

DON'T FORGET THE DINNER

Those who haven't booked for this years Annual Dinner are hereby encouraged to do so forthwith. Why does everyone always leave it till the very last minute? For the benefit of that faction who loose Newsletters and booking forms here, to refresh your memories, is a short resume:-

Date... 4th October, 1986. Place....Bulls Head Hotel, Cross Street, Castleton, Derbys.
Time... 7 to 7.30pm for 8pm. Price.... £7.50 per head.

Booking form, with full remittance, before 20th September to Bob Burns, 22 West Hall Garth, South Cave, Brough, N. Humberside HU15 2HD, stating number of meals requiring Beef and number requesting Chicken.

Whilst on about leaving things till its nearly too late, John Mac has asked for people to volunteer to lead Meets for next year.

Now it may be that you personally can't/won't/mustn't lead any, but that you have a friend who can/will/should. If this is the case, then persuade/con/order him/her/them to do the necessary. Oh Yes! then let little Johnnie know as soon as possible, so that he can include the fact on the Membership cards. Bearers of this information to form an orderly queue outside 166 Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester M31 3NB and ask for J.H. McNeil. (Don't tell him I sent you though).

Future Meets.

Sept. 27th - Buckden Gavel Mine. Leader M.R. Needham, Meet at Buckden car park NGR SD942774 at 10.30am.

Oct 4th. - Annual Dinner see above.

Nov 8th. - General Meeting, Presidents Talk-in & Pie & Pea Supper - see enclosed booking form.

Feb.15th - Annual General Meeting.

Boulby Potash & British Gypsum trips.

In the last Newsletter I used David Heaton's hand-outs in lieu of a Meet report. I now have his report to supplement his notes, or did we get part II first?
Boulby Mine visit - Friday 25th April.

24 members attended this meeting - the maximum possible due to the size of the cage, and, incidentally, the largest party ever to visit this mine since it was opened - that must be a feather in the caps of NMRS! Suitably devested of cameras, watches, lighters and hand torches and armed with emergency breathers we went through two compression chambers to the shaft top ready for the descent. From start to finish this took 4 mins 20 secs., travelling at 25ft per second. We were now nearly 3/4 mile below ground level. The bore down which we had travelled is one of the worlds engineering triumphs. For nearly 1000ft of the depth the sides had to be frozen solid and lined with quick drying cement to keep out the millions of gallons of water present in the Bunter Sandstone. After a one kilometer walk below the sea, along wide galleries formed entirely of salt and potash, we arrived at one of the working faces. This was being prepared by explosive experts (Salary £20,000+ per annum) for firing at 8am the following morning. New, experimental, blasting techniques were shown and explained to us, along with a demonstration of the roof grader - which reduced the atmosphere to that of thick porridge - and also a similar dem. of the roof bolting machine were both fascinating. A ripper, looking like an oversize chain saw costing £million pounds each, laid in wait for work the following morning. Some 300 yards away from the face we met Kevin, the shift foreman, having a cup of tea. The table was neatly laid out, complete with white table cloth and a thoughtfully placed white awning which acted as a backdrop against the high potash rock face. The temperature at 40°C assured his tea kept warm. On the way back to the shaft bottom, we saw many examples of salt crystals, and roof contractions where the great compressions from above can almost be measured by the eye. We then visited the control room where the electricity supply; conveyor movement and telephone communications are all monitored. It was hard to believe all this was going on 3600ft below ground.

On arrival at the surface we visited the twin winding houses, serving the double shafts. The larger of the two handles the mineral movement and this cage makes 32 round trips per hour carrying 22 tons of ore on each occasion at 52feet per second, allowing

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12 seconds at the bottom for loading - how's that for British productivity! The cables need replacement at regular intervals and cost £50,000 each. On the way back to the minehead buildings we noticed a complete lack of slag heaps. The reason? the tailings are crushed, mixed with sea water and pumped out to sea.

A cup of lemon, lime and salt was enjoyed by all and our sincere thanks are due to Mr Petit and Mr Kevin for all the help they gave on this unique occasion.

British Gypsum Mines - Sat. 26th April.

16 members (including 2 ladies) met on Dufton Village Green, and set off promptly for Longthorpe Mines, Kirby Thore. We were met by Richard Hird, the Mine Captain, and his Deputy, Dr. P. Holmes. Our exclusive band was then divided into two separate parties, and treated to an experience that must surely be unique in the annals of NMRS. We were offered a full morning of "armchair" mining, from the comfort of two white landrovers, with flashing lights and searing headlights, quite different to hand-held ascetalline lamps and dull caplamps in a remote moorland leadmine.

What a luxury this was - nearly five miles of underground workings were visited, a much greater area than would ever have been possible on foot. The drift entrance, is made down a wide roadway with the conveyor belt system running at the side. The Gypsum in these workings was laid down over a bed of sandstone some 250million years ago and constituted an inland sea. It is very high quality ore and in most cases after crushing is available for the immediate manufacture of plaster boards (for house ceilings) without further purification. This process is effected in huge mills which are situated adjacent to the mine itself.

The Pillar & Stall system is used, and to the untrained eye it would seem this method would be wasteful. However, an 80% extraction rate is achieved, which is highly efficient. The roadways are high and wide and we visited the face workings with rippers and roof bolt machines in situ; the mine sump and pumping station and various very interesting geological formations. Huge wooden doors opened and shut keeping the air circulation in correct rotation. We were, on average, 80 metres below the surface, and when the Settle-Carlisle express hurtles by overhead it is quite a unique sensation. Only eight underground miners are employed, but they have between them possibly the highest production figures in Britain.

On return to the surface we saw our journey mapped out against the mine captains office and our thanks are due to Mr. Hird and Dr. Holmes for all the trouble they took in making our visit so interesting and informative.

The afternoon visit to Dufton had to be cancelled due to thick snow on the fells and the fact that ownership of the land which we were to have visited had been transferred to Northwest Holst since your leader originally planned this spring meeting.

Thanks to all members who attended.

F. David Heaton.

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NAMHO Conference 1987.

Here are advance details so that you can make a note in your diaries.

3/6th July at Cambourne School of Mines, Pool, Nr. Redruth, Cornwall.

The theme of the Conference is to be "Societies, their aims and recent activities". Numbers will be limited to 100 delegates, but full details and programme aren't ready yet.

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Note Ye Well!

Stump Cross Cavern and Mungo Gill Caves, are now "Statutory Sites of Special Scientific Interest" (SSSI) as defined under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

Both these sites are subject to access agreements negotiated by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs.

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Scottish Field Meet 24-26th May, 1986.

The Meet began in Wigtonshire, with a Saturday morning rendezvous at the Greetown Gemrock museum. Early arrivals were not only able to examine a magnificent collection of specimens, large and small and from all over the world, but to enjoy coffee and home baking.

The Saturday visits were to the lead mines at Blackcraig and Pibble, so eleven members and friends set out for West Blackcraig, armed with hand-outs and maps provided by Geoff Downs-Rose. It later transpired that five more (in a Campervan) had gone to Pibble, but your correspondent does not wish to pursue this duplication further.

The Blackcraig and Pibble mines were in the Landdovrey greywacke that lies to the

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South of the Cainsmore granite. Foster-Smith suggests both worked parts of the same mineral vein.

At West Blackcraig the site of the main adit and smelt mill, NGR NX435646, was examined. Nothing remains of any buildings, but a collapse at the side of the A7 promised a dig to the adit. However, further investigation was left for another day, and the party moved on to the rough track that marks an old military road; noting the ruined miners' cottages at NX437649. There seemed little evidence of the mines, but over the hill at East Blackcraig prospects were more interesting. An open shaft, the Engine Shaft was found at NX448644, with what at first seemed to be a small adit beside it. After searching through briars and bushes, the hypothesis was put forward that: the adit had carried water to the shaft head. This water had been taken over the road in a box launder from a system of lades and a reservoir to the northeast of the site. The water had powered some sort of engine in the mine below, and there had been a balance beam and bob on the surface, and to the south of the shaft top.

The Blackcraig mines were worked on and off from the 1760s to the late 19th century. By 1850 they were owned by the Blackcraig and Craigton Consolidated Mining Co., who shipped the ore to Wales at that time. Total production from the West mine is recorded at 10,185 tons of ore to 1871. East Blackcraig seems only to have worked for a short period but produced zinc ore as well as lead, 4000 tons of the former and 1200 the latter between 1854 and 1881.

The party had retired for a roadside lunch when up the track, in the opposite direction and on a collision course, came a camper van driven by a short chap with whiskers. They had, he said, spent the morning at Pibble wondering where everyone else was! But your correspondent does not etc.

So off to Pibble, where permission had been obtained to visit the site as the buildings are on a hill-farm. It is approached over worsening tracks but the party were encouraged by the sight of the magnificent engine house set amid the hills. Most stopped their vehicles well short of the mine, but Jeremy Landless, driving on all four wheels at 10,000rpm and with cowdung flying in all directions, was able to take his passenger right to the minehead.

Only about a half of the Cornish enginehouse still stands on the north side of the shaft at NX525608. The foundations of the boiler-house are on the west side, the flue going behind the building to where the chimney once stood. The base of the balance beam trunnion can be seen on a W/E axis, with the bob to the west.

During the course of the afternoon the area was explored and the following "holes" up the hillside were investigated.

NX528605 and circ 250M. A small stream issues from an adit which forks inside, the west passage is to the forehead, the east to a fall. The water ponded beyond this is very deep, so it was not explored further.

NX528604 and circ 320M. A shaft with an adit behind it. The latter had been stoped down from the sole and exploration was halted when the cavities filled the passageway. NX530605 and circ 300M. A trial drift with some nice mineralisation. The party finally examined the remains of the wheelpit and dressing floor at NX524607. The wheel must have been a huge one, perhaps 20m in diam. but there is little sign that much ore was ever processed. To the east of the wheelpit is a collapsed shaft and on the other side the line of a collapsed adit. This could have taken water from the pumping shaft, but opinion was divided as to its purpose.

Copper as well as lead was mined at Pibble, and Foster-Smith records the mine was managed between 1849 and 1855 by the Creetown Copper and Lead Co., who built the engine house in 1853. Outputs of only 214 tons of copper concentrate and 29 tons of lead ore are recorded so, on the face of it, the returns did not justify the considerable capital investment.

Various options had been provided for Sundays' activities, but it was decided to visit Wanlockhead where a start had been made to open an adit that ran SE from the Wanlock burn at NS876130. It is thought to have been driven in the early 18th century to reach veins under Stake Moss.

The work had been set out in a very professional manner, the bank above the portal was shored up and the first set of fore-polling arranged. There was a considerable flow of water, so the visitors were put on to deepen the channel and lower the likely level beyond the fall. It soon became evident that much of the blockage was ancient domestic refuse, filled with shards and bottles which were sought by the younger members with shouts of excitement. The day provided the visitors with a practical example of fore-polling, but much work will be needed before there is any prospect of getting into this old level.

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On Monday the interest switched to limestone mines at New Cumnock. There was at one time about 50 limestone mines working beds that ran along Nithsdale and into Ayrshire, and for the mines at New Cumnock the party had the benefit of the local knowledge of ex coalminer, Donald McIver. Even wives and wains were tempted into the cavernous workings at Craigdullert, NS664153, which must be 6M high in places. A "cornstone" of the red sandstone series was mined, and was of sufficient thickness and quality that all could be taken out leaving 'open' chambers. Three kilns by the track served the lower workings and there are two more by the upper mines. Part of these workings are in a flooded quarry, and none appear accessible. Having looked in vain for signs of a drainage adit, the party set off for Benson, looking in, in passing, at kilns that served the Mansfield mines at NS628145.

Benson, NS580159, was opened by James Taylor, William Symington's associate, in the 1700's, and is now a good example of historical desolation. Only a few stones remain of the two three-draw kilns: cattle, penned in the quarry, have turned it to a quagmire; and the mine entrance is so filled with rubbish that without Donald's guidance it might not have been attempted. Understandably, only the determined followed him in, but it was worth the effort for the mine is an example of a different way of working from that at Craigdullyert. Only a finegrained carboniferous limestone was mined and this meant the adjacent, more sandy, stone was left to be packed between the roads. Of particular interest was what seemed to be a canal, deep in the mine. The dark water was held between magnificent stone walls but a boat would be needed to investigate its purpose and destination.

Craigdullyert was like a cavern, but Benson was definitely a mine. Feeling in familiar surroundings, Donald sat back on his heels, turned down his lamp, and regaled the party with tales of mines and colliery ghosts. Under the circumstances, these had a particularly atmospheric quality so, before his listeners were frightened half to death, a move was made back to daylight.

Having had many of the interesting features in the area pointed out, the party ended the day looking for fossils. With expert guidance some fine examples of tree ferns etc. were found and the youngsters returned heavily loaded to the cars.

And the weather? It was dry of course. Well, most of the time anyway. Isn't it always dry for NMRS scottish Meets.

Bill Harvey.

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The more observant of our readers will have spotted among forthcoming Meets that on November 8th there is a pie and pea supper. Somewhere with this Newsletter you should also spot a booking form for this same 'do'. As many members as possible are requested to fill in and return, with all possible haste, this form accompanying it, of course, with the appropriate remuneration. The first 50 will get the hot pies, any more than this number will have to make do with cold ones, 'cos we can't get any more in the oven. Please remember to bring your own dish and spoon.

Some of our newer members possibly aren't sure of what a "talk-in" is all about - so I'll try to explain. Various members bring slides, exhibits, plans etc and everyone sits and watches and politely applauds at the appropriate time. Unfortunately we do have a rougher element who are unversed in protocol, who tend to barrack, especially at the less educational of the talks. Anyone not participating in this practice will be reported to the Committee.

We urgently need volunteers to give talks etc. The subject is irrelevant, if it vaguely infringes on mining, great. If its serious or funny, better still. Tea and biscuits will be served at various intervals. (Plus pie & peas, of course).

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Parys Mountain - Another False Dawn?

The grand old copper mine on Parys Mountain in Anglesey is once again receiving the attention of a mining company. The mountain, thought by some to have more holes in it than a pin cushion, is currently being investigated by Canadian based Imperial Metals Corp.

Initial results from the 1985 drilling programme, which reputedly cost over £¼million indicated reserves of 3.2 million tonnes of polymetallic ore grading 1.6% copper, 2.9% lead, 6.2% zinc, 2oz/t silver and 0.02%z/t gold. In addition there are inferred reserves of 1.9 million tonnes with similar grades and the potential of large additional reserves.

Imperial's subsidiary Anglesey Mining Ltd. now want to spend £5million on the next phase of exploration involving sinking a 1700ft shaft and then development levels to obtain bulk ore samples. They will only go ahead with this work if Gwynedd County Council gives full planning permission for a mine and mill complex costing £25 million and creating 150 jobs. The proposed mine would produce about 45,000 tons of ore a year

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which would be shipped from Holyhead to a European smelter.

By way of comparison, Thomas Pennant observed during his visit to Parys Mountain mines in 1778 that about 8000 persons were "getting their bread from these mines" and he believed the mines produced about 44,000 tons of ore a year in their heyday.

The Welsh Mines Society is keeping a close watch on any potential threat to the historically important parts of the old site posed by the proposals for the new mine. Meanwhile, the encouraging drilling results at Parys Mountain have apparently activated interest in surrounding areas. Cominco U.K. Ltd., who drilled Parys Mountain in the 1970's has asked for permission to drill six holes on Mynydd Eilian near where there are old trials and which lies about 2½ miles east of the Parys opencast. The Llanellian Community Council oppose the drilling, but Gwynedd County Planning Officer has recommended approval. Gwynedd County Council has yet to make a final decision.

R.A. Williams.

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Who am I to comment about the fact that I've received the P.S. before the main letter?

Post-scriptum to Surrey Stone Mines Meet Report 28/29th June.

Ensuant to Nick Catford's excellent society meet to the Surrey Stone Mines on Sat. 28th June, the Hon. Secretary was "reluctantly" enticed by his brother to continue the meet by way of further mine exploration underneath the heart of Reigate. This consisted of a visit to "On the Rocks" in London Road, Reigate. A seemingly ordinary shop front in down town Reigate (up town?) leads to what must be one of the country's few underground licenced establishments. "On the Rocks" is a wine bar located in the former silver-sand mines which undermine the town. A map on the wall details the extent of the mine which was worked by the traditional pillar and stall method. The sandstone in this part of Surrey is extremely friable and at the time of operation of the mines would have been extremely easy to work by hand. The establishment gives a well illustrated view to yet another interesting part of Surrey's mining history and is well worth a visit for its novelty value. It is also a very cool place to be on a hot Summer's day.

To a Northerner, the only complaint is the somewhat inflated prices one has to accept (??) in Southern England coupled with a lack of Real Ale (posh for decent beer).

John H. McNeil.

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Irish and Scottish Gold Fever.

Ennex International has found "strong indications of sufficient reserves to support a viable gold mining operation" in the Sperrin Mountains in Northern Ireland. All but two of the 34 holes drilled in 1985 intersected economic ore grades and reserves are calculated at 537,000 short tons grading 0.27oz (cut) per short ton or 0.37oz gold (uncut). Further reserves are expected in adjacent areas.

James Resources Ltd., a Canadian company, has begun an 80 hole drilling programme to test a 130km² gold prospect in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. The company has raised \$c 200,000 to finance the drilling exploration to follow up soil and stream geochemistry gold anomalies. Most work will be done in the eastern portion of the area on strike to the shear zones that host the gold discoveries of Ennex.

New Sabina Resources Ltd., a Toronto based company, is exploring three concessions for gold deposits in County Wicklow in the Irish Republic. Work will include geological mapping, panning of streams and a geochemical survey.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, two Canadian companies have started drilling in the Loch Tay region of the Grampian Highlands to confirm a economic gold deposit. The selected sites are at Tomnadashon, Corrie Buie, Comrie and River Almond.

R.A. Williams. (Source: International Mining).

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Still on about Gold Mines, Eric Gray-Thomas has sent me the following cutting from the Liverpool Post of 21.3.86.

Gold Mine extension wins go-ahead.

Gwynfynydd mine company, headed by financier Mark Weinberg has been given the go-ahead by the Snowdonia National Park Authority to extend its operations and create additional job opportunities.

Gwynfynydd Mine Company first approached the authority last July for permission to increase its working near Dolgellau 15-fold, claiming that the increased operation would enable the company to turn a weekly loss of £8,600 into a profit of £2,450. The company sought consent to increase the weight of mined material from 100 tonnes per week to 1500 tonnes per week for a period of 45 years, and claimed that the introduction of a three shift operation would create around 12 additional jobs, bringing the workforce at the mine to 35.

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After the company made it known they would have little option but to close the mine down completely, the park authority had a change of heart and decided to have another look at the application.

Book Reviews

Tin Mines & Miners of Dartmoor - A photographic record. Tom Greaves. 86pp; 75 plates; glossary; bibliography. Devon Books (Town & Country Books) 24 Priory Ave, Kingskerswell, Newton Abbot TQ12 5AQ. £4.95

This is a book of photographs recording tin mining on Dartmoor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. All illustrations are accompanied by extensive captions, O.S. grid references and the photographers name, when known. Many of the pictures will be new to members since these fascinating glimpses of the past have never been previously published. Although the book deals with the mines' history and technology (which was, as can be expected somewhat primitive) the content is weighted towards the social aspect, viz a viz the working miners, their families and working conditions. Mr. Greaves gives copious verbatim commentaries which he recorded during conversations with many of the 'old timers'. Altogether a fine little book and one which can be recommended.

R.H. Bird.

New from Twelveheads Press, Chy Mengleth, Truro, Cornwall TR4 8SN :-

The Redlake Tramway & China Clay Works. E.A. Wade. 84pp; 56 plates. Card £4.50.

Case bound £6.45

North Devon Clay. MJ Messenger.

104pp; 73 plates. Card £4.50. Case bound £6.45

Ain't seen 'em - can't comment.

R.H.B.

Rail buffs may like to know that the reprint of Lewis Cozens (1949) booklet on the Corris Railway - built for slate traffic - is still available from Corris Railway Soc., Brynderw, Aberllefenni, Machynlleth, Pwys SY20 9RR. In 1949 it was four and a tanner, now it's thirty bob!

R.H.B.

The Stones of Britain by Richard Muir, published by Michael Joseph. 288pp with over 150 photos. Price £15.95. 1986.

This is a book of wide scope but it does not lack in depth, it is very readable and will be of interest to all who wish to look deeper into the making of the British landscape and heritage. The author ranges widely over the hard rocks, slates and sandstones, limestones, clays and chalks describing the landscapes they have helped to produce and the materials they have yielded ranging from axes and arrowheads through tombs and stone circles to domestic houses, bridges and cathedrals.

He describes the useage of stone in, amongst other places, the Lake District, Cornwall Cotswolds and the Burren in County Clare and in all periods particularly the medieval period when the industry perhaps reached its peak. Vast numbers of men were employed in hewing stone from both quarries and underground mines to develop Britain's great cities, its county towns, its ports and its tiniest villages.

Many of the more important quarries are mentioned together with details of their remains and some are described for example, those of Weldon limestone, Carnglaze slate, Stonesfield "stone slates" and Aberdeen granite.

The photos are splendid, but a few in colour, like those on the cover, would have added something extra to the book. The author states that his aim is to give pleasure by sending the reader out to look and probe, in this he certainly seems to have succeeded. The book opens up new horizons in an often overlooked area full of fascination and so very important to our heritage.

I.J. Brown.

Pit Ponies by John Bright, published by B.T. Batsford Ltd. London 1986.

120pp with some 58 photos, diagrams etc. Price £10.95

It is surprising that no major book has been published on this subject before 1986, the only other item on the subject in the reviewers library is an N.C.B. pamphlet of the 1950s. It is a fascinating story, starting over 200 years ago and the story is still being written. In 1947 the NCB inherited 21,000 pit ponies, by 1984 there was still 55 remaining underground and 45 of these were in an undersea colliery.

There are sections on history, breeding, purchase and training, working conditions, stabling, health and safety, of trips above ground, during strikes, for showing and racing. The book ends with stories and verses by miners and with extracts from colliery record books.

Although the writer is not writing from personal experience, he certainly has a feel for the subject and his book is full of anecdotes, animal stories and first hand reminiscences - all well worth recording. There is some sadness, for example stories of

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ponies with 26 years service shot below ground on the day their pit shuts. But in small shaft mines ponies had to be taken down young and grew too big to be brought out, three ponies the reviewer worked with - Sammy, Bangor and Ned, never knew daylight and when replaced by locos in 1958 they could not be brought out of the mine alive. A sad thought but mining was never the right place for ponies and the sooner the last one leaves the better.

This book is highly recommended.

I.J. Brown.

Keld Meet Report 12/13th July, 1986.

Saturday. Ten or so members, including a rather fit gentleman who had cycled over from Hartley on his mountain bike (very appropriate) met at Hogarths Bridge at the head of Swaledale on an overcast but humid day. We walked along the banks of the river accompanied by a poor soul still under the influence of Theakstons when a rather tall scientifically minded member (also under the influence?) kindly tested the depth of the River Swale (knee deep). On arrival at the Lane End Mines we inspected the two engine shafts, one operated by a water wheel, the other by pressure engine. Some time was spent testing the depth of the shaft and speculating as to why the water was lower than the river (could it have been due to the water table) and after being joined by two families we returned to the cars for lunch. On the way back the only through trip of the day was accomplished by a brave bearded little chap who single handed explored the 30 or 40 foot length of the Littlemoor Foot engine drift tunnel.

After lunch we visited the Keldside Smelt mill with its decorative facade which leaves one with the distinct impression that the later period of working the mines was more for show and the prestige for the directors than profit for the poor shareholders. The rest of the afternoon was spent visiting the Plate Holes dressing floor and trying to interpret and photograph this extremely interesting site whilst being eaten alive by giant midges. One bright spark suggested that sticking a fern in the collar of the shirt and bending it forward over ones head was a sure way of repelling these obnoxious little beasties which led to some very odd looking folk wandering rather self-consciously round the site. We then visited the Beldi Hill Smelt Mill and then back towards Keld along the river banks and the grand finale of the day when we crossed the river on a dubious looking and very shaky wire rope suspension bridge. The expression on the faces of various members whilst crossing the bridge giving rise to much hilarity and cameras clicking merrily away.

Sunday. Twelve or so members gathered at Keld on a morning with weather a lot fresher and midge less and walked up to Swinnergill Level. Two hours or so were spent exploring this level, the faster G.M.G. passing us more pedestrian members several times. We then explored a small level on the opposite bank of the gill driven on the north vein and then walked down to Crackpot Hall Level.

This is a fine level though rather a strain on the back being about 4ft high driven in lime with a ledge on the right hand side at 3ft the full length of the drive, which was most probably to carry pipes of some description. After a considerable distance a nice square 40ft deep sump is met on the left hand side of the level and the main drive continues on till it meets the shale, and soon after ends in a collapse. A crosscut to the right is arched to coffin level proportions through the shale, but on entering a large collapse chamber our gas detector (a gas lighter!!!?) gave a very low flame so a hasty retreat was made. A very nice level this one, but don't forget your matches!

The party now diminished to 7 with flagging interest or energy were coaxed down Landy Level where the only two wet suited members tried the delights of the cold wet extremities, visiting the top of the Golden Ball Rise.

Even more exhausted we were down to three when a visit to New Level was proposed and a quick trip was made through the very unusual fault dominated natural caverns which gave a fitting end to a rewarding day.

A most enjoyable weekend for the leader and my thanks to the members who attended this pleasant and often good humoured meet, I hope they enjoyed it as much as I did.

Les O. Tyson.

To Whom it may concern

I've been asked to inform anyone who saw a letter to a Newspaper, circulating in the Northumberland area, about a Mrs. Bird, that this does not refer to Dick's Hilary of editorial fame.

An open letter to Friends of Killhope; 23rd August, 1986.

" 1 Stonecroft Farm Cottages,
Newbrough,
Hexham,
Northumberland
NE47 5AX.

Dear Friends, following a recent unhappy visit to Killhope museum I wish to protest about the wanton destruction taking place on this site.

The whole scheme appears inspired by;

- a) Need to create cheap and chatty short term employment palliatives.
- b) Desire of planners to transform the North Pennines into Holiday Park and tourist trap.
- c) Political electioneering in the form of 'popular Capitalism' via private and public co-sponsorship.

How else can one account for the sight of bored youngsters kicking around the (newly exposed) remains of the worlds only remaining North Pennine washing floor. Why are they expected to differentiate between building rubble and rotten wood belonging to the floor. There are no walkways, no site supervision and much neglect is evident. Who are the vandals anyway?

My anger would perhaps have been contained if a group of youngsters hadn't unwittingly remarked on the absence of lead mining activity in the Tyne valley area as shown on your model. This failure to accurately portray the North Pennine Industry is symptomatic of the flawed philosophy which underpins the Killhope project.

Keep politics out of History.

Yours George French. "

Comment. Could people with similar ideas on Historical vandalism please drop me a line so I can include suggestions and techniques in future Newsletter article on the site. What specific examples of damage? Estimates of damage done, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100% - Dare I say 'Friends against Killhope'.

Coming back to the real world, I'm interested in anything to do with Tyne valley lead mining in South West Northumberland. If you come across a reference, please let me know.

G. French.

Allyn Austin has sent me "a brief note for your esteemed organ". However, it turned out to be for the Newsletter instead, and concerned the digging out of the Old No.2 level at Christ Cliff Farm, Eskdale.

"This was the lowest level of 4 ascending the fellside put in about 1880-82 by the South Cumberland Iron Co., who also worked the mines near St. Catherines Church, Gill Force in Eskdale. The iron mines were no more than trials with only a few rises shown on the sections of 1882 (Carlisle Record Office D/LEC/7/179) above the levels. The No. 2 level is about the length shown on this mine section of 350'. An inclined plane known as the "Gig" road was built to serve the levels but very little ore was produced. The vein in No. 2 is soft clay with a thin string of soft reddish ore varying from nothing to 3" or so thick.

The level is just behind the farmhouse and was dug out with permission from the farmer. The entrance was then thoroughly back filled, re-digging is likely to be a good days work, if the owner ever gave permission again. The entrance was a little dodgy as a ten foot drop through loose rubble was necessary. Quite a lot of the level was timbered, most of which has collapsed. This seems to have been to protect the miners from loose vein material dropping down.

The mine contains some iron "top hat" section rails as used in other Eskdale mines. There are some nice pick marks in the soft clay walls in one or two places. A small niche contained a piece of bent-over lead sheet about hand size containing a putty-like material - gelignite?.

Outside the level and lower down the fell is the remains of a small rectangular hut with dry stone walls - a powder house perhaps. The "gig" road fed a timber loading stage beside the farm track. The few hundred tons of ore raised was, presumably, carted to Boot for shipment out on the Eskdale railway. The company ran out of money about 1882 and very little, if any, work was done in this area afterwards.

Mr. B. Young has a copy of an 1882 section at the Inst. of Geological Science at Windsor Court, Windsor Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4HE. Richard Hewer has a copy of an 1881 plan of levels and Gig Road, also from Carlisle Record Office originally.

A piece of rail and a broken roller from the Gig Road will be placed in Ravensglass Railway Museum.

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The other 3 levels on this mine are all run in. The number 1 level by the loading stage was never driven. No. 2 we've dug out. No. 3 shows signs of a big collapse from a 40' rise put up to surface near the entrance. The plan shows it running 600' with two more rises put in along its length. It's about 120' up the fell from No. 2. No. 4 level is about 80' above No. 3 and the entrance is well run in. The plan shows it is 108' long. Finally, No. 5, another 120' above No. 4. is shown as about 120' long. This is also well run in, but was dug some years ago and was about that length. It contained nothing of note, except some pretty water-drop patterned mud in the floor.

When the Company ran out of money attempts to raise more on the London market failed. The lease specified that the plant was left in situ. An inventory of plant, of 1884, and a mine report of 1883 survive in the Leconfield Estate papers at Carlisle. The inventory confirms that rails were left in the levels of 14lb/yd. There were also 8 bogies; a 1" air pipe (compressed air for a drill?) and 90 fathoms of sheet iron air pipes with a "Blow George" - presumably for ventilation. The Gig Road was built of 4 1/2 lb per yard rail. This was used as spare rail for the Eskdale railway about the turn of the century. The Gig Road also had 42 rollers at one time, but this is altered to 24 with a note saying that others were missing or broken. There was also a brake wheel in a frame to control the incline and two wire ropes.

At the adjacent Paddock Wray farm, there are also 3 trial levels on an iron vein, put in about 1881 by the same company. All are now blocked at the entrances. All were fairly short, but connected by rises, according to the reports and plans, i.e. 2 at 150' long and one at 240'. A short level, part filled with water, exists on an "intermediate vein" between the two veins. Rails are still in and at one time it contained an old bogey, but this has now disappeared.

The trials are just east of the village of Boot in Eskdale. 2 of the Christ Cliff levels are beside a public footpath to Eel Tarn. Map. ref 184013 for Christ Cliff No. 2."

Help Wanted

1. Kenneth Franey of Hobbit Cottage, Stoke Rivers, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 7LD, would like a copy of British Mining No. 20 The Caradon & Phoenix Mining area. If you can help please contact him direct.

2. If anyone knows of any surveys of Industrial Chimneys, or their associated buildings or any work done on the practical problems of preservation and maintenance, then James Douet would like you to beat a path to his door at 152 Willowfield, Woodside, Telford Salop TF7 5NZ.

He wants this information in order to help the Institute of Industrial Archaeology and the Victorian Society to provide a more rational basis for conservation than the current ad hoc policy pursued by the Dept. of the Environment.

3. The Impressions Gallery of Photography, 17 Colliergate, York YO1 2BN will be showing two exhibitions on the theme of lead mining in Yorkshire.

The main exhibition is by Izabela Jedrzejczyk. The second aims to balance the commissioned work by showing historical photographs of Arkengarthdale, Greenhow Hill, Swaledale, Wensleydale and Wharfedale.

They need to find in the region of 30 images of a high photographic standard to make up an interesting and varied record of working mines and mills in the area.

If you have any material that you think might be applicable to the exhibition then contact Alison Foster at the above address. (Include any borrowing conditions, if you have them).

For Sale

1. From Mining Facsimiles, 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield S31 7EL, the following reprints are still obtainable:-

- a) Lead & Zinc Ores of Durham, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Notes on the Isle of Man. by R.G. Carruthers & A. Strahan. 1923. 114pp; 2 plates, 6 text fig. £8.50 + p & p.
- b) Lead & Zinc Ores in the Pre-Carboniferous Rocks of West Shropshire & North Wales. by B. Smith & H. Dewey. 1922. 95pp, 13 Text figs. £8.50 + p & p.
- c) Copper Ores of Cornwall & Devon. By H. Dewey. 1923. 76pp, 4 plates, 13 text. £8 + p & p.
- d) Lead & Zinc Ores of Northumberland & Alston Moor. by S.Smith. 1923 110pp, 15 plates. £10.65 + p & p.
- e) Lead & Zinc. The Mining District of North Cardiganshire & West Montgomeryshire. by O.T.Jones. 1922. 207pp, 27 plates. 4 text figs. £19.95 + p & p.
- f) Lead & Zinc Ores of the Lake District 1921 with Copper Ores of the Midlands, Lake District, North Wales & the Isle of Man 1925. 178pp, 7 plates etc £14 + p & p.

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In preparation :-

- a) Lead & Zinc Ores of the Carboniferous Rocks : of North Wales. by Bernard Smith. 162pp, 3 plates 25 text fig.
- b) Records of Mining by John Taylor 1829. 174pp 17 engravings.
- c) The Lead, Zinc, Copper & Nickel Ores of Scotland. by G.V. Wilson. 1921. 166pp.
Trade terms:- 1-3 books 25% discount; 4 or more 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %.
For further details contact the above.

2. Welsh Minerals by R.E.Bevins & T.Sharpe. 28pp, 30 colour illus. ISBN 0 7200 0262 1
£1.80 + 25p. p & p.

One Saturday Afternoon, The Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd Explosion 1894 by R.Meurig Evans. 88pp, 13 mono illustrations, plans. ISBN 0 7200 0293 1. £2.50 + 45p p & p.

These books, further details/book list can be obtained from:- The Bookshop, National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF13NP.

3. A Treatise on a Section of the Strata from Newcastle upon Tyne to Cross Fell, by Westgarth Forster. A reprint of the 3rd edition. 264pp. Cloth in dust wrapper.
ISBN 0 946865 04 3 £15.

Further details & book list from:- Davis Books Ltd., 140 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4AQ.

Tougher Line on Mining (Caernarvon Herald April 4, 1986).

Gwynedd County Council are tightening up on mining sites in the area, and plans to carry out a detailed survey of them.

The aim is to tidy them up and review planning permission. The survey has come about because of the 1981 Minerals Act, which requires councils to take firmer control over the development of mining operations. There are almost 200 mining sites in Gwynedd. Some of them were granted planning permission many years ago, when hardly any rules and regulations were placed on them. As it stands at the moment, a mine could start up again at any time, on the basis of that permission. However the planning dept. does not have enough manpower to carry out the survey.

A 3 year restoration project costing £1,700,000 has got underway at the Minera lead mines and is likely to add considerably to the tourist potential of Wrexham Maelor. Part of the restored site will be used for passive leisure pursuits and part returned to agriculture. Important features of industrial or historical interest will be retained to complement facilities for visitors using the Bersham and Glywedog Industrial Trail. It is hoped that Clwyd County Council will renovate the Cornish Beam Engine House for use as an interpretive centre. Capping work has already begun on the City or Meadow Shaft, at 1,380' the deepest of the lead mines, alongside the engine house. This shaft was in use until 1908.

The project, which is being funded by the Welsh Development Agency and carried out under the Supervision of Wrexham Maelor Council, will see 35 shafts capped, toxic spoil heaps levelled and made safe, and rare and interesting plants and wildlife protected. (from Liverpool Post of April, 1986).

Going by various newspaper cuttings, Sygun Copper Mine at Beddgelert, are doing a roaring trade since winning their fight against the planners to open a show mine.

The owners have ploughed £75,000 into the venture, and employ about a dozen locals full time.

Anyone interested in visiting will have to pay £1.50 if adult, or £1 if a child or OAP.

Llandudno has hopes of adding a mining experience as a tourist attraction, by gaining access to the Ty Gwyn Mine. Visitors used to be taken into this mine years ago, but there are many problems to overcome with this project before this will happen again.

That's all this time around readers!

Articles for next Newsletter (due out at the Pie & Pea Supper) to H. Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY as soon as possible. Thanks.