

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1990

FUTURE MEETS

Nov.10th 1990 General Meeting. Sicklinghall Village Hall, NGR SX523738 at 2.00pm. to be followed by President's "Talk In", and Pie and Pea Supper. Please complete and send in your booking form which is attached to this Newsletter.

1991 NAMHO The Welsh Mines Society is hosting the 1991 NAMHO Conference which
Conference will be held on May Day Bank Holiday week-end 3-6th May 1991.

The venue is to be at Llechwedd Slate Caverns, Blaenau Ffestiniog. There will be the usual mixture of lectures and field trips and the traditional Saturday night social event. More detailed information will be available later.

The conference co-ordinator is Mrs.Margaret Vernon, 78 Oakenshaw Lane, Walton, Wakefield, N.Yorks. WF2 6NH. Tel.0924-257017 to whom any queries should be addressed.

MEET REPORTS

Tamar Valley and Dartmoor Meet. Easter 1990

I lost count of the number of members who attended the meet. Some stayed all week, some left at the end of the Bank Holiday weekend, some joined us on selected days and yet others called to say hello without actually joining the official proceedings. We were however, pleased to meet some members who had only previously been names on the members list to some of us.

As most of the members who gathered for the first days activities were still weary after a long drive, we started with a gentle introduction to the Tamar Valley by entering the easily accessible adit to Gunnislake Old Mine. This runs under the town of Gunnislake from its portal beside New Bridge. This once rich copper mine was situated in the centre of what is now a housing estate, with nothing now remaining on the surface. The adit follows the lode to a point where it turns to the right along a crosscourse for a few yards, crossing the granite/killas boundary, before turning left to rejoin the lode. An interesting feature in this section of the mine is the black staining on the lower half of the level's walls, which marks the previous level of water. The adit must have been dammed at one time (probably by a fall). The accessible section of the adit ends at a brick arched section, beyond which the level has run, but just before this it passes through a medium size stope with a flooded winze complete with ladder to one side of the level. The mineralogists amongst us found traces of wolfram in the lode.

In the afternoon we had arranged to meet a member of the East Cornwall Mine Rescue Organisation at Kit Hill, who was going to show us around some of the numerous surface and underground remains. In the event, he showed us some that we didn't know about and we showed him one or two features which he hadn't seen before. The hill which is in granite, was extensively worked for tin over the last few centuries.

On Saturday morning, a small intrepid group kitted out in waterproofs, braved

the steadily increasing drizzle to go for a surface walk into Hatch Wood. The wood is on the Devon bank of the Tamar immediately downstream of Gunnislake New Bridge, and contains the setts of Ding Dong mine, Wheal Luscombe, Wheal Impham and Wheal Russell. We discovered the Wheal Luscombe deep adit and what we suspect was one of the upper adits of Wheal Impham. Despite the area being overgrown, the remains of the dressing floors at Wheal Russell could easily be made out, together with the well preserved powder magazine and the collapsed adit portal. On our way back to New Bridge, we investigated two possible access points to Ding Dong, with disappointing results. Dyers shaft, which was cleared and re-laddered about 9 years ago, was found to be in a very dangerous condition, much of the timberwork having collapsed, and the deep adit had been dammed.

On Sunday we put our walking gear on and headed out into the southern part of Dartmoor to visit Eylesbarrow Tin Mine, where there are interesting remains of dressing floors, waterwheel pits, blocked shafts and lines of small granite posts which had been used to support flatrods. On the way back we visited the portal of the Two Brothers Adit, but did not enter as we were not equipped for underground exploration. After lunch at Hexworthy we examined the surface remains, including the well preserved dressing floors of the Hexworthy Mines (Hen Roostm and Hooten Wheals). The mines were worked for tin up to about the time of the First World War, when power was derived from a Pelton wheel.

On Monday, we had intended to go underground at Golden Dagger Tin Mine, after visiting Vitifer Mine, but found that water levels in the adit were too high after recent heavy rain. We were also thwarted in our attempts to examine the open gunnises, when we found them covered by fallen trees from last winters hurricane force winds. The valley in which the Golden Dagger lodes are situated was a scene of unbelievable devastation. That afternoon, in order to make up for our disappointment, we went back to Kit Hill and entered a gunnis which we hadn't had time to explore on the Friday. Although it wasn't extensive, it was quite interesting with the tramway track in the main level, together with a rise and some stoping.

On Tuesday, a much depleted group descended into Wheal William and Mary by electron ladder. I had been told that by descending the lowest shaft on the hillside overlooking the River Tavy, one could get access to a winze which led down to adit level (blocked at its portal). William and Mary is on the same lode as, and was worked for copper with, George and Charlotte (of Morwellham tram ride fame). The two mines were reputed to join up underground, but the abandoned mine plans do not show this. We were keen to reach adit level to see if we could find any evidence of such a link. After a number of crawls and clambers up slippery slopes in shallow shafts, we came to what one of the party described as a "rabbit hole" in the floor. As meet leader, to back out now would have opened me up to all sorts of uncomplimentary descriptions, so without telling the others that I had been through before, I boldly went where.....etc. Inspired by such bravery, the others followed. We were in a small level with the winze in the floor leading down to adit level about 20ft below. However, one look at the state of the winze, and we all reached the same conclusion. The huge stack of deads filling one side of the winze was held in position by anti-gravity (which of course doesn't exist). It would have been absurdly dangerous to risk it, so the riddle of the connection between the two mines still remains unresolved. Three members of the party finished off the day with a walk along the banks of the River Walkham, observing the remains of Wheal Franco and Walkham (or Devon Poldice) mines.

Wednesday was to be devoted entirely to a surface walk at Devon Great Consols, but first we paid a visit to the Tavistock Woodlands Estates office to meet the Estate Manager Mr. Roy Dyer, who showed us a recent survey made of the D.G.C. arsenic refining remains. At the mine, recent forestry work has hidden some of the traces of filled-in shafts, but the vast areas of calcined waste still present an

awesome sight, more akin to the surface of the moon. The arsenic refining works, built during the brief re-working of a part of the mine in the 1920s, are still largely intact, as are the track bed of the mine's standard gauge railway and the long straight sloping clearings leading from the giant waterwheel pits (now just a bog) to the shaft heads, which once had miles of flat rod tracks erected in them. The main adit (the Blanchdown Adit) came as a disappointment to those used to the fine stone arched portals of the Peak District and Northern Pennines, as it consisted of a crumbling hole in the hillside, prevented from collapse by some recently installed wooden boards. At the Wheal Emma section of the mine, the wheel pits and engine house foundations were better preserved than the structures elsewhere on the site. Those who have never visited the site, cannot appreciate the strange mix of sylvan beauty and stark spoil heaps.

On Thursday, we set out by car for Great Rock Micaceous Haematite Mine on the edge of Dartmoor. This was the last metal mine to work in Devon (it closed in 1969). Micaceous haematite was used in the manufacture of rust proof paint. The mine was worked mostly from a series of adits, some of which we entered to see the stoping on the narrow lodes. The most extensive workings seemed to be from the many strikes along the lodes from the crosscut Deep Adit Level. After sheltering from an intense thunderstorm, we proceeded to the nearby Kelly Micaceous Haematite Mine, the mill of which is currently being preserved. The machinery includes a set of Californian stamps in pieces awaiting reconstruction.

On the final day of the extended meet (Friday), 7 of us drove to Geevor Tin Mine at Pendeen in West Cornwall, where the mine is currently on a "care and maintenance" status, following the recent collapse of the tin price. They are however, still taking parties around the mill and underground to the levels under the sea. Having visited so many long disused mines it was fascinating to see the workings of a modern tin mine, albeit a currently silent one apart from the pumps. If any member is in the area, do pay a visit. It is well worth the price, and such visits may help to keep the pumps running until the price of tin picks up again, as it surely will soon. We wish Geevor good fortune and thank the dedicated group of staff who went out of their way to make our visit a memorable one.

When those of us who lasted the course set off for home on Saturday, we all agreed that we had enjoyed a most interesting week, despite the variable weather. Well, I can't summon up the heatwave of Easter'84 every time!

Bob Burns

Cleveland Field Meet 19/20th May 1990

Seven members met outside the Miners Arms in Eston High Street on Saturday Morning. As insurance against the prevailing low attendance of NMRS members at field meets the leader had gone public with notification so that the group reached a maximum strength during the day of eleven persons.

We ascended the hills via the track of the former narrow gauge incline which during its time fed millions of tons of ironstone to the furnaces of Teesside. One small building only remains at present from the extensive stables and blacksmiths shop, and the three higher inclines are rapidly disappearing under new houses. Pushing through deep grass and dense jungle we located the massive gunpowder magazine built in 1877 and now legally protected by "listing". Passing the 1940's fanhouse by the site of Trustee drift we reached the Main Seam outcrop elevation, and then followed along to the top of New Bank where excavations last year have revealed the outline plan of the Guibal fanhouse erected in 1869.

Another listed building was visited by following the narrow gauge railway trackbed eastwards to the Guibal fanhouse built of concrete in 1876 where quite by

chance access was allowed to the air drift at the rear of the structure normally locked against public access. A return to Eston was made by early afternoon for a journey to Kirkleatham Old Hall Museum to view the "Blue Billy" exhibition illustrating the history of the Eston mines. By another fortunate coincidence the video "A Century in Stone" was run just at the right time for us.

Late afternoon found us at the picnic site near Upleatham West Winning for a walk through the trees along the former loco-worked railway track and a detailed discussion over the sites of the drifts and ventilating fanhouses which served these extensive mines. A hole was pointed out just begging to be explored which proved to be an area of collapse having almost reached the surface. The Upleatham mines were worked to exhaustion, the last drift closing in 1923.

Sunday was a warmer day as two members and a lesser mortal visited the drift at Skinningrove, claimed in 1876 to be the first driven in the north of Cleveland. We then proceeded via the Carlin How staple shaft, North Loftus fanhouse, Kilton Mill (non-mining but still interesting) and Whitecliffe mine to Liverton mines where recent reclamation has all but destroyed this once busy and unique site. As if to rub salt into the wound a monument records that the downcast shaft was capped on a date shared with the walk leaders 40th birthday!

The return to the starting point was made along streets named after personalities significant in the development of Cleveland ironstone mining and now largely forgotten. It is one of the aims of the Tom Leonard Mining Museum to remind and inform people of the events and factors that created the history and some of the landscape of East Cleveland. The museum was the start and end of the walk so opportunity was taken to deposit there the relics found during the previous day. During a look round the museum the sites were closely examined of the two Cookes ventilating machines erected here at what were the Skinningrove mines in 1874. Another two machines were used at Upleatham and a further two are known to have existed. Further research and excavation are needed to reveal just how unique these machines were and the relative importance of their sites in what was formerly this country's leading area for the production of ironstone.

Simon Chapman

LETTERS

The Geological Survey Special Reports on Mineral Resources.

The Special Reports of the post 1st World War period, now in reprint, are often quoted by writers of mining history. However those using those Reports in the course of research might consider examining the original notes used in their compilation.

Notebooks used by Dewey and others on their mine visits are now held by the BGS library at Keyworth near Nottingham. Whilst tracking down anomalies in respect of North Devon Mines I examined Dewey's No.8 notebook of 1919 covering that area. Although headed 'Lead and Zinc' it in fact included some iron and copper workings.

Dewey's entry for Bampfylde Copper Mine, in Vol.XXVII of the Reports, never did make sense; the notebook shows where he went wrong and highlights contemporary interest in the mine. No.8 also covers other south-western mines and some in Wales, the Llanwrst area. A cursory examination reveals various sketches of the workings and notes not included in the relevant volumes. Well worth the attention of researchers.

Peter F Claughton

North Devon Coal.

It surprises me how many people are unaware of the occurrence and working of coal in North Devon. This and the paint pigment associated with it, have a working span of at least three hundred years.

There are numerous small coalfields around Britain and most of them are outliers of larger and better documented fields. North Devon differs from the other small fields on a number of counts.

It occurs well removed from the major fields, in an area without the heavy industry associated with coal. The coal is anthracitic, comparing favourably with that of Pembrokeshire, high in carbon content but low in ash. Steeply inclined seams resulted in working methods similar to those employed in metal mining; the terminology was often common to the two, with seams being referred to as 'lodes'. In a separate seam accompanying the coal, is a material used as paint pigment. This was marketed for many years as 'Bideford Black', sustaining the mines through into the second half of the 20th century.

Parish records indicate that the coal was worked at Bideford by at least 1629. The seams are well developed here and adits at or near river level could open up sizeable deposits before pumping was required. The seams outcrop in a narrow band running east-west, from the coast at Abbotsham eastwards through Bideford to the Taw valley. They have been worked throughout their 14 mile outcrop; most extensively at East the Water, Bideford, where four anthracite and one paint seam have been identified.

It had been stated by some writers that anthracite was crushed for use as a paint pigment; that is not strictly true. There is a distinct and separate seam of paint pigment, on the south side of the anthracite seams, the chemical and physical property of which is very different. Comparatively low in carbon, 33% when dry, combined with equal proportions of silica and alumina and of a pastey consistency; this could only be ground for use as pigment after drying. Working of the paint seam appears to have commenced in the early years of the 19th century at the Union Mineral Black Mine in the western part of Bideford, at the upper end of High Street around the Rectory. The seams are known to have been worked under the town itself either side of the High Street. The Union Mine is reported to have been sunk to a depth of 40 fathoms, well below river level.

However the most extensive workings are on the east bank of the River Torridge, at East the Water. Here the Bideford Anthracite Mining Co. worked the seams below river level, employing steam power for pumping and driving an extensive adit on the 'North Anthracite Seam'; connecting the workings by tramway, on a close boarded trestle bridge, to the Quay. This cost book company, an indication of the connection with metal mining, was originally formed in 1846 and worked both anthracite and paint pigment for at least ten years.

Bideford Anthracite's workings appear to have extended east to the Chapel Park area, the site of early 19th century workings. After the departure of that company the Chapel Park Mine was worked for paint pigment through to the end of the century and beyond. In the 1920's there was renewed interest in working the anthracite, but paint pigment remained the mainstay of the mines. The final working site being to the east of Chapel Park, at Cleave; worked in the early part of the 19th century as the Westwood Mine. Here the Bideford Black Pigment Co. operated until 1969; challenging Great Rock Haematite as the last working mine in Devon.

The anthracite seams are very variable in width over their 14 mile run; the

Middle Anthracite was reputed to have averaged seven feet at Westwood, reaching a maximum of 14 feet. However, the same seam was only in the range 4ft 4ins to 2ft 10ins when examined by Devon Anthracite in the 1920's. In theory there were considerable reserves, but the near vertical dip of the seams meant increased penalties in pumping costs as they were followed down.

The industrial uses of anthracite are limited, its principal local use being in lime burning; although it was tried apparently with success, at the Combe Martin lead smelter. Domestic use would have dominated the local market, but after the arrival of the railway would have been superseded by more suitable coals from outside the area. An export trade must have been developed by Bideford Anthracite in the 1850's, with anthracite being tipped directly into waiting ships alongside the quay at East the Water. Much of the reported 10,000 tons per annum (as at 1851) must have been exported. Some twenty years earlier the output from the same area was only around 4,500 tons annually.

The Bideford Black Pigment Co. site is now part of a scrap yard; but there is still plenty of evidence of the old workings if you look closely. Until a few years ago the remains of an engine house were to be found at Chapel Park; but most of the evidence on the west of Bideford is lost under the town., occasionally it will come to light during development work. Hopefully future generations will not scratch their heads and wonder why the road has collapsed if an interest in the old workings is maintained. This applies not only to North Devon coal but to all the small, obscure, mining fields in Britain.

Peter F Claughton

Waterwheels and Enginehouses.

Further to Jamie Thorburns account of his Talargoch meet, the large waterwheel which stood by the Dyserth waterfalls was not for a mine, but for a cornmill which used to be on the other side of the stream. How the power was transmitted is a mystery, unless by flat-rods as per coupling-rods on a locomotive.

There is a lot of information about the Pennant mine in the Mining Journal. In common with many others, its Cornish enginehouse is now in a very perilous state, mainly due to failed wooden lintels. In Wales as a whole, at least 39 beam enginehouses still survive in varying degrees of decay, and I recently drew up a gazetteer of the sites with a brief report for the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (Wales). As a result, several have been listed or scheduled, not however, that this in itself is any guarantee of remedial repairs.

An expanded version of the study, with many photographs, was published in the Industrial Archaeology Review, Autumn 1989 issue. The volume also contains eight other papers on British and foreign metal mining.

The Welsh Mines Society has recently cleared the trees and scrub from around the Ladywell enginehouse, Shropshire, and in conjunction with the owner, is hoping to carry out emergency repairs. Direct action of this kind is the only way that many such buildings stand any real hope of preservation, and there is a strong case for mining societies to join together to see what could be done. Perhaps this is something that NAHMO could consider, and I would be pleased to contribute to any discussion.

David Bick

I was one of about 8 who turned up to clear the Ladywell site. Armed with a couple of chainsaws, bowsaws, and a match (for the bonfire-not the enginehouse!) the small group transformed the appearance of the enginehouse and surrounding area in a few hours. Any suggestions from Northern Mines members for a similar project?

David Bick has offered to provide photocopies of the article in Industrial Archaeology Review concerning the enginehouses for £1 incl.postage from Pound House, Newent, Glos. GL18 1PS.

DJM

The Hoy Miners Again

A couple of years ago a holiday in Orkney prompted a note for the Newsletter about a neolithic tomb on the island of Hoy, the Darfie Stone. A recent visit now prompts a query regarding the work of more recent miners: the Norwegians who tunnelled into the hills during the last war.

They had been working for "Store Norske" in Spitzbergen, and came to Hoy in 1940 to make an underground complex in the hills by the Scapa Flow naval base. This was top secret at the time, but now an interest in wartime connections between Norway and Orkney has provided local recollections, and has led friends of mine to seek information about the miners. The latter left Hoy in 1942 but it would have been 1945 at the earliest before they could return to Norway. So what did they do in the intervening years?

Has anyone heard of a party of Norwegian miners who suddenly turned up to do a "hard rock" job in some coal mine, or who were involved in other secret excavations? Any comment will be appreciated and will be passed to Orkney.

Bill Harvey. 86 Beechwood Drive, Broomhill, Glasgow. G11 7HQ. tel. 041 339 0827

BOOK REVIEWS

The Raasay Iron Mine - where enemies became friends.

By Laurence and Pamela Draper

78pp. 20 plates. 10 tables. 6 plans. ISBN 09514870 0 0

Obtainable from the authors at "Cnocmisan", Culbokie, Dingwall,

Ross-shire, IV7 8JH. £7.50 inc.p&p.

The manuscript for this book was submitted to the Society some time ago but, on balance, was considered inappropriate for a monograph. Its style can best be described as 'journalistic' to a degree, but this epithet does not imply a derogatory observation.

It was hoped that some other publisher could be found, since it was a very worthwhile project and one which needed publication, albeit not as a British Mining issue. With the assistance of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, it is pleasing to report that the book has now been privately produced.

The subject is iron mining on the remote island of Raasay (the Inner Hebrides not being noted for their extensive metal mining industry!) which was commenced just before the First World War by Messrs William Baird & Co. of Coatbridge. The book describes the controversy which subsequently arose - a controversy which echoed around the corridors of Westminster - when, due to local labour shortages it was arranged that German prisoners of war should be employed in the works. Such action appears to have contravened the Hague Convention which specifically banned employment of prisoners on munitions production; and one assumes iron mining fell into this category. In 1920, the Government went to some lengths to destroy all relevant records of their connivance and, in this, they were largely successful.

Germans and locals seemed to have worked harmoniously together but, in 1917, a pay strike by the latter resulted in Parliamentary allegations that the prisoners

were being used as strike breakers. The mine was, in effect, 'nationalised' to allow prisoners to be used.

By this time ore production had reached about 200,000 tons, after which output rapidly declined, consequent upon the cessation of hostilities; shortly afterwards the plant was dismantled.

Ore came from Pillar & Stall workings - there being some 8km of tunnels - and was trammed down to the waters edge on a narrow guage railway to calciners built there. After calcination, it was loaded onto ships via a large pier, still extant.

The book in a rather unusual format of 8"x8", is well illustrated, the maps and plans being particularly noteworthy. The authors are to be congratulated on this well referenced work which seemingly stemmed from a casual visit to the island in 1981. They have done a phenominal amount of research on the history of the mine, research made all the more difficult by the paucity and fragmentary nature of the surviving records.

Having seen the original photographs, it is to be regretted that gloss art paper was not considered for this book; such material would have added much sparkle to the excellent illustrations which appear lifeless as reproduced. A minor niggle this.

The study was awarded a prestigious Lloyds Bank Fund for Independant Archaeologists' Prize in 1988, a credit well deserved.

Dick Bird.

Cornish Mining Disasters.

By C.Noall. Edited by Philip Payton. Dyllansow Truran. Redruth.
ISBN:1 85022 032 8. 194pp. numerous illustrations. £9.95. Hardback.

Cyril Noall's name will be familiar to many students of Cornish mining history. He died in 1985 and had numerous mining tomes to his credit, in addition to others on various aspects of Cornwall's history.

This has been on the stocks for some time and its issue has been eagerly awaited. There always seems to be a morbid curiosity and fascination with calamities in general and perhaps even more so when these disasters are related to the mining industry. Many of the better known Cornish mining calamities have already been described in print, such as the Wheal Owles tragedy, when the mine was inundated by holing into a "house of water"; the East Wheal Rose flooding; the Levant man engine accident and the run of ground at the bottom of Dolcoath. However, up till now no book has appeared which deals specifically with the subject, per se. This is now rectified.

The long toll of deaths and manglings in the Cornish mining industry during the 18th and 19th centuries makes grim reading indeed. A fact which comes over strongly is that, even with speedy contemporary medical attention, death often followed almost as a matter of course. For example, a victim caught in machinery and requiring amputation would today stand an excellent chance of survival. Last century, death would be virtually certain from blood loss and the accompanying shock. Moreover, surgeons (even the ubiquitous 'bal surgeons') would not treat the injured whilst underground, insisting they be brought to grass before ministering to their agony. Consequently, the traumatic trip to the surface was sufficient to see off numerous unfortunates.

With regards to major incidents, such as the runaway gig in Boscawen Diagonal Shaft at Botallack, or the Wheal Agar skip disaster, there was nothing which could be

done for the victims other than 'collect the bits' afterwards!

The book is altogether a fascinating account - but a terrible indictment - of the mining industry of the South West. It is a book well worth having but spoilt somewhat by the host of typographic errors which have slipped through; the proof reading leaves much to be desired, I fear.

Mr. Payton, the editor, gives a brief biographical account of the author and has sprinkled the text with a few humorous cartoons from the pen of Oswald Pryor.

Dick Bird.

GENERAL NEWS ROUND UP

Scheduling of Sites of Special Interest

You will be aware that Mike Gill was recently asked to prepare a report for English Heritage on criteria for scheduling underground sites of metalliferous mines. Although this was a step in the right direction, some concern was felt that the subject was too narrow and it excluded a vast number of mining sites of coal, iron, stone, etc. As a result, the last Council meeting decided to commission two supplementary reports on

- a) Coal, Iron & Fireclay.
- b) Stone, Slate and other miscellaneous material.

These reports are to be prepared over the next few months and members of NMRS have the opportunity to contribute with suggestions of both underground and surface features which they think could be worthy of scheduling.

Your suggestions should describe the type of feature or in situ artefact that would be regarded as important enough to warrant preservation by scheduling. Other criteria could also be mentioned, such as a mine which is a rare example of an accessible type.

Headings which might be considered are:- Mining methods, Haulage /Access, Ventilation, Drainage, Underground services and Miscellaneous.

All suggestions and lists of specific sites, with reasons for inclusion, should be sent as soon as possible to:-

For Coal etc: Nigel Chapman, 14 Dorset Rd. Edgbaston,
 Birmingham B17 8EN. Tel. 021 429 3930

For Stone etc. Adrian Pearce, 162 Kingston Crescent, Chatham,
 Kent ME5 8ZY. Tel. 0634 686523

AIA Annual Conference

The AIA Annual Conference takes place on 7-9th September 1990 at Guilford in Surrey. There is a full itinerary of talks and field trips with the opportunity of extending the week to the 13th September with a further programme of field trips. Details from Janet Graham, 107 Haddenham Road, Leicester. LE3 2BG.

Derbyshire

Members of PDMHS recently rescued a crushing circle from the Slitherstones Mine which was in danger of being quarried away. It has been reconstructed at Dirtlow Rake where it will form an unattended site open to the public.

Shropshire

A trail has been created at Granville Country Park around the remains of Barmyard, Muxton and Freehold Collieries and a mining sculpture erected outside the Miners Arms at Madeley.

The contract to survey the remains of Snailbeach Mine has been awarded to Lancaster University Archaeology Unit whilst Ivor Brown is to survey the mine water supply arrangements.

Ove Arup are to carry out research into the Pennystone Ironstone Mines at Oakengates and the limestone workings near Steeraways Farm.

Durham

Beamish Museum has constructed a pit waste heap next to its coal mine display to give it an authentic touch. The material was donated by British Coal-they have probably got enough of their own anyway!

Northumberland

One of the most prominent landmarks of the Allen Valley has been hit by lightning, changing the silhouette drastically.

The Smelt Mill Chimney, which stands to the west of Allendale Town, was crumbling a bit at the top before being hit last Wednesday in thunderstorms, and some local people were hoping that English Heritage was going to restore it.

Now the chimney has lost its top half, and has a blackened gash down one side, and stones have been scattered hundreds of feet around the area.

Hexham Courant 29.6.90.

Wales

Anglesey Minings' Parys Mountain project seems to be progressing to plan and the new larger headframe and winder have been installed on the Morris shaft and trial milling of ore from the 280m level is taking place on site with satisfactory results so far. Over 400m of development are now complete on the 280m level, which is half of the planned total.

The mill at Cwmystwyth had been removed to the mining museum at Llywernog where it is reported to be deteriorating faster than it was when on site. The remains of the old mill have been consolidated and some excavation has revealed some features not visible before but the site does now lack the unique atmosphere which was there before with the old timbers standing out from their surroundings.

Wanlockhead News

In February 1990, Geoff Downs-Rose left Wanlockhead and returned to Derbyshire. His departure, with his wife Zoe, will end the first chapter in the life of the Wanlockhead Museum Trust and the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining.

Geoff started going to Wanlockhead in 1966, when he worked for the National Coal Board recruiting coal miners from the Scottish coal fields to work in Derbyshire. In 1967 he left the NCB and went to Teacher Training College for a year, then started lecturing at Loughborough Technical College in 1968 (it's said more for

the long holidays than the money!)

Geoff was to be found at Wanlockhead whenever possible, along with his long suffering family. By 1972, he had succeeded in having the Beam Engine taken into the care of Historic Monuments. A small collection of mining relics were being displayed on a 'weekends only' basis and, in 1974, the Wanlockhead Museum Trust was set up with Geoff as Adviser to the Trust. By 1977, the Miners' Library was re-opened (the Library dates from 1756) and, in the same year, Loch Nell was leased.

In 1980, two things happened. Geoff went to live at Wanlockhead and the Old Forge in the centre of the village was bought and converted into the Museum. In 1987, the Trust bought the Church and also acquired Straitsteps Cottage. During the whole of this period, Geoff spent many hours researching, developing the records and archives. All that has been achieved, so far, at Wanlockhead, has been done through the vision and hard work of Geoff, ably supported by Zoe (who, by the way, thinks we are all completely mad!).

Jeremy Landless

Shetlands!!

Shetland Isles Council has granted planning permission to Shetland Talc Ltd. to begin quarrying and processing of talc magnesite rock. Plans are to quarry 51,000t of rock at Cummingsburgh, 20km south of Lerwick. This will be crushed to 75mm size on site and transported to Sandwick where it will be milled and floated to produce talc and magnesite products.

It is claimed that around 19,000t will be of top grade 95% talc content, with withiness of 90-92 with 10,000t of lower grade product, 75% talc content. Processing facilities will be at Broonies Taing, Sandwick where infrastructural services are provided.

Mining Magazine April 1990

Cornish Tin Mines to Close- Tourist Trail to Open

In mid-March Carnon Consolidated announced the closure of one of Cornwall's last two working tin mines., Wheal Jane at Baldhu near Truro, with the loss of 150 jobs. This follows the closure the previous month of Geevor plc's Geevor mine at Pendeen with the loss of 122 jobs. A few personnel are being retained at both mines to keep the pumps running for the time being: operations at Wheal Jane are to be run down over a period of nine months. Cornish mines need a price of about £5,000 per ton for tin for their operations to be viable, compared to recent price levels in the region of £3,900 per ton.

Carnon's South Crofty mine, employing 370 workers, is to be kept running. Brian Calver, Carnon's managing director, is quoted as saying that South Crofty is in a comparatively stronger position because of lower costs.

Meanwhile a scheme has been announced to improve the tourist potential of Cornwall where, a century ago, there were around 200 mines in production and nearly 100 groups of stone engine houses and other mining and tin processing buildings are still standing, most of them designated as listed buildings by English Heritage. The scheme involves creating what will be the largest historical and recreation trail in Europe. Under the scheme, known as The Mineral Tramways Project, a 40 mile path will be developed across the peninsula from coast to coast, linking old mine workings and engine houses. Disused tramways will be converted for walking and cycling, and the route, part of which will be along the Red River valley, will link existing museums and old mine sites. The latter will be landscaped and engine houses preserved. Much

has already been achieved by the National Trust, the local authorities and the Trevithick Society in restoring some buildings and, in a few cases, the engines which occupied them.

Six organisations-Cornwall County Council, The Countryside Commission, Kerrier District Council, the National Trust, Kerrier Groundwork Trust and English Heritage are taking part in the scheme and they have recently appointed London-based Roger Tym and Partners (RTP), a leading firm of development economists and planners, to prepare an environmental and improvement strategy. The study by RTP will recommend a course of action which brings together the principal public agencies, landowners, mining and new business interests to promote an agreed plan of action.

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WANTED/FOR SALE

NMRS Newsletters

Barry Hunt wants any NMRS newsletters previous to 1979.
Contact him at 22 Mayfair Road, Nelson, Lancs. BB9 8GP. Tel. 0282 692880
(I presume he will pay good money for them!)

Surveys or Reference Books on the Rookhope Area

Paul Webster of 6 Chapel Terrace, Rookhope, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. DL13 2AL. Tel 0388 517580. would like anyone with surveys or books containing references to his area to contact him.

Greyfriars Books

Catalogue No.2. Mineralogy and Mining. Anyone in the market for books on minerals or mining should get a copy of this catalogue. Similarly, if you've any to sell they may be interested in buying them. The prices are very competitive and the catalogue can be obtained from Greyfriars Books, 92b East Hill, Colchester. CO1 2QN. Tel. (0206)563138.

EDITORS COMMENTS

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. Mike Gill, John McNeil, Andy Staley, Harry Houghton.

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