

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

November 1991

FUTURE MEETS

28th March 1991 The Society Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner. This will be held at the Ascot House Hotel, 53 Kings Road, Harrogate. N.Yorks HG1 5HJ. Tel.0423 531005.
As in previous years the dinner will be preceded by the Annual General Meeting which will commence at 4.00 p.m.
There is a choice of menu which is shown on the attached booking form

Accommodation is available at the hotel at a specially reduced tariff of £37.00 single or £26.00 each in a twin or double room for B & B. If you require accommodation please make your own arrangements with the proprietor, Mr.Stephen Johnson. Tel. (0423) 531005.

Please give this event your support and help to make it a success
The dinner provides an excellent opportunity to get to meet other Society members and discover common interests.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

***** SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1992 *****

A MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM is attached to this Newsletter. After holding the subscription the same for two years it is now necessary to make a small increase in the rates. Postal charges alone have been quite significant since the last increase. It does help if members can renew their subscriptions promptly and send them in before January 1st 1992.

Please complete the subscription form at the back of this Newsletter and send it off today before you forget.

MEET LEADERS FOR 1992

Meet leaders are urgently required for 1992 meets programme. Please contact Malcolm Street the Hon.Sec. as soon as possible on 0422 839749. I know that there are plenty of you out there with sufficient knowledge of areas where a successful meet can be held.
Please come forward and offer before the end of November '91 so that it can be included on the meets card.

Members will be sad to learn of the death of William (Bill) Walton on 9th March 1991.

Bill was one of the few who had remained a member of the Society since its formation in 1960.

Although not an active member on field meetings Bill was a regular attender at the Annual Dinner and Pie and Pea Supper. He was one of those people who was fortunate enough to be around when many of the mining remains of Greenhowe Hill were still intact. Those of us who knew him will miss sharing his memories and experiences

John H. McNeil.

Unfortunately it is necessary to record the passing away of yet another member.

Members will be saddened to learn of the sudden death, in September, of Alex Woodrow the author of BM7 "History of the Conlig and Whitespots Lead Mines".

Alex had a deep interest in metal mining, particularly Irish and Cornish mining. During the preparation of "Conlig" we struck up a friendship via our correspondence and, latterly I met him on two occasions, the last time at Tuxford, where he handed me a quantity of books from his collection as a donation to the Society's Library.

His letters and his book reflected a unique style of phrase which always made for enjoyable reading. Phrases like "stopes to put Dolcoath in the purple shade" and "Cornish 'badgers' labouring like guddling ducks in the rising water" punctuated his narrative.

On his retirement as manager of the Belfast branch of an insurance company, he moved to Lincoln and away from Ulster's problems; he was a part timer in the R.U.C. and had many reminiscences of his time on the "graveyard shift" in the small hours.

Alex had a particular love and fascination for the mines of south west Ireland and it is to my eternal satisfaction that he had the opportunity to peruse the "Berehaven" monograph, which I know he eagerly awaited.

He died just prior to his 74th birthday and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Dick Bird.

MEET REPORTS

Smelthouses 10th March 1991

After meeting at Pateley Bridge we drove to Smelthouses which is about 2 miles to the south west and parked on the bridge over Fell Beck. Smelthouses is said to be the site of the Fountains Abbey smelt mill and it is thought that the house on the left-hand bank of the beck, upstream of the bridge stands on this site. We walked up the public footpath into the woods and examined the various small coal levels, some of which are still open. On the top of the hill there is an incline leading down at a shallow angle and half full of empty beer cans etc. In the past I have been down this and it leads to a low passage driven in shale with a gritstone roof. I have followed this hands and Knees crawl for about 100ft to where the sides had partially

collapsed but the passage could be seen continuing. Close to this point there is an ornate gravestone, a memorial to who or what is unknown.

Further up the beck we arrived at the "Silica Mine", a collection of buildings scattered throughout the wood, some of which have been utilised by a nearby house. I say "Silica Mine" as at times in the past I have visited this place with various people and we thought that we had got the layout pretty well sorted. Then along came the members on the meet and shot all our theories down in flames. The "shaft top" is a pit for the base of a conveyor, the rollers of which can still be seen. The remains of the electricity sub-station can still be seen, next to which are the remains of two peculiar buildings. They are octagonal in shape, about 6 feet across and the brickwork shows evidence of something having been rotated inside - anyone got any ideas?

The buildings are brick with concrete roofs and tracks, tramways and pipes sprawl across the site in the trees in a remarkable state of preservation, even to the magazine, still with its wooden lining complete. The quarry where the rock was worked is overgrown with small trees, but an exposure revealed a white sandstone which was fairly easily crushed. Below the plant is a very large area of waste? white sand - if this is waste, the quality of the product must have been very high. I have not been able to find out anything about this site. It is not shown on any map I have seen, the local books tell nothing of it and I do not remember reading anything in the HMSO Regional Geology books either. I have heard that the site was worked by the Ministry of Supply during the war, but that is all. If anyone can enlighten me or point me in the right direction, I would be most grateful.

I would like to thank the dozen or so members who turned up for what I reckoned would be a short walk through the woods, but turned into a 4 hour discussion.

Malcolm Street

Beldi Hill Mines. Keld. 29/30th June 1991.

I arrived at Keld early to be sure of finding a parking place in the small village, but to my surprise I found that there is now a car park complete with toilets, hot water and hot showers!

22 members and friends turned out on this specially organised fine day. It is interesting to note that I had never before met some 70% of those attending and of the rest 25%, I had met only occasionally in the past. It was refreshing to see new members joining in the Society's activities.

We left Keld and walked across the river and up the track to New Level where various bodies disappeared down the hole. The cavers finding delight in exploring the cave which intersects this level. From here we proceeded to the Low Level where the same was repeated. After lunch, and an inspection of the restored dressing floors with "stones in the wrong places", we climbed the hillside back up to the track and made our way to Swinnergill Level. The old tractor at the divergence of the paths below the ruins of Crackpot Hall is slowly disappearing; only the back axle, gearbox and steering-wheel are left.

Swinnergill Level is a reasonably extensive mine working three parallel veins; the Sun, Middle and North veins, linked together underground by crosscuts with the Sun vein leading onto the Field Marshall vein. The keyhole arching at the end of Sun vein is now in a very dangerous state with arching stones defying gravity. The various short crosscuts on Sun vein were explored and off to one side of the level at the top of a 10 foot climb is a wet shaft up which daylight can be seen. John Hardy, in his book, states that this is a shaft that comes to surface behind the smelt mill, and this seems likely. At the end of the Middle vein is a left hand branch onto a

vein with a compartmented rise sloping up at 45 degrees. One of our newer members disappeared up this for about 40ft to a level? blocked with mud and stones. The voice at the top of the rise suddenly became urgent, saying something about all the deads were moving. The body came down fast, followed by the odd rock. The North vein is blocked after a short distance, but someone has been digging there.

We moved next to Crackpot Hall Level. By this time the party had dwindled to 7. It had been many years since I last went down this level - I remember it as being damp and low, but the memory fades with time. I soon found out why I had only been once. With my back pressed flush against the level roof I could not straighten my legs. I left this exploration to the members of more "normal" height and retreated to the entrance.

Sunday was bright and sunny, after a damp start. The party was smaller; Terry, George and myself plus 2 more members new to meets. We examined the remains of the Surrender and Old Gang Smelt Mills. Since the archaeologists have started work on the Old Gang Smelt Mills there is now a lot to be seen and interpretation is difficult, with new flues crossing old ones. Next we walked up the Friarfold Vein and examined the Brandy Bottle incline and returned back down the valley looking at various levels on the way. An exploration was made in the Knotts Level, a trial level driven to cut Knott's Vein, situated on the south side of Hard Level Gill, opposite Old Gang Mill. The vein proved to be small with some Barite, but little lead. Altogether some 2000ft of level was driven - an expensive trial. One interesting point, about 200 ft inbye is the remains of a wooden powder magazine. There is an old level, now blocked, which was driven onto Knott's Vein under the hush, which has a peculiarly shaped keystone with some faint inscription on it. To some it looked like a date, to others a name. Can anyone enlighten me on this?

I would like to thank all those who attended this meet and I hope they enjoyed themselves as much as I did.

Malcolm Street

Staithes Meet 14/15 July 1991 Alternative Meet Report

After all these years I suppose I should have known better, put it down to naivety, or even premature senility if you want, but the meet leader's instructions seemed perfectly clear. "...Fern Farm, opposite a pub with a name something to do with foxes", he said. We found The Brown Cow and The Badger Hounds, a Serenity farm camp-site, but no Fox or Fern Farm.

"We'll be drinking in The Ship", was the rest of the message. By eleven thirty we began to get the picture.

"we've got the date wrong! No. They've sent us here and they've all gone to the Lakes instead! Could this be the format for the weekend?

It could, and it was. It was raining when we all met in Staithes car park, seven adults and two kids, that is.

It's all right running a big Mercedes, but a bit much when you have to have a whip-round because you can't stump up the car park fee. Maybe Damian had left his spare cash in BCCI. Big Malc didn't get us lost on the beach and so things were beginning to look up. Even the sun came out to play.

We walked along the shore from Staithes to Port Mulgrave, speculating on the way about the old iron-stone workings that had been revealed by years of erosion. There are only a couple of very short levels, but several areas that seem to have been workings that have had their roofs removed by the tides. In many places the cliffs look as if they have been undermined and then back-filled. Further mining

evidence was being revealed as the cliffs were washed away.

If the kids had had their way, we would still be there collecting fossils, even though the twelve inch ammonite had long ago disappeared leaving only an impression in the shale.

Talking about impressions, it is possible to follow the line of the old tramway along the shore by the grooves in the shale that had held the sleepers. In one place a small cutting can be discerned.

Port Mulgrave is now little more than a ruined jetty, a bricked up level cum proposed railway tunnel, a boiler from a ship that ran aground and very little else. To see what it must have been like in its heyday a visit to "The Ship" for a perusal of the pictures adorning the walls of the bar is a good idea. One excuse is as good as another I suppose. Perhaps we should have thought of this at the time and called in.

From here on, the leaders route finding became, shall we say, idiosyncratic. "Has anyone been here before and knows of a footpath over that side of the village", is hardly calculated to inspire confidence, especially as he had also omitted to bring a map.

"It's easy" says the lady of the party, having just returned after making a detour via the camp-site, "we just go down this street here". It transpired that the camp-site owner had given her directions. That was about the only bit we did get right, perhaps we should have co-opted the owner as a guide.

After thrashing through miles of tropical rain forest, detouring to take in rolling savannah, cow muck and freshly dipped sheep, we eventually finished back at the car park.

Seeing as how it was too early for tea but too late for lunch, it was decided to pay a visit to The Tom Leonard Mining Museum at Skinningrove. Well worth it. Our guide used to be a deputy in the iron-stone mines and so could explain more than is normal nowadays at too many of these types of places.

I think it would be fair to describe Sunday's meet as "memorable". We decided to go to Sandsend and look at the alum mines and environs. A lot of material has been shifted here during the extraction of alum, but unfortunately none of us knew much about this industry.

Following the track of the old railway soon brought us to the portal of the tunnel that took the line for about a mile through the headland. The trip through was interesting, the exit even more so. Upon emerging into bright sunlight we were confronted by...mega nettles. As one member put it "I've heard of overgrown trackbeds, but this!!" They were chest high on Big Malc, so what chance did I have? The reversal of the underground experience went better than the initial journey.

To round off the day we walked over the top to see where we had been, and to assess the feasibility of completing the trip at the beginning of the year before the herbage takes control again.

Harry Houghton (not the official meet leader)

As Harry has written a report for the field meet at Staithes on the weekend of 13/14th July that lets me out of the task. However there is one point I would like to make:

The bricked-up level cum railway tunnel. This was originally the entrance to the Port Mulgrave mines. When the Grinkle Mines in the Dalehouse Valley opened it was

decided to continue the level (or Seaton Drift) through the hillside. This allowed the ironstone from GRinkle to be taken by railway along the valley, through the hill and loaded onto ships at Port Mulgrave. If our alternative leader (the re-plumbed, souped up Harry) had led us correctly we would have seen the inland end of the tunnel, instead of getting lost.

Malcolm Street (the official meet leader)

Just in case you are wondering - these two are really the best of friends - I think!!

(DJM)

LETTERS

The Deep Navigation Colliery, Treharris, Glamorgan. South Wales (NGR SO101974)

The 1870's were a period of unprecedented demand for coal leading to high prices as a result. With this stimulus to the industry many new collieries were sunk or old ones re-opened across the country. Eventually over production lead to a fall of coal prices and a depression in the coal and iron trades, resulting in the closure of many mines.

During October 1872 the Harris Coal Company commenced the sinking of two 17 feet diameter shafts at Quaker's Yard near Treharris, South Wales. Sinking continued until at 251¹/₂ yards depth heavy feeders of water were encountered. These required the purchase of a 100 inch Cornish pumping engine from Williams Perran Foundry in Cornwall. This engine one of the largest used at the colliery was placed on the south side of the Downcast shaft and kept the sinking dry.

Sinking continued until during May of 1879 the Aberdare Four Foot Seam was cut at a depth of 695 yards, making this the deepest sinking in South Wales.

To wind from the Downcast shaft the largest single expansion winder was built by Fowlers of Leeds. This twin cylinder inverted vertical engine had 54 inches by 84 inches stroke cylinders placed directly over the drum shaft cranks. A spiroconical drum of 18 feet minimum diameter expanded in 14 rope coils to 32 feet diameter. Early in 1880 a ceremony was held to witness the first coal drawn from the shaft by these powerful engines. Miss Harris, a daughter of the company Chairman helped to drive the engines while her sister christened the monster "Hercules".

In contrast, the upcast winder was a more mundane engine of two horizontal cylinders of 40 inches by 72 inches stroke, housed in a large sandstone block building.

Fowlers of Leeds also supplied a pair of air compressing engines of 42 inches by 72 inches stroke, capable of driving the underground haulages and smaller pumps at the mine. The Downcast shaft was also fitted with a multi-deck caging system operated by compressed air.

Steam was supplied to the plant by twenty eight Lancashire boilers at a cost of 100 tons of coal per day.

The Harris Coal Co. were absorbed into the Ocean Coal Co. of David Davies in 1893, becoming part of one of the largest coal producing concerns with an output of 2¹/₂ million tons of coal per annum.

By 1898 it was decided to improve the output by winding in the Upcast shaft and a new steel headframe and airlock building were erected. As part of this alteration a coal screening plant, said to have been the largest in South Wales was built by Head Wightson of Stockton-on-Tees. Four cleaning belts were installed,

handling all the coal from both shafts and delivering the finished product to railway wagons or the merchants carts.

From about 1900 electricity was gradually introduced to the plant of the colliery, starting with the underground haulages. This was followed by the replacement of the 100 inch Cornish pump, by two underground pumps capable of pushing 750 gallons per minute to the surface.

Ventilation was provided by an 11 feet 2 inches diameter "Sirocco" fan made by Davidsons of Belfast and delivering 300,000 cubic feet of air per minute. Motive power was provided by a 650 H.P. electric motor.

1921 was to see the replacement of the downcast winder by a 1476 H.P. electric motor driven machine. Built by a combination of English Electric and Frazer Chalmers of Kent. A new winder house was constructed immediately behind the steam winder house. Once the new winder was built, the change-over would have taken place over a holiday weekend without stopping the shaft working. Then the steam winder house would have been demolished. Because the backstays of the downcast head frame rested on the foundations of the steam house, part remained in existence until 1991.

Conversion of the upcast winder was undertaken during 1925 when a 1200 H.P. electric winder by English Electric and Fullerton, Hodgarth and Barclay was constructed in a house placed to the rear of the steam house.

During 1928 Belliss and Morcom of Birmingham supplied a new air compressing plant driven by electricity to replace the steam driven plant. At this date the steam boilers were probably scrapped as well.

Having almost rebuilt the plant during the 1920's, the colliery was ready to produce large quantities of coal as the depressed sales conditions of the period continued. Improvements were made to the screening plant in 1934 when a Chance flotation washer was installed.

More recent years have witnessed a greater concentration on the underground development of the mine with coal cutters and conveyors being used. Gradually the use of conveyors was extended until by the 1970's 5 1/2 miles of belts were in operation at any one time.

Because of the continued operation of cages in the shaft, the conveyors delivered to bunkers about 100 yards from the shaft bottom. Tubs were then loaded for the journey up the shaft to the surface. During the early 1980's skips were put into the downcast shaft enabling an output of 600,000 tonnes to be produced. Most of this output originated from the Seven Foot seam which had been developed since the last War.

Closure of the colliery took place on March 29th 1991 with a parade of the lodge banner behind brass bands through the streets of Treharris.

Salvage and shaft filling were in full swing by May 12th when most of the buildings were complete and the head frames over the shafts. At this stage the colliery was attracting a lot of interest, partly because of the historic nature of a number of the buildings and also from the realisation of the run-down of the industry in Wales.

A further visit on June 8th was remarkable for the destruction worked on the buildings in just under a month. Very few buildings were complete, most were either down or stripped of metalwork, while the superb lattice steel head frames had been reduced to scattered heaps about the yard. By now little can remain of this interesting colliery.

Nigel A.Chapman

BOOK REVIEWS

The Landfall Book of the Poldice Valley: a detailed study of a fascinating Cornish landscape, explored through a series of round walks and rides. By Bob Acton. 72pp., sketch maps, colour photographs and line drawings. Landfall Publications, Landfall, Truro, Cornwall. TR3 6NW. £3.99 + 40p postage.

Commissioned by the Poldice Valley Trust, and published with financial support of the Countryside Commission, this booklet is packed with information on the mining history of this one time premier copper mining district in Cornwall. It is laid out as a series of walks, and a few longer cycle rides, and will be found to be an excellent companion to those who wish to explore the district on their own. The Poldice Valley Trust was formed with the aims of preserving and, where necessary, restoring the valley landscape and heritage, and to allow access to those with an interest in metal mining, tramways, railways and natural history.

There are specific "boxed" sections within the text which deal with items of particular interest. For example, there are sections on Great Wheal Busy, Wheal Unity Wood, Chasewater and its church, ochre, Mount Wellington Mine, The County Adit, Nangiles Mine, Consols and United Mines, Poldice and the Great Mining Battle - explaining the Taylor/Williams struggle, The Redruth and Chasewater Railway, the Portreath Tramway and much more besides.

Although it could be argued that there are many books which deal specifically with the above mines and sites, this little booklet mentions things which are not often to be found under a single cover.

I only had time to try one of the walks mentioned, but this path took me past a section of some of the best preserved stone blocks which formed the track of the Portreath Tramway and also past the Unity fuse works, now a long whitewashed cottage. It ran close to the end of the very long leat which once burrowed under Scorrier from Pednandrea mine's adit to feed the dressing floors at Wheal Unity and, thereafter the footpath continued through Unity Wood itself. This wood which was previously known as Killifreth Wood, meaning "the speckled grove" with all its gaping shafts beneath their Clwyd caps. Also seen for the first time, the preserved footbridge over the old course of the Redruth and Chasewater Railway, tucked away behind the houses of Carharrack.

Most of the walks begin at Wheal Unity gate, east of the centre of St. Day and on the minor road running north from Crofthandy towards Chasewater (SW 737429) but there is no reason why walkers cannot lengthen or shorten these tours, or begin somewhere along the way.

As a matter of interest, Landfall Publications have also issued other, similar booklets which have not been read or "tried out" by this reviewer but, if similar to this one can be thoroughly recommended.

Other Publications are: A View from Carn Marth - 52pp. £2.50; A View from St. Agnes Beacon - 62pp. £2.75; A View from Carn Brea - 80pp. £2.95 as well as others which are not in the classical mining districts. Add 40p to all orders for postage.

Dick Bird

U.K. Journal of Mines and Minerals - Spring/Summer 1991 Issue

This issue of the above journal is now available, price £10 post paid for both volumes for 1991.

The publication is noted for its exceptionally fine colour illustrations of mineral specimens, and this issue, No.9, has undergone a revision to give it a new look with a different cover and content arrangement.

Mainly taken up with material of specific interest to the mineral collector, rather than the mining historian, it nonetheless contains a few interesting items for the latter's delectation.

Not least, there appears an article by the redoubtable Simon Hughes devoted to the Van Mine. This is admittedly not a definitive review, but represents a thumb nail sketch of this famous lead/zinc operation and brings one right up to date with recent activities here, including the erstwhile Egyptian entrepreneur's machinations which came to nought.

Other mining titbits relate to Penberthy Croft Mine in Cornwall, which has been explored underground (in part) seemingly with the sole object of obtaining some rather rare minerals. Also, there appears an article on vein minerals from Mannoch Hill in Scotland.

From small beginnings, the producers of this journal have now turned themselves into a limited company and their distribution is world-wide. More power to their elbow, says I.

As a rider to the above, I am bound to observe that the Van Mine, being one of the largest lead/zinc producers in its time (97,000 tons Pb, 29,000 tons Zn) surely merits a definitive monograph in its own right. Of certainty, I know of at least two people (both in this Society) who in the past, have intimated that they were preparing such a history. Nothing has transpired. With its own railway branch line, its gaggle of steam engines, its massive water-wheel and its almost unique mining techniques, this would be of interest to a wide range of industrial historians.

The same is true of Devon Great Consols which has admittedly been fairly well written up by J.C.Goodrich, in his "Devon Great Consols: A Study in Victorian Mining Enterprise" in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association. He was supposed to be preparing a monograph on the mine for D.B.Barton before this publisher went to the wall. Barton and Booker have similarly - albeit necessarily briefly - dealt with Devon Great Consols, but none of these studies were "under the same roof", as it were. So...what about it someone.....???

Dick Bird

The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales. Part 6. A Miscellany. by David Bick. 72pp.
Published by The Pound House, Newent, Glos. Tel (0531)820650. £4.95.

This is the sixth and last of the series of books produced by David Bick on the metal mines of Mid-Wales. The now familiar format has been continued and this book has all the readability of its predecessors.

As the title suggests this book does not cover a specific area but adds additional background to some mines which were covered in previous volumes together with more recent discoveries and revelations.

There is new material on Cwmsymlog, Rhoswydol, Cowarch and the gold-works at Red Dragon Mine. A chapter on life and work at the Gorn mine as seen in the mid-19th century from a contemporary chronicle gives a real flavour of mining at that time-"We smell the delicious odour of rashers frying before the forge fire and we watch the

silent buxom women in their straw hats and cotton gowns hard at work on the dressing floors for eleven hours each day".

Interesting chapters also cover crusherhouses in Wales and ore dressing. There is a chapter which brings the reader up to date with the recent discoveries concerning pre-historic mining at Parys Mountain, Nantyreira and Copa Hill at Cwmystwyth. This is followed by David Bick's personal views on what should be done with old mine sites and their place in our heritage and how conservation can be sympathetically embraced.

Creeping in at the end of the book is a chapter on coal Mining!! For those who have already got Parts 1-5 of this series, Part 6 will be irresistible and will complement what is already considered to be the standard work of its type for the area.

Damian J. McCurdy

GENERAL NEWS ROUND UP

Scotland

Lead levels in the mine spoil at New Glencrieff Mine site in the Leadhills Orefield the decision has been taken to level the area, cover it and seed with grass.

The National Museum of Scotland has submitted recommendations which will form the basis of negotiations for mineralogical conservation.

N.I. Great Britain Ltd. have applied to mine pyrites on a large scale from the hills just north of Aberfeldy. Perth and Kinross District Council are considering this application which is apparently being strongly opposed by the local community.

Rare specimens of lead minerals were returned to their roots when the National Museum of Scotland handed them over to the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining in Wanlockhead. The specimens are a white calcite and a calcedonite with linarite and pyromorphite. The calcite specimen is a type which has not been re-discovered since the turn of the century.

Staying with Wanlockhead, the Museum Trust has just published a new edition of J.G. Landless's "Gazetteer to the Metal Mines of Scotland"

Cornwall

It is reported that Geevor, the Cornish tin mine which dates back to Phoenician times at St. Just, has now flooded past the pump room and the mine is now irretrievable. A sad end indeed to such an illustrious mine with so much history.

Carnon Holdings, owners of South Crofty, have brought the mine back from the grave by appealing to the workers to return to work at an average of between 30 and 40% of their previous earnings. All 415 employees had been served with redundancy notices in February 1991, and some 200 volunteers had returned at the lower pay levels. Higher grade ore has been mined and this combined with the savings on wages has reduced production costs to £3,000 pr tonne. Also since February the price of the metal has improved from £2,800 to £3,500 per tonne. Carnons chances of longer term survival have improved since it has been granted outline planning permission for a £35 million leisure centre on the Wheal Jane site.

Cleveland

Simon Chapman has sent me a cutting from the Darlington & Stockton Times

dated 10th August 1991, which describes a dispute between Cleveland County Council and the trustees of Skelton and Gilling Estates which owns the land and conservationists.

Cleveland County Council wants to place a compulsory purchase order on the old ironstone mine tip at Kilton and a two day public enquiry has just taken place, the outcome of which is awaited. The County Councils proposals included demolishing or partly demolishing the remaining buildings and structures, to secure the stability of the mineshafts and to regrade the waste tip to a reduced and reformed profile and carry out grass seeding and tree planting. This they claimed would rid the landscape of an eyesore, eliminate the danger from buildings and mineshafts, hasten and encourage new wildlife habitats and protect and enhance some existing ones. They also stated that there were no proposals to reclaim the shale heap at South Skelton Mine at Boosbeck. Other industrial remains were the Guibal fan House at Huntcliff, Brotton and the fan house, drift entrance and engine house at Lazenby Bank. Other mines to have their tips lowered were Liverton, Lumpsey and North Skelton.

Map references for the mines etc. mentioned above are: South Skelton Mine NZ654164, Kilton Mine NZ694170, Huntcliff Fanhouse NZ697214, Lazenby Fanhouse NZ580189, Liverton Mines NZ710181, Lumpsey Mine NZ686188.

Yorkshire Dales

English Heritage recently exercised their compulsory powers under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act for the first time ever. They are to carry out emergency stabilisation and repair works at Marrick Lead Smelting Mill using their own masons from Mount Grace Priory. Included is the stabilisation and repointing of the rear wall of the Lower Mill and repointing, replacement of perished brickwork on the chimney and stabilisation of the furnace arches on the Upper Mill. The remains of the lead mills at Marrick include some of the earliest visible structures of the lead mining industry in Great Britain. Dating back to the late 16th century, they have been described as the finest examples in Europe. The cost of these repairs is estimated to be about £80,000.

Also in the Yorkshire Dales David Cranstone has undertaken a second season of building, recording and excavation at Old Gang lead smelting mill for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. At the same time Northern Archaeological Associates have been commissioned to carry out detailed topographical surveys of the dressing floor and of the environs of the mill complex, in advance of consolidation works for the National Park Authority. Quotations have also been sought for consolidation works to the Peat Store at Grinton Lead Smelting Mill. A contract should be let in late September 1991.

Wales

Anglesey Mining's Annual Report was published at the end of September and gives details of the completion of Phase 1 of its planned development. This has comprised a total of 10,971 metres of underground drilling and 2,613 metres of surface drilling. The Morris shaft has been sunk to 300 metres and the drive from the 280 metre level reached a total of 925 metres. Approximately 4,000 tonnes of ore have been brought up to a surface stockpile of which 2,000 tonnes have been treated in the on-site pilot plant. The treatment in the pilot plant has confirmed the feasibility of recovering saleable concentrates of zinc, lead and copper. 250 tonnes of concentrate have been sold to the Pasmenco smelter.

The reserve study carried out by the Robertson Group of Llandudno has indicated some 6.45 million tonnes grading 2.34% copper, 2.6% lead, 5.35% zinc, 39g/t silver and .32g/t gold. It is envisaged that full scale production could be achieved within 15 months from the completion of funding.

It has just been reported that a project loan of up to £14.5 million has been agreed and its majority shareholder Imperial Metals Corporation the Canadian company which founded Anglesey Mining in 1984 has agreed to provide guarantees for the loan. A £2 million grant has also been received from the Welsh Office as the development will create 147 jobs. The full finance package which is £20 million for Phase 2 is expected to be in place by the end of 1991 and full scale mining started by early 1993.

The Company has also proposed the erection of eight wind power units of 400KW each on the old mine site. A planning application has been submitted to the local council and a bid has been made to supply electricity to the Grid.

This seems a far cry from the old windmill which still occupies a place of prominence on the old site. They won't get planning permission will they?. (D.J.M.)

WANTED/FOR SALE

The Society has for sale the following publications. These will go to the best offer received for each before 1st January 1992.

1. N.C.M.R.S. Transactions. 1962-3. Vol.1. No.2.
2. B.M.8. Memoirs 1978.
3. B.M.27. The Rheidol United Mines. (two copies)
4. B.M.36. The Kelton & Knockmorton Iron Mines. 1852-1923.
5. Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner. Raistrick & Roberts.

Offers to be sent to R.H.Bird, 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield. S31 7EL

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:- Kevin McLaren, Robert White, Alan Sinar.

The next Newsletter will be published in February 1992. Please send any material for inclusion to the Newsletter Editor, at the address below before 31st December 1991.

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