

Forthcoming Attractions

If you have altered your Meets Card as per last newsletter I hope you left room for any further alterations, the first one being:-

North Wales Meet, evening of 26th May to 30th May, 1978. Leader - H. Houghton

The campsite has been rearranged at the head of Cwm Pennant at map ref SH539492 (Sheet 116). To get there - drive as far up Pennant valley as possible, after going through the gate with the tin for 10p's fastened to it (do not contribute cos campsite fees cover this) you are nearly there. Where the road finishes turn left across the concrete bridge and camp anywhere in the field up to the fence. Fees 10p/person/night + 10p car. Toilet at farm or lots of bracken about? The programme is flexible, but we hope to include both under and above ground covering lead, copper, slate and granite workings and machinery. Don't come and you'll miss a meet of a life time. Anyone not camping with us meet at campsite no later than 9-30am.

Hilton Mine & Smelt Mill project, July 8/9th 1978. Leader M. Goth

Camping will be on the army bivy area. Members wishing to camp will be taken there on Sat afternoon. This site can only be used on this occasion

The aims, on this initial meet, are primarily to make a start on the excavation of what is thought to be the old smelt mill, and to start to tidy up generally underground e.g. re-stacking the debris, removing rubbish etc.

Meet on both days at 10-30am in the lay-by on the A66 opposite the Warcup road, map ref NY753158 (sheet 84 Teesdale). (Meet here for any future Hilton Meets.)

Annual Dinner Sat 7th October, 1978. Time 7.00pm for 7-30pm.

(At Harefield Hall Hotel, Pateley Bridge. 4 course menu of traditional Xmas fare for £3.75 each.

Harefield Hall is now under new management, so this year we won't have to endure the medieval music and even older jokes, so we can instead enjoy the guest of honour.

On the booking form, on the last page you will find provision for names to be nominated for the following Honours:-

- 1) Founders cup - presented to any member/s for outstanding dedication to the aims of the Society in the current year.
- 2) Presidents' Piton - for the person who achieves the most meritorious performance during the year.
- 3) Golden Chicken - for the greatest act of ineptitude during the year.

Nominees are judged on their merits (or oratory ability or lack of in the case of the metal feathered replica.) by an impartial Barmaster with occasional help from the rest of the members forming the Barmoot Court.

The completed booking form to be returned to Mrs J. Guthrie, 186 Station Road, Billingham, TS23 2RT no later than 16th September, 1978 accompanied by the full amount of £3.75 each.

Camping is available at Riverside Caravan Park, Lofthouse Road, Pateley Bridge. Map ref SE 154657 (sheet 91).

Caradon Hill. Meet Report 24th/27th March 1978. John Keating and Roy Shambrook

Good Friday. The Meet was attended by the two leaders, a member of the Trevithick Society (Mrs Gill Burke), and two junior (prospective future members?) of the Northern Mine Research Society. After arriving at Butterdon Mill at 5am Good Friday morning, and after the usual "settling in" period, a pleasant day was spent inspecting the setts of Wheals Wrey, Ludcott, Treweatha and Hony and Trelawney mines - some excellent specimens e.g. galena, fluorite and spar being obtained.

Saturday. This meet was a little better attended, with 5 members of another society turning up. After leaving Butterdon Mill at 9am the group - 11 persons in all - made their way to Crows Nest village, where after leaving the cars on the approaches to South Caradon mine dressing floors, a short tour was made through the western section of South Caradon, viewing Jope's shaft (140 fathoms) and engine house (in an excellent state of preservation), Pearce's shaft (120 fathoms), and Old Sump shaft (250 fathoms), before going underground into the Main Adit - situated

immediately beneath the Miners' Drying House complex, where subsequently the party divided into two groups - John Keating taking one group into stopes above adit level and examining lode structures, and the other party led by Roy Shambrook traversed a northern cross-cut into Old Sump shaft.

Returning to the cars, both parties made their way to East Caradon mine via Tokenbury Corner, where Williams Shaft (150 fathoms), Seccombe's Shaft (120 fathoms) Footway Shaft (60 fathoms) were inspected, together with the site of the mines coal yard and East Caradon Main Adit.

Saturday evening, a collection of slides were shown by John Keating illustrating various geological structures and faults in different areas of the British Isles.

Sunday. The cars left Butterdon Mill at 9.30am. Marke Valley mine was first visited, where Fawcett's Shaft (100 fathoms) in the eastern section of the mine, Deep Adit, and a Wheel-pit were inspected. Followed by Salisbury Shaft (148 fathoms), New Engine Shaft (112 fathoms), Childs's Shaft (60 fathoms) and the dressing floors where many buddles were still visible amongst the undergrowth.

Then the party proceeded up the northern flank of Caradon Hill, through West Rosedown sett, to the Liskeard & Caradon Railway to Wheal Jenkin, looking into Dunsley Wheal Phoenix and Whael Jenkin adits en route, prior to meeting up with John Keating and other members at Prince of Wales shaft, Phoenix United mine, where the Main Mill (erected 1907-1909) was visited, together with Seccombe's Shaft (230 fathoms), Prince of Wales shaft (200 fathoms), and Hamilton's shaft (60 fathoms) were seen. Members were also shown what is now locally known as the "Burning House" originally a calciner, now used as a depository for a collection of Broughams and farm carts. Members were also able to take a close look at Phoenix United Account House - a fine and imposing late Georgian structure now a private residence, and its Auction Window, where pitches in the mine were auctioned to Tributors.

Monday. The inclement weather that day restricted the programme to visits to the Middle and Eastern sections of South Caradon mine, where Holman's (210 fathoms), Rule's (230 fathoms) and Kittow's shafts were inspected, the latter having three inclines meeting under the one shaft collar - a most unusual arrangement.

Further deterioration in the weather, forced a premature return to the cars at 3pm, when the Meet closed.

According to a report in the Yorkshire Evening Post of April 25th, "Bewerley Mines Ltd which has offices in London, had filed a planning application to carry out mineral workings and erect buildings on Bewerley Moor and in Greenhow village.

The company, which last mined there in 1966, wants to extract flourspar, barytes, lead, zinc, silica and limestone, all of which are known to be there.

A Harrogate planning spokesman said the mining would cover four square miles around Greenhow village and would extend to the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Bewerley Mines plan to erect workshops, offices locomotive sheds, a stone-crushing plant and an explosives magazine. A new dressing mill would stand on the site of the old smelt mill at Cockhill mine."

Oldham Mining Equipment

If anyone has been in the habit of dealing with Casey Bros of St. Helens, their cap lamp business has now been transferred to J.A. Jones (Mining), 19 Simons Close, Glossop, Derbyshire. Tel Glossop 5750. There is no mention on their price list of a replating service, but they seem to stock most spares and various bits.

Surplus NMRS publications

Yet another hopeful wanting to beg, buy or swap any out of print or unwanted copies of our publications. He says he has some early copies of the PDHMS Bulletin he would be prepared to exchange for the above. Anyone interested contact:-

P.J. Challis,
43 Fieldway,
Liverpool 15.

Tel Liverpool 7227754

Did Miners have very special compasses?

"Sir Walter Scott's Journal for Monday 2 March 1829 contains the following passage: 'Dined at the Royal Society Club and went to the Society in the evening. There was a paper read by Mr Bauld engineer upon the Subject of the miner's compass and the variations to which it is subject from magnetic and electrical qualities in the box of the compass itself or in different substances which approach the needle. One thing struck me as curious, namely that the affection of the needle is not in proportion to the mass of the attractive substance but to its proximity to the implement. Thus an iron buckle placed near to the compass will occasion a greater variation than a ship's cargo of iron bars stowed at a greater distance'."

Any information on the use of a compass by miners would be welcome; and in particular whether the type of compass used was sufficiently elaborate or special as to be a suitable subject for a paper read to the Royal Society (of Edinburgh). It is tempting to suggest that miner's was a slip of the pen for mariner's, but Scott certainly wrote miners. There is no reference to Robert Bald's paper in the printed transactions of the Society."

The above was submitted by one of our members, W.J.Craig, but if replies are sent to me (H.Houghton) I'll pass them on - might even filch some of them for use in a future newsletter.

Buckden. Meet Report 23rd April, 1978.

The Meet for me started at 8.30pm Saturday night when John McFarlane asked me to lead his Meet for him 'cos he was "reight pooley", though I think the reason is because he went to his map ref on sheet '89' and couldn't get across from Workington in time. (He must be attracted to his metal feathered friend and want to win it again next year).

On Sunday 30 or more members met at Buckden (as per O.S. sheet 98) and led from the rear most proceeded up the gill in the general direction of the mine. A rest and explanation was had at the old smelt mill which we excavated 3 years ago. This could do with a day spent tidying and rebuilding the remains, and if any member has had any experience in trapping Moles exports his services could be used here! There is evidence of a fair sized colony, going by the number of hatched metal eggs! At this stage it was noted that we had lost our sole wet-suited member, he was later found to have melted due to this year's day of summer.

Inside the mine 19 adults, a child and a dog spent varying lengths of time poking and crawling about and most of the readily accessible parts of the mine were visited by varying combinations of bodies. Ken and Ray, as is their wont, met up with us as we were on our way out.

The rest of the meet went for various walks in the vicinity, though not all of a mining nature, "been pub lunch daddy".

Note. If anyone has found a dog's lead somewhere in or just outside the mine, please let me know, 'cos my dogs lost one. No reward. Ta.

Daily Mail snip Battery operated train to take tourists through an old lead mine is being planned at Thornthwaite, near Keswick, Cumbria.

Book Reviews.

Lead Mining in the Peak District G.H.Brewerley. Dalesman Books 1977 28pp.

The author of this work seems to have used, as a basis for this booklet, a similarly titled publication issued by the Peak Park Planning Board in collaboration with the Peak District Mines Historical Society. It is a pity that Mr Brewerley did not read the latter more carefully since this would have helped to prevent this Dalesman publication from becoming a complete disaster. However, bearing in mind the familiar maxim that if one cannot say anything complimentary don't say anything at all, I fear that enough has already been said already?

"Caradon and Looe. The Canal, Railways and Mines" M.J. Messenger. Twelveheads Press, Chy Mengleth, Twelveheads, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 8SN. 128pp., 38 plates., 15 maps and diagrams. Hard back: £4.00; Card Covers: £2.50.

This book is the first definitive history of the Liskeard & Caradon Railway, the Liskeard & Looe Union Canal and the Liskeard & Looe Railway. The copper mines, granite quarries and the tin mines are dealt with, as are the men behind these enterprises. This book should not be confused with a similar title (Railways of Looe and Caradon) issued by Messrs Forge Books, which, although currently over £1 cheaper, ranks as a poor second to Mr Messenger's work.

"The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales. Pt 5. Aberdovey, Dinas Mawddwy and Llangynog" D.E. Bick. The Pound House, Newport, Glos GL18 1PS. 52pp + maps & illustrations. £1.50.

Part 5 of Mr Bick's excellent series on these mines is in similar style to the other quartet and, like the others, is filled with fascinating information concerning these little known areas. The best mines are described in the detail they deserve. In addition to mines of lead, the author also discusses the occurrence (and extraction of) phosphates, iron and - would you believe it - coal near Dolgellau, and last but not least, a short description of the life and work of Westgarth Forster, the well known mining engineer who was concerned with many Welsh ventures.

A hard-back, hand-bound edition of all five parts is now available, each signed and numbered with a comprehensive index, at the price of £8.50 + 30p postage. For orders of three or more Mr Bick offers a 25% discount, so have a word with friends.

(Field Meeting. An informal meeting for those subscribers to OMMW (above) has been organised by the author. This will take place at Dylife Mine (NGR. SN862940) on Sunday June 18th 1978 at 12 noon. Weather permitting, a walk will be made over to Pen Dylife and Dyfingwm before departing. No acknowledgement necessary.

R.H. Bird

British Mining No. 8.

Material for this next Memoirs should be in the editor's hands by June 30th in order to keep to the proposed publishing programme and to allow the 'decks to be cleared' for another issue of Mr Foster-Smith's series in late Autumn.

Lost

- 1) If any member is fossicking around Hartsop Mine in Patterdale and comes across a kit bag containing hammers, chisels, and a carbide lamp would they please drop a line to Geoff Rose, 25 Ratcliffe Road, Sileby, Leics, who would be pleased to offer an astounding reward for the return of same. Rumour has it that said bag also contains auriferous samples and some mouldy sarnies!
- 2) Would all members please check their bookshelves for the Library copy of Robert Clough's 'A Treatise on the Exploitation of Mines' and either pass it to a committee member or direct to the Librarian:- E. Nutter, 38 Skipton Old Rd, Colne, Lancs BB8 7AF.
- 3) Dog's lead (see Buckden Meet Report).

John Hunter, our current affairs in Weardale correspondent, who resides in South Africa has sent a little more follow-up on the Weardale Lead Co:- "Swiss Aluminium Mining (SAMUK) not only acquired the flourspar mining and milling operations from I.C.I but it has also contracted Matthew Hall Ortech to design, supply and erect a fluor-spar processing plant at Rookhope. The plant is scheduled to come on stream in January 1979 and will have a capacity of 70,000 tonne/year of acid grade flourspar as well as metallurgical and premium grades and a small amount of lead concentrate. The value of the contract is reported to be nearly £2million, and the plant will handle the output of several mines in the northern Pennine area.

The British Steel Corp is also planning expansions for its four Weardale fluor-spar mines, and a plant is to be built at West Blackdene.

Further south, in Derbyshire, Dresser Minerals International has acquired the old Hopton Works (now renamed Ryder Point) near Matlock. This has an installed capacity of 80,000 tonne/year acid grade filtercake, and can be readily expanded to 130,000

tonne/year if sufficient resources are discovered in their 10,000 acres of acquired mineral rights."

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Mount Wellington Tin Mine closes

Due to ore of poor tenor, high pumping costs and a fall in the world price of tin, notice has been given to 350 workers at the Mount Wellington mine near Truro. Development of the Mount Wellington concern started in 1974 and since then the Government have provided more than £1.8 millions in loans and grants. In addition, the company's shareholders have provided about £8 millions, Wellington has been facing pumping costs of around £½ million a year and since nearby Wheal Jane will be affected by the stoppage of Wellington's pumps, the former could well find themselves pumping both mines' water - a not unfamiliar occurrence in metal mining history in the south west - and recently Wheal Jane have had enough problems to surmount without this added expense.

In fact, reports in the Mining Journal (April 28th 1978) indicate that, unless there is some quick Government action, Wheal Jane is to close within the next few weeks. Jane is currently pumping 20 million litres/day (about 4,399,375 gallons) and experienced a loss of £400,000 last year despite heavy investment which included a deepening of the workings. There can be little doubt that, if Wheal Jane is continued, not only will it be necessary to cope with Wellington's water but also probably the whole of the drainage of the district which includes the nearby United Mines and Consols - the former's water already pouring into Wellington's workings to such an extent that attempts have been made to lower the level in this old and extensive mine to little avail. If Wheal Jane goes to the wall, another 418 jobs will go with her; a bitter pill to swallow in an area of very high unemployment and a great disappointment to a hoped-for mining revival in the West Country.

R.H.B.

Oil Strike West Craven

This sensational Head-line appeared in the Craven Herald last February. Upon reading further though, the residents of Horton-in-Craven had better wait a while longer before donning night shirts and yashmaks and applying to join O.P.E.C.

Cliff Oil Ltd., are carrying out under licence geological seismic survey and drilling a shallow exploratory bore hole about 350 metres deep. The operation is costing £70,000 and is expected to take about 6 weeks.

To date, according to NMRS spies, no oil has been found and drilling goes on.

For Sale

The following publications are available from Bob Guthrie, 186 Station Road, Billingham, TS23 2RT. (Prices include post and packing)

		<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Vol 2 No 3	Memoirs 1973	£0.70	£0.70
* Vol 2 No 4	" 1974	£1.00	£1.00
British Mining No 2	Bay Mine, Wanlockhead	£1.25	£1.40
British Mining No 4	Mines of Anglesey & Caernarvonshire	£1.00	£1.35
British Mining No 5	Memoirs 1977	£1.40	£1.75
British Mining No 6	Mines of Merioneth	£0.90	£1.35

Titles not shown are out of print. * A few copies only.

Also we have now sold out of car stickers, but metal lapel badges can still be obtained from John McNeil, 12 Woodville Road, Brierfield, Nelson at 35p collected, 45p posted.

Meets 1979.

If you are prepared to lead a Meet next year, please contact John McNeil at the above address.

All contributions/comments for newsletter to be sent to J. McNeil, 12 Woodville Road, Brierfield, Nelson.