

I always seem to have to start off each Newsletter with an apology of one sort or another. So as not to spoil 'my run' then, here is this issues. It goes to all contributors to the last Newsletter who didn't manage to get their bits in - sorry, all will be rectified forthwith. The excuse this time round was that initially I was scotching around for items for inclusion and had reached a point just past halfway stage, when I was inundated with articles. Many of these later offerings being of a topical nature, I had to sacrifice some of the earlier pages. Just in case I have too many items for this issue I had better also apologise in advance for any I have to leave out, and just hope that they aren't the same ones as omitted from the last. Doesn't life get complicated?

The following is a rough translation from the Celtish as "spoke you" by the leader of the Welsh Meet of 25/26th June.

Everybody getting ready when I arrived in Campsite. Weather dull and rather misty. Produced my map with its rash of red dots and pointed out where we were going and why. Drove down through Beddgelert to the entrance of the Aberglaslyn Pass, parked, and off on our walkabout pointing out Level Goch. This was the original working of the Aberglaslyn Mine. David Bick's book mentions it as being abandoned for two centuries. It is now just a hole in the roadside wall with coffee coloured H₂O coming out of it. I pointed out the level across the river and beneath the Welsh Highland Railway Tunnel, now defunct, and the site of Brynfelin Mine.

Next was the Main Adit to the Aberglaslyn Mine, and as no one showed any inclination to go into the waist deep water, we moved on to the bridge. Some of us went into the mini-shop/cafe, and heard Mr. Gauler tell us exactly where the Aberglaslyn Mine was. The roadside Adit goes in 150-180 feet, curving to the left. The other Adit is through a door at the back of Mr. Gauler's garage. This one goes in for 80 feet with a branch going left for a further 70 feet. The 80 footer turns right to join up with the roadside Adit and just beyond this junction there is a flooded shaft. Another Adit, in what he calls his garden, but is really a chunk of rocky mountain behind his buildings, join up at an angle of 45°. This Adit leads to a huge chamber, big enough, he assured us to hold 4 semi-detached houses and in very poor condition, the chamber that is. While this conversation was taking place Mrs. Gauler was busy selling Mars bars, ice cream etc. to the crowd. I counted 32 adults and children.

There are also several huge gashes, deep and narrow in the jungle left of Mr. Gauler's garden. Earlier this year, I scrambled about on the steep hillside looking for these, and found only two situated right on top of a cliff. What a place to dig holes, but what a view.

There are a couple of Adits in the grounds of Aberglaslyn Hall, but as it is used as a Youth Adventure Hostel, it is difficult to find out where. The sea originally came right up to the Bridge and boats used to load and unload at the jetties below us. The deep and wide pool was pointed out. 'Aber' means estuary of a river, hence the name Aberglaslyn - mouth of the Glaslyn river. After that energetic chap Maddocks built his cob or embankment at Porthmadog, the sea retreated six miles, and so the pool and jetties fell into disuse.

Enough about Aberglaslyn, everybody tramped off. First stop Heason's house, 'Tyrpeg Bach'. This gentleman is a Mineral Dealer - chunks of Quartz Crystals and Amethyst built into the house walls. Off again, looked at the south entrance to the railway tunnel. The three younger boys just had to go in.

The lower terminus of the Cwm Bychan mine was examined, concrete foundations, huge piles of iron and cableway. Ernie, better known as 'Gwynant Valley Minerals' found the iron cage in the river - it's big, with a massive ring at the top. Mike Goth said it was a "Tensioner" for the cableway. When hung on its ring, stones were put into it, thus making the cable taut... - sounds plausible.

This is where we start moving upwards, puff puff, following the cableway towers up the valley. Several rusting trams about. Roy Starkey found one with grease nipples on the axle despite the efforts of "W.I. Scraps". W.C. Williams of Harlech in 1921, first mention of mining here is in 1720, this is about right for all the mines in this area.

We had our sandwiches by the upper terminus of the cableway, then while the ones with wellies, and the ones who like getting wet went into the crosscut adit, the rest of us went into the narrow crevice above. We could see them 100' below. Higher up the valley we dropped down into a trial level. The young boys especially enjoyed this one. We thought we'd lost David Heaton, but found he'd disappeared into a waist deep watery trial level, as he was the only one with waders.

Next mine, Llwyn Du (Black Grove) or Crib Du (Black Ridge). A year ago Byers shaft was

water filled, now it's dry and 20 fathoms deep. Looked at two horse whims, tips and seats of the ore shoot to the trackway far below, round the ridge to the dressing floor where twenty girls were employed to smash rocks (called Bal maidens in Cornwall, says Bob Rumney). These girls were not exactly front row chorus material, but a rough, tough crowd, who could out wrestle, out swear, out drink most of the men. No wonder they are reputed to make indifferent wives,

The site of the "Big discovery" and its adit below were looked at. Nearly everybody eventually crawled into the Adit - dry a year ago, now welly deep. The chamber inside had a ledge going round to the left. This has now collapsed into the depression with the flooded shaft in the bottom.

On to Sygun - Ernie leading us down through the rhododendrons to the Sygun No.2 Victoria Adit, the more energetic dashing off to look at the tips and shafts near the mountain top. Paused to point out Dinas Emrys, an ancient fortification on the other side of the valley. Emrys is the Welsh for Merlin. After a bit of effort to try and lower the water level at the entrance, in we go, the ore shoot has collapsed, but the rest of the timbering seems to be in good condition - through the stope to the forehead, just about everybody went in. The dressing floor and mill site, just below us, was used in the film "The Inn of the 6th Happiness" starring Ingrid Bergman in 1958. The No. 1 adit is water filled to within 9" of the roof, and someone had tipped an old van down into the gully lower down. Shouts of encouragement failed to persuade one daring person into going into the water. So we drifted back to the cars and campsite. Stanley Elmor was a director of Sygun and his brother Frank metallurgist in 1897-1902, so they tried their oil floatation on the ores. It worked, but the trouble was not enough ore. Sygun closed in 1907 and the Stamps went back to Glasdir. (See Bick's book, for more information.)

Sunday. Everyone assembled at Nant Gwynant car park at 10.30. Across the road, and up the Watkin track to Snowdon - mountain tops all in low cloud. 32 persons yesterday, but today 15 youths and their leaders decided to join us. John Mac collected their 50p's. So although some of our lot decided to do their own thing, we still started off with over 40. The ruin of Sir Watkin's house, now hidden among massive rhododendron bushes was passed. Soon the huge incline and engine house of the South Snowdon Slate Quarry could be seen on the skyline. Got everybody together at the top of the Falls. Pointed out several features, the wide tramway going up to Braich yr Oen, stone piers, and the massive iron stained tip of our first mine, the Hafod y Llan. The ore being tipped down the mountainside from the many levels high up, then along a tramroad, which we couldn't see and to a huge stone pier, which we could, then down a shute to the dressing floors across the river.

The leat to the old waterwheel pit and the dressing floors were pointed out, also the flooded adit entrance, that was started, but never finished. Also mentioned was the bullet holes in the mine Captain's house, 200 yards up the track to the Slate Quarry. This area was used as a training ground for Commandos during the war.

Nearby is the big chunk of rock where Prime Minister Gladstone made a speech to a crowd of Welsh people. Hymns were sung followed by the Welsh National Anthem. Then everybody went home - all this happened in 1891. There is a metal plaque sunk into the rock commemorating the event.

In 1841, Alan Searell became General Manager of Hafod y Llan, also the South Snowdon Slate Quarry, Braich yr Oen, Lliwedd, Pant Ku and Hafod y Porth. Busy lad, Searell is the best known character associated with the Beddgelert Copper Mines. He had a brother Philip, who took over when Alan left to manage Cwmorthin Slate Mine. He once walked from Cwmorthin to Hafod y Porth and back in one day, a distance of 13 miles over some of the roughest terrain in Wales. He died in 1865. First mention of Hafod y Llan is in 1762. 181 tons of ore only, but as several mines were worked together figures don't mean much.

We move on across the river, up and up across the mountain wall and on to the tip - zinc everywhere. Up to top of tip, had a look at the Adit in the cleft, unfortunately a flooded stope has to be crossed first - Oh dear. Bornite, Chalcopyrite, Pyrrhotite on tip plus Sphalerite. Sandwich time, which is when I discovered I'd left my pack down by the river, so down to get it. As I eventually puffed my way up again to cries of "Come on Eric it's cold up here and we've eaten our sandwiches" no sympathy - somebody mentioned chicken? - probably referring to their sandwiches. Ernie had taken most of the crowd up over the ridge and on to Lliwedd. The rest of us went round the hillside on to the main trackway to Lliwedd - much photo taking of the two wheel pits, one hardly used, the other with the broken wheel still in situ plus crushing rollers. Up the tips to the Adit. This trip being popular, especially with the youngsters who'd never been underground before. Samples of the minerals being handed round. Had a look at the anvil, a solid chunk of iron, two others were also found. Higher up there is a series of gashes, very narrow and deep. Lliwedd produced 1,938 tons of copper ore.

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Followed the stream down Cwm Merch, stopping to look at Lliwedd Bach, and on down to car park.

I hope you all enjoyed our walkabout.

See you next Spring Bank Holiday.

Eric Gray-Thomas.

Anyone visiting the Yorkshire Dales should make a point of going to the Plate Holes dressing floors near Keld at the head of Swaledale. These floors have been renovated by National Parks volunteers under the guidance of Lawrence Barker, the Head Warden for the area, and are a perfect example of how, with a lot of care, restoration can be carried out without taking away the essential feel of the site. These floors are well worth a visit as they are unique in the Dales and probably in the whole country, being as they are almost complete. The team who completed the work are deserving of the highest praise.

It should be stressed however that the Paths to the site are a PRIVATE RIGHT OF WAY and anyone intending to visit should obtain permission beforehand from the National Parks Regional Office, or from Lawrence Barker enclosing a S.A.E. If this right of way is abused the paths will be closed permanently.

It might also help to remind members that Wet Grooves Mine in Wensleydale, which is much visited and despoiled with newspaper, tin cans, etc., by the mineral collecting fraternity, is on very PRIVATE GROUND and as the result of the mess left by collectors permission to visit will not be given to anyone and trespassers WILL be prosecuted.

Les Tyson.

Strontian Minerals Ltd.,

The old lead mines to the north of Strontian are being re-opened by a subsidiary of Minworth - the private Derbyshire based company who are involved in several mineral exploitation projects in U.K. Three years' preliminary survey work was followed by 2 years' core drilling to establish the extent of mineralisation. In May this year, the mineral separation plant (constructed by Davey - McKee) was approaching completion and commissioning was expected by the end of July. A conservative estimate is that £1m has been invested in the project so far.

The main vein at Strontian trends E/W and is close to the boundary between the granite and a granitised schist. The vein has a S at about 20°. The relation between the degree of Pb mineralisation and the relative position of the vein and the granite/schist boundary has been debated for many years, particularly whether the lead was disseminated or in lenses. The recent surveys have shown that the vein extends for some 7.2km, more to the W than to the E of the old workings, is at least 200m in depth at the old Whiteside Mine, and probably deeper at both extremities.

Minworth are primarily concerned with the barytes in the vein, and the separation plant is designed for an output of 50,000te/yr. Reserves should be enough to guarantee operations for at least 10 years. There are indications that the barytes purity is likely to exceed 98% which should make it suitable for the paint industry and hence sell at a premium. In some parts of the vein there remains 5% of Pb/Zn, which will be separated, and the Ag content of the Pb is enough to justify its removal at the smelting plant. Initially, the intention is to open-cast the vein at the West end (Whitesmith) of the present old workings and go underground at the east end (Bellsgrrove), the deeper parts of the vein will be mined underground in both directions.

The dog-leg on the road to Loch Doilet, which took the old road towards the Whiteside mine and back along the vein outcrop, has been closed and a new connecting section built. This has provided space for the new dressing plant at the altitude of the outcrop instead of on the site of the old dressing plant at the mouth of the adit. The upper Bellsgrrove Loch had been made watertight using a plastic liner to provide water for the treatment plant and a settling pond is being prepared above the old workings.

Geoff Greenough.

Mike Jackson has sent me the following cutting from The Daily Mail of 28th June.

'Honour for the 'human bombs'.

Two Army explosives men who strapped more than 200 sticks of unstable gelignite to their chests, to remove them from a disused mine, have been awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct. They spent three days last December moving the explosives, detonators and fuses from almost $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile inside Hagg's Mine at Northhead. They had to carry them in sandbags strapped to their chests so they could climb over rockfalls without jarring."

A Visit to Salford Museum of Mining at Buile Hill.

One damp steamy July Sunday saw us heading into that part of the County Palatine which is now Greater Manchester. Eventually we arrived at Salford and entered a rather plain looking "big house", once inside, however, we were transported into a colliery scene. The ground floor has been laid out with a lamp room, stables, changing room, fan house etc.

One impressive exhibit is based on the entrance of the No. 1 Drift into Old Meadows Colliery, Bacup, and is complete with the endless chain haulage system, signalling equipment, tubs, bogies and tippler.

Lifting the lid of an interesting tool chest revealed a collection of 19th century boring equipment which would be far better on display, if possible with a complete rig.

My only complaint, so far, was the almost complete lack of descriptive notices, although I am told that this may be because Yorkshiremen are too tight to buy the official guide.

Once upstairs, this situation was reversed and a fine collection of photographs, plans and smaller artifacts was set out with very good descriptions. All aspects of coal mining were treated in sufficient detail to be both informative to the casual visitor and remain interesting to those with greater knowledge.

The choice of photographs gives a clear insight into the collier's life and community, showing him at work and play. Sections are devoted to rescue brigades, trade unionism and technical achievements like the Brindley canal system, built for the Duke of Bridgewater, and various coal cutting machines. For the feminist, there are pictures of women undertaking heavy work on the pit brow and examples of the harness used by them, and children, for drawing tubs of coal.

If you live in this area, or are passing through, then I would recommend that you take time to visit Buile Hill, but buy the guide!

Mike Gill.

Devon Meet Report. Leader (under duress) R.E. Hewer.

Having received a message that the original leader had to attend a funeral, (this was later adjusted to a wedding and then to hospitalisation with appendicitis!!!) Yours truly was sent (ordered) on a mission of mercy to lead the meet. With no knowledge of the area, I was forced into buying an O.S. map and armed with Roy Shambrook's itinerary we set off for Devon. (It's a big place isn't it?) We arrived late Friday afternoon and quickly reconnoitred the area, which was a good job because we were in the wrong place anyway. Having sorted out the Grid Refs. we were ready for Saturday.

It was raining cats and dogs, the angels had well and truly been on the beer the night before. Saturday morning had arrived and our intrepid hero stood outside the 'Miners Arms' waiting for the invading hordes - We had been informed that the Trevithic Society had been invited to this Meet, and that this fact had been advertised in their Newsletter starting time 8.30am!!! Could this be the reason why we saw none of their members when we met at 10.30am? One new member was already there followed shortly by Mr. (two wheels) Heaton. Total of 6 members attended. (You miserable members, don't you read your Newsletters) We decided to attack Stowford Mine and the rain, brambles and nettles attacked us, followed by screaming swarms of flies. We picked our way to the adit, nearby stood an ore tub and water wheel pit, the whole area was heavily overgrown. The adit ran for a considerable distance to a fall. This could be dug. The area seems to be devoid of enthusiastic mining groups. We retraced our steps to the opposite side of the road and inspected several trials along the valley floor, although more interest seemed to be centred on an old Great Western railway carriage nearby. The sun came out - and went in again - it rained. We retired to the Miners Arms for a pub lunch. In the afternoon we visited Bampfylde Mine.

The large tips on the valley floor contained many nice samples of copper and iron ore. Much of the tip material has now been removed, but a general layout of the workings could be envisaged. The adits up the hillside had all run. We tried to find the adit which was said to be beautifully arched and led to an internal shaft where a wooden pump approx. dated 1688 and having the 'Royal' arrow engraved on it had been found (Days of Renown - - - Leader 1965). We found the entrance but it had totally run. Another good, quiet place for a dig. It rained again so we sheltered, whilst one new member squatted under a sheet of corrugated steel like a coolie. We raced back to the cars, some of us ran across the wooden footbridge, whilst one small member (who has an affinity for water) swam across the river - fully clothed. We changed and went to look at Poltimores Vein. This runs straight up the hill terminating in a series of pits and the main shaft. Near the road the large water wheel pit remains hidden in dense undergrowth. The adit to the vein has run a few yards in. We reached the cars when the heavens opened up and we all dashed for my car. Guess who got locked out? Well a drop of water doesn't hurt you - even if it streams down

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your face, back and chest filling your boots to the brim. The sun came out. The river swimmer went for another swim and the rest of us hoped that the weather would improve the following day.

Sunday. No sign of the Trevithick Society. After a night of severe rain the morning brightened and we set off for Florence Mine. Upon our arrival the leader decided that rather than be caught out like the day before, he would do the walk in his wet suit, a sad mistake. The party set off to where the tracks diverge, there then appeared to be some disagreement among the ranks as to the correct route, so the leader staggered to the top of the track, sweat pouring from every seam, the sun beating down at 90° in the shade. He was right. Shouting with all his might he encouraged the others to follow, however the forest and the hill swallowed all his words (which may have been as well, some were rather blue). After $\frac{1}{2}$ hour no one came so he assumed that they had taken another route (another sad mistake). He set off, mumbling a lot. The track led to a large double shaft which dropped onto staging. The forest had well and truly taken over the workings and shafts and adits were very hard to find. Not so the flies. By now yours truly had lost a stone in weight and attracted millions of flies to view his beautiful body. Not finding much he/I descended to the stream where an adit could be seen, water filled to the roof. Nearby in the stream was a large sheaf wheel and bearing, things were looking up. Above the stream was a banking on top of which lay the main shaft and small corrugated roofed engine house from the 1942 period of working. Having fought my way through to the building the area became very interesting. A large Kibble stood in the doorway, a Cornish boiler lay on the banking to one side and near the run and rail filled shaft stood a complete steam winch, as though it had stopped working yesterday. It was sad to see such an interesting site overgrown by near jungle conditions. I felt like a trespasser. I left and returned to the main track where I was greeted by a clap of thunder and a cloudburst. I didn't care, I had my wet suit on and it leaked! Having reached the others who had been waiting and then set off along lower track where they found a level. We retired to the pub, which didn't like children, but dogs were welcomed, so we left and had lunch at a Honey Farm, Buzz! Buzz! By now it was late afternoon, we decided to visit Britannia and Prince Regent Mines. However, it appeared that the Forestry Commission, as usual, totally ignorant of the word 'Preservation' had demolished and bulldozed the whole site, leaving a plateau and a sign with the locality painted on it. We moved on to South Molton Mine where we walked along the tramway from Combe to the large shaft, dressing floors and picking areas. Good specs. of lead were found. An interesting site, only a few yards from the main road but hidden by the trees. Not vandalised as yet. So ended an interesting but wet week-end.

Many thanks to those who attended. When we got back to the caravan, guess what? It leaks. We ended the day baling out.

(What will our intrepid hero do next? To find out be sure to read your next Newsletter!)

Richard Hewer.

Will the next member in Smallcleugh (when it opens again) please keep a weather eye open for my slave unit. I have lost it.....again (actually this is the third). Richard Hewer.

The library still has a large stock of Mining Magazines 1974/81. These have not been loaned out yet.

New Additions to the Library. - Rock Bottom. Doncaster & Wirksworth Mines Research Group. Journal No. 3; Journals of Somerest Mines Research Group.

If any member wishes to donate journals and books dealing with mining subjects, please contact Richard Hewer. A new updated Library list will be available for loan in the New Year. Sectionalised for easier reference work.

"My caravan doesn't leak any more My wet suit does! "

Book Reviews.

I had better make sure that this review is the first one in, else I'll no doubt receive further correspondence threatening dire consequences to my person:-

Garnorthin Slate Quarry: G. Isherwood. Merioneth Field Study Press 1982. pp92, 6 plates, 37 illustrations, 2 large plans. Price £4 plus p & p.

For anyone with more than a passing interest in the slate industry of N. Wales this is the latest, in a growing list of publications devoted to the industry is a must for the bookshelves.

Unless one counts the guide books produced by the tourist show mines this publication is probably the first published detailed account of an individual mine and of interest

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because although the book stresses the fact that it is not an abandoned but working mine and hence in private ownership it is subjected to frequent visits by caving clubs not to mention members of mining history societies!

The author has given us a readable account of the long history of the mine from its early days c1810 to the present and he describes the turmoils and vicissitudes throughout that long history including a short period when it was worked as a form of embryonic co-operative. However it was never a safe place to work and indeed attracted the unenviable name of the 'Slaughterhouse'. One group of owners even tried to defy the introduction of the Metalliferous Mines Act, introduced in 1874, claiming, in common with other slate mine proprietors, that they were in fact quarries under the meaning of the Act. And in 1876 the company then working the mine lost a test case involving the non-reporting of a fatality. In an attempt to circumnavigate the judgement they went into liquidation only to quickly re-appear as it was boom time in the slate trade!

Chapters on the techniques of slate mining, tramways and inclines and slate dressing lead the reader into the main 'meat' of the book, 'Cwmorthin described'. Starting in Tan-y-grisau the surface features and underground workings are methodically described and illustrated, although the author points out that much still remains to be unearthed regarding the early working period.

If any criticisms are to be made they lie in the style and quality of reproduction, a constant bane to any study not blessed with 'acceptability' in academic circles and therefore the almost certain lack of funds available for prestigious presentation. And here we have a classic case! The book is marred by the quality of its illustrations, which, in the main are drawings by the author and which, at least to this reviewer, are not at all clear in their execution or reproduction. Given that we are treated to photographic plates it is a pity that the author could not have used them throughout. However there is also a word of criticism regarding the photographs themselves. To one used to the superlative work of RHB and HMP to name but two masters of the underground photographic art, the photographs in the book leave a lot to be desired. The lack of any scale on the photographs renders them almost without serious value.

The book concludes with a brief look at the working conditions of the men and that famous institution of the Welsh slate industry, 'The Caban', which helped to consolidate the pride and sense of comradeship common to that skilled workforce now sadly, like so many things of worth, long consigned to the scrap heap.

Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the book can do so from Eric Gray-Thomas at his bookshop opposite the main entrance to the Castle, Caernarfon. (Or his address is in the Members list).

Pete Challis.

alias Kamisole Kate OR The MetroGnome.

Limestone Mines in the West Midlands.

Produced by Ove Aru, and Partners for the Department of Environment, this report is part of a £1m programme of investigation and treatment and includes a study of the 31 known underground limestone mines in the Black Country. A 24 page Summary Report is available price £1.50 from the W. Midlands Regional Office, D. of E. Fiveways Tower, Freder Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1SH. Copies of the full report cost £800 and are available from the above address.

I.J. Brown.

Apfhouse Colliery and the Denby Grange Collieries - A History by J. Goodchild published by Wakefield Historical Publications at Seckar House, Woolley, Wakefield WF4 2 price £2.50. This is a 24 page A5 publication which follows the management and economic history of the collieries up to about 1947. These collieries form probably the oldest group still operating within the National Coal Board. The publication also contains 11 old photos and plans and several tables of information. Plans are now well advanced for some of the pits to be converted into the Yorkshire Mining Museum's that any sequel (post 1947) will probably include this development.

I.J. Brown.

Discoverie and Historie of the Gold Mines in Scotland by Stephen Atkinson (Barratyne Club, Edinburgh - Publication No.14.). This book is about to be reprinted and should be available in Sept/Oct 1983 (ISBN 0 404-52714-0). The publisher is AMS Pr., 65E., 13th Street, New York NY10003. The address looks unusual but my letter was answered! The book, I believe, will be a facsimile reproduction of the 1825 edition. David Ifold.

(Ron Callender "eat your heart out".)

....Book reviews cont'd.

A History of South Crofty Mine by J.A. Buckley. Published by Dyllansow Truran, Trewolsta, Trewingie, Redruth, Cornwall 1980/81. 223pp; Price £8.45 inc. p & p.

A refreshingly technical book dealing with the rise of South Crofty Mine from the surface scratchings of many trials to the present day. Refreshing, because Mr. Buckley does not use the standard references one usually expects to see in this type of publication. He had drawn his material from every possible source relating to the Crofty Setts i.e. Tributaries, Pay, Cost, Ledger books etc..

Definitely not a 'tourist' book, which is reflected in the price. A few of the illustrations I have seen before. Perhaps pull out sections could have been included for clarification of the text.

Obviously a tremendous amount of hard work has been put into the publication and I think it is well worth the cost for it is very readable and interesting.

Richard Hewer

Meet Report - Martholme & Bridge Hey Colliery, 1/2nd October, 1983.

This, the first meet in the Burnley Coalfield, at its most westerly point, attracted only a poor attendance each day, but perhaps this played its part to make it such a successful weekend for those who did turn up.

Saturday's walkabout to Martholme, Bridge Hey, and Constant Mary Pit entrances was soon to be brought to a halt by quite heavy downpours of rain. The families of Denis Fagan and Tom Frost drove off in the direction of blue skies and the Yorkshire Dales seeking shelter from the monsoon climate.

Sunday showed itself to be clear of all wet stuff and so Les Tyson, Michael Whittaker, Mike Gill, Dicko & John Mac set about clearing the area of the Bridge Hey Engine House. Standing in 1890, and undisturbed, the perimeter and internal walls of the building are now visible. Two drainage ditches were found to pass the front wall of the building and to meander some 15m. East into the abundances of coarse grasses growing at the Bridge Hey wood. Coal production stopped in January 1884.

During the uncovering of a 9m. x 6m. area of tapered Firebricks standing on a brickwork floor, claypipe stems, a small adjustable spanner and other objects were found. Mike Gill & Dicko recorded the effects, of which a surface plan can be completed by a second visit (on Dec. 4th - see next item. Ed.)

I wish to give particular thanks to Les Tyson & Michael Whittaker for their non-stop effort, and to juniors Nicholas & Christian Frost & Simon Fagan for their help.

Bernard Bond.

P.S.

A sunken area, 7m diameter, that appeared on 18th Sept and which was visited by those on the above meet, has now been capped, after investigation by the N.C.B. Dug out to a depth of 5m. the area was then refilled and fenced.

Future Meet.

Bridge Hey Colliery. N.G.R. SD 758343 on Sunday 4th December, '83. Leader B. Bond.

By kind permission of the owner, the unfinished excavation of the engine house can be continued. Meet at 10.30am at entrance to Bridge Hey Caravan Park, situated $\frac{1}{4}$ mile West of village of Read on A671. Park cars on the old railway track. Please help by providing your own tools. For further information ring Bernard Bond on Ingleton 41857.

(All the hard graft has been done, the next bit's easy).

Tom Leonard Mining Museum at Skinningrove.

I haven't seen it yet, but I gather it utilizes a 20yard brick lined drift and the old Loftus Ironstone Mine. They aim to re-creaete a typical working face. There are also an engine house and a fan house, with the possibility of (Ed.) a waddle fan from the Lumprey Mine. Longer term projects exist for a public underground display area.

The site lies behind Overman's Cottages and is open June - Sept 1.30 to 4.30 Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Ring Guisborough 34458.

John Keavey.

Anybody got copies of British Mining 4 & 6 to spare?

If so J.W. Barratt of Flat C, 11 Mellish Road, Walsall, West Midlands would like to hear from you.

Gleaned from the 'Letters' of a local rag:-

"Britain's Lead Mining Industry.

To the Editor of the Craven Herald.

Sir, - In your last number you announced the East Grassington Lead Mine is to be closed. This morning's post brings me notice of a call on Weardale Shares, the mines being unable to make ends meet. At Great Laxey the shareholders are without dividends, the Great Minera Mine is in a similar position, and in this county (Flintshire) and in Denbighshire, formerly the great lead producing counties of north Wales, there are not above four or five mines at work, and lead mining throughout the kingdom is almost a thing of the past. What does the closing of a large lead mine mean?

Let us take the instance of the old and formerly productive mine, Talargoch. It means the cessation of employment for hundreds of hands, many of whom have worked there all their lives - and their fathers and grandfathers before them - who have small freeholds in the neighbourhood which they cannot let or sell. It means the ruin of the neighbouring villages, injury to the collieries whose coal was largely consumed by the iron, steel, powder, and the other items used in mines. Loss to the neighbourhood and the country of rateable value, loss to the shareholders and landowners. It means the departure of best hands to foreign countries to assist in the competition against us, leaving the old and infirm for us to keep. While their wages instead of circulating at home, are spent abroad. It means, also, the closing of a railway made by the London and North Western Railway Company, purposely for the mine, and the utter loss of the money spent.

Now, the mine that I have quoted was not closed on account of being exhausted, but because the price of lead was too low to enable the mineral to be worked. They are now probably lost for ever. The lead industry is not only affected in the case of large mines, but the low price of lead has put an end to the numerous small ventures of working men, who worked shallow pits on their account on Halkyn mountain, Mold Mountain and the west end of the Minera district. In good times, when a mine can afford to make "trials" and give the tributers a good price, there is a probability of continuous supplies of ore being discovered. But when, owing to low prices, trials are suspended, and tributers cannot afford to work strings of ore which might lead to good discoveries, the result is slow but sure. The "eyes are picked out" and the mine abandoned, in the case of old and deep ones probably for ever.

Of course the answer to my complaint on this subject is that we must have "free trade". Do the advantages of free trade in lead counterbalance the disadvantages which I have raised? to whom is it a benefit? Do we find our plumber's bills any less? If we build a house, do we find any appreciable saving? If we raise 100 tons of lead here, it is so much added to our natural wealth. If we import 100 tons of lead, we are none the better because we have to send money or goods to pay for it. If a protection duty of 5/ton were imposed, we should be able to retain our miners at home, the benefit of which, direct or indirect, no one can doubt. It may be said that we will then not export lead. Yes, we could, by allowing a draw back of the amount of the duty. Again, it may be argued that the public should not be taxed for the benefit of a class, but as the duty paid would go to the public exchequer, there would be a quid pro quo. I omitted to say that when the north Wales mines were yielding lead there were several smelting works going which employed many hands and large quantities of coal. There are now only two, neither of them doing the same business as formerly. As the population of the county has declined between 3000 and 4000 since 1831, it is evident that free trade is of no advantage.

Flintshire, 7th April, 1893."

"The Decay of English Lead Mining.

To the Editor of the Craven Herald.

Sir, - The letter subjoined appeared a short time ago in your contemporary, the "Mining Journal", and is so full and true that it will interest thousands of your readers in our Yorkshire dales, where lead mining has been an industry for centuries. Wharfedale, Nidderdale and Swaledale can tell a similar story to that of "Flintshire" - a tale of mining affected by free trade in lead, with no commensurate advantage to the community, or to any class of Englishman; on the contrary, with disadvantage to all consumers of lead. Owing to defects in smelting, most foreign lead is charged with impurities such as sulphur, arsenic, iron etc., which deteriorate its quality for all purposes, especially water supply. To the mass of consumers, as to most architects and builders, these defects are a sealed book, and English lead producers are at the mercy of the foreign importer, commanding but a pitiful 5s or 6s per ton over the foreign stuff, which comes as the residual product of silver mining.

English Copper is ruined, English lead is on its last legs, and English tin seems

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certain to follow. Doubtless a beggarly 5s per ton in iron would induce true born Englishmen to close our iron and coal mines - at least the cotton spinner would get his coal cheaper, so we sell our birth-right to extract our raw materials. Fanatics point to the swollen figures of our annual swollen returns. But it is to the foundations of all great structures that we look for stability - are they sure? Like any strongman who has abused his powers, the sources of its life have been sapped. It looks big but grows shaky, and when the change comes, it will be swift, if not irreparable.

An ominous symptom at this juncture is that those who believe in self-defence against foreign tariffs - and their name is legion - have not the courage of their conviction. Convinced by an idea they dare not stand up and fight, but with confused murmurs, and feeble makeshifts, shirk the main issue which dwarfs all others. This is the extremity of a nation, leaders are wanting. Is it to remain so? The people who will not fight for existence must perish.

Bradford,

Englishman. "

History of Lead Mining in the Pennines by A. Raistrick & B. Jennings.

This is an exact re-print of the original (published in the mid '60s by Longmans) and is now available from the Publishers - George Kelsall (Publishing) of The Bookshop, 22 Church Street, Littlebrough, Lancs OL15 9AA.

8½" x 5½", 347pp, case bound in illustrated dust wrapper. Price £15 plus £1.50 p & p. Perhaps the Publishers would like to send a review copy for the Library.

Also out from the same publisher is:-

Mines and Miners on Malham Moor by A. Raistrick. ISBN 0 9505577 9 X. 8½" x 5½" 42pp, card bound. Price £1.85 including p & p.

A review for this will appear in the February 1984 Newsletter.

By now most members will be aware of the recent fatality in Smallcleugh Mine at Nenthead. The main details of this and of the irresponsible actions subsequent to this appear to be as follows:-

On Wednesday 27th September, 1983, a 17 year old youth fell down the Waterblast Shaft (4ft. dia, 50ft deep), some 630 ft. from the portal. The party consisted of 12 students and 2 staff members, from the High Plains Centre, Garrigill. The leader was a regular staff member, and the tailman was unknown. All the party were quite well equipped; the deceased had no torch, having left it on the bus.

NORPEX (the Mining Society associated with this area) had, with clearance from the Catholic Trust agent, visited the mine, made surveys and secured the shaft top. The portal of Smallcleugh Level was blocked by a drystone wall, in which provision was made for bat access.

On 1st October, the Police had received a report of persons, who were lodging in the village, entering the mine. On inspection, it was found that the wall top had been removed, and it was repaired. Later the same night, persons were again found to have entered the mine, having demolished the wall. This unfortunate incident has done little to cool feelings in an area which is already sensitive. NAMHO is to attempt to elicit more details of the incident, and of those concerned.

Whilst on the subject of irresponsibility - Following another report about Wellgill Shaft top being left uncovered, and unattended, with children playing nearby, it was found that a S.R.T. party was exploring and had left no one on the surface. We urge all members to use common sense and practises which reflect a responsible attitude. Part 2 of the Underground Section of the Code of Practise for "Collectors of Minerals at Mining Sites" applies to everyone.

Therefore will all persons descending shafts please ensure that the top is left secure - especially S.R.T. teams etc., where no lifeline party is used.

Meets 1984.

John McNeil is still waiting for the sudden influx of offers to lead meets in 1984. If you want anything, then make an effort, don't rely on someone else to do it - they may be doing the same as you. John's address is 166 Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester M31 3NB.

Society Projects.

Have you any ideas for projects for the Society to tackle? We have one in the pipeline for starting this coming year, at Craven Cross Engine House on Greenhow, but if you have any thoughts on this subject let somebody know,

The Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner by A. Raistrick & A. Roberts.

The General Meeting on 12th November decided that, despite immediate orders being insufficient to cover the publication costs, there was sufficient confidence in eventually selling 500 to justify proceeding with publication of that number.

In view of this, the Treasurer is prepared to extend the date at which orders at the pre-publication price will be accepted until 31st December, 1983 from members only. So order your Christmas present now, delivery in March/April.

Subscriptions 1984.

These remain unaltered at last years figures - see attached renewal form.

At the General Meeting, it was agreed that to avoid difficulties the Treasurer has had in the past with out-of-date Bankers Order payments, that subscriptions would only be accepted if paid by cheque, P.O. or cash sent with the renewal form. 98% of members already do this.

Don't delay in paying, it makes things easier all round if subs. are paid promptly. (Why not send your subs. along with order for 'the Book'?)

I seem to have received quite a lot of Manufacturers equipment recall notices over the last year, the latest being for:-

Lyon Ladders of Rise Hill Mill, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria, makers of Petzl 'avanti', 'Rapide' & 'Croll' harnesses. "It has been found that some elements of Petzl polyester caving harnesses have been mistakenly made of polyamide (nylon). In the interests of complete user safety we are therefore recalling existing stocks of these harnesses, from shops and users, and replacing them with guaranteed 100% polyester construction models.

Petzl 'avanti', 'Rapide' and 'Croll' harnesses sold as acid-resistant polyester models are recognisable by the tape used in their construction - WHITE with CENTRAL BLACK STRIPE. They should be returned to Lyon Ladders for free replacement.

Please note that this applies only to 'Polyester' caving sit-harnesses. All other Petzl harnesses are constructed of 100% nylon, and sold as such."

The second from Caving Ladders.

"Some 5/16" C-links have recently snapped on pressure bonded ladders manufactured by Caving Ladders and distributed by Caving Suppliers to caving shops.

It appears that the chain manufacturer has supplied a batch of chain which had some faulty links, which did not show up in our own regular sample testing or in quality control checks. Accordingly, we must change the links on all our ladders manufactured in 1982. The ladders concerned are date stamped with the letter T or TT on the last rung. We must also include any ladders purchased during 1982/83 which have no date stamp letter, in case the date was omitted. The recall does not apply to any other products with 5/16" C-links distributed by Caving Suppliers, since these use chain from a different manufacturer.

Annual General Meeting, Sun 12th February 1984 at Sicklinghall Village Hall at 2pm.

Please do not forget the above event. Tea and biscuits are served after the meeting. So come along and have your say in how the Society's business is conducted.

Next Newsletter will be issued in February after the A.G.M., together with your membership cards as receipt of Subs. (Note. No receipt will be issued for Subs, until the Feb. N/L unless accompanied by a S.A.E.)

Please send all contributions for Newsletter in good time to H.Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY. Tel. Leeds 758505.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers.