

Whose copy of the library list, was, shall we say, less than perfect? Sorry. I'm palming the blame off onto Dick this time, 'cos he got us the stencils! One of the snags of printing like this is that you don't know it's not right till it's done and oops! Anyroad, by this time the deadline was fast approaching, besides which the tripeist had subtly intimated that ".... and if you think I'm doing all that again..." A less moral person than my own good self would have given the impression that each individual copy was the only grotty one. The mere fact that too many folks wanted theirs changing for a better one blew this ploy very early on, but has now to do with it.

Future Meets.

June 20/21 - Arkengarthdale. Leader Les Tyson.

Sat. Windegg Area (surface & underground).

Sun. Sloate Hole (weather permitting)

Meet at CB Inn (NGR NZ000031) at 10.30am each day.

July 3/6 - NAMHO Conference, Camborne School of Mines, Cornwall.

July 19 - Swaledale. Les Tyson is Leading this one too.

Barras End/Surrender Mines.

Meet at Foregill NGR NY993009 at 10.30am.

Sept. 13 - General Meeting, Sicklinghall Village Hall 2pm.

Sept. 19/20 - Derbyshire. Leaders J.A. Jones & R. Paulson.

Sat. Wakebridge Mine.

Meet at Wakebridge (NGR SK339556) at 10.30am.

Sun. Carsington Pasture.

Meet at NGR SK251547 at 10.30am.

NOTE - as advised in the Meets card please check with the meet leaders immediately prior to a meet to ensure that there are no last minute changes or cancellations.

Meets

On some recent underground meets the adequacy of member's personal gear has caused some pause for thought and members attending future underground meets should bear the following in mind:-

The minimum personal equipment for exploring underground workings comprises Helmet (miner's or climber's type) with bracket for cap lamp, electric headlamp, warm clothing, strong boots or wellingtons (with good soles). Take spare lighting too!

For wet mines a wet-suit is usually essential and when the climbing of electron ladders is involved boots with hooks should not be worn since they can become attached to the wires with disastrous results. As you will probably be underground for some considerable time food should also be carried.

For details of what's involved on a particular trip contact the meet leader. In any case it's a good idea to check if the meet is still on.

The NAMHO leaflet entitled "Going down the Mine" is available from the Secretary, John McNeil 166 Irlam Road, Flixton, Urmston Manchester. Enclose a s.a.e. (9" x 4") and should be considered required reading for all interested in underground exploration.

Raygill Meet Report.

The Society Meet at Raygill in Wensleydale was held on 5th April, 1987, a rather damp and overcast day which did nothing to deter the turnout. Seventeen members rolled up with one or two new faces and some members of long-standing returning to the fold (or mine), which is very welcome. (Nice to see you again, Ken.) We were also blessed with a surfeit of committee members, probably overseeing the use of Society tackle, and the first intrepid female to join our band of underground enthusiasts, who managed very well indeed considering it was her first trip down a wetty. So come on ladies, the torch has finally been lit.

The weather dictated a hasty start and a rushed entry was made into the mine where the usual ooh's and aah's testified to the beauty of the famed calcited ladder. The pitch was laddered after the Hon. Sec was democratically elected to climb the scaling ladders and the party split up in order to avoid congestion in the upper flats. A leisurely stroll round resulted in to two parties meeting up again when people seemed to be popping out of every nook and cranny.

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Snap was celebrated by Damian who was united with his bait bag after apologies from the meet leader, who was not completely lost, for delaying his much needed and stylish repast. Damian replied with good nature by showering delicate cheese butties on a suitably humbled meet leader.

The only incident of the trip occurred when we met up with two refugees from a mining society who are centred not a million miles from Matlock who were down there without permission and had the temerity to suggest that we were irresponsible for taking such a large party underground.

The meet concluded rather early about 3 o'clock with the meet leader being met by a jumbled heap of mud-caked ropes and ladder thrown down near his car and which took over an hour to clean on return home!!

Apart from this sour note it was a pleasant trip; thanks to all who came and let's hope we have as good a turnout for the rest of this years meets.

Les Tyson.

NAMHO Conference 3/6 July.

(Before anyone gets at me over the lateness of these details - it's not my fault. Honest. They weren't sent to me till well after the last Newsletter had gone.)

This Conference is being hosted by the Carn Brea Mining Society at the Camborne School of Mines, Redruth, Cornwall. The Conference itself takes place on the Saturday and Sunday, but additional events have been arranged for those who intend having a long weekend in Cornwall.

Lectures and seminars are open to those who have paid the Delegate fee and will take place in the main building of the School at Pool, Redruth. Due to space we are limited to 100 delegates. Reasonable breaks between sessions when free coffee/tea will be provided.

Field trips on Friday and Monday are open to Delegates and their guests. The underground trips, which will be guided, are of the "tourist" variety, but old clothes/underground kit is advisable and strong footwear is essential. For the Great Condurrow visit lamps and hard hats will be available - visitors must be over 16 and if under 18 an indemnity form must be signed by a parent or guardian.

A Display area adjacent to the Main Lecture Theatre has been set aside for Societies Museums to mount displays and publication sales.

Meals. With the exception of two pubs, eating facilities in the immediate vicinity are distinctly limited. Reasonably priced lunches will be laid on in the Conference Building for delegates who have pre-booked and paid for them.

A list of nearby accommodation is available, catering for most tastes from hotels to camp sites.

An Evening Social will take place on Saturday evening and will take the form of a 'Count House Supper', a traditional event of Cornish Mines of the last century at shareholder's and other important meetings. The venue will be Taylor's Engine House at EastPool Mine, which contains the preserved 90 inch pumping engine. (At the end of the Saturday conference session we will be showing a film of this engine in steam.) This event will take place from 7pm onwards, admission by ticket only - £4 Adults, Children (5-16) £2.50.

Booking Forms from Mr. P.W. Bonds, Higher Sentry, Redruth, Cornwall. Tel 0209 216482.

Force Crag Mine, Braithwaite.

Some members have commented critically that the National Trust are land-scaping the remains of the Force Crag Mine in the Lake District. This would indeed be wrong.

The present activity is because the remains are being re-worked for barite. The lease has some years to run before the National Trust could do anything, even if they wished.

Geoff Greenough.

Book Reviews.

Rockbottom. Issue No. 2. Spring 1987. A4 36pp, numerous plates, line drawings. Price £3.

Having been privileged to review the first issue of this U.K. Journal of mines and minerals (see Newsletter December 1986) I was amazed at the metamorphic alteration (pardon the pun) when I clapped eyes on issue No. 2. Usually, an improvement to such high professional standards takes time but the publishers have somehow made such a garantuan leap since their first edition that I wondered if this Spring edition was from the same source - again, pardon the pun.

Although much reduced in page quantity, the two column presentation has allowed the inclusion of an amazing content; no less than 17 items including the editorial. Although

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it would be invidious to highlight individual articles at the expense of the others, the those which particularly caught my eye, mining-wise, dealt with Minerals of Meadowfoot Smelter; Knoydart, Scotland; Levant Mine and Micro Minerals from the Dyfnwgwm Mine. These articles and the rest, which dealt more-or-less with minerals and collecting them, are illustrated with numerous halftones (many photomicrographs) and line illustrations. Next to the Classified Ads - a new item - we find Don's Digest. Whether the latter is designed to appaul, irritate or generally dumbfound is not quite clear and depends much on your point of view - and opinion of Mr Schofield ... but, it's different!

I quite expect that issue No. 3. will emerge replete with four colour plates throughout. We'll see. Even if minerals are not your forte, I doubt whether you could fail to be impressed with this new, and fast rising, publication.

Available from Mrs. J.S. Spence, 3 Oak Tree Drive, Bawtry. S.Yorks. Dick Bird.

The Romans in Derbyshire: Lead Mining and the Search for Lutudarum.

Harry Lane. A5, 128pp, 19 plates; 19 figs. Veritas Publications, Bolsover, Derbys. £5.95

This is a fairly 'in Depth' study of Roman mining in Derbyshire and draws together much information as would appear the writer could unearth. Unearth is the right word here, since Mr Lane has spent much time in archaeological excavations within the district. Lutudarum is supposed to be the local Roman mining centre (many pigs of lead having been found with the inscription 'LVT' which is taken to mean Lutudarum) and its site has been - and remains - an enigma. Many think that Lutudarum was near Carsington, in south Derbyshire, but the writer argues that the term could, in fact, relate to a much larger region than this. Chesterfield and Rainster Rocks near Brassington are also suggested for this centre. The book merely presents the reader with as many facts as possible (which includes comparisons with overseas areas, such as Spain, where Roman mining was prosecuted vigorously, trade routes, administration areas, smelting and much more besides) and one is left to draw one's own conclusions.

With another book previously to his credit, entitled 'The Romans in Chesterfield', Mr Lane is undoubtedly well qualified to write on the subject. It is to be recommended.

Dick Bird.

Postlethwaite's Mines & Mining in the English Lakes

Michael Moon is doing a reprint of the 3rd edition (1913) again (for the 5th time). It should be ready by mid June at a cost of £16 inc. post. from Michael Moon, 41,42 & 43 Roper Street, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 7BS. Tel 0946 62936.

Andy Staley went to the Isle of Man for the Manx Grand Prix and whilst there saw 2 for the price of one. Although a Manx G.P. report may be of more interest to some, we'd better stick to mining related aspects of his hol.

The Lady Isabella Waterwheel

The 'Lady Isabella' waterwheel at Laxey has been turning again for the benefit of visitors for a number of years, but until recently the rest of the substantial remains of the mining operations have been left derelict with open access to all and sundry, with much resultant vandalism.

The remains include the 600' long stone piers which carried the flat rods from the wheel to the head of the 247 fathom Engine shaft, the power being transferred through 90° by an impressive angle bob, connected at one time to the pump rods in the shaft.

Up the steep sided valley is the turbine house which provided the winding power in Engine shaft, with its associated cistern and falling main. Behind this is the 300 fathom deep Welsh shaft down which can be seen the top of the 'man' engine.

Further up the valley is the turbine powered compressor house again with falling main, turbine and huge air receiver. However this site is now securely fenced off, the whole area being turned into a visitors 'mining interpretation centre'.

But all is not lost, as the Manx Mines Research Society is doing a lot of the cleaning up, excavating and the like, with the help of a substantial grant from the I.D.M. government.

Up to now the top portion of the Engine shaft has been rebuilt as it was in an advanced state of collapse. The length of flat-rods running across the stone piers connecting the wheel to the angle bob have been replaced and the bob is now in motion.

The winding turbine house is being excavated and made safe and it looks like some substantial rebuilding will take place, the turbine still being buried in the rubble.

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The leat taking water to the wheel, at present running in plastic pipes, will be refurbished and run open again and it is planned to open up to the public a short adit - presently blocked - which leads to the main shaft.

While looking round the site, I got talking to a member of the MMR Soc. and was invited to look round this site inside the fences, in fact 3 members took the afternoon off later in the week to show me round in detail, and give an open invitation to any NMRS member to go over and see what the I.O.M. mines have to offer.

An interesting trip at the Laxey site involves walking down the 'man engine' access tunnel, climbing over the top of the engine and abseiling about 200' down a parallel sloping shaft to main adit level, where there is another angle bob about twice the size of the one at surface. This adit runs from the mine yard for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the valley underneath all the shafts in turn - Engine Shaft, Welsh Shaft and Dumbells Shaft.

The adit was originally steam hauled by 2 small locomotives, and water was also pumped up to this level, so these engines were said to have a bow wave when working. This site of the adit mouth is now marked only by a patch of wet ground and a spring, the section towards the entrance entered from Welsh Shaft quickly becomes inaccessible due to deep water. It is planned to use a J.C.B. to help open up this adit.

The I.O.M. has some interesting mining sites and coupled with the Island being a good place for a holiday - a good time can be had by all.

Anyone intending to go should contact Pete Geddes at 63 Derby Square, Douglas, I.O.M. as at least you can get to look round the Laxey Wheel and site without having to pay 80p.

Andrew Staley.

Nelson's Level, Grassington Moor.

(NGR SE0196 6680. Main Level Length 416 metres (est.) Re-entered by: J.Southworth (Earby Pothole Club), M. Forest (E.P.C) & B.M. Hunt (E.P.C & NMRS.)

On October 5th, 1986 at the end of a futile exercise in 'Shakehole proddling' between Yarnbury and Mossdale caverns, we were returning down Gill House Beck valley towards the track when we entered an area of obvious mining activity. Having an hour or so of daylight left we poked around in various holes on both sides of the dry valley until a fine, arched, portal was seen, subsequently identified as Nelson's Level.

This is blocked by a roof fall after a few feet, so we had a look above and behind it where the valley side rises steeply. At the far end of the obvious area of collapse a small hole was enlarged sufficiently to gain access to the level behind the fall.

Description. (all distances, estimated by John... in feet!)

The entrance starts as a squeeze through fallen Gritstone boulders, followed by 30' of knee-deep wading with a roof of deads supported on dubious-looking timbers. The level then continues 6'-8' high, easy walking with the occasional roof fall, for 400' to a cross rift at right angles to the passage. The right hand branch was entered by an 8' climb and followed for 40' to where it was blocked, passing under some nasty looking boulders 10' above head height. Back at the top of the 8' climb looking up the left hand branch is a wall of deads 18'-20' high with the rift going on beyond. A 3' climb gained 80' of passage ending in a blockage.

200' further along the main level is a narrow natural rift on the right hand side which was enlarged to a 15' long bedding plane with narrow rift on left hand side. This is too narrow to enter, but has a very strong draught.

Back in the main level is easy going, with the odd roof fall, for 270' where a small stream enters on the left hand side from a narrow vertical rift 6' high which was blocked by gritstone cobbles; this is a natural cave. After some work opening the rift and removing some boulders it was possible to climb up and follow the stream for some 20' to where it becomes too tight. A few feet back down the level from the inlet, up in the roof, is a tight vertical rift which was entered; one end being a voice connection with the climb up at the gritstone cobbles; the other side a strong draught issued from a 6" wide, 10' passage.

Along the main level another 130' on the right hand side a level goes off for 25' to a shaft 20' deep, choked with timbers at the bottom. A traverse above the drop gained entry to a further 15' of passage which is blocked; no draught was noticed.

The main level continues, walking and crawling over deads for 360' to a blank wall with no draught.

The entrance draughts strongly, but nothing was noticed after passing the natural passage 870' in. The total length of the main level was estimated at 1,370'.

There are still some possibilities to be examined but hopes are not very high.

As the entrance is unstable an oil drum with 'secured' lid has been fitted (owing to

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the close proximity of a popular public footpath). The securing nut & bolt is of 10mm and 2 spanners are needed to remove the lid.

History.

A search of the available literature revealed nothing much beyond the name of the level. A possible survey exists with H.M. Inspectorate of Mines & Quarries in their Abandoned Mines section, but a request to just view a copy of the possible survey would cost £5 search fee plus £5 handling fee plus £10 per hour + VAT on the total!!! To actually obtain a copy would have cost even more.

This may be considered reasonable when applied to 'commercial interests' but for the individual, amateur researcher it's tantamount to suppression of information!!! NAMHO please note.

Barry M. Hunt. 3/3/87.

Glen Sannox Mines - Arran.

Barytes. NGR NS 006453.

At Easter, seeing as how there was no Cornish Meet this year, our family found ourselves on Arran.

Having seen "mines disused" on the map, we went for a walk up Glen Sannox to have a quick "firkle" around.

The Glen Sannox Mines were worked over for Barytes and are found around NGR 006453. The mill area etc is situated on both sides of the stream, the major part though is on the south bank. The only remains here are concrete works with various mounting bolts rusting in situ. An old waterwheel pit contains the parts of a metal wheel of about 8'-10' diameter (at a guess). This was the only identifiable part of the area.

The vein runs in a NNW direction and has been worked over a length of about a mile. The lower (south) end by the stream (approx 50m O.D.) was worked via shafts, most either run; capped; or filled with water. The few that were open appeared to be about 20'-30' deep.

Towards the North end of the vein is a small open stope with timber-stemples visible at one end. Higher up the slope are the remains of several adits, all, bar a couple, had run. The top two were accessable, though only. The highest was entered - the other being 'moist'.

This adit was about 150' long ending at a forehead and a small stope. The vein visible in the roof varied between 6" - 18" in width and could be seen for most of the length of the adit.

The line of an incline about 400-500 yards long runs from the mill area to the largest of the tips on the hillside. There is no indication of how the tubs were hauled, but wooden sleepers are still visible in places, and the concrete remains at the bottom end, and to one side, look as though they supported a boiler/barrel/drum shaped object of some sort, though this gives no clue as to how or why, or even if, they had anything in common.

Harry Houghton.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - Data Protection Act.

The Society is required by the Data Protection Act to inform members that their addresses are held in a computer and that if they do not wish this to be so, members should inform the Secretary, who will arrange for their addresses to be removed and held on index cards.

The Society is not registered under the Data Protection Act. Members addresses are not sold to other organisations, who could in any case contact members via the published list of addresses that has appeared in the Newsletter since the inauguration of the Society.

A Weekend in May.

Success - the decision to change the date and format of the Society's Dinner has proved to be popular with members. This is especially encouraging in view of the short notice of the change from Autumn, with some 66 attending the afternoon lectures and 46 the Dinner.

Following a short General Meeting, where concern was expressed about the perceived threat posed by the spread of S.S.S.I.'s, the afternoon lectures began.

Mike Gill introduced aspects of his research into the Duchy of Devonshire's mines, in Wharfedale, and drew some comparisons with other areas. Grassington had its own system of Mineral Laws, with a Barmoot, which were first written down in 1642; but were

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obviously much older. He questioned the orthodox view that the early 17th mining was greatly influenced by Derbyshire and proposed links with Swaledale and Greenhow as being far more likely.

He went on to show how, unlike in Derbyshire, the Duke of Devonshire had rationalised the patchwork of meers, in 1776, and discontinued the laws; though the office of Barmaster continued for another 30 years or so.

An often ignored aspect of mining was its labour force, which Mike was identifying through Parish Registers, Census Returns and Parliamentary Papers.

The second speaker's, Andy Bowman, introduction to Somerset was a reminder that there was much more than the Mendip lead mining industry. All too often, it seemed, its mines fell victim to spoiling operations by larger competitors elsewhere. Examples of this were: salt; and Cheshire, Iron; and Cumberland, Slate; and Wales/Cornwall and the Scythe-stone Mines; and Yorkshire.

The Nailsea Coalfield provided some fine examples of engine houses which had been converted to dwellings - their owners often ignorant of the adjoining shaft!

By the 1840's, the Welsh Iron-masters had started to work the irregular deposits of spathic iron and, in the Brendon Hills especially, mineral railways were projected and built. The one from Brendon Top, matching those of the Cleveland Hills of Yorkshire.

Next came Jim Rieuwerts, the final speaker and Dinner Guest, who spoke on the development and function of the Derbyshire Barmoot; on which he is a Jurymen. These laws had first been codified by the Quo Warranto of 1288, nearly 400 years before those at Grassington. Jim felt that they were intended to encourage the working of mines by small groups of miners and not maintainers of mines. As Mike had already indicated, the complex nature of mineral veins and the simplistic nature of the laws often led to protracted disputes about the title to ground. Never the less, the Barmaster's ore-accounts were an invaluable source for the mining historian.

Sunday. - Grassington Moor Walk.

The idea of changing to May hit a snag, 11 members assembled, at Yarnbury, in the drizzle and mist of a standard Grassington Moor day.

Undeterred, they were issued with sheets; giving a brief history of the features they would see on a circuit of the mines. Mike Gill gave a brief description of what was to be seen at Yarnbury, and then the party set off into the murk.

All in all, a very good weekend.

Mike Gill.

Passing through Grassington village square sometime after 1a.m., intending sleeping at Yarnbury so as to be intimate for the Meet on the Sunday (the Dinner weekend) the last thing we expected to see was a van advertising a well known bookshop in Caernarvon. The message left behind the windscreen wiper wasn't so soggy that the sleeping Celt couldn't read it come the dawn, even if he didn't know where Yarnbury was, (nor did most of the locals who he'd asked on the way).

If you're wondering what all this is leading up to, it's just to explain how I came by these next few snippets. Eric wrote them whilst waiting for breakfast.

Gwynfynydd on Care & Maintenance. Pumps still working. Mine up for Sale.

Concord Tin Mines Ltd of Cornwall, has announced that its Wheal Concord tin mine at Blackwater, near Truro will be allowed to flood until the price of tin improves. The workforce is to be transferred to the company's other operations, including the former tin-tungsten mine, which Concord is investigating at Cligga, Nr. Perranporth.

(taken from Mining Journal 2 January, 1987.

The first Brithis Gold Prospectors Convention was held at Salford University on 16th May 1987 under the auspices of the Kildonan Club. Video Film and lectures by Ron Callender. Displays of Gold mining equipment, sluices, tools, books, maps, pans, pumps.

Well that's all this time around folks - we've run out of material!!! Please do send your contributions for our next edition (September) as soon as possible, to me:-
Harry Houghton, 29 Parkside Road, Meanwood, Leeds LS6 4LY. (Tel 0532 758505).

Thanks.