

Now that the Society is a registered Charity, we have certain financial advantages. Although we have yet to receive final confirmation from the Taxman, with your permission, we can reclaim the Income Tax which you have paid when earning the money to pay your Subs. This enables your subscription to the Society to be tax free; the value of your subscription will be increased by 43p in every £1. If the Subs remain at £7 then we should be able to claim a further £3 from the Taxman.

All that you have to do is sign a simple form known as a "Deed of Covenant". A Deed of Covenant has no effect on your tax position, and although its wording is of necessity in legal jargon don't be put off, you are not signing your life away, nor are you revealing any ill-gotten gains to the Inland Revenue.

This Deed of Covenant is not irrevocable; if your circumstances change you can always cancel it. You simply state that you have the intention of paying the Society your Subscription for 4 years. The best way of keeping subs down, without lowering standards is for everybody who is paying Income Tax to pay their Subs through Deed of Covenant. Obviously it doesn't apply if you don't pay U.K. Income Tax.

The Covenant forms and further missives will accompany the Subscription Renewal Form in the November newsletter.

Future Meets

Sept. 22. Coal Mines in the Ingleton & Lune Valley area. Leader D.M. Goth.

Meet in car park next to Masons Arms, Ingleton (on A65) SD691726 at 10.30am. I understand that Mike has arranged for a Pie & Pea or Sandwich lunch at the "George & Dragon" at Wray.

Oct. 12th Annual Dinner. 'The Plough Inn', Wigglesworth, Near Long Preston. 7.30pm

Full details in May Newsletter. If you haven't booked yet do so Now to avoid missing a good do. Briefly the menu is:- Soup, Beef, Yoks pudd & veg, Sweet, Coffee. Price £7.50 each.

All bookings, with full remittance, to R.E. Hewer, 36 Benomley Cres. Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8LU to arrive no later than 1st October, 1985.

Nov. 9th (Sat) General Meeting & Presidents Talk-in & Pie & Pea Supper 2pm Sicklinghall Village Hall. See attached booking form. (DON'T FORGET to bring plate & eating irons.)

Feb 16th (1986) Annual General Meeting - Sicklinghall Village Hall at 2pm.

Atom test feared in West hillside.

Some years ago (1977?) Roy Shambrook took the Society around Luckett and into the Excelsior Tunnel - we walked and explored the full length. The short galleries driven in the 1960's along the strike of the tunnel to accomodate the explosive devices are still there. Here follows a snippet from the "Western Morning News" of 21/3/85.

"A full Government statement on whether Kit Hill in Cornwall was used for nuclear test explosions is being demanded following the shock disclosure that Wick, in North-West Scotland, was considered as the site for an explosion involving radioactive material in the 1950's. The Ministry of Defence confirm that nuclear detection tests were carried out here, but said that only conventional explosives were used underground. The Western Morning News cuttings of 1959 & 60 record there were 75 controlled explosions over a period of several months and that Kit Hill was a low powered test area."

Phone rings. "It's for Yoo-hoo."

"Hello."

"Where did you get that chart on the back page of the last Newsletter?"

"Er... Why?"

"Cos it's part of a hand-out wot I rote to accompany a lecture I gave."

"Oh! I'm sorry but like any good (?) Journalist I can't reveal my sources."

So, in future, John McNeill, if you will insist on pinching Dave Carlisle's notes, at least let me know before he does. Will you also make sure that the facts are correct too. - Fire Damp is highly explosive at concentrations of 6-12% not as stated. How many of you spotted that mistake then?

(Brainbox only knew that when Dave phoned to point out this mistake in his original notes! Sue.)

Putting the Record Straight.

It was nice to see my little piece on Lindal iron mines in the last Newsletter, but I had better write to put a few points straight.

The Davey engine at Frank Pit came second-hand from the Stank and Yarlside system near Barrow, these two separate groups of mines had been worked as a unit since 1892 when the Barrow Hematite Steel Co. Ltd. (Stank) absorbed the Yarlside Mining Co. Yarlside had Davey differential engines at their No.8 and No.11 Pits; one went to Frank Pit at Lindal and the other went to Violet Pit (Kennedy Bros. Ltd.) at Poanhead, both about 1902 probably, but I don't know which one went where.

The bit about winding drivers relying on the depth indicator rather than the voice or hand signals shows up one of those odd differences between the coal industry and metal mining; I have the impression that in the coal industry the drivers were actively discouraged from watching the cages land; at Backguards the voice-pipe and chalk marks were obviously sufficient and at Diamond Pit not far away there was a large window in the front of the engine house so the driver could see exactly what the cages were doing.

In the reference to winding drums I meant that the two halves of the drum were clutched independently to the crankshaft (or the drum shaft in a second-motion engine) which allowed the position of the cages to be altered relative to each other. Can anyone comment on whether this is a feature peculiar to metal mining? I have an idea that it was but there seems no logical reason for it, because the need to wind from different depths must surely occur in coal mining as well.

Peter Holmes.

More on Society Projects.

Following comments in recent Newsletters, and at Meetings, about the need for Society originated projects, the Committee has arrived at the following conclusions.

Firstly, a glance through a pile of old Newsletters suggests that it is incorrect to conclude that fieldwork in the Society's name is rare. In the past 15 years, this would reveal the excavations at: Hebden Aerial Ropeway, Lumb Clough Smelt Mill, Buckden Out Moor, Chimney Shaft, East Engine (Banks) Shaft, Scordale Smelt Mill, Reed Colliery; as well as fieldwork on Grassington Moor and at Buckden Gavel Mine. Almost all of these were inspired by committee members.

The Secretary will welcome members' offers for the 1986 Meets Programme.

The Committee wishes to promote research and its presentation in a concise form, which reflects well upon the Society. One major problem is money; the Committee is unwilling to take on any additional commitments, which are not self-financing, and feels that they should not be met from increased subscriptions.

In some cases, therefore, it may be possible to exploit a less well known advantage of being a Charity. This is that companies can make grants, or donations, to us which qualify them for tax relief. As a part of the Committee's efforts to gain full advantage from our charitable status, a number of companies have already been approached about the possibility of providing cash to support specific items of research. Any such cash could contribute towards the expense of work at the depth required i.e. going beyond a straight-forward description of the mine, plus whatever historical data was fairly readily available. There has been a limited exercise in trying to attract external funding, and it has met with some success; allowing research into the Duchy of Devonshire's archives to continue. Obviously, the work involved in circulating companies is onerous, but, to prevent potential donor companies being importuned, members must NOT do this on their own by using the Society's name without the Committee's agreement. Requests for financial help from the Society must be channelled through the Secretary (please include a SAE), who will provide full details of what the Committee require from you. These will include information on such things as:-

- 1) The objective(s) of the research and the proposed means of accomplishment. It should lead to a wider understanding of the British mining industry and, at least, a major contribution to the Society's Memoirs.
- 2) What you have done already; evidence of previous, successful work will be an advantage.
- 3) The expenses for which you need help - keep them on a modest scale.
- 4) Suggest some firms, which might be approached, e.g. firms local to the area covered in your work, and which might be sympathetic.

Finally, please don't get starry-eyed; firms don't shell out grants all that easily.

Continuing the Saga

May I suggest a project that could be undertaken by any member of the Society?

That is each member looks at the surface remains of any mines within his own sphere of interest and records what is left. This could be done as a written description of the buildings, earthworks and levels of each site with sketches and photographs to complete the survey.

Such a study would produce not only details of the remains of each mine, its uniqueness or commonplace, but would also provide a framework of mining sites that should be preserved or recorded more fully. In the event of a threatened destruction of a mining site, then a day could be spent on the site improving and updating the existing records before all was lost.

It could also possibly be used to produce a series of gazettiers of remains existing for interested members, students etc, planners and conservation societies working in mining areas.

Let us not forget in this survey the working collieries that are about to be closed. These all require looking at to identify old equipment and structures remaining before these items are scrapped.

From the above it would be possible for all members of the Society to be involved in some small way.

Nigel A. Chapman.

Even More

I'm not sure whether Liz & Andy Staley could necessarily consider the production of a baby daughter on 21st May, 1985 as a Society Project, but Congratulations anyway. Mary Elizabeth weighed in at 8lbs 2ozs.

Creetown Gem-Rock Museum

Whilst on holiday we called at this very interesting Museum in Galloway, situated in Creetown, between Newton Stewart & Gatehouse of Fleet, just off the A75.

This privately owned collection is displayed in an old chapel and contains specimens from all over the world. Among the displays, one that looks very impressive is the "Fluorescent Display". A small room has been arranged to show a selection of minerals displayed under first normal light, then Longwave Ultra-violet and finally Shortwave Ultra-violet light.

The owners are very amiable and enjoy talking about minerals and mines to anyone interested.

There is a small admission charge, but a notice states that you can visit as many times as you wish during that holiday. Though, as they pointed out, if your hols seem to last for 6 months then they may ask for more!!

The Mines of Galloway.

During our conversation with the owners of the above Museum they told us about a Cornish Engine House on a mine not far away. Could we go have a look and possibly instigate a restoration attempt? The mine in question was Pibble Mine (NGR NX525607), and as well as the remains of the engine house, there was also a waterwheel pit about 40-45ft long, a mill pond, some shafts and various tips up the hillside. Unfortunately we were in the midst of what the weathermen term a precipitation and so weren't over keen to stray far from shelter. The area was photographed for the Records, as far as the rain would permit and then we beat a hasty retreat.

The next day, as the precipitations were still persisting, we went to visit a deer museum (the animal kind, not the expensive one, 'cos it cost nowt) set up by the Forestry Commission. Amongst the antlers and birds etc, on one wall was a Geological Map with various mines shown on it. The only snag with it being that there were no Grid numbers. We went back the next day armed with the appropriate O.S. maps and worked the locations out as best we could.

The scope for exploration/research in this area would, on the face of it, appear to be great. All it needs is for someone to take it up. It crossed my mind to have a Meet, possibly next year, to do a bit of firkaling around. Can anybody help here?

Tom Leonard Mining Museum

"The Museum of the Cleveland Ironstone Industry" situated at Skinningrove, Cleveland (NGR NZ712193). Open 1.30pm - 5pm every day but Sat. till the end of October.

Wots On

27-29 Sept. 1985 - Caves of the Peak District.

8-10 Nov. 1985 - Minerals, Rocks & Fossils.

at Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbys. S30 2WB. Tel Hope Valley (0433) 20373.

2 Nov. 1985 - Cave Science Symposium at University of Sheffield. Details from Dr. M.J. Noel. tel 0742 78555 ext 4488.

11 Nov. 1985 - Geology & Mining: The Science of Technology. Institute of Industrial Archaeology, Ironbridge Gorge Museum. Tel (0952 45) 2751.

Help Wanted

1) Letter from Madame Brule-Garcon (Anne-Francoise), Le Petit breil, Montreuil sous Perouse, 35500 VITRE, France. (translated by Hazel Martell)

"I am in the process of preparing a thesis on the history of the silver-lead mines in Cl9th France; a study which I hope to make less on the economic plan than on the machinery and buildings. It has already been possible for me to put into place the history of the silver-lead mines of Pont-Pean in ille et Viliane.

Could you tell me of any research concerning silver-lead mines in Britain which has been done, or is proceeding. This is of especial interest because it was with British engineers and capital that the mine at Pont-Pean was able to re-open its underground workings in the 1850's."

2) "I am researching mining in the Upper Eden Valley area including Hartley, Mallerstang and Ravenstonedale and would like any information on any mines in these areas (including coal), in particular the activities of the London Lead Company. Also on a recent visit to the Scottish Highlands I explored the Lead/Zinc mines at Tyndrum/Clifton? on the Perthshire/Argyllshire border. Any information gratefully received.

Glyn Robinson, 'Wearcot', Hartley, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4JJ."

Cornwall Meet - Easter 1985.

This years Easter Meet was again held in Cornwall and based at our usual campsite at Chacewater, which was up to the excellent standards we have come to expect.

On Good Friday, to break the troops in gently, the nearby Poldice Mine was first visited with its dressing floors and arsenic flues. After lunch, a lengthy walk was taken around the Great Consolidated Mines which are now being landscaped by the local District Council. The whole area is now adorned with Clwyd Caps, now complete with bat access/egress. Shears Shaft was next on the agenda, followed by the portal of the County adit at Twelveheads, now relocated following diversion work by Wheal Jane to by-pass the underground collapses. A return to the cars was made via the track of the disused Chacewater light railway & Wheal Maid, the present site of a decline being driven by Carnon Consolidated Mines to work, at depth, the United Mines lodes.

Saturday saw the party disappearing underground at Cligga Head into the rabbit warren of workings in the Tungsten mine. For some reason, a splinter group decided to desert the main party (the former being the larger of the two) and explore the No.3 adit first (i.e. the one on the beach). Meanwhile back at the No2 level yours truly and the erstwhile Treasurer had both suffered total & catastrophic lighting failure, presumably due to some localised nuclear attack with its associated electromagnetic effect. Thanks to Richard Hower I was able to proceed using his back-up carbide light which was much more preferable than my less sophisticated candle and matches.

After the morning feretting about an adjournment was made to a local watering hole to sample the pasties and hop water. The afternoon saw us heading in the direction of the Blue Hills Mine, in Trevellas Combe, to be confronted by traffic jams and parking queues. Unknown to those present the meet leader, at great capital outlay by himself, had retained a hill climb for vintage cars and motorcycles especially for the entertainment of the assembled throng. Some thought this was much more interesting than the nearby mine with its waterwheel and Cornish Stamps, whilst others were somewhat indifferent?! to the whole proceedings.

Sunday dawned, and it was raining. And it rained for most of the day (a lot!!). I had made arrangements for us to meet Dr. Marilyn Palmer from Loughborough University who, assisted by Peter Neaverson, gave us a guided tour of the West Basset Mine dressing floors illustrated by old photographs and plans (in plastic bags to protect them from the torrents). The University is planning a Summer school at the site to carry out the survey work which will, hopefully, ultimately be contrasted with dressing floors of the Welsh Potosi Mines described in B.M. 22. Thanks again Marilyn for an interesting morning.

cont'd....

After another hydraulic lunch the East Basset Mines and the South Frances section were inspected. The latter being of interest with its many remaining buildings including the unusual engine house built to house the Hawthorn Davey inverted compound engine. To those of you who deliberated the use of the structure at the south-end of the site, i.e. the solid structure made from large granite blocks, I subsequently discovered, during a wet afternoon in Redruth library, that this was connected by a tramway to the Williams shaft at Dolcoath Mine, but just what for I haven't a clue.

On Monday the party headed west to the St. Just area and after a quick look at the Wheal Edward Engine House and tips (mineral & Council rubbish) turned their attention to the Crowns Engine houses at Botallack. The top engine house had recently been restored with the help of the money raised by the Botallack appeal organised by the Carn Brea Mining Society (which was itself a feature of a lecture at this years NAMHO conference). The lower, pumping, engine house was still undergoing restoration and was clad in scaffolding. After another hydraulic lunch the shafts at Wheal Cock were visited, followed by the surface works of the Levant Mine, all rounded off by a cup of tea at the Geevor cafe.

By Tuesday everyone was so exhausted!! that we had a day off to do our own thing.

On Wednesday Wheal Prosper (Rinsey Head) engine house was visited (this has been restored by the National Trust), followed by the Wheal Trewavas engines which must compete well with Crowns in the competition for the most exposed engine houses. In the afternoon the 80" engine house at Tregurtha Downs, the engine for which is currently housed at Robinsons Shaft at South Crofty Mine, was inspected with a look at Great Work Mine being made on the journey back to Redruth. To round off the day the Dolcoath Adit & Red River were included on the agenda.

In the evening our Vice-President, Bob Burns, gave a demonstration on how to turn meat into carbon using a bar-b-que. (Didn't mean it Bob it was quite a good do really).

By the time Thursday arrived most of those present had got fed up with the weather or the meet leader or both and had gone home. A hardy few remained to brave the elements and conclude their holiday by visiting lighthouses and making sandcastles.

Thanks to those who attended and I hope the weather's better next year.

John H. McNeil.

Book Reviews.

Tin & Tin Mining by R.L. Atkinson, Shire Album No. 139. Published by Shire Publications Price £1.25.

This is a small A5 publication of 32 pages with about 40 photos and diagrams. Many of the photos are historic but have been published previously. This publication, unlike others in the Album Series tries to cover the world and includes tin dredging in Malaysia and smelting in Gascony. For its size its text is quite comprehensive. It includes a list of places to visit as well as a short list of mining societies. An interesting publication to have.

I.J. Brown.

Quarries and Quarrying by P. Stanier, Shire Album No. 134. Published By Shire Publications Price £1.25

Very similar in format to the above, this book concentrates on the production of building stone in Britain. Its title appears to be a misnomer but historically it is correct, for the production of squared stone whether from the surface or underground is "Quarrying" as derived from the Latin. The book includes many historic and interesting photos of surface quarrying methods and machinery as well as some taken underground in sandstone, limestone and slate workings. There is also a chapter on the production of granite setts and a very short chapter introduces "broken stone" quarries. Books on quarrying are rare so that this one is particularly useful and its list of places to visit covering quarrying subjects must be unique. The principal criticism must be that the author greatly underestimates the number of building stone quarries still at work & worthy of a visit, and also the considerable value of old stone quarries as nature reserves, recreational areas and even car parks.

I.J. Brown.

Northern Pennine Orefield Vol.2.

Yes; after tens of years waiting, the sequel to Volume 1, which covers the area from Stainmore to Craven, is here. As an economic memoir, it is best reviewed in two parts. The first, the geological content, represents the first really significant update of geological thinking since the late C19th; when the 6" mapping was done. As such, it will provide the mining historian with much valuable background data, containing references to material published as recently as 1982.

The economic content is, however, something of a disappointment, and this volume will never attain the prominence of the first. Despite the claim to cover Craven, no mention
cont'd....

is made of the Bowland area or the Cononley Mine; which, as research has shown, cannot be dismissed as insignificant, having made some £50,000 profit during its 40 year life! Are we to see these tagged onto a future Derbyshire volume?

The authors have chosen to ignore historical material published since 1975 and, as a result, in places the text has a very dated feel. Reference to the various maps shows that many workings are named after local features; when their true name has been common knowledge for many years. Also, a number of references are wrongly attributed, which is sloppy.

Geology of the Northern Pennine Orefield, Vol.2, Stainmore to Craven, by K.C.Dunham and A.A. Wilson, is published by H.M.S.O. for the British Geological Survey. The old format has been dropped in favour of A4 with floppy covers. It has 247pp, 8 plates, 36 figures, 25 tables and costs £15.

Mike Gill.

Mining Journal

This year's edition of Mining Annual Review is a special Anniversary issue to mark the 150th anniversary of Mining Journal itself. The introductory section is devoted to the anniversary while the major balance of the book is devoted to the normal annual survey of metals and minerals, the technical developments and the countries.

The first issue of Mining Journal was published by the founder, Henry English, on August 29th, 1835 and it has been in continuous publication ever since. Mining Magazine began in 1909 and celebrated its 75th Anniversary last year. Mining Annual Review began, in its present form, as the centenary edition of Mining Journal in 1935 and, thus, celebrates its own Jubilee this year.

Waste Recovery Opposed

"Proposals to move 17,000 tonnes of waste from dumps associated with the disused Cononley lead mines near Skipton have been refused by North Yorkshire C.C.

The plan was to move material for treatment in Co.Durham or Scotland to recover the barytes (barium sulphate) left by the old workings. There is 38,000 tonnes of waste at the mine and about 46% is made up of barytes."

from Yorkshire Evening Post, 5/6/85.

Duften & Silverband Meet -29/30th June.

Approximately 40 members assembled on Duften Green by 10.30am. We set off in convoy for Silverband mines which we reached without incident some 30 minutes later. After inspecting the washing and grading machines used in the Baryte mining operation, we went by the Old Silverband High Level and ascended the hill to the opencast work in operation on top of the Fell. Large Baryte and Galina seams were laid bare and two members found near-perfect examples of crystal quartz. Back at the washing plant we were joined by 10 more late arrivals, and we again set off in convoy for the Stag Arms at Gullom. We did not reckon, however, that our descent would coincide with the seasonal sheep shearing trek from high Fell to pens. It seemed that half the sheep population of Great Britain were on the way down the hill at the same time. Lunch was a little late, but swift service helped to catch up with the schedule.

After lunch we re-assembled on Duften Village Green to mount a tractor and trailer for a long upward journey. On arriving at Duften Mines nearly all present went into Scar Limestone level. This was an easy trip and the superb coal seam it contains was photographed many times, including one member from Surrey who took two hours to take one tripod picture - this I must see when developed! Dr. John Barrett, on whose land we were exploring, had very kindly let out the head of water he keeps stored in Atkinsons Level as a reservoir, which made access to this mine much easier and alleviated the necessity of a long cold 'swim' through 5' deep water. After a barrel squeeze in the drier part of the mine the big mineral deposits were of great interest, in particular the large tabular Baryte crystals. Our trusty driver, Peter Hullock, was waiting for us when we eventually emerged, for the journey back to base. The craftier members amongst our band all stuck themselves to the back of the trailer, thus avoiding being bumped and crushed by the rest of us as we made our near vertical descent to Duften.

On Sunday, we were joined by some new faces, which all but replenished those who could only spend Saturday with us. In the morning the meet divided into 2 sections; one re-entering Atkinsons Level and later going to High Fell Horse Level, (which may be the subject of a later dig); the other negotiated the side of White Rake Hush. Three levels were found ending at Gascoines. We rejoined the first party at High Fell Horse Level and inspected the large shaft nearby which was not part of the same system. After lunch, taken by the washing plant we used as base camp, we all set off to Duften Low Level. Beyond two small falls of rock must lay one of the best examples in Britain

cont'd.....

of partial stone arching. This was a beautiful sight to behold and was much appreciated by everyone present. A long heavy fall soon blocked any further progress, but our intrepid member, Paul Dollery, 'volunteered' to be pushed by Malcolm Street into a small dripping upward crevice, as he was the only one at the time wearing a full wet suit. After a couple of dull thuds which we were wont to hear, and a sound not unlike the bath emptying accompanied by a rush of water, slurry and pebbles all rushing downwards to the bottom of the level - Hey Presto! - the way forward was at last opened up. The low wet crawl was very well rewarded by the workings we discovered beyond. The whole way was transversed by wooden tram rails in very good condition, and rare examples of miners clog marks and those of ponies hooves were found in the clay on each side of the level. Emerging to daylight our last objective of the day was Thelkeld Side Adit, this has a cave entrance and was reported to be wet at entry only. Incorrect. Neck height all the way, would have been a more accurate description.

Our sincere thanks go to Dr. John Barrett and Tom Crag for permission to visit their mines and to Peter Hullock whose tractor driving was superb!

F. David Heaton.

Great Orme Copper Mines

I received the following letter from Andrew Lewis about his activities at Llandudno, "I think you may be interested in the detailed explorations my friends and I are making in the Great Orme Copper Mines. To date many discoveries of mining relics have been found; these include rock drills, shovels, gunpowder barrels (part remains), ore bucket remains, numerous messtins, lengths of water pipe, bore hole scrapers, powder horn stoppers and other unidentified items of iron.

One recently entered working contained many of the above items, together with two clay pipes that have been dated at 1800-1820. That this particular passage had not been entered since the mine closed was clearly indicated by the imprints of miners clogs in the clay of the passage floor (i.e. no other sole prints were present). Similar unentered workings have also been discovered in deep sections of the mine. One of these (approx. 300' from surface shafts) contained the skeleton of a cat, which had been carefully placed to one side. Theories on its occurrence here have ranged from the trivial to the supernatural! Does it have some esoteric significance?

However, the find that surpasses all previous, is a pair of clogs. These were located towards the end of a narrow blind working in a remote section of the mine. They are in an almost perfect state of preservation, being carefully positioned to the passage side. The most likely explanation is that they were an offering to the mine "knockers". I'm sure you've read of these mischievous spirits that were said to inhabit mines and help the old miners locate the ore veins by creating knocking noises. Anyway we like to believe this, as the passage does have a certain atmosphere to it, and its exit is always welcomed.

Many of the finds (including the clogs) have been left in place, only the clay pipe, a few drills and scrapers have been removed. Explorations down the shaft workings near the summit, and the main drainage level at the west shore have been continuing for several months now. It is hoped that one day a connection can be made between the two sets of workings. We would be very interested to hear from any fellow adventurers that know of such a connection or have at any time heard or read about one.

Studies of mining methods/techniques and mode of mineralisation are also being documented. These include possible prehistoric workings that are being reported on by a colleague - Duncan James. I hope to elaborate on the above subjects at a later date."

This next piece ought to be entitled "Down your Way" or, maybe, "A Wally on Walkabout" or some such would be more appropriate (you don't see the state of some of the bump that this bloke churns out).

"With reference in the last Newsletter to the Monkton Farleigh Mine:- Your President (the things I do for the Society) decided to give the place a reconnoitre during his holidays. Verdict - Excellent. Well worth a visit, principally because they have only just nicely got it opened up, so Madame Twoswords etc. haven't had time to buy the place out and fill it with dummies. It's unspoilt and massive. You immediately walk down a long incline into the main roadway where all the bays may be seen where the ammunition used to be stored, as well as these areas there were supa loos!! stone quarry sections, generator house, the GIANT ventilating fan and ice cooling system.

Criticism & Comment:- The guide tended to give the usual comic patter which I found corny and off-putting, though his general information was good. We were rushed around, cont'd.....

but then there was a lot to see and a long way to walk - about 2 miles all told all underground, emerging up a different incline. May I suggest that you take your own cap lamps, for one has to rely on the guide's lamp to see items of interest; general light is low wattage stuff. There was a terrific amount there which we didn't see and perhaps this will be included at a later date and brought into the underground route. If you are in the area do pay a visit. You won't be disappointed.

The second visit was to the Clearwell Caverns in the Forest of Dean. This time I'm afraid one or two dummies were there, although they didn't detract from the interest of the mine. An interesting mine and appreciated by all, especially the little ones. The underground hall would be ideal for the next NAMHO Conference. Again worth a visit and you can take your time walking through, no guides, but the bats get in your hair!!

The third visit was to the mine of a Forest of Dean Free Miner. We just happened to be riding down a narrow lane when we saw muddy water pouring down the road from a lay-by; we stopped and in the corner was a compressor 3' to one side and above was a tin hut with an air winch and to one side was a hole with a tub being hauled out via a rope round a pulley to the winch. In front of the area was a converted bedstead on springs with two little children bagging coal. Well, I flashed out my camera, the children smiled, the man gave a V sign and we got on champion. Had a chit chat, where I was directed to see the owners wife (we know who wears the trousers!). After a 10 mile drive, she told me to go back and we could go down for a trip. Well we were off like Superman and thingy. Down the hole we shot, 200' at 45° in 6" of seething mud and along the level passed several old pillar and stall workings to the face, where we met Mr. Morris, a very kind and helpful man who showed us the 6' coal seam. He also put in a set of timbers so we could take some photographs. We saw the tub taken away up the incline. His partner showed us tallow candles which had been found in the old workings. A most interesting and lucky visit; I doubt I could find that lane again."

Richard Hewer.

Wanlockhead - Still Alive.

Like most projects of this kind, it becomes more long-term than one would think. It is now 2 years since we found the engines, and since then we have only had 5 trips to them. The pumping engine is beginning to look a manageable size, and it's relatively easy to undo the nuts and bolts. Frank Jackson is producing a working model of the pump engine which will work on compressed air. If it's as good as the beam engine then we are in for a treat when it's finished.

We have now got to the far reaches of the mine on adit, and have found some very nice timbering along with some fine "bits", shirts, tools, det boxes, fuse etc. Work on another level is going slowly. We are now 12½' into a fall with a predicted 8' to go - hopefully we will get through by the end of the summer.

I have compiled a Gazetteer of the metal mines of Scotland, some 210 entries, which make up the bulk of the mines and trials north of the Border. This will be published by the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining at Wanlockhead and should be available late September. I hope to bring some to the General Meeting on Nov. 9th.

Jerry Landless.

NAMHO Biennial Conference.

The NAMHO conference can now justly claim to be firmly established on the calendar of events, and this year was no exception. The venue, at which some 140 persons attended, was Matlock Bath, the date May 31st/June 3rd, the host was the Peak District Mines Historical Society Ltd.

The programmes commenced with registration on the Friday morning and, for the daring, a winch trip at Bage Mine; organised by the Wirksworth Mines Research Group. The writer, however, preferred the delights of Enthovens Lead Smelter and Millclose Mine. No ore is treated at the works, its activity being restricted to the recovery of scrap. Regretably, the smelter was comatose; being under repair, but we were able to view the rotary furnaces, dust extraction system and refining pots, whilst, in the store area, stacks of "lovely" lead awaited despatch. The manager, Mr. Mutter, proudly showed us his battery masher, which performs unimaginable feats with casings, lead paste and acid! During our tour, we kept spying a vast hole, which was appearing at the rear of the present works. As we approached this, our guide became positively enthused; this, we were informed, was to be the site of the "premier lead smelter Anglais".

In the evening, those doyens of the Peak District, Messrs Rieuwerts and Willies, treated an ever growing audience to an introduction to lead mining in Derbyshire. This was followed by, what for me is a major attraction of such conferences, a chance to sit

cont'd.....

and chat with fellow enthusiasts.

Saturday morning opened with a bang - headmaster Ford gave us assembly, and the days orders, in his usual effervescent manner. Under his chairmanship, those arriving late to lectures would be harangued; a point that future chairmen would do well to remember and repeat.

The work of the Carn Brea Mining Society, at the Crowns engine houses, Botallack Mine, was an eye-opener for anyone who has talked about repairing mine buildings. This society actually got on with the job, and has saved one of Cornwall's most famous features. The story of fund raising, disasters, crisis management and eventual (well nearly) success served to remind one that such ventures cannot be undertaken lightly.

At this juncture, the first major difference from earlier conferences arose - a series of alternatives. Outdoor events had been arranged to run parallel with lectures, which allowed those who really felt the compulsion, to; swing from a railway viaduct, get wet and see the inside of yet more limestone. A more interesting, and certainly more useful departure, was the introduction of seminars, on subjects of esoteric interest. Of course, this choice was too much for some - who are probably still wandering around bemused.

Jim Rieuwerts chaired the first seminar, on mining laws and customs, which gave an opportunity to compare, and discuss, their development, or absence, in various mining areas. It was a stimulating debate, which illuminated a much neglected area of research.

George Batey treated us to some personal, and anecdotal, memories of his youth in the North-East Coalfield; where, as a proto-type John McNeil, he had been a sickly child. On one occasion, young George had been so ill that his neighbour had killed his beloved pigeons to provide meat. This brought cries of "shame" from a visiting bunch of revolutionary socialists! The potion did its work, however, and the boy lived to relate more lurid tales of his fellow colliers, and hometown; known evocatively as "Little Moscow."

On safer ground, Rob Vernon talked about his work on the mines of the Gwydyr Forest, Llanrwst. Here, Rob is liaising with the Forestry Commission and Snowdonia National Park etc. to identify those sites suitable for reclamation or preservation.

During his talk on "Bats and Mines", Dr. Stebbings (of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs.) illustrated the need for caution when visiting mines - many of which contain bat colonies. Because of the strength of legislation, aimed at protecting the plummeting bat population, it was possible that access to mines could be maintained, even when landowners wished to block entrances.

The Saturday Social Evening proved to be an event not to be forgotten. It started with a ride up the cable-car to the Heights of Abraham, where a crowd (some slightly green with the experience) gathered - many having forgotten the mnemonic about "What goes up":

The evening advanced, the barbeque was over, and the Folk Singers appeared - not to be beaten, we sat our ground. Even when that famous duo - "Pearce and Carlisle" gave a Chaucerian rendering of some bawdy song, only a few departed. But, alas, what had been slowly dawning on some of us came to pass, viz. the descent. Suffice it to say, this involves negotiating a path which drops about 800' in a horizontal distance of about 10'. It was midnight, very dark, and many of us had no lights. Various tales of mishap are told, and it is known that a certain well-to-do Secretary, who prides himself in wearing leather soled shoes, was deposited in the undergrowth, lost his pullover and nearly set fire to the hillside whilst using his lighter to search for it. A Recorder, who remained sober during the proceedings, wheeled himself to the edge and, on deciding that the pin-pricks of light, far below, were not stars but street lamps, was seen to have a very ashen complexion. Those members who remember the world wheelbarrow altitude title being clinched (BMS, p39) by this same Recorder, will (perhaps) be pleased to read that, thanks to the able efforts of Lyn Willies as anchor, and Hazel Martell as illuminant, a safe, if sweaty, descent was made.

On Sunday, we were transported to the Isle of Man; which, for those of us who have never been, has more to it than the Lady Isabella waterwheel. Here, Chairman Ford relaxed his grip, and tea was late, leaving Bob Clark with a tight schedule in which to recover his artefacts. Bob admonished us that far too many items were removed from mines, taking them out of their contexts, and then went on to suggest means of preserving them once the crime was committed. Regretably, to get back on schedule, no time was allowed for discussion; as a lively debate looked set to ensue.

Roger Burt's seminar, on Archival Sources, was very much linked to a discussion of his work, with NAMHO, towards a comprehensive bibliography of post 1946 sources on mining history. Work on this is well advanced, and a number of useful suggestions for improving it were made.

cont'd.....

After lunch, the final seminar found Mike Gill in philosophical mood as he detailed what was wrong with our current approach to mining history, and examined some alternative methods for improving matters. At the end of his talk, although shell-shocked, those present contributed to by-far the longest post seminar discussion; which revealed that the speaker was not alone in his misgivings.

During these two seminars, the lectures had continued, one giving details of the "French Connection", this time at the Coniston Copper Mines. The second, an attempt to "allay some of the stigma attached (by mining historians) to mineral collectors" was, by report, unsuccessful.

For those who thought that the efforts of the Carn Brea Mining Society were ambitious, Lynn Willies's talk on the recording and conservation work at the Rio Tinto mine, Spain, was an education. The work, which has political and commercial backing, is aimed at using the site when mining operations cease completely in a few years time. Lynn illustrated the Roman workings, with their estimated 16 million tons of slags, the Cl9th and modern periods were also well represented - but not too much (yet) of the intervening fifteen hundred years or so.

On the whole, this was an excellent Conference, with a stimulating variety of events on its programme. It is heartening to see that the strengths of earlier conferences have been used to reach a degree of sophistication which provides seminars catering for those who want something more than just having to sit through yet another photograph of a mining scene.

Mike Gill.

Members List

The more observant amongst you will have twigged that the members list enclosed with this Newsletter should have been sent with the May edition. There is a very good reason for this. Cost. It wasn't left out because we forgot about it, but due to the fact that postage was 66p without it and 99p with.

Who remembers filling in a box on their last Membership Renewal Form asking if they were willing to pay more for extra publications each year?

The result of this nationwide survey was that approx. twice as many were either against or didn't bother to vote than the Yea's.

The committee will now have further deliberations! Doesn't life get complicated?

For Sale

NMRS Back Issues.

	Price
BM16 The Gallantry Bank Copper Mine. C.J. Carlon.	£3.50pp
BM22 "The Richest in all Wales". M. Palmer.	"
BM23 Memoirs 1983	"
BM24 The Ancient Metal Mines of the Isle of Islay, Argyll. R.M. Callender and J. Macauley.	"
BM25 Memoirs 1984	"
BM26 The Old Mines of the Llangynog District. R.A. Williams.	£5.66
Publications Index & Bibliography of NMRS Publications 1960-80.	0.50

All available from 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield S31 7EL.

Lectures

By kind permission of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Ind.Hist Section, members are invited to two lectures. The first on 16/11/85 "Aspects of Mining" by Ron Storer, from Lounds Hall National Mining Museum. The second on 18/1/86 "Water power in the Yorkshire Dales" by Griff Hollingshead, retired from Bradford Ind. Hist. Museum. I suspect that this lecture will be based on Grassington Moor.

These start at 11am (Tea & coffee at 10.30am) at Claremont, 23 Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9NZ. Grid Ref. SE292341.

Volunteers are required to lead Meets for 1986. Please contact John McNeil NOW. (166 Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester M31 3NB.)

Please send articles for the next edition (November) as soon as possible to H.Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY. Tel (0532) 758505.