

Future Meets etc.

May 24/26th - Wales - as February Newsletter

June 21/22nd - Nenthead - as February Newsletter

Jly 5th - Caphouse Colliery - as February Newsletter

Aug 3rd - Scout Moor Quarries - as February Newsletter

Aug 23/25th - Wanlockhead - as per February Newsletter, but see also Booking Form attached to this Newsletter. Some Hotels in the area for B & B (dearest first) - Menckfoot Lodge tel 06592 382; Nithsdale Hotel 06592 506; Blackaddie House Hotel 06592 270; The Glendyne 06592 203.

Oct 11th Annual Dinner to be held at New Inn, Clapham, Nr. Ingleton. (This is only an appetiser). Menu - Soup; Casserole Chicken with Mushrooms and peppers done in wine and cream, with 2 potatoes, sprouts, carrots and swede; Sherry Trifle; Coffee & Mints. Provisional price £5.75. Time 7.30pm for 8.00pm.

There is limited accommodation at the New Inn and members are asked to make their own arrangements direct with the Hotel. There will be camping at the home of one of our members - H. Barnes, Castle Hill Farm, Higher Westhouse, Ingleton.

A booking form for the Dinner will be included in our next Newsletter (due out in August)

For Sale

NMRS Metal Lapel Badges - 35p each if accompanied by Sae, 50p if not - are still available from our Sec. J.H. McNeil, 12 Woodville Rd, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancs BB9 5RW.

Publications

Members cannot have failed to notice the gradual climb in the cost of our publications. Inflation is just as real for NMRS as anyone else and to maintain our standards this increase has to be passed on in our aftersales prices. On the top of recent postal increases our printer informs us that the costs for printing are to rise as from the current issue, due to his escalating overheads and materials costs.

Despite this, every effort is made to keep prices within reason and, judging from prices marked up on the flimsiest publications in bookshops, I hope our volumes can still compete in terms of value for money. Consider for a moment the above information in relation to your annual subscription of £4; at the current rate of inflation this should be at least £4.80 and we are not yet halfway through the year! Come 1981, the 'housekeeping' will just not run to it!!

The following publications are still available:

BM9 The Llandudno Copper Mines. C.J. Williams	£1.80
BM10 The Mines of Montgomery & Radnorshire. J.R. Foster-Smith	£1.35
BM11 Memoirs 1979	£2.25
BM12 The Mines of Cardiganshire. J.R. Foster-Smith	£2.25
Index & Bibliography of Society publications 1960-1980	£0.45

Prices are to members only and include post and packing.

From Mrs H. Bird, Publications Aftersales, 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield. S31 7EL.

Book Review

It is my pleasure to review the latest publication by R.T. Clough - a reprint of the classic architectural study, "The Lead Smelting Mills of the Yorkshire Dales and Northern Pennines".

This work must remain the definitive study of Yorkshire Smelting Mills and in its original form pioneered interest in the subject.

The reprint includes many additional unpublished photographs and drawings and provides comparative detail of Northern Pennine Mills and communities. The comprehensive, updated, bibliography gives an insight to the research undertaken in the production of this scholarly work, which follows Mr. Clough's tradition of beautiful presentation.

An invaluable reference for the serious student of Mining History.

332pp. Price £25 post paid from the Author, Stoneleigh, Utley, Keighley.

(A copy of the original book has just been sold in auction for £48.)

N.C. Gill.

Alderley Edge Meet Report - 23rd March, 1980.

C.J. Carlon.

Seventeen members gathered at Beacon Lodge, Alderley Edge for this meet, the object of which was to examine the surface and underground features of copper, lead and cobalt mining on this pleasant wooded hill in north-east Cheshire.

The mines at Alderley Edge are somewhat unusual in that they worked sandstones impregnated with metallic minerals, rather than the more usual 'vein' or 'flat' type mineralisation so typical of Britain's non-ferrous ore deposits. Mining may have begun over 3000 years ago, although the main periods of intermittent mining activity date from the late 1600's, and in particular from 1857 - 1878.

The party, led by Nigel Dibben (from the Derbyshire Caving Club) and Chris Carlon (geologist and member), first examined the Wood Mine workings. Entering via its now only (locked and barred) entrance, which resembles a 'manhole', and the long adit, the labyrinth of stopes and interconnecting levels were examined. Several people commented upon the more obvious features of the mine, its dryness, lack of timbering and good air circulation. Features pertaining to the mining methods were pointed out; the 'mousehole', water passage and ladder shaft negotiated and patches of rich ore still in situ observed. The dinosaurs footprint preserved in the rocks at one point in the mine was indicated, Harry attributing it to a hopping biped desperate to relieve itself!

After 2 hours underground the party was led over part of the surface workings by Chris Carlon (who would like to thank Harry for volunteering him in his absence to write this report). The workings at Stormy Point were examined, early mining features indicated and the relative importance of the Romans and King Arthur to mining at the site discussed at some length. At Engine Vein Mine, the superimposition of mining techniques and periods of activity was demonstrated in the conspicuous opencast of the mine. This well known landmark or 'scar' on the Edge is soon to be partially infilled and barred in an effort to reduce its undoubted danger to ill-experienced and ill-equipped people who are tempted to venture into the opencast.

It being a rather warm, dusty day, the party then retired to the 'Moss Rose' to sample the local 'brew' and examine mine plans of the area.

Notes

1. The Dept. of Energy has issued oil exploration licences to Rio Tinto Zinc Oil and Gas Co Ltd., covering parts of West, North and South Yorkshire. The licences are valid for 3 years and while permitting prospecting, carrying out geological surveys and drilling to 350m for the purposes of obtaining geological information they do not cover drilling for or producing petroleum.

2. Boulby Potash Mine. After a period of doubt the mine owners announced in February that mining operations were to continue following improvement in production and prospects.

Further to

G.A. Schnellmann has sent the following information on the mining activities at Wanlockhead.

" I was interested to see that the historical note on Wanlockhead (Feb. N/L) stopped short at 1930.

There was a very determined effort to resuscitate it in the early 1950's and production was in fact achieved for a while. My firm, Mackay and Schnellmann, were appointed consultants and J.R. Foster-Smith, a contributor to your records, was manager.

The project was initiated in 1951 by the Siamese Tin Syndicate, curiously enough. After a shareholders rumpus instigated by the stockbroking fraternity, Rio Tinto (as it was then known) joined forces on a joint venture. A company called Lowland Lead Mines was formed, but I cannot recall whether this was before or after Rio Tinto joined in. The mine was unwatered, much diamond-drilling (underground) was carried out and development headings were driven. A particularly interesting operation was the driving of a long exploratory crosscut, I can't recall on which level, which intersected several veins, some of them previously unknown. A treatment plant was designed and erected by R.O. Stokes & Co. Mining started and production was achieved, but eventually Rio Tinto withdrew because it wasn't a big enough operation to interest them. If my recollection is correct, they had in mind a minimum production of 1500 tons of run-of-mine ore a day. In my opinion, if their ideas had been less ambitious the mine would still be running. I can't recall in which year operations ceased, but I can well recall pleading in vain for the management to put a water-tight stopping in the crosscut so that hopefully at some future date a vertical shaft could be sunk (the old inclined shaft was never satisfactory) and mining re-started without a de-watering operation."

Additions to Library.

Arthur Roberts had donated several copies of the transactions of The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy given to him by the late W.T. Shaw.

Mongo Gill

Prior to the recent society trip to Mongo Gill Hole, Greenhow Hill, two members of our society landed themselves and more particularly the society in trouble with the Council of Northern Caving Clubs by visiting Mongo Gill without permission to do so.

In future any member proposing to visit Mongo Gill must have written permission to visit the hole from the Council of Northern Caving Clubs and must strictly observe the rules concerning access imposed by them.

Under no circumstances must the Society's name be brought into conversation or correspondence on any matter from which even the slightest repercussion might occur. This is particularly important where the society's name is used to gain access to sites and this should not be done without the prior knowledge and agreement of the committee.

We have had a whisper into the ears of the two members concerned.

Dudley tunnel and Limestone Workings of the Blackcountry.

M. Guest.

Limestone mining began in the Blackcountry two centuries ago and was centred under and around the town of Dudley. The limestone was obtained mainly to supply the iron industry of the Midlands but some was also burnt in kilns to produce lime for agricultural and building purposes. The stone was mined from both the thin (upper) and the thick (lower) beds of Wenlock limestone, which outcropped at both Castle Hill and Wrens Nest Hill, Dudley, and continued across the Blackcountry with other workings at Mons Hill and Walsall.

The first limestone mined was at Castle Hill on the estates of John, 2nd Lord Viscount Dudley and Ward, and he built a 755 yard branch canal, known as Lord Ward's Canal, to serve his mine and kilns. This included a 226 yard tunnel, completed in 1778, which terminated in the underground workings in the thick bed. On completion a notice appeared in Aris's Birmingham Gazette to promote trade:

"The Public may now be supplied with any Quantity of VERY GOOD LIMESTONE, to be delivered into their Boats at Four Shillings per ton; or upon proper

Notice may have their Boats loaded with Lime upon the most reasonable terms."

These workings were later opened out to the surface to form Castle Mill Basin. The tunnel passed through the thin bed of limestone before reaching Castle Mill Basin and subsequently this bed was also worked and again the area around the canal was opened out to the surface forming Shirts Mill Basin. The rock face separating the two basins is an enormous coral reef which is now of great interest to Geologists and the area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The next stage was to extend Lord Wards Canal by driving a tunnel (the main Dudley tunnel) from Castle Mill Basin, through the ridge straddled by the town of Dudley to gain access to the south (River Severn and London via Thames and Severn Canal). This, however, proved to be a very difficult but the tunnel was finally completed in 1792 after 7 years struggling. The tunnel was just over 1½ miles long (132 chains, in fact) and nominally 8 feet wide with no towpath. The tunnel was built using the technique established by Brindley at Harecastle about 20 years earlier. A straight line was surveyed over the hill and about a dozen constructional 'pits' were sunk, at about 10 chain intervals, down to the level of the intended tunnel. Headings were then driven outwards from the bottom of the shafts; the centre of the tunnel and the level being taken from the ends of the two vertical lines. The separate headings then eventually met to form one continuous tunnel but at Dudley, as in other early tunnels, inaccurate surveys meant corrections midway between shafts were necessary. In fact, where the tunnel encountered a very hard Basalt intrusion, two headings were out of alignment by more than "half a hole" and a pronounced "kink" resulted which prevents one from seeing right through the tunnel although one can see both ends of the tunnel from the middle.

Shortly after leaving Castle Mill Basin the tunnel passes through Castle Hill fault and then passes through the thick and thin beds of Wenlock limestone again. When the tunnel was cut as far as the thick bed, quarrying began and a vast open pit was excavated, comparable in size with Castle Mill Basin. Then, as the workings face retreated a branch canal was built along the strike of the limestone, and, the junction with the main tunnel was roofed by a vast groined vault, known as "Cathedral Arch", to prevent rocks from falling into the canal, and this brickwork was covered with several feet of spill. This is thus an early example of the "cut and cover" method of tunnelling. The

branch-canal eventually penetrated 418 yards into the mine and other branches were built to connect with thin bed workings and also back through Castle Hill fault, further along the hill, into the thick bed workings. The limestone was removed leaving huge caverns with massive pillars left in to support the roof, which consisted of a hard band of limestone about 18" thick.

The last section of the underground system to be built was the Wrens Nest tunnel which was started about 1805 as accessible deposits of limestone on Castle Hill were becoming worked out. This branch led to a cavernous underground basin at the East Mine of Wrens Nest Hill 785 yards from Castle Mill Basin and was extended 400 yards to an even larger basin at the West Mine about 1815. This was the most impressive of the mines - the bed of limestone lying at about 60' to the horizontal was worked out to the surface, a vertical distance of about 250 feet, where it was known as the Seven Sisters Cavern after the seven pillars across the entrance.

Although mining was coming to an end on Castle Hill by the early 1800's, the resourceful Earl of Dudley soon realised money could be made by opening the mines to the public. Consequently, gas flare lighting was installed and miners were employed to inspect the pillars in the caverns each day and fix wooden blocks where cracking occurred. A bandstand was constructed in the heart of the main cavern and there are many stories of parties of up to 20,000 people being entertained at one time!

Mining ceased altogether in the 1920's, although parts of the system were converted for munitions storage during the War. Unfortunately, most of the Wrens Nest system was infilled during 1972/3 as it was becoming increasingly unsafe due to pillars "wasting", but most of the workings of Castle Hill are still accessible and only subject to natural deterioration. The remains of the mines at Walsall are quite interesting also in that although the system there is 99.9% flooded/collapsed, the part still intact is only accessible via a 3-foot diameter shaft, 30 feet deep directly below a manhole cover in the public footpath!

During the 1930's Dudley Zoo was set up on Castle Hill and several of the quarries were used as enclosures for lions and bears etc. The quarries which extended underground were ideal for the bears for hibernation but no one thought to seal them off from the rest of the system until a few bears were suddenly found roaming round the neighbouring village of Gornall!

In 1962 Dudley tunnel was threatened with closure and with being culverted to form a railway embankment but the Dudley Canal Tunnel Preservation Society was formed to fight to keep the tunnel open. The tunnel was however officially abandoned but the D.C.T.P.S. managed to keep it open by running boat trips and eventually in 1973 it was reopened officially. The D.C.T.P.S. was reformed into the Dudley Canal Trust who have maintained the tunnel ever since and operate tunnel trips using the country's only electric-powered passenger-carrying full length narrowboat "Electra". Now the tunnel lives again and at its northern portal the open-air Black Country Museum is being formed.

If anyone would like more information on the Dudley tunnel the D.C.T. publishes an illustrated guide book, price 75p (including p & p) which is available from:- Martin Guest, 35a Victoria Rd, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, WV10 0NG.

At present the workings of Castle Hill are freely accessible (in fact the D.C.T. obtains stone for repair work from the mines by boat) but are deteriorating rapidly. If anyone would like more information on the mines I may be able to help, so please contact me at the above address. For any cave divers: Mining was also carried out at a level about 100 feet below the canal but these workings are now all flooded to canal level and little is known of them.

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Bill Jones, our correspondent in Abergele, North Wales, was reading the Liverpool Daily Post of March 25th and 27th. When he woke up he couldn't avoid noticing these two little items. Unfortunately..... he had omitted to switch on the immersion heater as instructed by his wife two hours before, and this completely knocked out of his head those pithy comments (to which we are all so well accustomed!)

"A disused railway line which served lead mine workings at the Van near Llanidloes has been offered to Montgomery District Council by British Rail. Since the Council has plans to carry out a land reclamation scheme in the area, it is being recommended to go ahead and buy the line."

"A mining museum will be opened at Glyn Ceiriog, Clwyd, on July 1. A former slate mine is being converted with examples of mining machinery and illustrations of the 19th century mining techniques."

The Society Records

Apart from reports to General Meetings, many new members will have no knowledge of the Society Records.

It has always been our policy to keep records of mining in Britain and wherever possible to make them available for publication. Because of the early geographical spread of membership, most of the items donated related to the northern districts; we would appreciate any material from other areas.

We have a collection of mine plans which are available for inspection by arrangement. Unfortunately we have no facilities for providing copies but members are welcome to trace and make notes.

The files contain members reports and donations, along with photographs of sites. We have an index of mining sites which is slowly expanding - giving details of shafts and levels, their depth, location and where appropriate a reference to the record files.

We must urge all members who collect their own private records to make them available through publication. The material is lost when it is sat on your shelves and it is in the interest of all that this does not occur.

Mike Gill. Hon. Recorder.

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Next Years Cornwall Meet

The general consensus seems to be to hold the Meet next Easter in the depths of darkest Cornwall - in the Redruth/Cambourne area. Any member/s being intimate in this area (so to speak) please volunteer as leader/s or even just as guide.

Does anyone have a favourite campsite in the area that they can recommend - desirable qualities, if possible, would be cheap! cheap! cheap! with a bog and a tap to hand. If this can be accompanied by bungalows/caravans to let so much the better. If these too are cheap, better still! Send any information or comments/advice on this topic to me.

Don't keep secrets - let us know.

H. Houghton.

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Imperial College Library - Mining History Sources

The Royal School of Mines, founded in 1851, became part of Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1907, which in turn became a School of the University of London in 1908. More than a century of education in mining, mineral processing and geology has resulted in the RSM having extensive library collections of historical value. More recently the College has become host to the Annan Collection on mining history.

The Annan Collection is housed in the Lyon Playfair Library (the central College Library) and comprises an excellent range of volumes (some 600 in total). Its particular strength is in books published before 1800; many volumes are in German or Latin, covering early mining in the central European orefields. On the other hand, the RSM collection (housed in the Department of Mineral Resources Engineering) is primarily post 1800, and in particular 1880-1930. In total there are some 2700 books, as well as periodicals. Both collections include both British and international material.

To give some idea of the scope of these two collections, highly selective lists of some interesting volumes relevant to Britain are given overleaf. It should be emphasised that, in general, the collections are unlikely to be of great value in researching the history of specific mines, although certainly there are several cases for which a lot of detail of this sort can be gathered. Their greatest value will probably lie in researching the history of mining techniques. The development of shaft sinking, mining methods, winding, haulage, blasting, pumping, ventilation, mineral dressing, surveying and mining geology - to name only a few - can all be investigated from these sources.

Through the courtesy of the College Librarian, it is now possible to arrange for Society members to consult these collections. Prospective readers should write to Mr A. Whitworth, College Librarian, Imperial College of Science & Technology, London SW7 2AZ, stating (a) that they are members of the Society, (b) whether they wish to consult the Annan or RSM collections, or both, (c) the date and time (Monday - Friday only) of their proposed visit and (d) the theme of their research. For more general enquiries - for example, whether the collections are likely to prove useful for a particular research study - members are invited to write or phone Dr Chris Down, Department of Mineral Resources Engineering, Imperial College of Science & Technology, London SW7 2BP, Tel 01 589 5111 ext 1541.

(On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Dr Down for negotiating this arrangement. H.H.)

Annan Collection

Agricola	Various publications (1530-1580) and Hoover edition (1912)
Articles of agreement for working mines in Cardigan and Merioneth (1670)	
Articles of agreement re copper mines of England (1725)	
Atkinson	Discovery of Gold mines in Scotland (1619)
Borlase	Natural History of Cornwall (1758)
Budge	Practical miner's guide (1825)
Burrow	'Mongst mines and miners (1893)
Bushell	Mines Royal in Wales (1641)
Calvert	Gold rocks of Britain and Ireland (1853)
Cochran-Patrick	Early records of Scottish mining (1878)
Cramer	Assaying of metals (1741)
English	Companies working British mines (1826)
Forster	Mineral veins etc. Newcastle-Cumberland (1821)
Grant-Francis	Smelting copper at Swansea (1881)
Hardy	The Compleat Miner (Derbyshire) (1748)
Heton	Mines in Britain and Wales (1707)
Houghton	Liberties laws and customs in Derbyshire mines (1681)
Lean	Duty of Steam engines in Cornwall (1839)
Leifchild	Cornwall mines and miners (1855)
Liberties and customs	of England mines (1645)
Mander	Derbyshire miners glossary (1834)
Pettus	Mines in England, Wales, Ireland (1670)
Pole	Cornish pumping engines (1849)
Pryce	Mineralogia Cornubiensis (1778)
Savery	The Miner's Friend (1702)
Shiers	Mine Adventure (1700)
Simonin	Mines and miners (1867)
Sopwith	Mining in Alston, Weardale, Teesdale (1833)
"	Mining in the Forest of Dean (1841)
The Cornish Stanneries (1751)	
Tapping	High Peak minerals and customs (1851)
Thomas	Chasewater-Cambourne mining district (1819)
Unwin	Tin exports from Cornwall (1790)
Violet	Gold and silver rights in Britain (1660)
Vivian	Accounts of Cornish copper mines (1800)
Waller	The value of mines in Wales (1698)
Yalden	Mines of Sir Carbery Price (1701)

Mineral Resources Engineering (RSM) Collection

Journals

Colliery Guardian - 1894 to date (some missing)
Mine & Quarry Engineering - 1936 to 1959
Mining Journal - some early issues 1870-1880, 1909-1919 and 1954 to date
Mining Magazine - 1909 to date
Proc. South Wales Inst. of Engineers - 1924 to date
Trans. Fed. Inst. Mining Engineers - 1889 to date
Trans. Inst. Mining Metallurgy - 1892 to date
Trans. Nat. Assoc. Colliery Managers - 1903 to date
Trans. North of England Inst. Min Engineers - 1852 to 1889

Books

Penzer	Tin resources of British Empire (1921)
Brown	Rating of mines and quarries (1898)
Hall	Geology of West Cornwall (1914)
Edge	Geophysical prospecting (1931)
DSIR	Iron and other ferrous ores in Britain (1918)
Lupton	Electricity in mining (1906)
Le Neve Foster	Ore and stone mining (1910)
Davies	Machinery for metal mines (1902)
Mechanical coal cutting	(1905)
Charlton	Tin mining, dressing, smelting (1884)
Davies	Slate and slate quarrying (1878)
Volk	Haulage and winding in mines (1903)

Pamely	The mine wagon	(1914)
Louis	Dressing of minerals	(1909)
Hoover	Floation	(1912)
Farey's Derbyshire		(1815)
Wallis-Taylor	Aerial tramways	(1898)
Hunt	British Mining	
Greenwell	Mine Engineering	
Pamely	Colliery Manager's Handbook	(1893)

Mongo Gill Meet Report, 30th March, 1980. - - - -

B.Bond

This meet was attended by 14 members. With some brisk arranging of who would de-ladder, the bulk of members were happy to visit the system via North Shaft Entrance through to Shockle Shaft, a group of 4 going Shockle to North and myself with a further group of 3 descending Shockle to East Hade.

If ever there is a need to 'beat' the mad rush Earby Pothole Club have the answer, by 10.30am the ladders were duly fixed to the top of Shockle and out came 3 wet-suited 'stalwarts'. "Glad you decided to ladder Shockle first" came the reply.

Mongo Gill must impress variety without severity, its 4 metre wide walkways to 1792 Cavern, delicate crawling past roof falls with ample formations, helictites and gour pools. Those members for whom it was the first time in Mongo found the place well worth their efforts.

Judsons Cavern became a meeting place for our own photographic group and those members passing through from North to Shockle under the guidance of Ian Gornwall. From here to J.J.Cavern a narrow crawl on the right was entered, decorative, this metre high passage returns to Judson Cavern Area. At our point of entry the whole floor area sounded distinctly hollow.

On our return to the entrance an excursion was made to Stream Passage, to beyond Roof Cavern. Stream Passage with a resemblance to the Kingsdale Master Cave has a totally different environment, an active part of the system, a further visit to beyond Sump IV is well worth a visit.

Shockle Shaft was ascended by 3.00pm, though at around 1.15pm a group were seen to 'hare' across the moorland from Shockle and make a beeline to the nearest ale-house. The warm afternoon certainly warranted such action.

Myself and E.Nutter laddered North Shaft entrance and squeezed our way about the tubes and crawls, south of Luckstone Level, the whole area is well fragmented.

Help Wanted

1. Bats in Cornwall

Avril Longman, Millcombe Cottage, Herodsfoot, Cornwall wants to know of any bats spotted in and around Cornish Mining sites.

If possible she wants to know how many; where seen and type. Write to her direct please. DO NOT send samples!

2. Old Slags

Don't forget to send Simon Hughes any old slags that you may stumble upon. He wants samples of ores and slags of approx 100 grms (3½oz) weight.

Send complete with map ref and details of mine where found to:- Simon J.S.Hughes Dept of History, University of Manchester, Oxford Rd, Manchester M15. Postage will be refunded.

3. In the same vein!

Oxford University are still wanting lgrm samples of lead and copper ores to help with their research.

Send all samples together with location found and if possible map ref to Mr C. Salter, Dept of Metallurgy, University of Oxford, Parks Rd, Oxford.

Hatched/Matched Dept.

1. Jennifer Griffin (the last Treasurer) is expecting a Griffin Jnr Mk II.

2. Among our latest acquisitions is a lad complete with carry cot.

Tamar Valley Meet Report 4/7th April.1980.

- B. Burns

About 16 members and guests assembled in glorious sunshine at Butterdon Mill on Friday morning. When it transpired that almost everyone (including yours truly) was suffering from a particularly nasty bug/backstrain/fatigue/plague etc. it was decided not to indulge in anything too strenuous. Consequently the party drove first to the site of Wheal Betsy silver lead mine on the western edge of Dartmoor, to see the pumping engine house, erected in the 1860's, together with the North/South line of shafts, while the mineral collectors set to work on the dumps.

At about 12.30pm, a loud rumbling sound from Harry's stomach was diagnosed as starvation and that his only chance of survival was an immediate pub lunch.

A tour of the Wheal Friendship arsenic calcining remains at Mary Tavy was cut short by a visit from the law, who pointed out that the landowner did not appreciate such visits. The next venue (Wheal Benny at Latchley) had received some unwelcome attention since last visited, the middle adit level had been polluted by the dumping of some form of sewage (pig - - - someone suggested). Thus despite some interesting relics to be found in the level? - e.g. parts of the flat rod system - the stench soon forced the entire party out into the fresh air. Further up the track we were shown a portal with a considerable amount of clear water issuing from it - some thought it more likely to be a culvert - but as no-one could be talked into bathing it was not investigated.

Whilst most of the party returned to Butterdon Mill, four of us visited Mr Jim Richards (the local authority on mines). On hearing that we intended entering the Wheal Fanny section of Devon Great Consols the next day, he revealed that the level had been gated and padlocked a few weeks previously. When this bad news was revealed to the rest of the party, and the remainder of the days unfortunate incidents were recalled, the meet leader was threatened with a certain 'Golden Chicken' award - much to the envy of Malcolm Green (the present holder) who had just arrived.

On Saturday morning it was decided to investigate the gated level, but on finding it to be well and truly barred, the party proceeded to an adit into the Wheal Maria section of D.G.C. This was found to be 3' deep in thick ochre. This did not deter Harry from asking for a volunteer to wade in for him. As the response was nil, the plan was abandoned. Following the by now mandatory pub lunch, the party proceeded to the banks of the River Tavy and, after wading across the river, entered the adit level of the reputedly haunted Devon and Courtney Consols. This was not revealed to the party until afterwards, but the ghost must have been on holiday as no-one had encountered any spectral manifestations. We attempted to discover whether adit level extended as far as Engine Shaft by proceeding beyond the stope above adit through chest deep water. Progress was eventually halted, however, when a winze extending from wall to wall was encountered. We then explored the adit level and stopes of New East Wheal Russel.

On Sunday morning about half of the party explored the Gunnislake Old adit, there being some excitement when good samples of wolfram were discovered and the hammering commenced (good job Harry wasn't with us - he being too ill to participate in active form) Later we met up with Jim Richards at Gunnislake and proceeded to Kit Hill where Jim led us to the site of a stope to the surface in a small quarry and then to a well hidden adit which reputedly interconnected with the stope. Having observed the 3' depth of cold water in the adit, the party decided to attempt the stope. Ladders were lowered and an advance party descended, only to find a flooded winze in one direction and a shaft blocked by brushwood in the other. Harry elevated Malcolm to "ladder expert" status and delegated the task of clearing the shaft to him. Meanwhile, Roy Starkey and I braved the icy waters of the adit searching for a connection with the shaft which Malcolm was by now being talked down. The adit was a crosscut intersecting three lodes, the last of which had been driven on, and extensively stoped both above and below adit. No connection with the shaft was found, this being confirmed by Malcolm who found the bottom of the shaft had run at 60' - 70'.

On Monday, the majority of the party accompanied John Keating to explore the Caradon area, while the rest walked to Wheal Wray, a few hundred yards up the road from camp, to examine the 60' shaft and the spoil heaps.

Thus the meet ended, as it started, in warm sunny weather. Who said it always rains in the South West?

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Apologies for the state of this Newsletter and for any omissions, inadvertent additions or any other mistake therein, but due to a sickness in the family, the N/L is slotted in between midnight and breakfast.

All contributions for August N/L to H.Houghton, 29 Parkside Rd, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY.