Library

Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter November 1980

Subs for 1981.

This could herald a sudden decline in membership. However we have had no option this year but to increase subs, not too exorbitantly we hope, just enough to adequately cover costs for next year and, with a bit of luck for the year after too.

Subs have been held at the present rate for Full members for the last 3 years, though you will notice when the balance sheet is published that subscribers and publications after-sales have helped to subsidise the general membership for the past year. Also to be taken into account is the fact that your membership fee now includes a payment for the Public Liability insurance cover, as announced in the August 1980 Newsletter.

You must agree that for what you pay you still get exceptional value for money.

Oh! yes, nearly forgot, the new rates are:- Full/Associate/Junior/Student Members £5.50; Family Members £0.75; Overseas Members £6.50.

A renewal form is attached, and if you could complete and return it as soon as possible to the address shown it would make the Treasurer's job that bit easier.(Don't miss the nomination of Officers on the back of the renewal form.) If you want an acknowledgement or receipt for your subs before the February 1981 Newsletter goes out, then please indicate and enclose S.A.E (if you don't, we won't!!)

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Meets

If you want any Meets next year then please hurry up and volunteer to lead one/some.

If you do not fancy leading a Meet, how about acting as guide around an area you know or like? If this idea appeals let us know and we'll do the organising. Even just to suggest somewhere you would like a meet to be held would help in compiling a Meets list.

All correspondence to John McNeil, 12 Woodville Road,Brierfield,Nelson,Lancs.

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For Sale

Society Badges.-lapel- metal. Obtainable from John McNeil (address above) at 35p if collected or 45p if posted.

Typewriters. Anyone wanting to buy typewriters? we can sell any number up to 2. No.1 is a runner - performs all its functions (I think) and is a bargain at any price. No.2 also goes.Performs any function not requiring accurate placing of the "T", and is also a snip.

Price:- Make us an offer we can't refuse!

P.S. at the price don't expect them to perform like I.B.M. Golf Balls.

Either/iether/awther in residence at 29 Parkside Road,Meanwood,Leeds LS6 4LY. 758505.

Publications still available from our Aftersales address:-

British Mining No.12	The Mines of Cardiganshire by J.R Foster-Smith	£2.25
British Mining No.13	The Mines of Grassington Moor & Wharfedale.N.M.R.S.Records	£2.25
British Mining No.14	The Manganese Mines of North Wales. by C.G.Down	£2.25
British Mining No.15	The Teign Valley Silver-Lead Mines,1806-1880 C J Schmitz	£2.25
Index and Bibliography	of N.M R.S.Publications 1960-1980 M C.Gill	£0.50

The above are priced to members only and include the cost of post and packing. B.M 15 is almost ready for issue and will be posted to those who have ordered it, when it is received from the printers.

water [illegible] high. [illegible] success. Another party made a further tour of Wanlockhead and Leadhills, and by evening tents,caravans, and mining historians had left for distant homes.

Bill Harvey.

Field Meet of National Association of Mining History Organisations.
Wanlockhead. 23/25th August,1980.

One aspect of the weekend on which all were agreed was that the weather was great. True the nights were cold, particularly when camping at 500M but the three dry, even sunny days seemed too good to be true. The Meet began with a visit to the Barjarg limestone mine near Penpoint. Scottish limestone mines come in many varieties and Barjarg is a good example of massive workings where the absence of deads has left huge spacious caverns. About 50 visitors found their way there without apparent difficulty on Saturday, and were rarin' to go long before the scheduled 2.00pm start. The quarry where the stone was first worked is now a jungle of nettles and firs, but in spite of misleading notices an advance party found the entrance and pored through. "Its not like a lead mine!" someone exclaimed. (Profound) Headlamp beams disappeared into the vastness and all stopped, awaiting direction. "Down to the right is the best route, Up to the left its all roof falls." Without hesitation the advance party set off up to the left. The next group were not given a choice, but were led off to the right and down a steep slope to the line of a tramway. En route the place where THE WATERWHEEL had once rested was pointed out. Although its now nearly seven years since it was rescued (see Society N/L January 1974) its present owners, The Scottish Society for the Preservation of Historic Machinery, seem unable to agree to a home for it. Sollution passages in the pillars were an interesting bit of speleo-geology, and it was suggested that the mud underfoot had come from these embryo caves. The tramway disappeared into a subterranean 'lake' and the party skirted its shore to arrive at a drystone wall about 1.25M high. Beyond it was what looks like a small quay, and across the lake was the entrance to an adit which led out near the lime kilns. On a much earlier occasion, May 1981 to be exact, a scantly clad Swedish lady-caver had led members of a NCMRS/CPC/CSS meet into the adit, but there seemed no inspiration to explore it on the present occasion and having looked at the roof falls, the party returned to daylight.

Across the main road and near the river Nith is the bank of three kilns where the stone was burned. The area is much overgrown, but the ruins of buildings and the adit portal could be discerned.

Sunday morning was spent at Wanlockhead visiting the Museum Cottage,Library, the Loch Nell Mine (illuminated and part of the museum complex) the Open Air Museum, and the exhibition of photographs etc that was currently running in the old schoolhouse. At midday, tea and sandwiches etc, provided the opportunity to meet and talk. Although no underground explorations at Wanlockhead had been planned, it wasclear that this was what many of the visitors wanted. Most adits around are run, and all shafts capped, but a hurried consultation with Museum reps led to an invitation to dig out the adit to the Long Drift, a late 17th century working. So a party set out for the lower slopes of the Dod, while others set out for the Leadhills mines, walking along the line of the old railway. This and the adjacent tramway track lead past the Glengonnar Mine, the ore bins and settling ponds, and Wilson's mine to the dressing floors. All were worked into the present century, but there is little to be seen on the surface today. The tour ended at the Miners' Library, founded in 1741. As well as the collection of maps, mine journals, bargain books etc housed there, the Library featured a small exhibition on the history of gold mining in the area.

Back in Wanlockhead the hard men were sinking a shaft looking for the rock at the adit. Tons of material were being shifted and success ever seemed inches away. However constant runs from the loose ground sapped enthusiasm and the attempt was eventually abandoned. Mine exploration is not a particular objective of the Wanlockhead Museum, and although serious work would be welcomed, there seems little interest in Scotland. A fact which surprised many of the visitors.

Monday had been left open, and the programme set out suggestions for visits to other mines etc. Unfortunately copies had not reached all the visitors, nor had their own ideas filtered back to Scotland. The local antimony mines, some of the few places where the mineral was worked in Britain, were an attraction and parties set off for The Knipe and to Glendinning. The hard men turned their attention to Milligans level, one of the drainage adits where a massive run had blocked the entrance and ponded the water roof high. Strenuous efforts were made to clear it, but again without much success. Another party made a further tour of Wanlockhead and Leadhills, and by evening tents,caravans, and mining historians had left for distant homes.

Bill Harvey.

Following the same drift!!! R.Vernon

On Sunday afternoon, 24th August, following the walk around Wanlockhead, I visited the Gasswater Barytes Mine with two friends from the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club. The Mine is situated about 4½ miles to the East of Cumnock. The main adit is at NS 655219.

The mine was worked intermittently throughout much of the present century, probably starting as opencasts. About 1920 the mine was worked by the Hedworth Barium Co of Newcastle who acquired the mining rights from the Marquis of Bute. In 1946 Anglo Austral Mines owned Gasswater and worked it throughout the 1950's. In the early 1960's Rio Tinto acquired the mine, but it was eventually closed in 1964.

Three main Barytes veins have been worked: the Main, West and Quarry, all coursing in a NNW direction, and hading to the south. The mineralisation had occured in a crush zone in Devonian sandstones. Occasionally the veins are displaced by the minor cross-courses.

The veins run for a distance of about 2 miles, north of and virtually parallel with the Gasswater valley. A surface tramway ran the whole length of the vein which was accessed by shafts and adits. The main working area was at the western end of the vein, where the main shaft is situated. The shaft collar is at 1055 AOD and went down 512', the deepest point in the mine. On being hauled up the shaft , the Barytes was taken by aerial ropeway to the mill some 2½ miles to the north-west,adjacent to the A70 trunk road and the railway. In the 1950's the Barytes was taken by rail to the chemical works in Wigan. The only structure remaining on the site of the main shaft is the brick built transformer house.

A mile to the east, the dumps of the South Mine form a conspicuous feature. This section of the mine was served by an incline drift. The run-in drift mouth is easily identified by the presence of haulage rope rollers in line with machinery mounts. At the eastern end of the vein there is evidence to suggest that access was via a shaft, although this is not obvious. There appears to be a concrete shaft cap adjacent to machinery mounts.

The veins were worked to surface over much of their length, and can easily be traced by larger stopes and open-casts. The vein was up to 26' wide in places, but carried a large proportionof country rock. Levels were driven at 100' intervals, and there were also 2 underground shafts, Jamieson Nos 1 & 2, to fascilitate ore clearance.

The general appearance of the vein at surface would suggest that the stopes are very unstable; judging by the amount of cratering which has occurred,some of which is very recent. It is understood that all shafts were capped, and adits blown in when the mine was abandoned, although one shaft was noted to be open at the western end of the main vein, in loose ground.

Altogether this was an interesting afternoon visit to a little known but a large producer of Barytes. And the views from this mine site across to the Highlands were stimulating.

On the Monday (25/8/80) I visited two Antimony Mines. The first being the Knipe Antimony Mine /Trial. The mine is situated some 3 miles SSE of New Cumnock at NGR NS 658104. at a height of 1750', on the north side of Knipe Hill which is composed of granite that protrudes through Silurian Sediments. A north-south vertical vein 12 to 18ins wide has been worked according to the Geological Survey for a distance of 30 to 50ft.

After a steep trek over marshy land hhe mine was finally reached and consisted of an upper and a lower level, both blocked, and attendant tips. Specimens of stibnite (Sb_2S_3) crystals stained with yellow cervantile ($Sb_2O_3 \cdot Sb_2O_5$) were found along with the altered granite rocks in which the stibnite veins occur.

During the ascent the party was momentarily stunned by a long loud explosion which came from the direction of the mine. Later it was learnt that there is an explosives testing site near-by.

At the side of Garepool Burn, a mile to the north of the mine at NGR NS657116 there is the remains of a waterwheel in the stream bed. The wheel is about 12'diameter with a 3' breast, and was manufactured in Liverpool. Just on the east side of the burn there are the remains of an overhead driveshaft which leads to what some believe is a buddle. The buddle? has a central vertical axis from which the sweepers/blades were operated. It is about 10'diameter. It was not discernable how it could have operated as there was no obvious channel for distributing the ore slime. It is possible that it was of a concave type similar to a Cornish round frame. Adjacent to

the buddle there was the remains of a cast iron water-pump. The cylinder casings had been cracked open, presumably to remove the brass pistons. It is possible that the wheel and the 2 devices may be nothing to do with the mine.

This little recorded site is probably unique. It is situated in a semi-remote area with no obvious tracks to either dressing-floor or mine, and almost certainly dates back to before the 1920's. It is a site worthy of surveying and preservation, as it is probably one of the few remaining buddles outside Cornwall.

(R A Williams helped with some of the above text. ED.)

In the afternoon, I visited the Glendinning (Louisa) Mine some 12 miles to the North West of Langholm up the Meggat Water at NGR NY 313967. According to the Geological Survey Mineral Resources Memoir, the vein was discovered in 1760 during a search for lead-ore. However it was not worked regularly till 1790, when 40 men were employed in both mining and smelting.

The mine was also worked between 1888 and 1891 and 88½ tons of metal were extracted. Just after the First World War the mine was taken over by the Glendinning Antimony Mine Co. One vein was worked, which runs in a north-east direction, and is about 4' wide. It is said that the ore occured in pockets of no great extent. The mine was worked both by shafts and adits. There is an adit just above the mine site and the position of a shaft can be made out adjacent to, and about 30 to 40' above the burn. Two small skips lie at the side of the shaft.

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Doyen of Cornish Mining History Dies

The well known mining historian, Dr A K.Hamilton Jenkin died on August 26th 1980 at the age of 79. His book 'The Cornish Miner' published in 1927 has been regarded as one of the finest works on the subject and has been reprinted three times. Subsequently, Hamilton Jenkin went on to write and publish a vast amount of material, product of painstaking research and fieldwork. His very comprehensive 16 part series 'Mines and Miners of Cornwall', which details workings long since forgotten, will probably be his lasting 'monument'.

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Doctor Who?

Member, Mr Lynn Willies of Matlock Bath has been doctored - perhaps not quite the right term! - but congratulations are in order to that venerable gentleman on being awarded a doctorate at Leicester University (where else) for a thesis on Derbyshire Lead Mining History.

A Derbyshire Spy.

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Wanted

If any member has a copy of BM10 The Mines of Montgomery & Radnorshire by J R Foster-Smith that they wish to dispose of, a fair price will be paid by Mr R H Godfrey of Canada. Anyone who can help, plaase write direct to him at 12 Roxborough Street West, Toronto,Ontario,M5R 1T8, Canada.

This volume is now out of print.

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Coniston Meet Report, 20/21st September, 1980. J.T.Crompton.

Upon reaching Coniston on the Saturday it was obvious that we had our usual weather laid on for walking round the fells - low cloud and plenty of rain. However things were not so bad as it turned out. We had a large turnout by the time we reached Tilberthwaite, about 18 members present.

Due in part to the amount of distance to be covered in the day there was little time to spend on extensive exploration. However it was, I hope, enough to encourage some of the stalwarts to visit Tilberthwaite again. The tour started aptly enough at the old mill site, also the site of the old Deep Level, just to one side of Penny Rigg quarries. In the early part of this century most of the spoil from the quarries was dumped over the smelt mill site, and has to a large extent, obscurred it. At this point some members had a quick look up the old Deep Level, and the leader had a master plan of activities. Mainly to keep dry but also to make sure I had enough strength to lift a pint at the end of the day.

After climbing the hillside above Penny Rigg, the rain eased and the cloud lifted, thus enabling everyone a view of the mining area.

The next mine to be visited was Wetherlam Mine. About 6 members had a look inside the mine. This was quite a dodgy one due to a sump in the level floor. If the leader misses it some nasty accident could occur (explorers please note). We met one group who learned the hard way. We had one amusing chap, who shall remain nameless, who kept loosing bits of his camera. This itself made for quite an entertaining day.

The climax of the day came with the visit to the last but one mine after a fairly long walk round the hillside. It is called Long Crag Vein. This level has a few plus points, the minus being the extremely cold water at the entrance. In the level are well preserved wooden rails shod with metal strips. On the vein itself is a sump with a jackroll over the top, and a stope above. The last mine of the day was Walkers Works a pre gunpowder working.

Sunday again started wet, but brightened up later. We had an even larger turn out than Saturday, 24 being present, although some did disappear, probably due to not being interested in quarries. We criss-crossed the Tilberthwaite valley going in and out of the extensive holes and levels, with a visit to the Moss Rigg workshops and a poke round at all the dressed slate in the yard. A visit to High Fell quarry, and a look in the largest man-made cave in the Lake District completed the day.

Due to the good turnout of members it was a very interesting weekend. Many thanks to all who came.

Some notes on the Tilberthwaite Mines

The deep level starts under Horse Crag and is 1000 yards long. It was cleared out in the 1920's by the Greenburn Mining Co., however nothing worthwhile was found and the project was abandoned. There are seven veins ranging from E - W to ENE - WSW in a belt of country 50 to 100 yards wide. From North to South they are named North Lode, the Shaft Lode, Bensons Lode, Bensons South Lode, Speddings Lode and two other unnamed. The North Lode, Spedding Lode and the two unnamed veins hade northwards at small angles. Bebsons Lode is nearly vertical, Bensons South Lode inclines steeply to the south, and the Shaft Lode underlies southwards at varying angles, and becomes flatter in depth.

North Lode crosses the stream in the upper valley just below the sluice. The old surface workings are about 50' deep, the vein being about 6 or 7' wide. The vein appears to die out as it goes westwards. In this area were two waterwheels and dressing floors in the period 1800 - 1880. The deep adit was driven about 1850. The shallow adit was driven from the waterfall in the beckside to just below the open stopes below the sluice. The shaft on the West bank of the beck takes water from the stream and also runs into the shallow adit. The deep level runs into these workings from Penny Rigg quarry. At the vein it is 90 fathoms below the surface. On this level two other levels were driven to work other veins. The next vein goes under Steel Edge on Wetherlam. It has been worked intermittently over a considerable period.

The mine was known as the Wetherlam Mine when held by the Coniston Mining Syndicate in 1910; as the Tilberthwaite Mine when worked by the Central Chili Copper Co in 1913 (who were responsible for the dressing plant. There are rods with universal type joints on them and these powered the works from waterwheels in the beck); and by the same name during the tenancy of the Langdale Silver Lead and Copper Co in 1917. The level, now closed, runs due West then turns North West for 60 - 70 yards. Some stoping was done above the level ,and a wide sump was sunk 13 fathoms below the level and into the vein which was 18" wide. The average width of the vein is 3' and hades to the North.

On both sides of the Tilberthwaite Gill are two copper mines , although very little ore seems to have been obtained.

Man Arm Vein is under Steel Edge on the West side of Dry Cove Bottom. The vein can be seen in the mine although very little copper is present.

The veins that run across the slopes of Birk Fell while technically in Tilberthwaite belong to the Greenside Mine in Greenburn. The veins are known as Long Crag, Pave York, The Gossan, The Sump and Low Gill. The plans of the mine have been lost, so it is not possible to identify the veins with certainty. The Long Crag Vein is on the northern slopes of Birks Fell in Greenburn at 1800'od. All the other veins in the mine are below the valley floor, the deepest being 120 fathoms down. Another level has been tried about 300 yards further North without much success.

The Pave York Mine is on the Tilberthwaite side of Birk Fell near the summit of the fell. Hellens Mine is on the southern slopes of Birk Fell. It has three levels and a number of stopes. Going East over Betsy Crag are some early Elizabethan workings which are pre-gunpowder, being very rich with malacite staining on the walls. An open stope, by and a little above the level mouth, is full of water. These are called Walkers Works or Mine.

"For Shale - mine under Porlock

If you sit on the beach at Watchet in West Somerset yuu are likely to arise with black, tarry gobbets adhering to your costume. The oil comes from the land not the sea. The blue-green Brendon Hills are underlain with oil-shale - maybe a lot of it.

Geologists have known this for many years, and regarded it idly as another oddity, only interesting in its relationship to the old Somerset coalfield. Oil shales exist all over the world. They contain many times more oil than the world's known conventional reserves. The problem is that the oil is almost as difficult to separate from the shales as it is from the seat of your swimsuit - and even at today's dry cleaning prices, much more expensive. Certainly it costs a great deal more than a few dollars a barrell ordinary oil fetched until six years ago.

Now, shale deposits are within sight of becoming profitable. In Australia and Canada, huge projects are going ahead. And in the sleepy Brendon Hllls, they say, there are prospectors about.

I cannot confirm this. The Somerset County Council know nothing of it, or if they do, are keeping mum. Some say Taylor Woodrow are involved, possibly as drilling contractors. If so, they too are saying nothing.

Perhaps Dunkery Beacon will one day look down on a great new oil-field. Or it may be that the prospectors - if prospectors they are - are looking for something entirely different. For nearby you may find barytes, a grey stone which, finely ground and mixed with water, becomes a mud indespensable to drillers of oil wells.

The man you ask about barytes is Bob Sprinkel, managing director of SPO Minerals. SPO (floated on the market two months ago) are building a barytes plant in Derbyshire. (due to open in December). Mr Sprinkel was in town recruiting Car Sebag's mining partner Tim Read as his full-time finance director. Whoever was thinking about Brendon barytes, they said, it wasn't SPO. No, if it had been Shropshire or Wales, or even the Isle of Man..... Nor did they know who might be checking out the Somerset deposits, possibly with an eye to supplying drillers in the Celtic Sea and Western Approaches.

So there, for the moment, the mystery must rest. For all I know the prospectors may have been fugitives from Butlin's camp at Minehead, or day-trippers from Weston-Super-Mare looking for Exmoor ponies.

Events have clearly overtaken Nye Bevan's joke. Instead of being an island built on coal and surrounded by fish, we are built on shale and surrounded by oil. I bet we still make a mess of it."

Daily Mail, Sat. Oct 4th'80.

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Annual Dinner, 11th October, 1980 New Inn, Clapham.

This year the dinner was held at the New Inn, Clapham. The meal itself was of a very high standard, not like those usually associated with large parties - more on the standard of dinner for 2.

The Guest of Honour, Bob Gunn, of Force Crag fame, gave an interesting talk about the mine owners problems with types like us. Simple things can cause havock with production;- like employees being stopped to answer questions from so many passer-by - that eventually they had a simple hand-out printed. That's without the specimen hunters rooting on the tips and in the levels (both legally and otherwise). Bob also outlined his future hopes for Force Crag, as well as the problems of implementing them.

We wish him all the best in his endeavours.

The Founders Cup was presented to Adrian Pearce in recognition of all the hours and effort he had devoted to setting NAMHO into being. He conceived the idea, and more or less single handed finally brought it to fruition.

The Metal Fowl on Wooden Plinth or Golden Chicken finally went to John Crompton a deserving winner.

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More Barites

"The mineral has been unearthed in the Grampian Hills, overlooking the town of Aberfeldy. There are said to be around two million tons of barites there, enough to supply North Sea rigs for the next twenty years.

Barites is used as a 'grease' and support for the sides of drill holes. But, more importantly, it is used with other chemicals to stop oil and gas blow outs. Until now, exploration companies have had to import almost all supplies from Ireland Greece, Morocco and America."

Daily Mail, Tues. Sept 23rd '80.

Notes on the Development of the Elsecar Colliery Area.

Coal has been mined in the Elsecar area from at least the 17th century, from which period a number of documentary references survive. The Barnsley Bed of coal, hereabouts some 9' in thickness, was limited in its market potential until the end of the 18th century, although the local landowners (the Marquises of Rockingham & their successors the Earls Fitzwilliam) operated the pits themselves at certain periods.

Plans for constructing a canal - which would provide the only cheap means of transportation available and would hence open wider markets - were considered from the 1770s, although it was not until 1793 that an Act was passed for building the Dearne and Dove Canal, from Swinton on the Don up to Barnsley, which was to have a branch to below Elsecar. Earl Fitzwilliam agreed to provide the monies necessary to extend the canal into Elsecar itself, the matter being under negotiation in 1796 & '97. At the end of 1798 the branch to Elsecar was opened to traffic, and it was to remain in commercial use until 1928.

Anticipating the arrival of the canal, Fitzwilliam put money into developing and enlarging the collieries at Elsecar, erecting in 1794-95 a Newcomen-type pumping engine with a 42" cylinder, the engine house of which survives. The new colliery opened in 1795 and a steam whimsey (winding engine) was bought in the following year. The colliery was completed with the opening of a third shaft (with another steam winder) in 1798. A new 48" cylinder was put in the pumping engine in c.1801 and in 1836 the present iron beam was fitted to it. Subsequent to this time the engine was used regularly, making six strokes per minute (50 gallons per stroke) until 1923. It was subsequently used ,as required, upon failure of the electrical pumps which were supposed to replace it. It is now the only Newcomen-type steam pumping engine in the world remaining in situ.

By 1836 some 200 men and boys were working at the Elsecar collieries, and provision had already had to be made for living accomodation for them. Other industries had also appeared in the valley bottom; coal tar was being made locally from the mid-eighteeneh century and it was distilled at Elsecar from 1814 until 1818. The group of houses at Elsecar still called Distillery Side derived their mame from this occurrence.

An iron works was opened at Elsecar, utilising the local Tankersley seam of iron-stone. The first furnace came into blast in c.1795 and a second in 1800; both used a coke blast. The first lessees became bankrupt in 1827. The Milton Ironworks, less than ½ mile from those at Elsecar, were opened in 1802 by the famous Walkers of Masbrough near Rotherham and were worked by them until about 1820, and subsequently the works passed through a variety of hands. A railway connecting them with the canal basin at Elsecar was built on 1838.

Both groups of furnaces and foundaries were leased in 1849 to G & WH Dawes, who later developed furnaces at Denby near Derby and were the first to exploit the iron resources at Scunthorpe. The depression of the later 1870's led to the closure of the east Elsecar works' furnaces in 1881 and of the Milton furnaces in 1883. Both works closed down completely in 1884.

Housing was required for the workpeople at Elsecar. Old Row and Station Row were all completed by the end of 1800, and were probably built during the previous decade, possibly in part to designs by the great John Carr. Reform Row bears the date 1837 and the Earls Fitzwilliams provided the social ancillaries for the developing village, ranging from a shelter and washing house for the canal boat women at the beginnnng of the 19th C to schools, a church, a market hall and a lodging house: a new model colliery village was built at the lower end of Elsecar in 1910-12 and also survives.

Transport facilities were further improved when in 1850 the Elsecar branch railway was opened, with a private station for Earl Fitzwilliam's use at its upper end, a very short section of the canal being ultimately filled-in to provide extra siding accomodation space. Hoyland and Elsecar station, on the Midland extension line to Barnsley was opened in 1897. The present colliery at Elsecar was begun to be sunk in 1905 & '06 and was completed in 1908: it was known as Elsecar Main. A gas works had been opened at Elsecar in 1856 and remained in use until recent years. The great reservoir which still exists on the Wentworth side of the village was initially used to supply water to the branch canal and for the purposes of the Elsecar Ironworks.

These notes are in large part based upon A.K.Clayton's "Hoyland Nether", 1973 and upon local trade directories.

The present Elsecar Colliery employs about 930 men and produces up to 480,000

tons per annum from a shaft sunk in 1905 but subsequently deepened to 534 yards, The Swallow Wood and Lidgett seams are now worked at 100 yards and 200 yards depth respectively.

J.Goodchild.

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"Digging Deep for the Facts...

A scientific study will involve drilling three 700' holes a few miles north of Langholm. The Edinburgh based Institute of Geological Sciences will drill the holes as part of a study of the "Ordovican shale sequence" near the old antimony mine, Glendinning. The operation will take about two months to complete. Antimony is a brittle, metallic element used in medicine."

Cumberland News.

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Ireland

The Irish Times of 3/4th September has a number of articles dealing with mining in the Emerald Isle. Tara Exploration, who are working the largest lead/zinc deposit in Europe at Mavan, Co Meath, hope to raise 2.5 million tonnes of ore this year. Recovery seems about 20% on the ore and 60% on the concentrates. Mogul Ireland is said to have 3 million tonnes of lead/zinc still in ground at Silvermines, Co Tipperary, an area worked intermittently over the centuries. There is still silver there, up to 9oz/tonne. Silver was also extracted from the ore mined at Gortdrum, where 3 million oz were obtained between 1967 and 1975. Mining has ceased at Tynagh, Co Galway, but the company, Northgate, is continuing to work over material at grass. At Clontibert, Co Monagham, Anglo United is drilling on a deposit of arseno-pyrite, said to contain up to 0.5 oz gold per tonne. The same company have found a coal seam at 1300' near Rosslare. Mining it is likely to be seen in a more favourable light than the proposal to work a large uranium deposit at Finntown, Co Donegal. The Irish Times say exploration licences now count for 40% of the country. But it seems most of the investment needed is coming from Canadian interests.

Bill Harvey

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From the Morning Telegraph, Thurs, 6th November

"Mining row comes to a head

The bitter struggle between the minerals industry and the conservation lobby in Derbyshire has come to a head in a new application by the American Dresser Minerals Corporation. The firm says its future as a major employer cannot be assured if plans for digging minerals from the land in the area are constantly rejected. Dresser wants to dig a pit 100' deep at Cromford, in a five-acre field bordered by 100' high cliffs which are a local tourist attraction. The fluorspar they hope to extract would be used in a variety of chemical applications, including anaesthetics and aerosol sprays.

West Derbyshire planning officer, Mr Roger Yarwood, says mining for fluorspar behind the cliffs will increase their instability. Dresser says the stability of the face is guaranteed and assured, but Mr Yarwood will not accept this as the cliff already suffers from minor rockfalls each year.

Mr Dick Gamble, general manager of the works at Hopton where fluorspar is processed for use in many chemical end products, says they are already short of 40,000 tons of material to keep the plant working to capacity in the current year. The proposals for land restoration, he insists, will mean that in four years time the Cromford site will look precisely as it looks now."

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Even more publicity for Welsh Mines Society

The Welsh Mines Society was formed in 1979, and already has over 90 members, scattered throughout the British Isles. The purpose is to bring together those interested in any aspect of Welsh mines, to further their study and protection, and to provide a Newsletter.

The A.G.M. is held in June, in combination with one of the field meetings. At present it is not proposed to publish articles etc as other avenues exist for this purpose. The Society is a member of NAMHO, and the annual subscription is £1. Please state particular interest.

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

Pie & Pea Supper November 15th. 1980

By Friday night we'd received bookings for 50 members and friends.

The only miniscule apprehension to blight an idilic existence was that only 2 people had made offers to entertain. One of these condescended under sufference and dire threats, only then on the strict understanding that he wouldn't be called upon to perform unless we were really desperate! (he must be mad to think he could get away so easily).

On Saturday the car groaned to Sicklinghall loaded with display material and ancilary gubbings and topped off with 5 dozen pies and ½ ton of mushy peas. (How do you calculate the quantities of mushy peas - by the gallon - lb - or cubic metre?).

After that minor irritation, called a general meeting, was over, minds were tuned to more lofty matters - the main feature of the day could begin. To prove that Someone upthere loves them little & lovable & cuddly, hundreds rushed forward offering their slides to show to the masses. Whilst the canteen staff (imported at great expense) did things with tea and biscuits, the lanternist set up his machine and warmed up his bulb.

The chef de hote performed with the ladies in the kitchen, and finally the banquet was served (2 o'clock for 5.30- dress optional). The repast was valued at £25 per head, but a large discount was given for cash.

Because Cinderella was due to turn into a pumpkin at 10 o'clock, the final chorus of Aul Land Syne was sung at 9.30.

Thanks to all who helped make it such a success.

Harry Houghton.

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Book Review

ELEMENTARY SURVEYING for industrial archaeologists by Hugh Bodey & Michael Hallas Published by Shire Publications Ltd. pp 65. £1.25

As the title suggests, the main purpose of this book is to explain how to survey a site. Interest in industrual archaeology remains high, but increasing numbers of people want to know how to do something positive about it themselves instead of merely following others around, making respectful oohs and ahs. The authors tell you what equipment you need to carry out a reliable survey, and how much of it you can make for yourself. They set out a step-by-step method of surveying an open site like a field and then do the same for the different kinds of buildings likely to be encountered. A chapter on surveying machinery will be found helpful by the scrap-metal brigade. But there is more to a survey than that, and so there is guidance on how to make your rough field sketches into a set of finished drawings suitable for research by later generations long after the site has been cleared, and advice on what supplementary information is needed. Finally there is a chapter on other forms of rescue work (apart from preservation), where action is urgent, and where local or inside knowledge is the only sure way of having it done.

There should now be no excuse for not inundating the Recorder with new material.

H.H.

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Memoirs 1981

Dick would like any articles suitable for a Memoirs. For the unitiated these are defined as "Too long for Newsletters, but not long enough (when edited) for a Monograph".

All material/promises to R.H.Bird, 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston,Sheffield, S31 7EL by 1st January, 1981 please.

Take this as an advance reminder to start finding material for 1982 Memoirs as well.

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Publications News

For issue in 1981 as part of subscription:-

British Mining No 16. The Gallantry Bank Copper Mine, Bickerton,Cheshire with a review of mining in the Triassic rocks of the Shops-Chsshire basin.C.J.Carlon.

British Mining No 17. The Cwmystwyth Mnnes. S.J.S.Hughes

A third volume may be issued next year (extra to subscription) (being the last part of the Foster-Smith series) The Non Ferrous Mines of the South Wales Area.

Aftersales address - Mrs H. Bird, 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield.

Destruction of Mining Sites

It has been suggested that as a Society we do not, on occasion, do as much as we possibly could to try to preserve certain sites by appealing against planning applications.

Many sites are destroyed out of ignorance by firms not appreciating their historical worth. Whereas if they had been approached at the planning stage, before site clearance had begun, many would have been too happy to co-operate in protecting and preserving that of particular interest. There will always be the odd few firms who will not listen, of course, and it is these who give most cause for concern. However there are many more who would be prepared to preserve sites if they had any indication of any outside interest shown in them.

"But no one said anything when plans were submitted for our proposed use of this site!".....

All planning applications are published in the local papers in that particular area. If you spot one that appertains, let us know as soon as possible.

Don't stop there though - send a letter of objection yourself to the planning officer concerned. More notice is taken of 30 objections than only of 1.

If the threatened site is in an area where planning permission does not appertain, then write to the firm involved expressing your concern and let us have a copy.

In any case do SOMETHING.

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Access in Wensleydale

Some of you may have had difficulty with access problems in this area over the past years.

Hopefully some of these may soon be resolved, but , in the meantime, we must ask members, where possible, to avoid this area for a few months so as not to jeopardise these delicate negotiations. Ta.

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Wanted

A member would like to procure a copy (wouldn't we all!!) of "The Greenhow Lead Mining Field".

This was published by us in 1970.

If you have a copy to sell please contact Mr F. David Heaton, Bramham Lodge, Wetherby, Yorks. Tel Boston Spa 842101.

Failing this he will have to wait until we publish the re-write, the author having this in hand. (This last phrase means roughly " not actually started on yet, but the author is full of good intentions").

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Back to NAMHO Insurance

ALL non-members attending EVERY meet will be charged 50p per meet - you could find it cheaper to join as a Full or Family member!

This insurance covers all activities which are approved by the Society. -

Just to remind you.

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To Contributors

If your offering hasn't been used, don't despair - it will be kept on file for future inclusion.

Similarly if you spot part/all your masterpiece under someone elses name this only means that at least 2 people have sent similar articles and I'd combined the best of both, or not used the one sent by those who I knew wouldn't take offence at their name not appearing.

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All contributions for February 1981 Newsletter to H.Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY.

No SAE, no reply.