

Again the August Newsletter hasn't appeared till September. Sorry. Can't blame anyone but me. Plenty of articles sent in early for a change; wife poised over hot tripe wrighter; kids rubber stamped all the envelopes; But me? lethargic "Plenty of time, will start it tomorrow". Sound familiar? then you'll understand.

The snag now is where to start.

"How about reminding them about the annual dinner?"

"OK, I will."

The following is for the benefit of those who have forgotten to send in their bookings, as opposed to those who don't want to come.

Last Call for bookings for the Dinner

To be held at The Manor Restaurant, Slaymaker Lane, Four lane Ends, Oakworth, Keighley at 7 to 7.30pm for 8pm on Saturday 27th October, 1984.

The required information is number in party & who they are. What does each want to eat? Pork or chicken and money to the value of £8 per head.

All this to be sent to J.M. Dickinson, 8 Hazel Grove Road, Sutton-in-Craven, Nr. Keighley before 6th October, 1984.

Future Meets

Sept. 29/30th. Cwm Pennant. Leader Damien McCurdy. Meet at NGR SH507431 at 10.30am.

Camping facilities are available at the head of the valley - contact Mr. J.R. Evans, Braich Dinas, Pennant, Garn Dolbenmaen. Tel Garn Dolbenmaen 273. Another site approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ way down the valley is with Miss B. Jones, Plas Pennant, Cwm Pennant, Garn Dolbenmaen. Tel Garn Dolbenmaen 272.

Oct. 27th Annual Dinner (see above)

Nov. 10th General Meeting and Talk-in which includes the pie & pea supper. See elsewhere in this esteemed publication for booking form.

There now follows a report, itself being a rough translation from the Celtic.

"The Biannual NAMHO Meet over, now the report - eyesdown, all the Ws. Who, what, where and when.

Who. Welsh Mines Society or Cymdeithas Mwyngloddio Cymru (You sort that out, I can't. Ed.)

What. NAMHO Biannual Field Meet.

Where. Beddgelert, Nantle Valley Copper Mines

When. May 19/20th 1984.

Our carefully laid plans were upset when Alan Borham, BBC freelance reporter, wanted to go underground, so Sygun was the obvious choice. Whilst David Bick took some of the party up through the rhododendrons to Crib Du or Llwyn Du, on the skyline, the main party followed Phil Amies into the No 1 adit of Sygun. The thickness of the mud and the iron stained stalagtitic formations were admired, then we got everybody up the ladders and out through the No 2, Victoria, adit. Alan Borham was very pleased with his trip and tape recording. It was broadcast on Wed. 23rd May on BBC Wales AM. Many thanks to Phill for his hard work and Mrs Amies for the tea and coffee afterwards. It is Phill's intention to open Sygun to the public. The Mill site was used in the film "The Inn of the 6th Happiness" starring Ingrid Bergman in 1958, and is the second mine to use Elmans (? Ed.) Oil Flootation Process. The plan has the approval of the Mine Inspector, but has been turned down by the Snowdonia National Park Planning Committee due to parking problems - appeal is being organised.

Opened about 1830 the mine closed in 1907. In between these dates Sygun saw the usual problems, closing, re-opening and court case. The main adit is the No 2 - ore was trammed out, along the hillside to the mill. This is why the headroom is higher in the No 2 than No 1.

Leaving Sygun Mine 14 hardy types elected to visit Llwyndu and Cwm Bychan mines. A 20 stone ex Chicago cop, George Aguado, and his equally robust daughter, Kathy, elected to join us in this venture. The grind up to the ridge nearly killed them. Once at Llwyndu we examined the site of Horse whim, Calcining flue and Barracks. The once flooded shaft was speculated over - where has the water gone? Another question raised was where did the rubbish from the barracks go? Is there a bonanza of old bottles somewhere under the spoil tips? One thing is certain - they did not take their refuse home with them like we do on field trips. Leaving Llwyndu we proceeded down Cwm, examining trials on way to entrance adit of Cwm Bychan mine. Donning hard hats we proceeded into adit. Everyone got wet here as adit still has 2ft. water

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in bottom. Once cross-cut reached the mineral hunters started hunting for copper roses. The rest of us then went out to have a look at stoped out section from above. Samples of a faintly blue mineral were shown round and thought that this was most likely a copper silicate, maybe Chrysocolla - samples sent to labs. for confirmation. Proceeding down the Cwm we looked at the remains of the telfer that Will Scraps left behind and pondered the feasibility of getting some of the lighter bits to the proposed museum at Sygun Mine. Finally to the dressing floors at Nantmor, found the cable tension basket in dry river bed. A short pause in Aberglaslyn to look at Level Goch and Dressing floors by river. Pointed out site of Bryn Felin Mine and access difficulties due to attitude of owner of Bryn Felin Farm. There is a public right of way from behind Goat Hotel, but it would have taken too long - the tips do, however, have good samples of massive Arsenopyrites which may be of interest to the collectors.

While David & Ernie were doing their bit (as above), I took a small group from the Nant Gwynant car park, up the Watkin track up Snowdon. This was a repeat of my meet of June 1983 with NMRS members as detailed in the November 1983 Newsletter, so I will not reiterate here. An enjoyable evening was spent at the Saracens Head Hotel in Beddgelert.

Sunday. The fine weather of yesterday continued as we left the campsite for the Nantle Valley, after a "little" delay due to Gwynfor Pierce-Jones's girlfriend going off for petrol and taking the key of the Dorothea engine house with her! Gwynfor gave a talk on the history of the engine house. In 1904 the 68" Beam Engine was built by Holman Bros. of Cambourne, the engineer was Nicholas Trestvail, the cost being £3,625, weight (total) 58 tons. It was still working in 1956. After looking down the shaft, with its inspection cage in, we go on up to the top floor. It is in a remarkable state of preservation - an Industrial Archaeologists paradise. Time flies, so unfortunately we had to leave out Gwernor Mine.

Some members of the Ovdinician Mine and Cave Exploration Group had been busy putting electron ladders in Benallt, Talysarn and Drws-y-coed mines. So while they took some of our lot on the through trips, the rest of us looked at the Talysarn mine on surface. Plenty of shafts, trial levels and spoil heaps about. We then went up the hillside following a small leat above the Talysarn mine and on to the long upper leat. It is clearly shown on the O.S. 2½" map SH55. The leat joins the stream at 537524 about ¾ mile away at Cwm Ffynnon. We turned left, crawled through the 2 short tunnels through Clogwyn - y-Barcut. The leat then curves round the hillside high above the Drws-y-coed mine, through another short tunnel to a point above Drws-y-coed reservoir at 546533. A short walk along the road and we were back at the cars.

The few who had not yet had enough followed yours truly into the No 4 level of Benallt. We looked up the shaft, down which the explorers had come, and back out, and that was it. Many thanks to David, Phill, Ernie, Tony & Co, and not forgetting the landowners, except for Hafod-y-Porth. Also thanks to the people who took the trouble to write and comment on the meet."

Eric Gray-Thomas.

Bill Harvey has sent this snippet, taken from the Spring issue of 'BP Shield International' the house magazine of the BP Group.

A French Company, Geobutane, is having 3 huge caverns mined out near the Lavera refinery to store liquid butane. There will be 2 storage complexes; each 60m below ground level and they are being excavated in limestone via lengthy access drifts. The caverns are 20m high, 13m wide, and from 160 to 200m long. By ensuring the pressure generated by ground water is equal to the vapour pressure of the butane, the liquid gas will be safely contained. Work began in April 1982 and is expected to be finished by the end of this year.

Obituary

Eric Richardson of Nenthead, Cumbria has died at the age of 75. He suffered a stroke in the early hours of Monday, 11th June, 1984 and died in Alston Cottage Hospital in the early hours of Wednesday, 13th June.

Eric, a former member of the Society, was known all over the world as an authority on the mines and minerals of the Alston Moor field and had been a guide and mentor to many mining enthusiasts who visited the area. His name will be particularly linked with the Smallcleugh mine on which, with others, he held the leases for a number of years and was always willing to allow enthusiasts to explore at will. Or, if preferred, to act as guide generously sharing his detailed knowledge - all quite free of charge.

He had a varied career working as a miner in the mines of Alston Moor, Teesdale and the Lake District and later as washing master at various treatment plants. Towards the end of his working life he was works engineer at Alston foundry. An early retirement, due to injury, set him off on his last and favourite career - that of passing on his great knowledge of the

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mining history and mineralogy of the area. It is a proven fact that the world beat a path to his door and almost any day could find a geologist from Europe or university professor from the American continent being entertained and invariably informed. His splendid mineral collection was the envy of all, although he modestly claimed 'not to have a great interest' this statement was patently contradicted by its variety and quality.

Now he is gone, Nenthead has lost a remarkable son. We have lost a very good friend and a tangible and invaluable link with the past. Those of us who knew him and particularly those who were privileged to call him a friend will miss him sorely. The mould has been broken and we are all the poorer.

H.M. Parker.

I've also received a cutting from Alan Williams taken from the Cornishman of 5th July, 1984 telling of the demise of Cyril Noall.

Cyril Noall, who died early this year at the age of 65, was a well known author of books about Cornish mining areas. They included "St. Just Mining District"; "Botallack"; "Levant-The Mine beneath the Sea" and the "St. Ives Mining District". He will be sadly missed in Cornwall and by all those who have read his books.

To prove that he hasn't spent his entire existence living in a hole at Wanlockhead, Jerry Landless turns out to have spent part of his life running on three legs. Wot else could you expect from a Lancastrian?

The Great Laxey Wheel - Personal Reflections. Jerry Landless.

I read with interest the short article in the last Newsletter "The Great Laxey Water Wheel".

In 1947, at 14 months old, I was transported from Colne in Lancashire to Laxey, Isle of Man. My father was to turn an old flour mill into an engineering company, "Manx Engineers". The first lathe was driven by an already installed water wheel, and father bought another from Foxdale Mine. The hub of the wheel was still in the front of the mill (as it is still known to the older members of the village) when I visited last year.

The Laxey Wheel was just up the road from the mill. One of my earliest memories is of the noise the wheel makes - great stuff. As in most things nowadays we have a very much unsung hero to thank for the existence of the wheel today. After the mine had closed, the wheel was allowed to rot, until 1935 when the local joiner and undertaker, Mr E.C. Kneal, bought the wheel and took the best care of it that he could. It was painted every two years in green or red lead paint; a gallon a spoke.

At about the age of 10, when visitors to the wheel would just look from a distance without having to pay their 6d's, my twin brother and I used to have fun walking about inside the wheel, which was stopped due to the age old problem of lack of water in the summer months. The spectacle of the two small boys inside the wheel collected quite a crowd, and, presumably, got visitors paying again to go and have a closer look. In those days the miners' very ornate ore collections were on show on the 1st landing - don't know where they are today, pity. I often wonder if they were as great as I remember them.

In 1954 the wheel had its centenary. As a 9 year old I can remember well the embarrassment of having to wear a pair of my mother's stockings, as a herald in the fancy dress (didn't win either). I still have a photo to prove it - what a terrible sight a 9 year old looks in stockings!!

On my rare visits back home I make a pilgrimage to the wheel, which still has a fascination that I can't really explain. If you want to know more, the Library has the centenary book by A. Jespersen, Denmark. Well worth a read. If you want your own copy, Mr. E.C. Kneal, Pinfold Mill, Laxey, I.O.M. may be able to supply you one, and the stamp that started all this can still be obtained from the Philatelic Office, Douglas, I.O.M. Hurry though, they destroy all stocks after a year or so.

I will bring the first day cover along to the Pie and Pea night, maybe even "The" photo.

Arkengarthdale Meet Report - 2/3 June, 1984. David Heaton.

Leader and spouse arrived at the CB inn Friday evening around 10pm, and were quickly joined by 8 members already camped out in the field below the pub. Saturday morning started dry and sunny and by 10.30am we were joined by 19 members and 1 non-member (50p taken) also 1 four legged two year old called Snowy. Some duplicated homework on the area, its history and topography was much appreciated by members, as was also a detailed summary of Pubs serving 'real' ale in the immediate area. Ian Cornwall supplemented this by producing a beautifully marked map, placed on an upturned table top, showing all the levels, shafts and veins in a wide area of Arkengarthdale.

A fast speed was soon established after visits to the old Powder House and the two Smelt

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Mills the flue was followed uphill to Underedge level near the Chirt Mines. The level proved interesting and was very well mineralised. Justice level, a short distance away, was then crawled into, and lunch was enjoyed by all. The Hungry Hushes were then visited which proved beyond doubt to be the most spectacular part of the day, together with a huge hoard of fossilized sea shells 1700ft up.

Foregill Level was found to be run in and after a crawl into the adit at the foot of Turf Moor Hush some perfect examples of 'Cat-heads' were collected.

The meet leader warned the 17 members then left in the party that the last visit of the day to Moulds Mine was for interest only, as it had run in. John Mc and Les Tyson thought otherwise and suggested that the leader purchase 17 pints if he were wrong. And wrong he was, the mine was dug-out and now open, and the pub was open on return to base. Moulds was the highlight of the underground part of the day and is of great length and interest.

On Sunday we awoke to the sound of torrential rain, and unfortunately this put off a number of members under canvas, only eight answering the call to duty at 10.30am. An interesting run through Routh Level lasted nearly 2 hours, but the famous Boat Level named Stones was found to be inaccessible. After lunch Moulds Mine was again returned to and further exploration was made this time in the direction of Surrender ground, but due to the time factor only half of the workings could be visited, and a large part of the mine will have to be covered at a later date.

As well as his Meet report (above), I thought that David's hand-out notes for the Sat. walkabout worthy of inclusion too:-

The Old Powder House. Black powder was used for blasting in lead mines during the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries, and had to be kept in safety well away from other buildings. The Bathurst family built this magnificent example in 1725, and it is one of the few buildings associated with mining of this early age which is still to-day in almost perfect condition.

The Bathurst Family. The mines in Arkengarthdale were leased from the Crown by a Dr. John Bathurst who was by profession the Private Physician to our old friend Oliver Cromwell. The year was back in 1655 and he paid the Government £3.10.0d per year for the favour. This is £3.50 for the younger members. The following year in 1656 he purchased the entire ownership outright of the whole of the Manor of Arkengarthdale and also the nearby New Forest. He was a very autocratic character and had many disputes with his tenants, and at one time threatened them all with deportation to Ireland if they did not yield to his demands. Upon his death his estates passed to his sons and shortly after to his Grandson, Charles Bathurst whose initials are perpetuated for all time (or at least as long as they brew ale) in the name of the local inn (The CB Inn) and also that of the nearby CB Smelting Mills. The prosperity of this Dale was undoubtedly due to the work and dedication of the Bathurst family, and in particular that of Charles, grandson of the founder.

The Great Octagon Smelting Mill. One of the largest industrial buildings of its time, construction was commenced in 1700. Its shape was octagonal with two sides shorter than the remaining ones. It measured 107ft x 70ft internally, and contained four Ore Heating Hearths. A 36ft waterwheel was placed between two pairs of furnaces which in turn worked two bellows for each furnace. There were originally seven arched openings each giving direct access to the furnaces inside. Production ceased in the 19th century, and the building was kept in good repair until a little before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. In 1941 the north corner of the building collapsed and rendered the whole structure unsafe - the roof was dismantled, the beautiful solid wood beams sold to a local contractor now very probably the focal point in some peoples front rooms, and the roof tiles to a local builder. Locals and visitors alike took away the stone bit by bit, and forty years on see for yourself what is left of one of the finest industrial buildings of the 18th century - now lost forever except for the photographers plates.

The New Mill. Built around 1803 this Mill was at the time CONSIDERED to be the best and most technically advanced in the whole country. Even more improvements were added in 1824 by Jaques & Company the new lessees of the Arkengarthdale Mills. There were three reverberatory hearths, and double acting air blasts powered by a 33ft waterwheel replaced the normally accepted bellows. The manufacturers used to boast of the 'modern' machinery, and prospective buyers from all over the world made the journey to Langthwaite to see the hearths in action. The fuel store was on the North part of the building and was not unlike the famous Keld Heads Mill in Wensleydale. The mill was closed in 1883, and only in recent years has fallen into dereliction.

Flues. The original flue from Octagon Mill can still be clearly traced. Its length was 2700ft and rose 340ft vertically. The chimney on Crag End is 1300ft OD. The same flue and chimney were used for a time by the New Mill, and the 'cut in' from the mill into the old flue is seen on the right looking up. When an extension was required this was carried up to

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Moulds Top. Of course these flues were covered over when in use, and not open in places as found today.

Hushes. Various and many perfect examples of 'Hushes' will be seen on this walkabout today. A great deal of the Yorkshire Dales lead mining was carried out by using the Hush method. An outcropping mineral vein was spotted by some up and coming keen eyed miner, and an artificial dam was created in the upper reaches. This was broken allowing the waters to rush downwards thus exposing the mineral veins - doing away with the necessity of digging. After collecting the 'goodies' the dam was repaired and the operation repeated at a later date.

Accommodation Offers.

The following member missed the May Newsletter - in the same post she sent Geoff her Subs. and me the advert, BUT unfortunately she put the letters in the wrong envelopes, and by the time this was sorted out the Newsletter was despatched.

"We are fortunate or unfortunate enough (depending on how you look at it) to live in a former Mine Captain's House, complete with Count House, and Assay House, which we are gradually renovating. We now have spacious self catering accomodation, including the former Board Room, and also offer B & B. We would be pleased to welcome members of the Society at special discount rates. As anyone who has read Mr. Shambrook's excellent publication will know, the whole area abounds in industrial archaeology, and there is no shortage of interesting sites for the enthusiast. Also numerous minerals to be found near the house.

It is extremely peaceful and restful here on the edge of the moors, with (perish the thought) other hobbies to be enjoyed, such as riding, fishing etc. Please contact:- Mrs. A. Stokes, Phoenix House, Minions, Liskeard, Cornwall. Tel Rilla Mill 63083."

A Watering-hole at Wanlockhead.

Accommodation, food, and beer can now be obtained at Wanlockhead at the 'Walk Inn'. It is on Stake Moss, in part of what was once a GAA Hostel, and commands a view right down the glen. Anyone wanting to stay is advised to book ahead. Phone Harry Wilson, Leadhills (06594) 360.

It looks like we have the makings for a Family History Studies Section. Here are two more queries from folk researching into this subject.

Lead Miners in North Wales. I am currently researching the family history of my mother's family, the Blackwells, who were lead miners in the Rhosesmor area of Flintshire. Commencing with my grandfather, I have traced back through 4 generations of miners to a Samuel Blackwell who was a miner living a Caerfallwch in the Parish of Northop in the 1780 - 1823 period. His father was a Thomas Blackwell, probably a miner, whose first children were born at Llanverres and later children at nearby Cilcain.

What I am primarily seeking is information on the migration of miners into North Wales in the early to mid 1700's. A number of early Blackwells certainly came from Derbyshire and one of the earliest entries in Flintshire registers is the baptism at Halkin in 1727 of a William Blackwell of Yolgreaive (Youlgrave) in the County of Derby. However, the story allegedly handed down through my Blackwells is that my branch came from Cornwall and I am therefore keeping an open mind until I can find firm evidence to their origins.

Any information to:- R.J. Watkin, 'Ranworth', 2 Smith's Field, Romsey, Hants. SO5 8WD.

"My wife's ancestor (Christopher Pearson 1669 - 1710) was at one time overseer of the leadmines at Wanlockhead. I do not know exactly when he assumed this position, but he held the job at the time of his death.

However, the mine was leased from the Duke of Buccleugh in 1691 by Matthew Wilson, for a period of 19 years. Matthew Wilson came from Allendale, Northumberland - as did Christopher Pearson. At the time of the lease Christopher was 22 years old and it seems likely that Matthew Wilson, who lived near the Pearsons, took him with him and gave him the job. Chris. stayed in the mine area, married a Margaret Crichton, and produced a family.

Christopher's father, William (1610-1681) died a very wealthy man - according to his Will. He was Lord of the Manors of Hexham and Haltwhistle, and owned a number of farms.

There is no mention in the Will of leadmines and I wonder whether a member of your Society has any knowledge of the names of Pearson or Wilson appearing in these areas? "

Replies to Angus Baxter, 5 Katherine Street, P.O.Box 655, Lakefield, Ontario, K0L 2H0 Canada.

First we had the likes of Flash Gordon. Next came Cross Roads & Coronation Street. Now we have the ultimate; The unexpurgated Memoirs of Dave Carlisle, exclusive to this Society Newsletter. In the last issue Dave told of his going to Zambia and starting work in the copper mines. Those who can bear the suspense no longer read on.....

Copper Belt Memories Part 2 Promotion

After 6 months or so in the technical offices at Seven Shaft, the Learner Mine Officials drifted one by one onto the 'back shift' (nights and afternoons alternate) as shiftbosses on production. I was no exception, and reported to Mufulira West one night at 10.00pm to start under Mine Captain X - I really can't remember his name - all I do recall is that he was a horrible little "YARP" (ask your Africaans friends about this word). I had an enormous section with seven gangs spread out between the 1150 and 1575 levels, covering about 20 blocks, or nearly a mile on strike. I once calculated that I walked seven miles to go once round properly - let alone all the ladders!

In addition to supervising the Grizzley and Intermediate Haulage Gangs, I had a statutory duty to perform each and every night. This involved walking over a mile westwards along a Hanging-wall drive (on the 1150, I think) to examine the Drainage crosscuts. I would send my African P.A. to check that the gangs were all in their proper places and then embark on the lonely walk. This wasn't made any more enjoyable by the knowledge that the water pressure behind the concrete bulkheads in some of the crosscuts was over 5000p.s.i. - and there was only one way the water could go if the bulkhead gave!

The water was tapped from a band of conglomerate in the hangingwall of the C orebody and used for domestic and industrial purposes in large quantities. A couple of years after I left the mine, a shiftboss from the UK Midlands was doing exactly what I used to do when a bulkhead did fail - result, curtains for him and a partial flooding at Muf West.

About this time, in 1965-6, there was a long African strike on the Copperbelt. I can't recall what they were striking about (pay probably), but I do know that it lasted over a month - long enough for us to be instructed to get all explosives out of the mine. Each night we used to do a Fire Patrol round our sections (or some of us did) and one of our duties was to look for explosive boxes which may have been missed. One night J.B. (of long-hole raising fame) found a box containing two cases (100lb) cunningly concealed in an old diamond-drilling crosscut out of a loop off the 1650 haulage. We used to patrol both our sections together for company, so I got involved as well. The gel. must have been there for a couple of years at least, so we daren't move it, and we had three goes at getting it off in situ. The final successful effort with a det and four good 4oz plasters resulted in a hell of a bang, a demolished trolley line and some nicely curved 3' gauge rails! "Had to be done", said Mine Captain X - "can't be helped". This was probably the most sensible thing he ever said. He and I were rapidly approaching a state of open warfare. Not being too thick, I noticed that J.B. and I seemed to be the only ones who were going underground during this strike. The other shiftbosses, who were older, spent all shift playing cards in the office. Well, you know me (or some of you do!), and I just had to bring this up. During a somewhat heated exchange I informed X that he wasn't fit to lick a miner's arse - and a black one at that. This comment caused some hilarity when related in the Mine Club, but resulted in yours truly being transferred back to Seven Shaft on "Punishment Shift". Now this really was awful. I had to supervise six gangs of raw recruits mucking out (or lashing) small ends with picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. Most of the "boys" had received some sort of education, because of which they refused to speak "Fanagalo", the mine language. Their gangers were both arrogant and idle - one of them was so idle that he refused to sign his gang's work tickets for more than one completed end per night because they got bonus and he didn't. Besides, he wanted to sleep for half the shift.

The hours were bad too - 7pm to 3am six nights per week with one early shift every three weeks. By this time, I was married and with my (now ex.) wife teaching, we saw very little of each other at all.

End of Part 2. See next Newsletter for the 3rd thrilling installment.

And now for something a little different we have the

Murton Meet Report by David Heaton.

A beautiful morning on the 7th July was welcomed by an equally beautiful gathering of members - forty one in all - joined for the day by four non-members and two dogs. The winding cart track up the Dale was followed by twenty cars in line of file, and after parking in two groups near the spoil heaps, the party made a near vertical 700ft climb to the mine entrance, which was reached by 11.30am.

The full compliment entered the very extensive flats and note was taken of the stone
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archways built below and through stacks of 'deads' perhaps rarely found in such perfect condition. Descent of the shaft at the far end of the workings, which connects with the White Mines complex below, was ruled out because its depth estimated at well over 100ft, would have been an unwise venture for 40 people. But ample compensation was provided by the finding nearby of a bountiful seam containing witherite and many multi coloured crystal deposits. These finds will provide miniature close-up photographic material for many months to come for the two keen cameramen that were in our midst.

Lunch was taken either within the workings, or at the entrance, the vista from which must, without doubt, rank as the finest in Britain.

Re-entry was made around 2.30pm, one group making a bee-line for the shaft nearest the entrance. This was successfully descended in one 50ft pitch, the ample flats and workings below being well covered - perhaps the last people down there were from the West of England, a 'Cornish Examiner' dated September 1972 being found screwed up at the bottom of the shaft. The other group made an equally enthusiastic bee-line to the far top end of the inner flats where thick veins of barites and native sulphide of lead made a thick carpet of colour and contrast.

The cars were reached by 6pm, the sun still beating down the valley. A good day was had by all.

Little Dike Ironstone Mine

The above mine is situated at Emley (NGR 256135) near Wakefield, and represents a particularly good example of a closely spaced group of bell pits. The farmer, however, has recently commenced operations to clear the field and, at the last visit, had removed 9 of the 35 pits. Both this Society and NAMHO have made representations to the West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council, to draw its attention to this sad loss.

Profit for Geevor (from Cornishman of 5th July, 1984.)

Geevor Tin Mines processed a record tonnage of ore in the year ended March 31.: Turnover increased by a third: profits before tax amounted to over £1.1 million against a loss for 1982-3. The report of the directors of the company to the annual general meeting says that with increased output, costs per tonne on tin produced rose by less than 1%. The report also says that further improvement to the mine's treatment plant, which was commissioned in August, 1983, enabled the mine to process a record tonnage of ore, leading in turn to an 11½% increase in the production of tin-in-concentrates. Average tin price was £8660 per tonne against £7444 for the previous year, and turnover, including substantially higher sales of granite rejects, rose 33% to £7633. With the increased output, costs per tonne of tin produced rose by less than 1% and the overall profit before tax amounted to £1.177,000 against a loss of £26,000 for 1982-3.

Book Reviews

North Yorkshire County Record Office Publication No. 36.

Documents relating to the Swaledale Estates of Lord Wharton in the 16th & 17th Centuries.

This is, in part, a companion volume to Arthur Raistrick's study of "The Wharton Mines in Swaledale", Vol. 31, which was published in October, 1982. The Wharton family were substantial landowners in Westmorland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Co. Durham, Buckinghamshire & Ireland during the 16th and 17th centuries. Vol. 36 contains numerous leases, deeds, valuations and letters, principally relating to the Swaledale estate, which have been gathered together from a number of sources, to give a rare insight into the organisation of this part of the family's extensive estates. There are, however, a number of documents which cover mines and other holdings in Cumberland and Wharfedale.

The book does much to highlight the great degree of activity in the Swaledale lead mines in this early period, and the growth of the "Derbyshire Connection", through families such as the Barkers from Chesterfield. Holding, as it does, such a large amount of transcribed documents, this work is an indispensable reference source for all those interested in the development of lead mining in Swaledale.

314pp, printed at A4 format, with the Swaledale section of Thomas Jeffrey's map of Yorkshire, 1771, forming a loose cover, N.Y.C.R.O. Publication No. 36 is available from: The County Archivist, N.Y.C.R.O., County Hall, Northallerton, Yorks. DL7 8AD, at a cost of £5.50 plus 90p p & p.

Other volumes with a (known) mining content are: Annual Reports of the North Riding Record Office/containing an article on "Kirkleatham Ironstone"; and 1969 containing an article on the "Lead Mining ventures of the Scropes of Derby in the 18th C" at £1.50; Vol. 3 "Copper cont'd.....

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Mining in Middleton Tyas" at £3.50; Vol. 7 - articles on the Richmond Copper Mines at £3.50; Vol. 25 - article on Billy Banks Copper Mine, richmond at £3.50. All the above volumes require the addition of postage and packing as follows:- 1 vol.+90p; 2 vols. + £1.30; 3 vols. + £1.50; 4 or 5 vols +£2.00.

M.C. Gill

Michell - A Family of Cornish Engineers 1740 - 1910. by F.Bice-Michell

The decision to write this book was taken some while ago. It is fortunate that Mr Bice-Michell has found the time, in a busy retirement, to add a valuable and informative Engineering history to the bookshelves of the industrial archaeologist.

The book traces the Michell connection with Cornwall's mechanical and mining engineering history over 170 years and contains a unique glimpse of the scenes as viewed from a family standpoint. Most of the information has been drawn from working notes, personal memoranda and diaries.

Containing some 80pp and 13 illustrations, it is eminently readable and thoroughly recommended. Paperback, A5 format. Price £3.00 + p & p. ISBN 0 904040 22 4.

Available from Publications Secretary, Trevithick Society, "Newlands", Tarrandean Lane, Perranwell Station, Truro, Cornwall TR3 7NW.

Damien McCurdy hereby submits his meet report for your delectation (you look it up like I had to. Ed.)

Saturday 16th June, a bright sunny morning and 13 members and friends gathered at the rescheduled meeting place. The original venue of Cwm Penmachno had been called off at short notice because at a recent meeting between NAMHO and the Forestry Commission it had been noted that the Commission were very sensitive about that particular area. In fact, in order to prepare for the proposed meet in Cwm Penmachno I had made a short walk about visit to the area in April. I had found, to my dismay, that the large quarry, along with many interesting surface remains, had been bulldozed flat. Apart from the many surface features which have now disappeared, so also has the means of entry to the superb dry slate block arched level which was several hundred feet long and was, to my knowledge, unique in its extent. It also served to drain a large volume of water from the quarry. So, at short notice, I had arranged visits to, on Saturday, Cwmorthin, and, on Sunday, to Manod.

With the sun beating down on our backs we walked up to Lakeside Level, stopping briefly on the way to watch slates being expertly split by one of the mine partners. In the morning the whole party, yes women and children too, were guided round the full extent of Lakeside Level and saw the machinery etc., and the caverns currently being worked by the two men who work the quarry in their spare time. Back out into the sunshine for lunch, during which time we were joined by a late arrival (car trouble etc. etc.). In the afternoon a 'men-only' party descended the Back Vein incline and made our way through to the Oakley connection. As this is a working quarry the party kept away from the area where the workings joined.

Sunday was warm but the mountains were enveloped in very low cloud which persisted all day and robbed us all of the fine views which are normally obtained from Manod Quarry. Before the meet I had called at the home of the quarry owner to collect the keys which would not only let us in, but would also allow us to turn on the lights in the workings. The previous weekend I had been down at the quarry with the owner, Mr. Glynn Williams, setting up Quartz Halogen lighting in the large cavern. Once again all the party of 12 toured the workings in the morning, and a small party returned in the afternoon for some more serious photography. During the course of the afternoon your meet leader drove his car into the mine! not, I hasten to add, because he is lazy. On reflection I think this must be a Society 'first' because the car was also driven out again! The ex-Government Art Treasure storage facilities, which form part of the mine and which have been sealed from public view since the 1940's, were very interesting.

My thanks to all who turned up. I hope you enjoyed the two days as much as I did.

Other snippets of information from Damien.

Clogau Gold Mines plc. (Article in Financial Times 26.6.84)

Trading was quite brisk, with some 475,000 shares changing hands, as Clogau Gold Mines made its debut on the Unlisted Securities Market.

The company, which raised a net £2.04m a week ago through a placing of just over half of its equity, plans to explore the old Clogau St. David's gold mine, with a view to proving sufficient reserves to operate at a minimum production rate of 30,000 tonnes a year.

The mine opened about the middle of the last century, and at its peak, between 1891 and 1911, produced more than 64,000 ounces of gold. All the wedding rings for Britain's Royal family have been made from Clogau gold since 1923.

Wheal Concord (Financial Times 20.6.84)

The cornish Tin producer, Wheal Concord, has been sold by the Receivers of the company to a new company called GTS Mining, which hopes to resume mining as soon as possible. The mine which was re-opened in 1980, went into receivership in November 1982 after a dispute with the Rio Tinto-Zinc group, over the quality of ore delivered to RTZ's nearby Wheal Jane for processing.

The next article comes from someone calling themselves "Rinky Pooh". Obviously a right wally with a name like that. Comes from Benomley Cres. Almondbury, Huddersfield.

Birkside Mine, Thirlmere

During mid-July a party of NMRS members and friends visited Birkside Mine, Thirlmere, for the purpose of exploring and surveying the area to Grade 3. Permission had been granted by the Water Authority, thanks to Mr. Farrar's efforts, in return, we promised to produce an accurate plan for the W.A.

Little is known about the mine, apart from the fact that it was operating in the 1840's for copper. It is thought that the mine was again tried out in the 1860's operating under the title of Huel Henry (1860-1866) perhaps as a satellite of Wythburn Mine. Further information would be most welcomed.

The morning was hot and humid, fellwalkers lethargically set off in their shorts and tee shirts for Helvellyn summit. Suddenly, their attention was diverted towards our party as we tumbled out of vehicles, stripped and donned boiler suits, waterproofs, wellingtons, caving boots and, wait for it, a dinghy! Yes, there were frowns, they knew who had been affected by the heat. The dinghy was quickly stowed away in a caving bag. The 11 of us moved quickly through the tree line away from the tourists, trying to blend into the surroundings with our fluorescent red and orange caving suits, helmets and cap lamps at the ready. A Park Warden (note the capitals!) surveyed us with distrust until I exposed (~~myself~~) my letter from the W.A., and all was well. The ascent was hard, as swarms of hostile kamikaze mosquitoes dived at us from out of the sun. The cries of bandits, bandits, 6 o'clock, were constantly heard amongst the members. One smaller member (guess who) elected to tackle the ascent, the direct route, straight up the waterfall. Not much water, but he still got wet!

Two small trials were investigated on the way up, usually chest deep (I know 'cos I've been through them) were now quite dry and led to foreheads. Once over the lip of the waterfall one immediately walks along the mine tip to the miners hut and partly walled adit, the latter providing awkward access to the level, normally dry but now wet. The level is driven as a cross-cut slightly East of North (015°) for 33 metres to an EW copper vein, the level continues forward a further 25.5 metres to a second EW vein. The latter vein must have been considered as worthy of a trial for the miners followed it for some 50 metres before giving up. Patches of copper in a sugary quartz string was their only reward. The first copper vein appeared more promising with copper staining showing in several places. After 30 metres the vein (heading at 060) is lost, cut off by a fault, the level turns sharply southwards and then South East and yet turning again to 020° into a fall. The level on plan appears as a long stretched 'S' shape in an effort to relocate the vein. We think the level coincides with an open stope further up the gill and that the fall is due to debris from that stope. However, a shock was waiting for us at the stope. Large sections of wired reinforcing rods had been placed over the hole, was this the start of the Thirlmere by pass? Read on... But no, our L.D. planning board official assured us it was not, it was just another way of protecting the public from holes in the ground.

It was decided to ladder and rope the 30' pitch, the latter for the benefit of those who were inexperienced in abseiling techniques and could practice the art with the experts. The descent led to a rubble slope in a stope descending to adit level. Now you may have been wondering why we carried a dinghy all the way to the mine, well, so was I at the time, because it wasn't needed. For in front of us was a flooded stope stretching the full width of the level and beyond, being about 20' by 10'. Impassable you might think, but not so, for about 18" underwater there was a rock ledge which provided access to the level beyond. Much bolting and lifelining was affected and everyone came safely across. The flooded stope was plumbed several times and the same answer came up each time - 40' deep. The level continued for 77 metres to a forehead passing through one small stope 20' high, very little mineralisation could be seen. The level was partly backfilled a short distance in from the flooded stope, which suggest that, perhaps, the stope was cut during the 1860's period of operation. We had a safe journey back and made good our entry into the stope from the surface. We finished the day by having a look at Helvellyn Mine No. 4 level. A very interesting area, more of that later. Except that the water was bitterly cold and having camouflaged the entrance totally without success, and still blood would not flow in the direction of the toes, it was decided to descend 'undreds of feet back to the car park and pub where we could buy a

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fluid which promised to reach parts of the body other lagers couldn't reach ... it worked!
P.S. Sorry if some figures are in metres and others feet - the survey was totally metric
and some of my notes olde English.

Advance notice of the 1985 NAMHO Conference

Friday 31st May to Sunday 2nd June, 1985 at the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath,
Derbyshire, organised by PDMHS. Cost £6 plus meals etc.

More details later.

The North Devon Gold Rush

GOLD was first found in the late 18th C at the mine north of Heasley Mill, now known as Bampfylde Mine. At first the discovery was purely of academic interest, but in 1840 a Mr. Robert Backwell of Devonport applied to the Treasury Board for a licence to work the gold. This came to nothing, and the mine continued for a few years working copper only, under the name of Prince Albert.

1847 saw the formation of the Poltimore Copper & Gold Mining Company (named after the owners of the freehold), followed in 1852 by the Britannia Gold & Copper Mining Company, otherwise known as Prince Regent Mine situated in Higher Mines Wood, followed in 1853 by the South Poltimore Copper & Gold Mining Company otherwise known as Crowbarn Mine. Encouraging assays of up to 27 ozs per ton were published and the Poltimore Company alias Bampfylde even sent two cargoes of ore to St. Helens in Lancashire for smelting with encouraging results.

The Poltimore and Britannia Companies both purchased mercury amalgamating machines to treat the ore for gold on site, although the machines had been demonstrated successfully when erected at the mines in 1854, they failed to produce any gold. The patentees of the machines, Messrs. Berdan and Parkes, had by this time unaccountably disappeared from the scene and it became obvious that the ore had been "salted". Who were the perpetrators of this chicanery was never established, but Berdan & Parkes were not the originators - having merely jumped on the band waggon, but had seen the red light!

The directors of all the companies all accused each other, but the blame could not be attached to anyone of them. Both the Poltimore and Britannia companies continued to work for copper, but foundered a few years later with all their capital frittered away on the gold venture. The South Poltimore Company (Crowbarn Mine) in its subsequent winding up was able to return 19/6 in the £1 to its shareholders as it had not purchased the mercury amalgamating machines.

The original discovery of gold was quite genuine (it was found in the Poltimore lode of what later became Bampfylde Mine) the scene of prospecting by British Kynoch Metals Ltd in the 1970's. Gold did and most probably still exists in Bampfylde Mine, but extraction costs would be heavy as proved in later years when further trials were made by the New Bampfylde Mining Company.

Notes. Specimens of gold can be seen today in the local museum at South Molton, together with other local minerals.

Bampfylde Mine N.G.R. 737327; Britannia or Prince Regent Mine N.G.R. 745 335;
South Poltimore (Crowbarn Mine) N.G.R. 738318.

Roy Shambrook.

DON'T FORGET to send in your booking forms for the Annual Dinner, and for the Pie & Pea Supper. With regard to the latter remember it's up to YOU to make the event a success - so do let me know if you will speak, give a slide show or put up a display. Don't forget to BRING SPOONS & DISHES.

The next edition of the Newsletter is to be issued in November, hopefully at the Pie & Pea Supper (it saves on postage you know)

All contributions to H. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY in good time please.