

Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter November 1979

Abay
NORTHERN
MINE
RESEARCH
SOCIETY

Subs

If you would like to be a member of NMRS next year then your subs are now due (by 1st January anyway). Unfortunately we have had to make a small revision of some of our rates - Full and Family members may pass to the next article - the rest read on.

The new rates for 1980 will be:-

Full	£4.00
Family	£0.75
Associate	£4.00
Student	£4.00
Junior	£4.00
Overseas	£4.50

You will appreciate from the quality of material that we produce, without taking into account normal Society running expenses, that we just cannot afford to operate for less than £4.00 per member. We hope that all those affected by these increases will continue to give us their support and enable us to maintain our high standards. A renewal form is attached for your use, and if you could complete and return it as soon as possible to the Treasurer (Mrs S.M. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY) it would help to make her job a bit easier.

To enable us to keep costs down as much as possible, your Membership card will be sent to you with your February 1980 Newsletter. This will save at least £20 in postage alone. Therefore if you do require an acknowledgement immediately please enclose s.a.e. with your renewal.

Meets Leaders for 1980 or
Your Society Needs You

We desperately need volunteers to lead weekend meets for next year. If you know of any mines in an area that you think would be good for a meet, please come forward and offer to lead a meet. You do not even have to be an authority on the area, all you need to know is the rough location? of a few mining sites for members to fill a weekend looking and poking at them. We could even come to an arrangement whereby you act as guide and we'll lead the meet! Failing this are there any mines/sites/areas you would like to attend a meet at? If so let us know.

All interested in helping please contact John McNeil, 12 Woodville Road, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancs BD9 5RW as soon as possible.

Easter Meet - Cornwall

The Cornwall Meet for 1980 will be led by Bob Burns and will cover the Tamar valley. As last year, we are staying at Butterdon Mill (N.G.R. SX295662) because of the value for money for camping/accommodation/facilities found there before.

If you don't want to camp, there are 12 brick built holiday bungalows available for hire at very reasonable rates - e.g. they sleep 6 persons for £30 per bungalow/week, (no extra to pay for gas, hot water etc). This year we've been offered a 'discount' for numbers. So if you would like to be included in a block booking let me know, at the latest by Xmas, and we'll take it from there. At these prices it's as cheap as camping. First come first served.

Please contact H. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY and enclose s.a.e.

Publications News.

Since its introduction three years ago, the Society's Monograph series has proved to be an outstanding success. The current trend has been for members researching an area or mine to produce a lengthy paper on their chosen subject - too long for the Memoirs - which is why the Monographs were initiated. This, coupled with the wider appeal of these volumes and consequent greater circulation and sales has meant that monograph material now far outweighs the shorter papers. Without exception, these

monographs are most important contributions to mining history and every effort is being made to issue them as soon as possible. The following titles are either in preparation or awaiting issue:

The Gallantry Bank Copper Mine, Cheshire. C.J. Carlon
The Mines of Grassington Moor and Wharfedale. A.P. Finch
The Cwmystwyth Lead Mine. S.J.S. Hughes
The Rheidol United Mines. R.J. Prichard
The Teign Valley Silver-Lead Mines. C.J. Schmitz (reprint).
The Non-ferrous mines of South Wales area. J.R. Foster-Smith
The Welsh Potosi Mines. M. Palmer
The Caradon Mining Area. R. Shambrook
The Phoenix Mining Area. R. Shambrook
The Manganese Mines of North Wales. C.G. Down

In consequence of the above, substitution of a Monograph for the annual Memoirs is now being considered for 1980. If this is decided upon DM 14 will appear as The Manganese Mines of North Wales by Dr Down, of the Royal School of Mines. This is a most important and hitherto little known subject worthy of early publication. The Memoirs will of course remain but may have to appear more sporadically as and when material is available.

Since Mr Foster-Smith's The Mines of Cardiganshire is now due for imminent release will members requiring copies please order direct from Bob Guthrie, 186 Station Rd, Billingham, Cleveland TS23 2RT, and NOT the editor. Those who have already sent in an order need NOT re-order from Bob. Invoice will be sent with publication.

R.H. Bird. Editor.

Grinton Meet Report 29th July 1979.

J.T. Crompton

The day at Grinton was fine, warm and sunny although at the campsite by Surrender Smelt Mill we had some heavy showers.

At the start of the Meet, five members and families being present, we set off for Devis Hole mine, bypassing the smelt mill with the view to look round on the way back. Behind the mill is a strong resurgence of water from a shaft. Does anyone know where it comes from?

After 10 minutes of speculation we walked up to the tips of the mine. The entrance of the mine has over the years become silted up, but about 50' up the adit a shaft had been sunk alongside the level and an entrance made through the side of the arched level. Upon gaining entrance to the level a crawl begins for about 20 yds in a space of 18" high to some drums 15" in diameter through a fall. It is at this point that the larger members became very frustrated, even 'Ferret' Landless our Human mole, shaft descender and bad air tester etc said he could not get through! One member did get through only to be brought out again because no one else could.

After this failure and amongst much muttering I suggested a trip down How level. We walked across the moor having a good view of the hushes surrounding How level. After lowering the water and walking up the level two white fish were spotted by Cliff who tried to catch one. Upon closer inspection they turned out to be white trout. However with disturbing the sediment in the level we lost them in the murk.

The level went for about 600 yds through some very good stone arching where it ended in total collapse. After surfacing about lunchtime we looked round Grinton Smelt Mill, one of the best preserved in the country.

After lunch we discussed and decided to visit Faggergill mines in Arkengarthdale. At this point the intrepid Mike Gill turned up, "Nice to see you lad", who tagged along for the afternoon. (Is it true that the rails were left in levels so that he can get his wheelchair in?).

The entrance to Nut Hole is largely silted up, but on gaining entrance to the mine it becomes very obvious that a large volume of water goes down it in the wet season. The way the veins have been followed in the mine reminds one of the Plungago mine in the Lakes. With time being short a proper exploration was not possible although it was obviously an extensive mine. After shedding all the bynow muddy gear we adjourned to the nearest river for a dip. Thanks to all for a very good day.

Information Wanted

Have you any knowlegge of a S.Yorks (where?) community called Denaby Main? It is understood that this and Cadeby Main were part of 1 company. Information is wanted about the mines or the village which is beleived to be one of the few owned by the companies who ran the mines. Also wanted is information on the markets of the coal produced. If you can enlighten-please contact me (H.Houghton) and I'll pass it on.

A new member, D.Proctor, c/o BEC Minerals PO Box 568 Windhoek 9100, S.W.Africa, wants to buy a copy of BM 7 Conlig and Whitespots - anybody know where he can get one?

Strontian Meet Report - 25/27th August. - - - -

This year Argyll was a little more kind to us, we did not get rained on and had the pleasure of seeing a pair of eagles with one young. But to the Meet itself:-

Saturday morning a total of 12 bodies and one dog set off to have a look at the most westerly workings, Corantee Mine, It was my hope to get underground here, as all I had done before was to look at the surface workings and the wheel pit.

Harry and family started ahead of the main group and took the main path up to the mine. I started about an hour later and led the rest up the side of the forest along a open fence - alas this was not a good idea - it had been ploughed!!! It took some time to get on to the path. Not a good start, but nobody actually gave up and went home, so at lunch everybody seemed prepared for a good look round.

The wheel pit was studied along with several bits of ironmongery, this included one ore crusher which was very worn and some large cogs. The remains seemed to suggest that an aerial ropeway was in use at the mine.

We entered a level whose first few yards were quite wet, only two people had bothered to bring their wet suits (mine was still reclining in the back of my car, and anyway it seems to have shrunk). The level in general was in good condition and two areas of stoped out ground were examined. The second had an ore chute in its entrance and possibly an ore bin above it, daylight could be seen and as we later discovered the ground above was stoped out to the surface and were really massive. Harry, of course, had his camera so a good photo session was had? A Backass is gently rotting over a fairly large hole in the floor, which is water filled and it was fairly obvious that we were standing on timbers covered with stone.

At the end of this level were some steels, a bucket and some very long rods (plain bar, approx 10' long x 1 1/2" dia) Any ideas?

The sun was still shining when we came out and I wanted to look in an adit which I thought was dry, Ah well we can't be right all the time, but it would be nice to be right some time, I sank into mud, the water lapping gently above my knees - I pushed Harold in front, after all he had his wet suit on, it went about 60 yds and ended in a collapse.

The upper workings were looked at, but apart from the one which connected with the level, all were water filled, so we all made our way back down the hill to the cars via the path this time, which appears to have been an old mine track.

Sunday we were down to 7 in all. Whitesmith was given a good going over. Mike Goth bashed at just about every rock he could find, which kept him fairly busy - its quite a large dump. The more foolhardy of us went to the west end of the workings to have a look at the head of a 600' shaft, now mostly water filled. This is the oldest part of the mine, and looks it, so in the end only three of us had a look. It appears as if a large amount of deads are being held up be exceedingly little!

We next entered the open cast workings nearer its east end, and a walk to the west takes you into a very nice stope, which has not broken the surface. About 70' or so underground some fine Brewsterite was found and some levels explored, all of which appear to have been back filled.

After lunch we took a look at the Smelt Mill, now the Post Office, then lots of tea and coffee seems to have been consumed - after all it was Sunday.

In the evening 3 members of the party wanted to have a look down the Engine Shaft, which is normally covered with a wooden capping, now broken probably by a large amount of flood water during the winter months. The first man down was Harold. Last time 75' of ladder reached the rubbish at the bottom of the shaft, alas now we were 25' short and Harold had to hang on to a ledge whilst extra ladder was attached. During all this a rock was somehow dislodged and bounced off Harolds head. Upon his arrival at the surface he was given a very thorough examination by the expedition consultant

psychiatrist, Mr M Green. Great alarm was experienced at first when the patient refused to react to stimuli and said that his head felt numb. Irreversible damage to the brain seemed to be confirmed by his inability to correctly interpret such intellectual questions as "Add 2 + 1" or "Spell your name in capital letters". Things indeed looked grave until somebody asked whether or not he could have answered correctly before his accident. Judgement was differed until more exhaustive tests could be carried out, if more advanced technology ever became available. However it was strongly suspected that Harold had not taken his brain with him, at any rate no sign of it was found. Harold later proved his worth by ably pushing uphill single-handed a car which had stalled - the driver playing us a very nice tune on his gearbox when he eventually started down the hill.

Monday we walked over to Fee Donald, the most easterly workings. We now had 12 bodies. A trial was found about half way between Bells Grove and Fee Donald, these are not marked on the map. The Mine was given a general look over and a 50' shaft was descended, and a suggestion that ablockage could possibly be did. If this is done and the level goes, it should get us into the main workings, at present totally inaccessible except for this one shaft.

On the way back Mike pointed out two hand dressing floors on the Bells Grove Mine, and the site of a Horse whim.

Many thanks to all those members and none members who attended and made the meet very successfull.

J.G.Landless.

New Publications from the Shropshire Caving and Mining club

(1) SCMC Journal 1978, a bumper issue containing articles on the coal and limestone mines of the Coalbrookdale area; the Dayton Colliery in the South Shrops/Worcs Coalfield and the Wells of West Shropshire. The metalliferous mining area is covered in two articles, one of which describes recent attempts to save the Snailbeach area from the threat of land reclamation.

78 pages, 9 pages of maps and diagrams, A4 size.

(2) Account No 12. Survey of the South Shropshire Metalliferous Mining Area. A very recent survey of features remaining and of prospects for underground exploration carried out by the Club. This formed part of the evidence presented to the Inspector at the recent examination into the Structure Plan of the Salop County Council.

71 pages, 13 pages of maps and diagrams, A4 size.

Both publications can be obtained, price £1.40 each, post free, from Dr.I.J.Brown 95 Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorks.

Welsh Mines Society

The possibility of a society for those interested in Welsh metal mines and mineral was discussed at Dylife on 10th June, 1979.

It was suggested a useful purpose would be served by beginning with a low-key approach in which an informal society meets occasionally and circulates a newsletter to keep members in touch, the frequency (hopefully twice a year) depending on cash and material available.

This was agreed, and in the absence of other volunteers, I offered to act as general factotum for the time being. Please forward anything suitable for publication relating to Wales - news, comments, discoveries, developments etc.

The annual subscription is 25p - S.A.E. The next meeting is at Cwmystwyth, date to be arranged.

D.E.Bick, The Pound House, Newent, Glos.

Lakes Meet Report 22/23rd September.

H.Houghton

The first I knew that I'd been volunteered to lead this meet was when I saw it on the Meets card. 'Plenty of time though to con someone else into leading it' thought he - no such luck and by Sat there were about 2 dozen folks all wanting to know where I was taking them.

Now knowing that we have members who know a lot more about this area than I do, I had enlisted the help of John Hodgkins who drew up an itinerary complete with potted history and map refs to aid me and to try to convince the meet that I knew where we were going.

Fortunately for me (for the rest of the meet too - 'cos if I got lost so did they)

I managed to enlist the services of a guide. Hower by name, answering to Richard, he said he would guide us as he knew all the places on my list - but he wouldn't be meet leader.

At this stage, some of the group discussed what we had planned and decided to go fell walking instead - "Cos there's too much walking involved in visiting those sites and there's nothing there anyway" !!! (one must have been all of 500yds from the road)

The first stop was just outside the campsite at 'Ellers', a mine John Hodgkins has asked if we could gain access to. The last time he was there he'd been evicted. The mine turned out to be in a gents garden, and after explaining who and what we were, he was only too glad to co-operate.

There are two levels - one each side of the stream - and evidence suggests that they were first worked about 1500, for copper. There is also the remains of a wheel pit in the stream bed. The first level, the dry one to the left of the stream, only goes about 20-30yds to a fall and is open to the surface in one spot - so facilitating the convenient disposal of refuse over the years. The second level goes about 80-100yds to a fall and is about 4' deep in water, 2' wide following the vein at an angle of 45°.

Upon reporting back to the owner, he showed us where he had blasted out the rock to extend his house, this being the probable cause of the fall in the first level which, he had been told, used to re-open into his garden on the opposite side of his house, though no visible evidence remains of this. He then asked us if we could identify an object for him which he had found in his shrubbery. This find, we were able to tell him, was an ore sorting pan. It was made of copper in a dish shape, approx 3' across by 6" deep with a pouring lip at one side and a handle at the other.

After a quick lunch, and partially dry, we made our way to Brandle How Mine, but only explored one of the 2 levels - the other looked evil. The level we looked at became, after about 30yds, a flat out crawl over gravel, until, after another 30-40yds, at a 'T' junction the way was too low to proceed. A branch off to the left of the main passage led into a stope, but didn't lead anywhere. Outside the various remains were inspected before going across the road to Brandle How Old Mine. Here we found a level that went for about 200yds to the forehead. Someone then got the bright idea that as we were already $\frac{1}{2}$ way up the hill side, we might as well walk over to Goldscope via Yewthwaite. After sending the ladders and rope with the cars to meet us in Newlands valley, we found a shaft just below the crest of the ridge so had no way of exploring this, except by dropping stones down. At the Yewthwaite dressing floors, which look as if they're in the process of being landscaped, Richard pointed out to us the shaft down which the local vicar was once reported to have thrown himself down to commit suicide. Unfortunately the shaft was blocked at 20' and he died of starvation!

Goldscope Mine was the last to be visited, the site of the underground water-wheel drawing the greatest interest.

By the time we arrived back at the campsite it was turned 7 o'clock, so whilst meals were being prepared others were dispatched to search for fire wood and/or substance to drink round a campfire.

On Sunday we went, once again, to the Slate mines at Honister. This time we found 4 inclines (3 internal ones) and went into some quite old workings - very impressive, even if it is all uphill.

Thanks to all who attended and especially my 'helpers'.

"Death of last Billy Bank miner of Hudswell" - Stockton and Darlington Times 18/8/79

The last surviving miner of the Billy Bank Copper Mine at Richmond, which was opened in 1906 and mined until 1912, Mr George Edward Close, has died aged 88.

Mr Close, always known as Ned, had lived in Hudswell all his life, except during the 1914-18 war. He started work as a lad in the copper mine, of which he father was foreman.

From there Mr Ned Close moved into coal mining, then to the building trade, from which he retired when he was 67."

Thar's gold in them thar Welsh hills

This Welsh gold comes from an old working at Donddu in Snowdonia. The Assay Office assessed one specimen at 555oz. of gold to a ton of rock, and the thickness of the deposit is better in more recent samples. In South Africa a mine might produce

loz. to the ton.

The deposit comes in small clusters of rock - not great seams as in South Africa or Australia. The gamble - and it is a big one - turns on how many of these clusters there are.

At the beginning of the century the mine employed more than 200 men.

At present the mine runs about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles into the mountainside at a depth of about 50ft. One partner says "We are about to reach the real gold deposits. Then we will clean up and go. It will be months, not years."

The above is an extract from the Observer of 16/9/79.

Peak National Park Study Centre

The following courses may be of interest for 1980:-

2/4th February	Mines of the Peak District.	£28.00
27/29th April	Practical Field Archaeology.	£27.50
28th May/1st June	Canals of the Peak District	
28th May/1st June	Railways of the Peak District	
21/28th July	Activity Hols. Caving etc.	£79.00
11/18th August	Caves, Rocks and Fossils	£69.00
18/25th August	Industrial Archaeology	£69.00
18/25th August	Canals and Railways	£69.00
2/4th November	Practical Industrial Archaeology	£29.00
9/11th November	Caves of the Peak District	

For further information, please contact - The Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB. Tel Hope Valley (0433) 20373/20693.

News

Moors Line No 47 (Magazine of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway)

Application has been made to National Park planning committee to re-open Sil Howe Whinstone mine, at Goathland, as a tourist attraction. Owners are David Wilson Mining Co.

Above submitted by Alston Moor Mines Research Group.

Additions to Members List

Full

		Tel.
R.D.Attwood	Ty'n-y-Cae, Llanbedr, Conwy, Gwynedd, LL32 8UU.	Tynygroes 653
R.M.Bell	5 Daleside Close, Irby, Wirral.	051 648 6002
C.R.Blick	16 Sycamore Crescent, Bawtry, Doncaster DN10 6LE.	0302 710213
J.R.D.Blyth	34 Cowdray Avenue, Colchester Essex CO1 1UT.	79845
C.G.Down	Dept. of Mineral Resources Engineering, Royal School of Mines, Imperial College, London SW7 2BP.	01 368 2643
M.H.P.Green	Moss View, Cragg Foot, Carnforth.	
J.M.Harrison	Westwood, Startforth, Barnard Castle.	0833 38358
D.Hayton	12 Greenhead Lane, Utley, Keighley. BD20 6EL.	Kly 62476
A.F.Head	107 Longhurst Lane, Mellor, Nr. Stockport.	061 427 1378
W.J.Hill	64 Emerson Ave, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough TS5 7QQ.	826147
S.J.S.Hughes	Leri St, Talybont, Cardiganshire	
M.A.Jeffery	12 Boundary Rd, Northgate, Crawley. RH10 2BT.	Crawley 21527
D.B.Jeffrey	35 Castle St, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7AD	21455
A.K.Jones	Dept of Botany, University of Liverpool, PO Box 147 Liverpool L69 3BX	051 727 4092
R.J.King	Dept of Geology, University, Leicester LE1 7RH.	771754
M.J.Littlefair	Station House, Boosbeck, Saltburn, Cleveland TS12 3AF.	
Llechwedd Slate Caverns	Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd LL41 3NR.	076 681 306
Mrs E.E.C.MacLeod	Flat 2, Canton House, Pant-y-Afon, Penmaenmawr, LL34 6DY.	
Mrs M.Palmer	54 Chapel St, Measham, Burton-on-Trent DE12 7JD.	Measham 71720
D.S.Potter	2 Didsbury Terr, Kinder Rd, Hayfield, Stockport.	New Mills 44152
Mrs J.Potter	as above (Family)	
R.E.Starkey	15 Whitehall Dr, Dudley, W. Midlands DY1 2RD.	Dudley 59983
B.Wilkinson	19 Larkholme Parade, Fleetwood.	2594
E.H.Wilkinson	Croziens Croft, Moss Lane, Silverdale LA5 0SS.	701118
R.A.Williams	9 Conyers Ave, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4SZ	0704 64682

Associate

R.J.Prichard Ithilien, Llangwyfon, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 4HA. Aber.3181 Ex291

Student

D.S.L.Fraser Tennent House, Ecclefechan, Dumfrieshire DG11 3DF. Abon 875490

Overseas

W.D.E.Proctor c/o BEO Minerals, P.O.Box 568, Windhoek 9100, S.W.Africa.

Changes of Address

A.P.Finch c/o Mining Dept, University of Leeds, Leeds.

J.M.Holmes 12 Longroyd Road, Earby, Nr Colne, Lancs BB8 6NZ

W.Mallett 1 Higher Glen Park, Pensilva, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 5QR. Rilla Mill 62898

Telephone No.

A.Winrow Doncaster 833788.

Annual Dinner Report - 13th October, 1979.

J.H.McNeil

This year's Dinner was held at the Bridge Hotel, Ingletton and had a record attendance of 61 members and friends providing a good opportunity to meet many new members as well as the usual regulars.

After a good meal we were admirably entertained by our guest speaker, Mr Jack Pickup, accompanied by his wife Sue. Jack is chief rescue controller of the local, Clapham based, Cave Rescue Organisation, the largest and busiest such organisation in the country. Jack's amusing accounts of some of the stranger aspects of rescue work also served to embarrass one or two of our members who live locally and are rescue team members. One such event involved the unsuccessful (?) use of explosives by our resident explosives expert.

Next on the agenda for the evening came the presentation of the Society awards. This year the Founder's Cup (awarded to the person who has shown outstanding dedication to the aims of the Society) went to Mike Gill for his persistent endeavours in the office of Recorder. The President's Piton was presented to Vaughan Landless for the most meritorious performance during the year.

Next we came to the more serious proceedings with the presentation of the "Bronze Fowl on Wood Plinth". This year with few other contenders the Golden Chicken was awarded to Dr. Malcolm Green for his various acts of ineptitude. The "thing" was so easy to get rid of this year that it was even unnecessary to fabricate evidence similar to that so prevalent in previous years. John Crompton came a pretty close second but congratulations Malcolm from a former owner on joining the rather elite group of Chicken owners. (They don't just give it to anybody).

It is worthy of note that this year the original bowler hat was re-introduced into the proceedings. Caleb Wade explained the origin of the hat and described how he once defended the honour of the hat and the society.

The formalities now over there was ample time to socialise and enjoy the extension to normal licensing hours.

Pie and Pea Supper - Sat 10th November, 1979.

H.Houghton

A fortnight before the event was due to take place we were all ready to cancel the pies, due to the very low response (20 replies including 2 prepared to give a talk). Fortunately though we were inundated!! with last minute bookings. Eventually 50 had booked with several persuaded to lecture. In future years numbers may have to be governed by the size of pans available for boiling peas in.

The general meeting preceding the Talk-in was, for a change, very well attended. It would be nice if every general meeting had this response.

John McNeil started the Talk-in with a picture quiz of 25 slides showing mines in various parts of the country - the winner, Mike Gill who recognised 24 out of the 25, won himself a free years subs for next year (donated by John Mc.).

John Crompton showed a selection of slides, choosing for his subject the Lake District. The quality of his shots shows that he has mastered his new camera (well it was new when he bought it). Some of his subjects were very well known, but many were taken in places not so frequented by general trade of 'Thos Cook'.

John Hodgkins was next with slides and talk about the sand mines around Castleford and Pontefract in the W.Riding of Yorks (non of yer new Metro rubbish with this kid). Underground mining (by pillar and stall) ceased in the 1940's when opencast mining was favoured because of its cheapness. The sand was much in demand since the industrial

revolution being very pure, which made it ideal for casting and moulding cast-iron and for the manufacture of glass.

The Basal Permian Sands occur above the coal measures and are overlain by the Lower Magnesian Limestone. In Yorkshire they extend from Knaresborough in the North to South Anston in the South, and stretch Eastwards to Selby. The horizontal beds vary from 1-5 metres in thickness, the upper layers being of finer grains are the most usual mined.

The mines are all at relatively shallow depths often within a few metres of the surface. In fact quite a few gardens and drives in the area have dropped into the old workings at various times.

John and his colleagues also showed a 5 minute home movie that they made underground in the sand mines. John explained his lighting techniques, comprising in the main - bulbs, Flying Flying Fortress landing lights, Mini Hubcap reflectors and car batteries - linked together by various bits of wire/string etc. (John assures us that he showed Sid Perou his idea and Sid promptly went off and made his TV series).

After the main event of the day - a superb 6 course meal, comprising pie, peas, gravy, mint sauce, bread roll, cup of tea (just think what you missed) - Arthur Roberts had brought slides of copies of very old mining photos. It's hard to appreciate, in many cases, that today's pile of rubbish was at one time such a wealth of mining interest. In fact it was disputed whether or not some of the mining sites shown are, in fact, the same sites that we know now. A very interesting collection, that Arthur has obviously spent a great deal of time and effort collecting. (Anyone having any old mining photos please let Arthur have a copy, send them to him c/o Beamish Open Air Museum, Beamish Hall, Stanley, Co. Durham.)

"They always save the best till last" was David Leonard's comment at the start of his contribution. 3D complete with 'specs' obtainable from the usherette!! Caving photos with a difference, shots of levels and passages look as if they go somewhere and underground formations take on a new dimension! - in fact lots of the audience were at times leaning over sideways to try to look round corners or under ledges. The true size of such things as stalactites was much easier to judge due to the stereoscopic effect. This type of picture, correctly taken, certainly puts most others to shame and several members were keen to look further into (sorry!) the subject.

As well as talks, photographs, maps, plans, minerals and artefacts were on display. Mike Gill the recorder brought several items from the records to give members some idea of what we have. The whole of this was interspersed with many cups of tea and plates of biscuits, handed round by cheap labour taken on for the occasion.

Many thanks to all who participated and helped to make this yet another success.

Book Review

Cornish Explosives by B. Earl. 317pp., 113 plates., appendix, index. Trevithick Society. 1978. £8.50 (+50p post and packing to non members).

This magnificent tome details the early growth and use of explosives as applied to mining and quarrying up to the present day and is a truly significant work.

Gunpowder was known to the Arabs as early as 700 A.D. and was used in China and India before the 8th C for making rockets and incendiary devices. Its rock breaking properties were first recorded as being used in a mine at Ober-Dibersstollen, near Budapest, in 1627; blasting in metal mines did not occur in Britain until about 1638 when gunpowder was first tried at Ecton Copper Mines, Staffordshire.

The ingredients of gunpowder, charcoal, sulphur, and saltpeter imbued its manufacture with an aura of revulsion and the sinister since originally saltpeter was obtained from the nitrous exudations from heaps of decaying human excreta and similar detritus and conditions for this process were to be found in hot, dry climates. Thus, initially, its importation made it an expensive item. Ultimately, when applied to mining and quarrying the establishment of gunpowder mills quickly followed and the book describes the manufacture of the explosive through the mixing, milling, drying and 'glossing' stages - punctuated with frequent ignitions and loss of life.

A lengthy chapter is devoted to the manufacture of fuse (always, irritatingly, spelt 'Fuze' in the book!) which replaced the powder-filled straw or goose quill previously used to carry the flame to the charge. Dickford - whose invention this was - found his fuse much in demand since it was much safer and more reliable and he quickly set up a factory at Tuckingmill to make it. Dickford's invention was to spread throughout the world and many a miner and quarryman lived to thank him for his

humane development.

Subsequent chapters deal with high explosives and describe early experimentation with nitroglycerine - frequently fraught with big unintentional bangs - and later Nobel's more stable dynamite and guncotton. The making of these dangerous H.E. concoctions is also described together with the devices for initiating detonation.

Later compounds such as fumelessite, ammonal, blastine and burowite are the subject of a later chapter and the book concludes by outlining high explosives still in use, such as the ammonium nitrate/fuel oil explosive, Anfo.

The book is copiously illustrated and gives a very detailed insight into this little-recorded branch of mining and quarrying. A minor irritation is the inconsistencies of spelling but mining and industrial historians will find this work fascinating - not to mention the I.R.A.!!

R.H.B.

Industrial Archaeology - A Directory of Local Organisations.

The above Directory, published by Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust in association with the Association for Industrial Archaeology by Phillimore & Co Ltd is now available price to Members £1.95 inc. Postage etc. All orders with money to J.H. McNeil 12 Woodville Rd, Brierfield, Nelson Lancs before 1st February, 1980.

The Brynfelin Mine, Near Beddgelert, Caerns.

W.G. Jones

Sheet SH 54 of the 2½" Ordnance Survey at 588.478 shows 'Mine (disused)'. Here was the Brynfelin Mine and this paper seeks to add to the very sparse information that appears to exist about this enterprise.

Quite oblivious to the fact that nearly 60 years were to elapse before he was to retrace those steps, a precocious 6-year old skipped happily behind father and grandfather down the Aberglaŷlyn Road. It was 1911 and the small party had just lunched at Beddgelert's 'Royal Goat' and were taking their 'constitutional'. Perhaps "Grandpa" had ulterior motives for it was he who soon found the end of an old ropeway. This was sited to the West of the road and on the gently sloping mountain which flanked it, but a few hundred yards from the illustrious hotel.

Although the hillside was screened by trees and scrub, iron stanchions about twenty feet high and standing firmly in concreted foundations could be seen. The iron cable which they carried sagged between posts but still carried some of the buckets that had carried ore from the mine to this roadside loading bay. Here and there, odd buckets lay on the ground rusting. These buckets or scoops seemed to a child "positively huge" but there is little doubt that they were "quite large", approximating over 3' in length.

With the passing of the years, it happened that Beddgelert was chosen as the venue for a Sunday motoring trip in Wales and the alfresco lunch was taken at the first point it was possible to pull in off the road, past the Hotel. The mind is beyond understanding in the multiplicity of items that it cat loques and 'photographs'. Nevertheless that feeling of "been here before", can be quite awesome. There were no stanchions, no cable and no buckets for re-assurement..... but here and there, dotted along a route were to be seen some little piles of concrete which at one time had been foundations. Something clicked, and with curiosity piqued, the search for some more supporting information was on!

The Librarian's assistant at the University College of North Wales was kind enough to search through the Catalogue of the Seavell Manuscripts in an effort to track down an item of 1841-43, but this proved only to be a settings book for the nearby Sygun Mine. The prospect of success seemed better with the Druids Inn Mss. where an 1853 report of Copper Mining in the Beddgelert region was cited. But this turned out to be relating to the Fridd Isa Mines, which had been situated over two miles away to the South West and in any case was 'round the mountain'. Of Bryn Felin there was no mention.

It was a kindly Colonel Goodchild (of Plas Oerddwr) a local landowner, who when written to, replied in such terms that the matter could hardly be regarded as dead. The good Colonel not only confirmed the existence of those piles of concrete and their original purpose, he pinpointed the old mine and stated that "he could not think of anybody now living in the area from whom further information might be obtained". As the mine had last been worked in the later part of the 19thC, this all seemed to tie up nicely.

To the Record Office at Kew must be given the credit of coming up with the "last word". Their Search Assistant routed out and provided a photostat of "The Memorandum of Association of the Brynfelin Mining Company Limited". Seven Directors had

subscribed in total for eighty five shares of £5 each and the company was to engage in "developing the mineral resources and exploring the ground for copper, lead, tin and other metals in upon and underneath the land called or known by the name of Brynffelin in the Parish of Beddgelert". The Capital was £6000 and the Board of Directors headed by William Hawes, Estate Agent of Manchester, included a Mining Agent, a Mine and Quarry Agent, a Master Miner, a Manufacturer, a Surgeon and a 'Gentleman'. Such was the optimism that prevailed in that April of 1861. For some years nothing can be gleaned of the fortunes of the mine but by 1878 the patience of the Registrar of Companies was about exhausted, for in a letter dated 18th July of this year, he complains of the Company's failure "to provide the required returns for the years 1862-1877." !

But he stuck to his guns and kept up the pressure and in response to his statement that the Company would be "struck off" he finally received the undernoted letter under the signature of five of the original Directors:-

"We the undersigned beg to give you notice that in consequence of this Company finding insuperable difficulties to the carrying out of the intention expressed in the Memorandum of Association registered 19th April 1861, no articles of association were executed, no shares issued and no party ever had any interest in the undertaking besides us who signed the Memorandum and Mr. Edgar Williams Yarrow and Mr. Horatio Wilson who also signed the same, and it has been resolved by us and them to abandon the undertaking and we therefore give you notice that the undertaking is abandoned accordingly."

This letter is undated but the London Gazette of 7 March 1882 carried notice of the Company's dissolution.

One is tempted to say that never did so few, do so little, and took such a long time about it!

Something obviously went very wrong at the inception. Perhaps the climate of 1861/2 was unpropitious for the raising of Capital in another one of those Welsh mines and investors had become wary and cried "Enough" !

More Information Wanted

Does anyone know anything about any or all of the following:- Jehu HITCHEN, Mining Engineer: b) J.R. EDDY, Mining Engineer: c) S. EDDY, Mining Engineer: and d) C.E. VARLEY, Mining Engineer and Civil Engineer.

Also

The Society's copies of some of the pre 1970's issues of the Newsletter have gone astray. If anybody has ANY copies of their own that we may borrow/beg to copy ourselves for the Society's Records could you please let us have them.

Replies for all the above to Mike Gill, 38 Main Street, Sutton, Keighley BD20 7HD.

NAMHS

Who? you may well ask! This is the name so far decided on for the proposed National body of Mining Societies etc. At the inaugural meeting at Matlock on 16th September 1979, attended by representatives from most of the major societies, the concept of a national body finally looks like getting off the ground.

A start was made by electing 4 caretaker officers consisting of Chairman & PRO - Dave Carlisle (EMRG); Vice-Chairman - Pete Jackson (AMRS); Secretary - Adrian Pearce (PDMHS Ltd); Treasurer - Ivor Brown (SCMC). All Societies represented chipped in with £5 each to pay for any necessary expenses.

Two Insurance Brokers had been invited to the meeting and are now trying to get a good deal at Lloyds for Liability Insurance cover.

It is proposed to hold the 1981 Mining Conference at Ironbridge, hosted by the SCMC for 12-15 June 1981 (Prov) to cover Fri-Mon (the 2 outer days being optional. In alternate years to the Conference it is proposed to hold a joint meet. We offered to organise the one for 1980 at Wanlockhead for August Bank Holiday.

The next meeting to be held at Matlock on 25th Nov, 79 at 11.00am. Main items - insurance, and draft Constitution.

Oh Yes - NAMHS stands for National Association of Mining History Societies.

Annual General Meeting. (The NMRS one)

To be held on Sun 10th February, 1980 at the Village Hall, Sicklinghall, Nr Wetherby at 2.00pm. All members are encouraged to attend.

All items for N/L to H. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY.