some extent his achievements were overshadowed by the success of his younger brother, Joseph Wilson Swan, who became internationally-known for his work in improving photographic materials and in developing the incandescent-filament electric lamp.

J.K.Almond.

- - -

Wanted:-

for an optimistic member, rotary slide magazines for Gnome Projector. Please contact D.Platt, 5 Kirkstall Drive, Barnoldswick, BB8 6EZ.

- - -

Gunnerside Gill Meet Report - 1st & 2nd October

J.H.McNeil

On the Saturday the meet was attended by the leader and two members, with one member attending part time. People were obviously deterred by the inclement weather of the previous evening. The day was spent on a pleasant stroll up to Blakethwaite Mill inspecting the Sir Francis and Bunton mine sites on the way. It was in fact necessary to walk all the way to the top of the Gill in order to cross the stream which was in severe spate.

After an hydraulic lunch in Gunnerside the meet was continued in West Stonesdale where the engine shaft and dressing floors of the mine there were examined. A rather cold evening prompted an early visit to Kings Head before braving the elements in a tent.

On the Sunday the meet was rather better attended with 14 members turning up and most were soon ushered down Bunton level where the level was explored along the Friarfold Vein to a collapse and then on the Old Rake to a collapse in very unstable ground. Pricilla and Blind Gill Levels were explored later in the afternoon and the meet came to a close at 6.30pm.

(Will anybody with any information about the West Stonesdale Mine in Starting Gill please contact John McNeil, 12 Woodville Road, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancs BB9 5RW.)

- - -

Miner farmers in Arkengarthdale in 1816

Arkengarthdale Church was rebuilt on a new site in the years 1818-1820 at the cost of the Trustees of Mr George Brown of Stockton, one time Lord of the Manor of Arkengarthdale and owner of the mineral rights there. The negotiations concerning the new site were complicated and they generated a long series of letters which were preserved in the estate archive. One letter, that written by R.C.Clarke to Wm Ward and dated 17th July, 1816, is particularly interesting because of the light it throws on the social conditions of the mining community in the dale at that time.

"Arkindale, as you know, is distant from any Market, the population are all Miners, who take bread and Milk with them when they go to work: and from necessity of being plentifully supplied with Milk they all farm land and keep Cows: Hence no milk is to be bought and the Clergyman who may reside to do the duty of the Church, if he be married and have Children, would be ill off if he had not a Cow or Cows of his own: and had not, also, a considerable quantity of Ground to produce him potatoes and other vegetables. In wild and what are termed, moorish districts, milk and Garden stuff, and the opportunity of keeping pigs are most essential; in which view of the Subject, the annexation of as much land to the new parsonage as can be obtained, and as contiguous as may be, for Arkindale is subject to deep snows, is highly requisite".

Acknowledgement is duly made to M.Y.Ashcroft, Archivist to the County of North Yorkshire, and to the representatives of Sir Thomas Sopwith and T.E.B.Sopwith, Esq., for allowing me to use and to quote from the documents now at the County Record Office in Northallerton under reference ZQX 4/7/2.

D.S.Hall (friend of a member)

- - -

General Meetings 1978

You will notice on your next Meets Card that after the AGM in February (at Skipton) that the next General Meetings are to be held at Sicklinghall, Nr.Wetherby, just off the A1.

Don't be left on you own at Skipton - go to the Village Hall, Sicklinghall.

Annual Dinner - 8th October, 1977.

The dinner was held, this year, at Foster Beck Watermill, nr Pateley Bridge. After a good meal of traditional Xmas fare the guest of honour, Mr P.C.D. Brears Curator of Castle Museum York, gave a very amusing talk about the characters, personalities and objects and situations a museum curator encounters during the course of his work. At various times he produced objects from his bag and much hilarity ensued in guessing the function of each. Needless to say no one managed to put the correct use to any of the objects - but a few of our members appear to have very warped imaginations.

A more serious part of the evening was for the presentation by Ken Walls (the President) of the Founders Trophy and the Presidents Piton, both awards being a unanimous decision on the part of the committee.

The Presidents Piton went to Sue Houghton for her work on behalf of the Society over the past year. This was received by a speechless and embarrassed Sue (though I did catch sight of a "wait till I get you home" look).

The Founders Trophy went to Mike Goth for his work over the past year in furthering the aims of the Society. This is the first time that Mike has been known to be stuck for a reply - which also meant we didn't have to suffer another of his puns. All in all a touching moment.

The Craven Bar Moot Court was next convened to award the Golden Chicken for the "greatest act of ineptitude" during the previous year. A totally unbiased court consisting of Mike Goth, as Bar Master, with John McNeil and Ian Cornwall as his assistants sat in solum and regal deliberation to hear the charges, pleas, lies, call them what you will, levelled against the various contenders/victims.

After the preliminary eliminating rounds the main contest of the evening turned out to be between the defending Champion, Mike Gill, and new challenger, John McNeil. After a closely fought match John Mc was declared the winner (?), so no doubt we will see him again next year defending his title.

- - -

News from Wanlockhead

Bill Harvey

The current Job Creation Scheme programme ended in August. During more than a years work the Open Air Museum layout has been almost completed and various features linked by nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of walkway. The main activity during the summer was the re-building of two hearths at the old Pates Knowes smelter. The finding of much original cast iron hearth stones enabled an ore hearth and a slag hearth to be rebuilt, much as they would have looked when the smelter was working. To set them off, the surrounding walls were built up to about 6ft in height, and a 12ft stone arch has been built in front of the ore hearth. The whole is a monument to the ability of the largely unskilled JCS labour force.

Efforts to get out the piece of 18th century waterwheel found in the old wheel-pit (see N/L Feb 1977) had to be abandoned because of the weight of mud trapped in the floats. Have any members any ideas as to how this mud might be removed without damage to the wooden wheel? Survey shows the wheel to have been about 18'6" diam, with 48 floatboards 24" wide.

The Loch Nell mine has been opened and the adit timbered by a couple of retired miners. Now the Glasgow Spelaeological Society, assisted by Jerry Landless, are surveying the workings and clearing deads out of the old stopes. The accessible workings are somewhat limited in extent, but once tidied up will be a valuable addition to the museum complex.

An article on the Pates Knowes excavations has been prepared for a later Memoirs, and it is hoped to follow this in due course with another about the old waterwheel.

- - -

Presidents Talk-in - 12th November, 1977.

This years Talk-in and pie and pea supper was supported by 36 members. The event proved very informative and interesting even though some members showed another disrespectful choice of slides depicting some officers of the society as objects of ridicule (I'll get my own back next year).

There was a display of members specimens, photographs and exhibits as well as the entries for the photographic competition. This was won by David Pollitt, 2nd was John Mc, joint 3rd was Mike Goth and yours truly.

For next year I hope to get a full time tea bar staff - fingers to the bone - slaving over a hot stove!!!

- - -

The following letter from W.G.Jones started "....If you think this will pass muster, perhaps you will pass it on to the N/L editor....(it did and she has. Tai)

Henry Mancur 1810-1835. In the May Newsletter the Editor published my appeal for information about this gentleman's activities in England and Wales during this period. Hot foot, member Mr.Justin Brooke of Marazion, had him laid by the heels. He was able to advise that Mancur was responsible for the reopening of the Tresavean Mine in Gwenapp in 1818 and furthermore that he had contacted Sir Willaim Lemon Bart M.P., in regard to the leasing of mineral rights in the Carnon Valley. In fact, Mr.Brooke has in his possession a letter actually written by Mancur to Sir William.

Mr.Brooke was good enough to send me a duplicate of his most detailed and substantiated letter and this I was able to pass on to my Frankfurt correspondent, Herr Ernst Schornig, since when I gather that a mutually informative correspondence has resulted between the two.

Amongst many other letters I have written on Herr Schornig's behalf, have been those I addressed to the County Archivists of the "New" Counties in Wales and perhaps as a precaution, to the Records Offices of the "Old" Counties as well. Not to mention the three English Counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Cornwall; it is to be regretted that though I received a reply to every letter sent, no positive information has so far resulted. I may say that on some future occasion, I would give serious consideration to the Antiquarian Societies as possible sources of information.

Herr Schornig is writing a thesis for PhD on "the local and regional mining history around Frankfurt am Main and collects material on this subject in Hessen and in the Taunus Mountains in S.W.Hessen".

The importance of Henry Mancur and his association with the German Mining Co of London in mining activities in Germany ("Mancur bought more than 300 mines in Germany") has so obviously impressed him that his interest has been evoked in the 25 year period of Mancur's English and Welsh sojourn. The great vigour and industry that this man displayed in Germany, makes the absence of written record of his work here all the more remarkable, But perhaps the day is yet young!

Mr.Brooke has expressed the hope that Herr Schornig may be persuaded to write a short paper for the Society when his deliberations have been concluded. The future is evidently going to be not without interest!

- - -

Expenses for a Mine on Grassington Moor

R.Boardall

The following was sent in as a comparison of costs between different mines, to be compared with the cost of sinking the Hanging Hey Pit by J.A.Aked as published in

B.M. No.1 Dec.'75. Thanks to the Archives Dept., Bradford Metropolitan Council, Central Library, Bradford for sight of the original document which is located in Deed Box 9 Case 7.

" The account of W.Preston and Co Ltd., for expenses of Greenridge Mine. From the taking up of the ground until 11th November, 1797.

	£	s	d
To his grace for ground rent	1	0	0
Edward Place and 2 people for sinking 10 fathoms and 1 yard at 33 shillings per fathom	£17.	6.	6.
Do for driving 1 fathom to North	<u>1.13.</u>	0	
Edward Lawson for wood	18	19	6
John Brown smith work	1	17	0
Thomas Gudgeon for carriage		1	18 8
Isabela Wrathard as per bill		5	7
Edward Place for getting and carriage of 2000 props	1	10	9
		8	4
	26	7	10

Costs shared out to:-

The reverend W Preston	1/5	5	5	6 ³ / ₄
Mr Collers	1/5	5	5	6 ³ / ₄
Mr Brown	1/5	5	5	6 ³ / ₄
Mr Simson	1/5	5	5	6 ³ / ₄
Edward Place	1/5	5	5	6 ³ / ₄
		26	7	9 ³ / ₄

(whoever did these accounts must have run out of fingers.Ed)

AN account of same company for 11th November 1797 till 11th April 1798

Edward Place and Thomas Ripley for driving	26	19	10
Isabela Wrathard for bill	1	5	0
Edward Lawson as per bill		1	0
John Brown as per bill		13	10
Jos Holmes for assisting to put props in		2	0
	29	1	8

Costs split up in the ratio of 1/5 to the persons named above."

Book Review

R.H.Bird

'JOHN TAYLOR', mining entrepreneur and engineer 1779-1863 by R.Burt. 9lpp., 20 illustrations., bibliography, index. Moorland Publishing Co, The Market Place, Hartington, Buxton, Derbys SK17 0AL. Price £2.00.

The fact that no previous biography of this famous metal mining engineer has appeared, must mean that this work will provide a useful and interesting record of Taylor's career and achievements. The book traces his many interests - from his earliest introduction to metal mining at Wheal Friendship at the tender age of 19 - and his brilliant managerial successes at Consolidated Mines, Gwennap and at his mines in Cardiganshire. Taylor's lesser known connections with the Ecton Mines, Grassington Moor, Alston Moor and the mines in County Clare are discussed, as are what can be called his two most outstanding failures, at the Real del Monte Mines in Mexico and, nearer to home, the Alport Mines in Derbyshire. The book concludes with notes on Taylor's other non-mining interests such as his associations with the

Geological Society, the British Association and the Institute of Civil Engineers - to name but three. He was also treasurer of the University College London for many years. Mr Burt has done a fine job in assembling all the salient facts into a volume of some 90 pages but, because of this, few items are discussed in depth and one is left with a feeling that so much more could have been told of this remarkable man's career. However, being a specialised biography, it is doubtful whether a book twice as thick would have sold to any but the most knowledgeable 'mining historian sector', since John Taylor, unlike for instance, I.K.Brunel, is quite unknown to the general public.

- - -

Progress at Force Crag Mine by Bob Gunn, General Manager

We are plodding on with the work here with some good results and some poor as one might expect. The raise going up when the society came proved some low grade ore but we shall shortly be stopping it for Barytes as there is a good bit there.

Another raise in the end of 0 level proved no ore, but helped the ventilation. A third, from 1 level to 2 proved good ore and gave access to 2 level. This is impassable because of deep mud about 4ft of it, but the stope above 2 can be reached nearly up to 3 level where it is blocked by waste from the Laporte incline. This has also improved ventilation which has cured our radon problem.

The ore proved by this work is not enough to reach our target, and diamond drilling has not come with anything remarkable, so we are now preparing to sink down 30 metres for a new level below 0. I hope this to be done in time to be able to re-equip the mill next summer. The recent weather has done a great deal of damage to the road which requires much maintenance, and the buildings have suffered too.

- - -

Any old Bang.

Anyone wandering in Smallclough be on the look out in the region of Smallclough Flatts (down one of the cul-de-sacs) for some old gellie, some say the location of this is marked by a skull & crossbones.

Similarly in Brownley Hill, in Jane Flatt ? (the flat above Jane Foot,) in the vug where everyone braves samples from, the broken up stuff on the floor that some people have been known to lay amongst, could loosen more than was wanted, it could certainly make your eyes water, or help to train for singing soprano.

If you know of any more, let us know the location.

- - -

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS.

- - -

All correspondence etc relating to the Newsletter to be sent to:-

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