

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER MAY 1990

FUTURE MEETS

May 19/20th Cleveland Ironstone Mines. Surface walks.
Details as in the February Newsletter. Suggested campsites not
mentioned before:-
Tocketts Mill Caravan Site. NZ626181. Phone 0287 35161
Fern Farm. NZ792166. Phone 0947 840350

NAHMO FIELD MEET

The annual NAHMO field meet will take place on the 21st & 22nd July 1990 and will be based on the Alderley Edge Mines. Meet both days at the Main Car Park at Alderley Edge (Map Ref.SJ860772) at 10.00am. Camping will be available near the Scout HQ. There will be a full range of trips catering for all tastes and abilities. There will also be a social event on Saturday evening - possibly a barbeque.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL DINNER 10th March 1990

The Society AGM was held at the Ascot Hotel and was attended by 31 members. The officers made their reports as follows:

Editor: The logjam of material which was becoming an embarrassment a few years ago has now been cleared, as a result of a policy of three publications per year.

We are now in a situation where we are waiting for material which has been promised but, for one reason or another, has not arrived.

I am aware of three monographs for publication; one is some way from completion; one is written but not finished whilst the third - intended for the May issue - although in my possession, has required revisions, additions and illustrations not yet completed by the author.

The regular appearance of our publications in the past few years may experience a temporary hiccup and it is quite possible that the May issue will not be ready until early or mid June.

Treasurer: Since the beginning of the year we have had 15 new members of which 12 are full members and 3 family members. Paid up membership is now 428, somewhat more than the same time last year, probably because the reminders went out earlier.

Renewal of covenants and collection of 'Certificates of Deduction of Tax' has caused a lot of work and postage, enhanced because members did not read the Newsletter or the forms with sufficient care.

G.B.Greenough.

The Treasurer apologises for two errors on the printed General Account, each of 20p, caused by his poor copying from the audited accounts ledger. Subscriptions 89 should read £2187.75 and the Opening Balance of the Current Account £311.64. The bottom lines of the Cash Statement should read £1422.39
423.92

Secretary: 1989 has again been a busy year for me in what in fact is my last year as Secretary. The correspondence has ranged from run of the mill membership applications and enquiries, which although similar to last year are down on previous years, coupled with numerous address changes and a vast multitude of miscellaneous questions. The latter have dealt with topics including requests for information concerning toxic metals from an environmental toxicologist in the United States, details of various British mining sites, their owners and operators etc. In addition I have been inundated with the usual adverts for courses, exhibitions and other associated junk mail which I have generally successfully diverted in the direction of the Newsletter Editor.

Following the seminar on the Northern Pennines Lead Mining Heritage, held in October 1988, I only very recently received the report of the meeting. The tardy delay in the production of the report is an indication of the enthusiastic interest being shown in the project.

During 1989 The Society held a total of 9 field meetings to various parts of the country. Support for these from members ranged from excellent to abysmal with in some cases only one member in addition to the leader turning up. One of the meets was even cancelled due to snow; the first time in the history of the NMRS, I believe. Irrespective of the attendance all the meets were extremely well organised by the leaders concerned and I would like to thank them personally for the hard work they put into this and must urge all members to fully support this year's programme. I would make similar comments about the annual dinner, the support for which has dwindled over the years. 30 tends to be the norm for this event nowadays, although the attendance did peak at 63 eleven years ago. Ironically this was the year in which I was President.

In June the Society assisted Subterranea Britannica with their Summer field meet to the North of England by guiding them around Buckden Gavel Mine. I extend my thanks to those members who helped make this a success and can report that a good day was had by all.

I have now completed my 12th year as Secretary and can not just disappear without making a few comments. Since I joined the Society I have seen the membership grow from less than 100 to almost 500 today. This I attribute entirely to the excellent standard of publications which the Society produces and which would not have been possible without the professional expertise of Dick Bird our Editor. The result of this has also been for the Society's turnover to increase from £1700 in 1978 to £8600 last year; it did in fact peak at £11000 in 1983.

Noteable events during my term of office have included the formation of NAHMO, as a result of the first mining conference in 1979, and this was an event which I am personally proud to have been associated with having watched NAHMO grow over the last ten years also. The Society went on to host a NAHMO conference itself, in 1983, at the Armley Mills Industrial Museum in Leeds and the event was a great success.

Another millstone (I mean milestone) was the publication by the Society, in collaboration with the Beamish Museum, "The Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner" by Dr. Arthur Raistrick and Arthur Roberts. The work sold out very quickly and has become a recognised reference volume. The production of the book was not without its problems, the biggest of which I think was trying to co-ordinate no less than three Yorkshire Men and many others on occasions (never again, he cried!).

The Society has carried out a number of projects over the years including the one at Chimney Shaft on Greenhow (I wasn't going to mention that so I'll say no more). The need for new ideas for a project is now long overdue and perhaps there may

be some time for discussion in any other business.

More recently due to the efforts of Mike Gill and Mike Dickinson a permanent Society display was opened at the Yorkshire Dales Railway at Embsay. If you haven't been it is worth a visit and I can certainly commend the bookshop at the station which has one of the finest collections of mining and industrial archaeology books in the country.

Over the years the views of the Society have been increasingly sought by professional bodies and local authorities at local, county and national level. This has been with regard to planning applications, preservation of sites, conservation etc. Enquiries also roll in from all over the world and this is a clear reflection of the professional esteem in which the Society is held.

In conclusion I would like to thank all who have helped me with the job over the years but I must particularly thank Mike Gill for his invaluable assistance with a few of the more awkward queries, and that's not only the letters. Between us I think we've both learnt a great deal. I was looking forward to putting my feet up and sitting on the back row in these meetings from now on but the rest of the committee has TOLD me that I'm not allowed to and has conned me into standing as President for the coming year. So (assuming I'm elected) I'll still be sitting at the front here, albeit in a different chair. I must finally wish my successor, Malcolm Street, every good wish for the future. Thankyou all for your support.

J.H.McNeil.

P.R.O.: Seeing as how this looks like being the last opportunity I'll be getting to forget to write a P.R.O. report, and now that John Mc. won't be in a position to mutter about the fact, herewith, like a good boy, is my final offering, to be kept no doubt, for posterity.

This is quite a sad time for me in many respects. No money; overworked; unloved, and now - redundant.

I've been P.R.O. since 1975. For those whose fingers can't go fast enough, this is 15 years.

Since then I've seen many changes in the Society. We only had a total membership of 140, and the subs. were about £3.00. The Newsletter was a single sheet affair, which we ran off on an ancient cantankerous hand cranked duplicator, of dubious parentage. The tripewriter I inherited to produce the stencils on defies description.

It's been a happy time on the whole, though there have inevitably been moments, that to say the least, could be termed as "fraught". Not quite leading to divorce.....more like murder.

Being Newsletter Editor has brought me into contact, if even only by correspondence, with many of the members. A fair few who started as casual contributors have subsequently become regular reporters and friends, even though we have never met. To all these, and in fact to everyone who has contributed over the years I would like to record my thanks and appreciation. Whilst on the subject of contributors, a mention I think is warranted for the knockers. Don't get me wrong, they provide valuable feedback - after the Hyper-academics; the cranks and super-cranks (to say nothing of the professional nit-pickers) have been identified, that is. After all, despite what I think, nay know, others may see my perfection in a lesser light.

I've deliberately left this bit till last, I would like to express a big

thank you to Sue, without whose help I would never have been able to have performed! I wouldn't have put up with the swearing and cursing that at times seemed part and parcel of Newsletter production. Those in the know, appreciate that she ran the P.R.O. office. I was just the front man. (Like any marriage in fact?).

It is with great regret and misgivings that I am forced to relinquish the post, but other family pressures and commitments mean that at present there are too many calls upon our time.

I wish good luck to my successor, and hope he survives as many years as I have!

Harry Houghton.

N.A.H.M.O. Representative: Details of the 1990 NAHMO field meet are still awaited. The meet will be held at Alderley Edge, hosted by the Derbyshire Caving Club. A date is not yet available.

M.C.Gill.

Librarian: 1989/90 has again been a very quiet year for The Library. Only 21 publications have been lent out and these have been to only 5 Members. I have dealt with a few enquiries and supplied several photocopies of items included in books which can only be viewed at The Library.

The contents of The Library has been enlarged by the addition of 11 publications, also the journals etc. from 4 Societies and the 3 N.M.R.S. publications.

The list of additions will be published in The Newsletter and I attach a copy of the list with this report.

D.J.McCurdy.

Your new Committee was elected as below. Mostly the same names but the jobs have been shuffled round because several wanted to have a rest from what they had been doing but no substitute volunteers were to be found.

President.	J.H.McNeil. 166 Irlam Rd,Flixton,Urmston,Manchester.M31 3NB. Tel. 061 747 8652
Vice Pres.	R.E.Burns. 3 Queen Elizabeth Way,Barton-upon-Humber,S.Humberside. DN18 6AJ. Tel. 0652 635523
Jnr.Vice Pres.	J.Hopkinson. 19 Clingo Rd. Leominster.HR6 8UD.
Secretary.	M.Street. 6 Oakwood Park,Leeds. LS8 2PJ. Tel.0532 401542.
Treasurer.	G.B.Greenough. 22 Elmhurst Rd.,St.Annes-on-Sea,Lancs. FY8 3JH. Tel. 0253 723987.
P.R.O.	D.J.McCurdy. "Denefield",111 Barn Lane,Golborne,Warrington.WA3 3PR Tel. 0942 718192.
Recorder.	M.C.Gill. 38 Main St,Sutton in Craven,Keighley,BD20 7DH. Tel. 0535 35588.
Librarian.	H.Houghton. 29 Parkside Rd.Meanwood,Leeds.LS6 4LY.Tel.0532 758505.
Editor.	R.H.Bird. 41 Windsor Walk,South Anston,Sheffield,S31 7EL. Tel. 0909 563229.

The Friends of Cononley Mine: The meeting voted a donation of £500 from the Society to pay for the setting up and administration costs of this worthwhile project.

Very interesting talks were then given by Graham Isherwood on the great collapse in the Oakley Quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog and the causes leading up to it. Mike Gill spoke about the "German Connection" and the improbability of any significant influence on mining in Britain by German miners 3 Centuries ago. Finally

Ron Callender, who has recently published a book called "Gold in Britain" gave a talk about his recent visit to California and its environs. An excellent meal was then consumed and with interesting private conversations and exchanges of ideas, the day was brought to a close. I am sure that those who attended enjoyed the occasion and to those members who didn't: please try to come next year, you won't regret it!

MEET REPORTS

Talargoch Mine. Clwyd. August 20th 1989.

Dick Bird has already commented on the lack of support for this and other field meets, but in such a select band it was sure to be an enjoyable outing.

The morning walk took us across the limestone hill of Graig Fawr. The southern and western slopes of the hill are covered by mine trenches and Rakes, the majority of which date from the 17th Century. The largest, the China Rake, was worked by the Quaker Company in the 18th Century. It runs for about 250m and in places is up to 10m deep. The main mine area on the flatter land at the foot of the hill can be seen from the summit of Graig Fawr which also gives a good view over the northern end of the Vale of Clwyd and the coastal towns of Rhyl and Prestatyn.

From Graig Fawr we followed the course of the 18th Century leat that tapped the stream above Dyserth waterfall. The foot of the fall is reached by steps down what appears to be a large waterwheel pit about 45ft x 6ft. J. McNeil pointed out holding bolts in the top of the wall. The waterwheel may have worked the Ash Tree shaft of the Dyserth lead mine on the south side of the falls. I have not found any documentary reference to so large a wheel on this very small mine.

We returned to the main area in Meliden via the Clive Engine House. This cornish engine house was built in 1860 to house a massive 100" cylinder engine to pump the S.W. end of the Talargoch sett. The engine house is the best preserved example in the N.E. Wales district and retains its slate roof and wooden shuttering. It has featured recently on the cover of a leaflet for a nearby country club development (sited on the former dressing wastes).

Most of the features at the centre of the mine site have vanished. it is still possible to recognise the former offices and the two remaining cottages of a row of five built by the Panton Co. in the 1780's. A wall of the 80" Engine House has been incorporated into a garage.

In the afternoon we made a brief visit to Pennant Mine, Rhualt (SJ087753). This mine worked a 500m long vein trending E.S.E. in Silurian Wenlock shales rather than Carboniferous Limestone. The mine was reputed to have Roman origins but even its modern history is obscure. In the period 1860-1890 it was worked as a lead mine. In 1913 it was reopened by the St. Asaph Zinc Lead and Barytes Co. Ltd. which worked it as a barytes and witherite mine with some hopes of also extracting galena and blende. In 1919 a new steam pumping engine was installed at the New Engine Shaft and oil driven dressing machinery erected. However, separation of the blende and barytes proved difficult and by the early 1920s the mine was closed.

The small, stone-built cornish engine house at the New Engine Shaft is still standing, although the brick and stone stack that stood behind it has been demolished in the past few years as it stood over a small road.

Jamie Thorburn.

Ding Dong (B45 Pit) Meet 30.6.89

Well, it could have been worse. No one could have turned up. As it happened

Richard Platt undertook the long trek into the Furness peninsula, the lone representative of the NMRS on this, the meet leader's first ever NMRS meet. Richard apologised profusely for the poor turnout (not that it was any fault of his), though the meet leader reassured him that he was used to this kind of occurrence. Even the CATMHS members who live locally have to be forced down the Ding Dong with pointed sticks.

In the interests of personal safety, the venue was changed from Ding Dong to the nearby ramifications of Daylight Hole, a large haematite working close to the south eastern extremity of the Lindal Moor Main Vein. Platt and meet leader McFadzean spent an hour or two wandering through levels driven by the Pennington Mining Company and old chambers hacked from the irregular hematite deposits by their predecessors, Harrison Ainslie & Co. At one point the two men were joined by a rat. The rat however appeared to be more selective about the company it kept and scuttled off into the shadows before it could be persuaded to boost the numbers.

Back on the surface the duo spent a half hour poking for kidney ore on the Diamond Pit spoil heaps, followed by a tour of the bewooded and heavily overgrown bank and railway sidings of the B30 Pit, Lindal Moors most prolific producer, before repairing to the meet leaders kitchen for tea and cake.

It was a great shame the turnout was so poor, for exploration has been progressing in leaps and bounds in the further reaches of the Ding Dong. The dry summer has drained the Top Height, the main haulage road linking many of the pits between the villages of Marton and Lindal, allowing access to the Derby and Buccleuch pits at the northern end of the Main Vein. The seasons most important find was the almost accidental discovery of the chambers and shaft foot of the B42 Pit, sunk in the 1850s by Harrison, Ainslie & co. An iron end-tipping tub, still on its rails, stands poised above a collapsed hopper on the evocatively named crosscut, the Tewet Mire Road.

Driven in 1910, the Tewet Mire Road has long been a goal of the local enthusiasts. Linking the Top Height workings to the Carkettle pits on the crown of Lindal Moor, it should, in theory, allow access to an isolated series of pits, sunk in the 1850s by Joseph Rawlinson, and worked almost continuously until 1915. Exploration of this extremely muddy and uninviting tunnel ceased after a mere 80ft when Neil Pacey (of the RRCPC) and McFadzean encountered black damp.

Travelling in the opposite direction, the unusually low water levels allowed the main drive of the Top Height to be pushed west towards its source in the B30 Pit Engine Shaft. At a point some 600ft short of the shaft Pacey and McF, up to their ears in water, found their progress barred by an apparently impenetrable fall of rock. In view of this, it is unlikely that access will ever be gained to Lindal Moors most extensive pit.

A.McFadzean.

LETTERS.

Box Stone Mines.

I refer to my article on the above in the November 89 Newsletter, and apologise for it being inaccurate, so now having done proper research I would like to put the record straight. The sources of reference which I use and recommend are the excellent and inexpensive series of books by the Cotham Spelaeological Society (CSS). CSS Memoirs Vol.4 covers the history and gives a short description. CSS Memoirs Vol.5 covers the geology. Some Notable Wiltshire Quarrymen is self explanatory, and also Scripta Legenda Vol.1. All of these are listed as obtainable from Mrs. Ann Oldham, Rhychydwr, Crymych, Dtfed. SA41 3RB. Scripta Legenda Vol.1 is the first of three

books of the inscriptions to be read (by the Quarrymen) with a survey of the area covered by the book. Vol.1. covers the Lower Hill series which comprises the two areas designated Box B and C. Vol.2. covers the Clift area, this has just been published and is not yet generally available, but copies can be obtained direct from Roger Tucker, 18 Springfield Grove, Westbury Park, Bristol 6. (£2.50 inc.p&p). Vol.3. which will cover the central series has not yet been published.

Box is a fascinating place, and easy to explore, a refreshing change from Wet Suits and SRT, however I feel it is fair comment to say that it is an easy place to get lost in, while in places the route is indistinct with downwardly mobile roof conditions. Particular care should be taken at the junction of Bat Route and B12. I agree with Mike Breakspear about the practice of route marking on the walls. I use little paper arrows, which was what I meant in my November article. However I must say that I feel that the greatest act of vandalism at Box has been done by those responsible for the destruction of the fine old entrances, three remain open and we should all try to see that they remain open.

Roy Fellows.

Underground Canals In Lancashire.

In answer to Peter Hay's enquiry in the February 1990 Newsletter, Alan Sinar writes:

Worsley Canal Tunnels: Following Mosley Common Colliery closure in 1968, the pumping stations to this underground canal were abandoned and filled in. Weirs were erected at the tunnel mouths (twin entrances) and the canal sealed by raising the water level. Methane then built up and started to come up through the shaft infill at Ellesmere and Edgefold pumping shafts. The weirs were therefore dismantled and the tunnels unsealed to remove the pressure and give a vent at canal level.

I have spoken with a retired N.C.B. electrical engineer (who provided a portable telephone system for this job). He said the team obtained a special shallow boat to check underground, but they could not complete the inspection as the ochre had silted up the channel.

The current situation therefore is that the canals are open at one end, completely silted up and in all probability "gas fast". ie. Full of fire damp and black damp. Furthermore British Coal would object to access as they were severely criticised following an incident at Brackley Colliery, also on the canal system, when children got into the old Fandrift and were suffocated. There is access to view the entrances at Worsley.

Chaddock Tunnel: As a child during the war, I was shown the keystone at the top of the arch which was then at water level. With further subsidence and consequent lifting of the canal bank this is now completely submerged.

Standish Canal Tunnel - Wigan: This was abandoned soon after completion and all that is left is a silted up short bay off the Leeds and Liverpool canal, the line of the tunnel has collapsed completely.

Wet Earth Colliery: Probably not an underground canal, Fletcher's Canal was a conventional canal from the colliery to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury canal. It was fed however by Brindley's underground Conduit and Syphon when this water supply was not required to operate pumps. This is now dry as the Conduit was broken by sewage works pipes to Ringley Sewerage Works. The wheel chamber was filled in by the N.C.B. following the Brackley "incident" mentioned above. Corbett writing in 1907 said, "There was an underground canal 8 miles long but long out of use". No other record is extant. I understand that Buille Hill Mining Museum at Salford has a collection of

photographs of the underground canal system.

Bibliography available:- The Canal Dukes Collieries by Glen Atkinson.
Brindley at Wet Earth Colliery by Banks & Schofield.

Cwm Ciprwth Copper Mine

I have received on official headed paper from the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, Plas Tan Y Bwlch, the following letter.

In your November 1989 Newsletter Roy Fellows comments that he is dubious about the aesthetics (sic) of using concrete in the restoration of the wheelpit. Has Mr. Fellows actually seen the site? Aesthetically the restoration is perfectly acceptable. The ethics of using concrete are, however debatable. The decision to use concrete was only arrived at after extensive consultation with Cadw: Welsh History Monuments, with construction experts and with a wide range of Industrial Archaeologists who are familiar with the site.

At the time when the consolidation project began in November 1987, the wheelpit was in a state of virtual collapse with the wheel itself supported only by a fragment of the original wooden beam. The possibility of using wooden beams was thoroughly discussed and eventually discarded. Contributing factors to this decision were: the logistics of transporting the timber half-way up the mountain side; the difficulty of removing the holding down bolts to allow the insertion of timbers to fit them around the bolts (?not aesthetic); the problem of supporting the in situ wheel whilst these operations were being carried out; and the difficulty of rebuilding the supporting wall on the south side of the pit (very thin, to allow for the crank). Furthermore, one side of the wheelpit had been built with a marked curve and the holding down bolts placed eccentrically, to allow for a presumed curve in the original beam.

No doubt all of these factors could have been overcome, given time and more money. Meanwhile the wheelpit would have collapsed and the wheel itself irreparably damaged, resulting in yet another aesthetically pleasing romantic ruin.

The solution adopted was the best available under the constraints at the time - difficult to appreciate now the site is restored. It would still be possible to replace the concrete with wood - if Mr. Fellows would like to raise the estimated £10,000 cost, I would be glad to organise the necessary work.

Peter Crew.
Archaeological Officer.

A long letter from a short comment, and very interesting. I remember leading an NMRS meet to Cwm Ciprwth in September 1984 at which time we removed trees which were growing out of the side of the wheelpit and putting it in imminent danger of collapse. DJM.

The National Mining Museum Lound Hall

Andy Staley has sent in this account and short history of Lound Hall. His father was a Trustee of the Museum and prompted by Andy has written the majority of the following account.

If anybody is intending to visit the National Mining Museum at Lound Hall in Nottinghamshire, they will be very interested to know that it has closed down and the exhibits moved to another location.

The National Mining Museum was opened in the 1970's, as the official National

Coal Board Museum. The 'Board's' training centre at Lound Hall was a convenient location for the museum since there was space available. Lound Hall had been the property of Air Commodore Harold Peake who sold it and the estate to the N.C.B. for the sinking of Bevercotes colliery.

An official opening of the museum was arranged with due ceremony and a great deal of hard work resulted in a very creditable museum.

Fixed exhibits included about 60yds of 'herringboning', a form of supporting timberwork created in one of the surface roadways used for the training of haulage workers. A bell-pit was constructed, a short drift mine and a short section of pillar-and-stall work, all of which were large enough to accept a bus load of visitors.

Publicity resulted in the receipt of exhibits from the length and breadth of the country, which eventually resulted in about 2000 exhibits. These included two steam locos, a steam turbine, a large steam pumping engine from Ellistown (which was kept steamed up and working), a steam winder from Donisthorpe, both of these engines being housed in buildings representative of the period. The wooden tandem headgear from Brinsley colliery was erected and the Ruthbrook cupola, a cylindrical brick chimney some 30ft high was moved brick by brick and re-erected on site.

The Starvationer barge, a coal carrying barge from an underground canal was brought to the site after being dug out from the mud. I am not sure whether the name came from the shape of the hull with its ribs or from the inability of the men who worked the barges to earn a living wage.

The Opencast Executive were responsible for many artifacts as their operation resulted in the uncovering of many small mines which contained items from very early mining including parts of sledges and bits of shoe-leather from the children who hauled them. Bits of candle in home-made 'smokies', parts of clay pipes, a hand operated flint-mill, a 'blow-george' which was a hand operated fan for ventilation, as well as a fire basket used to aid ventilation were among many of the items recovered.

Many lamps and other more modern equipment were received and suitably housed. One of the last exhibits to be received was a turret clock from Pye-Hill No.2. colliery. This is a four face clock and was overhauled from a derelict state and was installed overlooking the museum reception.

Around 20,000 visitors a year were attracted to the museum, mainly school classes and volunteer guides conducted the visitors around the site, which gave rise to very many appreciative letters, drawings and paintings.

Since nothing remains the same for long, there came a whisper that the museum was to move---probably because the museum was occupying room which was wanted the expansion of the Training Centre. There was much speculation and a stop was put on museum spending and the dead hand of neglect began to show. The number of visitors did not fall, but more excuses had to be found and weeds started to bury the outside exhibits, with blue-tits nesting in the inlet pipes of the Bellis and Morcom engines and in the holes in the steam loco buffers

Very few details of the discussions as to the future of the museum filtered down but the main thing was that the museum collection would be given free of charge to anyone who would keep it as a collection.

Eventually, Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum at Tunstall in Staffordshire who have their own extensive mining museum and mine became the new owners and over

the past few months many large lorries have been transferring the exhibits. Every single item has been catalogued and all the items will now be displayed together at Tunstall as the 'National Mining Museum Collection'.

So if you never had the time to visit the museum while it was at Lound Hall, then you are too late and will have to go to Tunstall, while in these days of realising an areas tourist potential, the Nottinghamshire has lost a large lump of its mining history and heritage.

Mining Sites in N.America contd.

Our journey continued on to Bryce Canyon and the Grand Canyon before a long run eastwards to Purgatory (near Durango). The aim was to have a ride on the Silverton/Durango steam railway, but when we got there we realised that much of the journey was alongside the road so we opted for a jeep ride across country. We first passed through the town of Silverton viewing various mine sites, where many of the tips are being reprocessed for the gold content. Moving onto Ouray we climbed 6,000ft and came to a flourspar mine called Thistledown which provided the mineral as a flux in the final reduction of gold. The miners were hauled up to these workings in ore buckets on an aerial ropeway! In winter when the pulleys froze, miners were sometimes left suspended in the freezing temperatures and many died. A halfway house was constructed to try to reduce casualties. The mine closed in the 1920's but the cables, dressing floor and shelters can still be seen. In the upper part of the valley, many of the buildings still contain machinery but the buildings themselves are in a collapsed state. The reason for this is that the mine or building owners have pulled down part of the property in order to avoid property tax. However if anyone tries to remove timber or machinery then this is classed as 'Grand Theft'. So you may look but can't take!

Later on we saw in the distance the once rich Virginus mine. Started in 1876, this silver mine was worked by 3 miles of tunnels and deep shafts. The boarding house for the 100 or so miners was strategically sited at the upper level in direct line with the path of winter avalanches. This tended to thin the workers out as did the practice of thawing out dynamite prior to tamping home. Much of the mine is still intact, but we could only view from a distance.

Our last visit of the day was to see the remains of the Atlas mill, which although partially demolished, contained several sets of Californian stamps.

The next day we made another jeep trip from Colorado Springs upto Taylors Mountain and some old Ghost towns and mining camps where we spent a short time successfully panning for gold, you couldn't fail there was so much. We viewed the old workings of the McKinney Mine at 14,000ft and the New Yorker mine further down the valley, where there was an aerial ropeway and an old abandoned railway.

Our final journey took us to Cripple Creek and what could be described as the Worlds greatest gold camp. From 1890 until 1961 over 500 million million dollars worth of gold has been dug out of the hills here. A cowpuncher called Womack discovered the gold but whilst drunk sold his claim for 500 dollars and died penniless. As the town prospered so other towns appeared and the town of Victor was established in 1893 and became known as the 'City of Mines'. Both cities were razed to the ground by fire and were rebuilt very much as they are to be seen today. All the working mines are gone, but the tips are fiercely guarded for they contain low grade telluride ore and are being reprocessed. Indeed the main street of Cripple Creek rests on gold ore. The richest was treated and the poorer values were taken away and dumped for road material. Portland mine stands above Victor and produced gold worth over 60 million million dollars. Its 3,200 ft shaft is the deepest in the camp. Cresson mine was another rich working. Independence mine was discovered by

Scott Stratton, a carpenter, who became a millionaire. Pharmacist mine was discovered by a chemist.

The remains of the mines are very impressive, especially Mary McKinney mine with its huge timber butments preventing thousands of tons of waste from falling onto the highway. Mollie Kathleen mine trip was quite entertaining. We descended over 1,000ft to a cross cut which led us to the gold vein where we could dig out bits of ore and our guide was a professional gold miner.

Well I think I have whetted a few appetites and I now hope to return soon.....very soon!!

Richard Hewer.

BOOK REVIEWS

Western Mining:

An informal account of precious metals prospecting, placering, lode mining and milling on the American Frontier from Spanish times to 1893.

Written by Otis E. Young Jr. and published by The University of Oklahoma.

A5.342pp. Numerous illustrations. £13.80 from most booksellers to order.

Many years ago I located this title in the lending section of Sheffield City Libraries and, remembering how much I had enjoyed the volume, recently sought it out again. It is no longer available for loan but I subsequently discovered that it remains in print. The current edition is the 5th reprint, which indicates its continued popularity, and I determined to obtain a copy for my own shelves. Although not a new volume (it was first published in 1970), it is compulsive reading for anyone with a smattering of interest in metal mining

Notwithstanding that it deals with mining in the New World, such is its fascinating content - lavishly illustrated with drawings from (amongst others) our 'very own' Le Neve Foster and from Simonin - I can unhesitatingly recommend it. Even the most ardent British-orientated student will find much to interest him, on the Cornish Connections for example.

Young describes early Mexican mining methods - the so-called Sistema del rato (rat hole mining!) - with its attendant processing in arrastra crushing mills and the rather empirical Patio process, using salt and mercury, and thereafter, takes the reader through the subsequent working of gold by placering and dredging. The well known discovery of gold at Sutter's mill, which sparked off the Californian rush of 1849, is well told and the later lode mining in Arizona and Colorado is full of fascinating mining history which will delight and amaze.

For instance there was the Cresson Mine at Cripple Creek, where the miners hit the jackpot when they found a vug filled with gold crystals which merely required casting into bullion bars and which realised \$1,200,000; the mine captains who had the reputation of being able to 'smell out' silver sulphurets through ten yards of porphyry (and, later, proving this!); the stopes of the Comstock Lode, in the Sierra Nevada, which were awash with hot water, pushing the thermometer to the 170F mark; the dry-rot infested squareset timbering of truly gargantuan proportions needed to keep the stopes open; the devious methods of 'high grading' and 'salting'; ownership disputes and much, much more besides.

Along with the very readable text and its equally copious footnotes, comes a glossary of mining terms (both Spanish and American), a bibliography, a milling flowchart and, of course, an index.

Even though I had read this book some years ago, I found it such compelling reading again I had to ration myself so as not to arrive at the last page too quickly. Such an admission is perhaps one of the greatest compliments one could pay an author.

I notice that Mr. Young has written a further volume which deals more with the men and machines in this mining saga of the West, titled 'Black Powder and Hand Steel'. I currently await its arrival with great anticipation. More of this one anon.

Dick Bird.

Gold in Britain by R.M. Callender. 64pp. Published by Goldspear (UK) Ltd. Beaconsfield. £4.95.

This short book will be useful to those new to the field who wish to know where, and in what form, gold has been found in the U.K., or who feel the urge to go gold panning. The author is an expert gold panner and his appendix (12pp) on techniques for the amateur is excellent. The history of the working of the Kildonan valley alluvial deposits (20pp) is well described, but the treatment of the important Welsh gold mining areas (13pp) is superficial in the extreme; two sketch maps showing the mines would have been much more valuable than many other figures. The potentially important deep deposits near Tyndrum receive no technical comment and are illustrated by indecipherable photos of newspaper cuttings. The general standard of reproduction of illustrations is poor throughout the book.

G.B. Greenough.

GENERAL NEWS ROUND-UP

Riotinto & The Iberian Pyrites Belt.

James Thorburn has sent details of an 8 day tour, departing Birmingham International Airport on Thursday 17th May 1990 and returning on Thursday 24th May. The flight will be to Faro, Portugal and from there a drive into Spain to Riotinto, where the tour will be based. Accommodation will be in the small, family-run Hotel Los Cantos. The price will be £440 per person (inclusive of VAT) and will include: Flights UK-Portugal-UK; Accommodation; Meals (except some lunches and evening meal Seville); All transport costs in Spain; museum entrances etc. A set of guide notes will be provided. Travel will be by mini-bus 'combi' and so the group will be limited to seven passengers. If you would like further details please contact James Thorburn, Atalaya Tours Ltd. Ceinionfa, Penglais Terrace, Aberystwyth. SY23 2ET. Tel 0970 625137.

Although it is probably a bit late to book for this trip Jamie Thorburn says that he will be running a similar trip next year. So now's the opportunity to book early!

New Mining Museum - Caldbeck, Cumbria.

As reported in the February Newsletter a new mining museum has been established at Caldbeck in the Northern Lake District. Specialising in mineral mining in the Caldbeck Fells and other areas of the Lake District the museum is housed in the recently restored 18th Century Priests watermill, which itself is worthy of a visit.

The official opening ceremony took place on Sunday 11th March and was performed by Alan McFadzean author of "Wythburn Mine" and "The Iron Moor". For those, like me, at the NMRS dinner in Harrogate the night before it was a "tidy" way to

drive!. Although only small, the museum is well worth a visit if you are in the Caldbeck area. Maximum use has been made of a small space to display an excellent collection of plans, minerals, photographs and original artifacts.

The museum is administered by Society member Ian Tyler and his colleague Warren Allison and is associated with an outdoor shop selling a range of outdoor gear, mining books, minerals, lamps etc. (Free Plug!!).

There is also an excellent cafe in Priests Mill with freshly made produce available daily from March to October, Mondays excepted, so you've no excuse for not going.

At the opening ceremony Ian Tyler related his stories about the growth of the collection and in particular the larger items which tended to be housed in his garden. Surprisingly! Pickfords remembered him when he moved house for the second time, commenting "aren't you the guy with all that scrap metal?" By chance when in his new home an itinerant scrap dealer happened to be passing one day and offered to take the lot away free of charge. I am sure you can imagine the response from Ian.

J.H.McNeil.

Anglesey Mining PLC

Anglesey Mining has taken the first underground bulk sample from its Parys Mountain mine. The material was taken from the White Rock zone on the 280m level. The tests are being carried out on site in the Company's own pilot plant. Underground drilling and tunnelling programmes are continuing and so far eleven underground diamond drill holes have been completed. Six for structural information and five for orebody evaluation. Over 400m of development has now been completed on the 280m level, which represents half the planned total. The target date for the completion of feasibility studies has been set for July 1990, and if given the go ahead commercial production would start in early 1992.

Mineral Fairs

26/27th May	Bristol & West. Watershed Media Centre, Canons Rd., Bristol.
25/26/27th Aug	Harrogate International. Crown Hotel, Harrogate.
20/21st Oct	London Int. Holiday Inn, Swiss Cottage, London.

Cornwall

A reduction of 90 workers from the 550 workforce has been announced by Carnon Consolidated Ltd. Wheal Jane and South Crofty are both affected. Last year the price of tin peaked at £7000 per ton but has since fallen to £4200 per ton which is less than the tin price collapse of 1985 in real terms. Carnon Consolidated has managed to get its production costs down to nearly £5000 per ton but must now make further cuts in production costs.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY SINCE FEBRUARY 1989

BOOKS

Bosanketh, E. Tin.
Bick, D. A History of Sygun Copper Mine.
Liscombe & Co. The Mines of Cardiganshire, Montgomeryshire & Shropshire.
Burt, R. & Waite, P. Bibliography of the History of British Metal Mining.
Trounson, J. H. The Cornish Mineral Industry: Past Performance & Future Prospect 1937-1951.

Kirkaldy, J.F. Minerals & Rocks in Colour.
Bennett, J. & Vernon, R. Mines of the Gwydyr Forest. Part 1. Llanwrst Mine
& its Neighbours.
Barton, D.B. The Cornish Beam Engine.
Barton, D.B. A History of Tin Mining & Smelting in Cornwall.
James, C.H. Sedimentary Ores Ancient & Modern.
Willies Gregory & Parker. Millclose - The Mine That Drowned

SOCIETY JOURNALS. (Other than N.M.R.S. Publications)

ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY.
Industrial Archaeology Review. Vol.9.No.2.1987. Vol.11.No.1.1988
Vol.11.No.2.1989.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY.
The Local Historian. Vol.18.No.3.Aug 1988.

THE INSTITUTION OF MINING ENGINEERS.
Transactions. 1936. Vol.91. Pts.1,2,3,4,5,6. Vol.92. Pts.1,2,3.
1937. Vol.92. Pts.4,5,6. Vol.93. Pts.2,4,5,6. Vol.94. Pts.2,3.
1938. Vol.94. Pts.4,5. Vol.95. Pts.1,2,3,4,5,6.
Vol.96. Pts.1,2,3.
1939. Vol.96. Pts.4,5.

PEAK DISTRICT MINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Bulletin Vol.10. No.5.

N.M.R.S. PUBLICATIONS.

B.M. No.38. A History of the Manor and Lead Mines of Marrick, Swaledale.
Mining in Cumbria: A Bibliography.
B.M. No.39. Memoirs 1989.

Thanks.

Thanks to all the contributors to this newsletter both those named after certain articles and the following who have also sent in information which has been used. Eric Gray-Thomas. Rex Cook.

As you will have noticed from the AGM notes you now have a new Newsletter Editor. Please help me to get off to a good start by sending in plenty of material. After all, it's your publication. Will the regular contributors who have supported my predecessor so well please keep up the good work. If you have an item of interest but don't feel like putting pen to paper, give me a ring and tell me about it. Lastly, constructive comment about content/presentation will always be welcomed.

The Next Newsletter will be published in August 1990. Please send any material for inclusion to the Newsletter Editor, at the address below before 30th June 1990.

Damian J. McCurdy, "Denefield", 111 Barn Lane, Golborne, Warrington. WA3 3PR.
Tel:- 0942 718192.

The views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily agree with those of the Editor or the NMRS. The accuracy of articles is the responsibility of the contributor.

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

General Account

Statement of Income and Expenditure for period 1/1/89 to 31/12/89

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Subscriptions 1989	£2187.75	Publications	£3693.50
1990	1877.00	Stationery	319.29
Insurance premiums	48.75	Officers Expenses:PRO	124.35
Income Tax Refund	725.50	Secretary	40.85
Interest	398.32	Treasurer	18.62
Donations	124.04	Records	103.50
Dinner	243.00	Subs to other Soc.	51.00
Talk-in	33.00	Hall hire	20.00
Misc	50.00	Dinner	257.85
		Insurance	45.75
		Talk-in	42.75
		Misc	59.30
			<u>£4776.76</u>
		Surplus (Inc/Exp)	<u>£910.60</u>
	<u>£5687.36</u>		<u>£5687.36</u>

CASH STATEMENT

	<u>Current A/c</u>	<u>Investment A/c</u>	<u>Total</u>
Opening balance	£311.44	£5299.30	£5610.94
Movement	<u>112.28</u>	<u>798.32</u>	<u>910.60</u>
	£423.92	£6097.62	£6521.54

Bank Balance as per Statement
at 31/12/89

£1846.31

Less cheques not
presented

£1400.00
£ 22.39

£1422.39
£ 423.92

I certify that this statement is a true and fair record of the accounts of the Society for 1989.

J.Pulford ACMA.3/2/90.

Treasurer's Remarks

Transferring sums to the year to which they refer shows the true surplus during 1989 was about £720, and balance at the year end £4600. This is entirely satisfactory, BUT the surplus is rather less than the Income Tax recovered on covenanted subscriptions.

G.B.Greenough.

Northern Mine Research Society

Publications Account

Statement of Income and Expenditure for period 1/1/89 to 31/12/89

INCOME

Income from General A/c	£3693.50
Aftersales	2631.01
Bank interest	170.04

£6494.55

EXPENDITURE

Printing	£4266.42
Books for resale	219.60
Stationery	107.60
Postage	655.82
Editors' Expenses	5.00
Aftersales "	9.90

£5264.34

Income/expenditure 1230.21

£6494.55

CASH STATEMENT

	<u>Current A/c</u>	<u>Deposit A/c</u>	<u>Total</u>
Opening Balance	£ 557.74	£1047.29	£1605.03
Movement	366.67	863.54	1230.21
Closing balance as per statement	<u>£ 924.41</u>	<u>£1910.83</u>	<u>£2835.24</u>

I certify that this statement is a true and fair record of the Publications account for 1989.

J.Pulford ACMA 3/2/90.

Notes

Cash in hand on 31.12.89	£ 2.27
Stock at cost on 31.12.89	£1151.42

R.H.Bird.