

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

MAY 1992

FUTURE MEETS

DERBYSHIRE Sat 6th & Sun 7th June.

Sat 6th June

Winster/Bonsall Moor surface walk.

Leader L.Willies. Tel.(0629) 584322.

Meet at the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath, SK294582, at 10.30 am.

Surface walk on the Saturday, underground on the Sunday. Arrangements for underground will be made on Saturday - contact the leader if you wish to come only on the Sunday.

PDMHS are pleased to invite NMRS members to the Museum and Temple Mine free of charge, and the Magpie Field Centre will be available to any who wish to overnight there: Contact Lynn if you need more information.

Boots and weather-proof clothing needed. Bonsall Moor - small scale mining features, small and large buddles, Romano-British settlement site close to mines. Then Winster - the best preserved of the mining settlements, and the surface washing buddles, launders and troughs of Pitts Mine. Lunch at the Miners Standard, which is probably a reference to the miners who gathered around King Charles at Standard Hill in Nottingham in 1642. After, if stamina holds out, to Carsington Pasture, and many more Romano-British features in association with mining, and the presumed site of Lutudarum. In all a few miles by car, and a little on foot.

Sun 7th June

Youds Level (Masson, Ringing Rake Sough) underground. Details on the Saturday (6th June) or ring the Meet Leader L.Willies Tel.(0629) 584322. Hard beginners standard, with short length lying in a few inches of water. Wet suits possibly overdressing. About a mile up Ringing Rake and Masson Soughs, including 1/4 mile of very fine coffin level, then into pipe workings. Very sporting, with considerable historical interest. About 3 hours.

27/28 June

NAMHO Field Meet. Shropshire.

Details in the Feb'92 Newsletter or contact A.Pearce. Tel.(0952) 253310

CLEVELAND MINES Sat 11th & Sun 12th July.

Sat 11th July

Leader S.Chapman. Tel. (0287) 76483.

Boulby Alum Works. Meet on the old road near Boulby Grange, NZ760187 at 10.30am.

Sun 12th July

Margrove Park Heritage Centre. Meet at the Centre, NZ651155 at 10.30am.

NENTHEAD, CUMBRIA. Sat 8th & Sun 9th August.

Leader D.J.McCurdy. Tel. (0942) 718192. Meet each day in the car park in Nenthead at 10.30am. NGR NY781437.

Sat 8th August Rampgill Mine, underground, no ladder pitches.

Sun 9th August Rotherhope Fell Mine, underground, no ladder pitches.

Additional information for the Teesdale Meet on 12th & 13th September 1992

Leader J.Harrison. Tel. (0833) 27350. Meet each day in the car park in Middleton-in-Teesdale at 10.30am. NGR NY948254. Nothing difficult on either day.

Sat 12th Sept. Underground at Firestone and other levels in the Hudeshope Valley.

Sun 13th Sept. Surface and underground in the Pike Law - Flushie-Mere area.

There is a camping and caravan site at Daleview Caravan Park, Middleton-in-Teesdale. Tel. (0833) 40233. The Leader also has a list of B&B, some of which do evening meals. Please phone for details.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

The Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner was held at the Ascot Hotel Harrogate on Saturday 28th March 1992. It was attended by only 17 members.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

I open this meeting on a sad note by reporting the death at Christmas of our Treasurer, Geoff Greenough. Geoff joined the Society in 1977 and had been an active member of the Committee since 1980, holding the offices of Vice President, President, and until his death, Treasurer. Geoff put a lot of time into the Society and was king pin in our dealings with the Charity Commissioners which resulted in the Society achieving charitable status in 1984.

He will be sadly missed by the Committee and other members.

I would like to thank Bob Burns for taking over the job of Treasurer at short notice at a particularly difficult time of the year with members renewing their subscriptions, at least 50% (Bob's estimate) moving house and changing their addresses and having to prepare the Society accounts at the year end.

Last year a good programme of meets was organised by Malcolm and on the whole was well attended as was evident by the reports in the Newsletters. Some of the meets, however, were very poorly attended and this is sad since meet leaders do put in a lot of time and effort organising these events. I would like to urge all members to support this years programme of events.

It is disappointing too that only 17 members (less than 5% of the membership) are attending the Annual Dinner this year. Numbers have been declining over the last few years and now is possibly the time to review the long term future of the Dinner.

The proposal to start local groups throughout the country did not receive the support we had expected, with demand for a group only really being required in Scotland, probably in anticipation of independence, and Mr.B.Skillen has taken on the role of organising this.

The Society is continuing to support worthwhile projects and during the year we again made grants to other organisations to this end.

I would finally like to thank the rest of the Society Officers whom I have not already mentioned for their support during the year.

J.H.McNeil - Hon.President

The Officers gave their reports as follows:-

Secretary

First I would like to apologise to any person who has had a late reply to any letter sent to me in the past few months as I have been very busy with work matters.

In 1991 I received 26 membership enquiries and 8 general enquiries. To date in 1992 there have been 9 membership enquiries.

John McNeil has already given a review of Field Meetings held in 1991, in his opening address and encouragement to members to support this years programme of events, which I would like to echo. The best attended meets last year were those held in the Northern Pennines and Yorkshire Dales.

Also in his opening address John made a comment about Local Groups, namely the lack of. I sent off a letter to each of the twenty or so people who VOLUNTEERED to lead a group, but general apathy seems to reign about doing something, and so with this in mind I have decided to try and organise a group covering the Yorkshire Dales. I have had a favourable response from 2 or 3 people so far.

Malcolm Street.

Librarian

Everyone seems to have gone into hibernation since the last Committee Meeting on January 17th. There have been no loans, only two requests for a Library List and a book which is not in the library. This was David Kiernan's "Derbyshire Lead Industry in the 16th Century". If anyone has a copy which they are prepared to donate, please "see me afterwards", as the saying goes.

E.V.J.Greenough.

Treasurer

The total membership at the end of 1991 was 461, 7 below that of 1990. However, strictly speaking the number was 462, as one member has recently paid for both 1991 and 1992. Although the continued slight decline in membership is disappointing, indications so far for 1992 are encouraging. Membership to date stands at 423 compared with 414 on the 2nd April last year, ie. at least 9 up on last year. There have been 32 new members and 23 new or renewed covenants so far this year.

As can be seen from the Cash Account closing balance for 1991, the Society's finances are in a healthy state, although a considerable proportion of last year's surplus was due to donations received. Obviously we cannot expect the surplus to be as large every year. Therefore in order to ensure that income is able to cover expenses for the next few years, the Committee decided on a modest increase in Subscriptions for 1992.

As members are probably aware, we have to gaze into the crystal ball each year when deciding on the Third Party Insurance Premium, for those who require it, as we are not in receipt of the actual amount required for NAMHO premiums at the time when membership renewal forms are sent out. This year we managed to predict it fairly accurately. The amount requested from members was 70p (ie. last year's premium) and the actual premium turned out to be 65p.

R.E.Burns.

NMRS GENERAL ACCOUNT FOR 1991

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>£</u>
Subscriptions	4069.75	Publications A/C	3569.07
Interest (Estimated)	850.00	Donations	260.00
Income Tax Refund	727.07	Stationery	483.38
Donations	1097.25	Officers Exps.	324.66
Dinner	280.00	Subs.to other Socys.	55.50
Talk-in	39.10	Hall Hire	20.00
Misc.	3.00	Insurance Premiums	54.60
		Dinner	278.60
	7134.17	Talk-in	32.68
		Misc.	285.87
			5364.36
		Surplus Income	1769.81
			7134.17

CASH ACCOUNT

	<u>Current A/C</u>	<u>Investment A/C</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Opening Balance	669.00	6852.73	7521.73
Closing Balance	451.01	9274.31	9725.32
Movement	-217.99	2421.58	2203.59

The accounts are presented in the same way as last year, in that only subscriptions applicable to 1991 are included in the income column. The Cash Account summary includes all credits and debits which occurred in 1991, irrespective of whether they were applicable to that year, with the consequence that the movement in total funds does not agree with the estimated surplus for the income for the year. As this adds complication to the presentation of the accounts, it is my intention in future to include in the accounts to be audited, only transactions applicable to that year. In this way, the accounts presented to members will be precisely as audited and will represent a true measure of each year's income and expenditure.

R.E.Burns.

PRO/Newsletter Editor

I must first apologise for my absence which is due to an unavoidable family commitment.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Newsletter by sending in items which they have written themselves or by sending in interesting snippets or articles from other publications. The numbers of members who actually send in material is however very small compared to the number of members in the Society.

The February 1992 Newsletter was litho printed as an experiment to see what the quality would be like and for the printer to establish how economically the job could be done. The Committee is evaluating the implications of this.

Damian J.McCurdy

Recorder's Report

On 25th March 1992 I attended the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) NW Regional Panel. The conference on coal mining is coming together and will be held on May 13th at The Tickled Trout near Preston. The programme is aimed at convincing planners, tourist officers, British Coal and the DOE that too many monuments and records are being lost.

On April 1st, I will be attending a meeting of the Yorkshire Dales (National Park) Archaeology Group. From the agenda there is no specific item relating to mineral matters but those items on The Pennine Dales ESA (Environmentally Sensitive Area?), Yorkshire Dales Project and Current Research and Proposals for 1992 may well be important.

The Salford Mining Museum has donated four volumes of the Mining & Smelting Magazine. They are rather tatty and need rebinding - estimated to be under £20 per volume.

Mike Gill.

NAMHO Representative

This post is open to anyone wishing to take it and get involved in some of the wider issues relating to mining. Some, generally those totally ignorant of NAMHO's role, dismiss it as a talking shop. Nothing could be further from the truth. Meetings are informal and every effort is made to finish them in time for people to visit local sites. Current issues include: MPP, colliery closures, legislation on liability, treatment of abandoned workings, Radon, raising standards of safety and research and registers of potentially contaminated land.

NAMHO is also updating its Codes of Practice and getting them printed.

Mike Gill.

Editor

The forthcoming British Mining on Dartmoor and The Tamar Valley was originally to be published by Devon Books before the manuscript came to us. As we are to publish it Devon Books have ordered 1000 copies from us for sale. The print run is therefore to be about 1500 copies. Due to the numbers being sold to Devon Books there will probably be little Society aftersales.

R.H.Bird.

NMRS PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT FOR 1991

<u>INCOME</u>	£	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£
Aftersales	3627.06	Printing	7736.76
Donations	1097.31	Books for resale	151.69
General Account	3569.07	Stationery	113.94
Bank Interest	351.62	Postage	1226.56
Min.Stats. etc.	32.50	Editor's expenses	34.09
Bank Charge repayment	31.72	Sales expenses	5.00
		Bank charge	51.84
	8709.28		
			9319.88
		Expenditure over income	-610.60
			8709.28

CASH STATEMENT

	Current A/C	Deposit A/C	Total
Opening balance	607.87	2407.85	3015.72
Movement	-528.60	-82.00	-610.60
Closing balance	79.27	2325.85	2405.12

R.H.Bird

The Society Officers for 1992 were duly elected as below:-

President.	J.H.McNeil. 166 Irlam Rd, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester. M31 3NB. Tel. 061 747 8652
Vice Pres.	J.Hopkinson. 4 Knights Way, Newent Glos. GL18 1QL. Tel. 0531 820462
Jnr. Vice Pres.	Vacant.
Secretary.	M.Street. 7 Salisbury St. Sowerby Bridge, W. Yorks, HX6 1EE. Tel. 0422 839749
Treasurer.	R.E.Burns. 3 Queen Elizabeth Way, Barton-upon-Humber, S. Humberside. DN18 6AJ. Tel. 0652 635523.
P.R.O./News- letter Editor.	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 7HD. Tel. 0535 635388.
Librarian.	Mrs.E.V.Greenough. 22 Elmhurst Road, St. Annes on Sea, Lancs. FY8 3JH Tel. 0253 723987.
Editor.	R.H.Bird. 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield, S31 7EL. Tel. 0909 563229.

Geoffrey Greenough 1921-1991

It is with regret that we have to announce the sudden death of our Treasurer, Geoffrey Greenough, on Friday 27th December 1991 in Middlesbrough where he had spent Christmas with his family.

He had suffered from impaired health for some years but never allowed this to curtail his activities.

Geoff was a scientist from his Cambridge University days to his final position as Chief Technical Manager at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Springfields. His career encompassed the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, lecturing at Sheffield University, Research Manager at Windscale and Deputy Head of Labs. at Springfields. He enjoyed his work which he approached with a concise and logical mind and immense enthusiasm, but humour always tempered this seriousness.

One of his favourite recreations was walking, an abiding love from his childhood in Derbyshire where he always accompanied his father on geological expeditions. His interest in geology remained throughout his life with numerous geology field trips to Scotland, The Lakes and The Dales.

From his love of Derbyshire arose his great interest in the history of the metal mining industry. As treasurer of the Society he devoted a large amount of his time to interpreting the accounts, and we will certainly miss his advice and guidance. We will remember his sense of humour and concise approach to any problem. He had a lively mind, balanced and well informed. Until recently he was still active in exploring old underground workings.

His sedentary passion was for Bridge which he played three times a week and thought about even more often.

He was a family man and was delighted when his granddaughter Rosemary was born and he was recently very happy to celebrate his 70th birthday with all his family in Derbyshire. His family and friends will miss his desire to discover how things worked, which sometimes resulted in their failure to do so everafter. We will miss his "weedy" jokes, he had a true Lancashire sense of humour. Geoff was a straightforward man, not interested in frills and pretensions. He was a "right gradely lad". We shall all miss him.

LOCAL NMRS GROUPS

Scotland

As a result of the Questionnaire last year and the indications from various members of a willingness to set up local groups, some progress has been made to that end and a local group has now been established in Scotland. The organisers are Bill Harvey, 86 Beechwood Drive, Glasgow. G11 7HQ. Tel.041 339 0827 and Brian Skillen, 46 Munroe Road, Glasgow. G13 1SF. Tel.041 954 7676. For members requiring further information please contact either of the two mentioned above.

Yorkshire Dales

As stated in my report to the AGM I have decided to organise a group covering the Yorkshire Dales. The number of people who originally expressed an interest in Local Groups are really too widely disseminated throughout the country to get together to meet with regularity in a town. With this in mind I have decided to organise a group with an interest in the Dales. I have contacted a few people in respect to this and found that there IS an interest in doing something useful in the field, both underground and on surface, not just "tourist trips". Some people are only interested in research - maybe the two could be combined? If anyone is interested, please give me a ring on Halifax (0422) 839749.

Malcolm Street.

NAMHO CONFERENCE 1993

The Biennial NAMHO Conference in 1993 is being hosted by the Laxey Mines Research Group and the venue is to be in the Isle of Man at the Manx Museum. The dates have been set for Friday 23rd of April to Monday 26th of April 1993. In view of the slight isolation from the mainland the Laxey Group have decided to start well in advance and get the necessary information out early in order that bookings can be made in good time.

If you are interested in going to the conference the Laxey Group would like to hear from you as soon as possible in order to get an early idea of numbers, and should anyone wish to give a lecture or talk, they would like to hear from you soon.

The Conference Co-ordinator is Rachel Robertson, at the Laxey Mines Research

Group, 11 Western Avenue, Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 0624 674702.

N.M.R.S. Information and Membership Application Form.

Included with the Feb'92 Newsletter was an Information and Membership Application form, but no note about it in the Newsletter. It was intended to encourage existing members to recruit additional members to the Society and there is still plenty of time to do this during the current year. So please do what you can to increase our membership. The Peak District Mines Historical Society (PDMHS) was included in case any of our members would also like to join PDMHS. PDMHS have also distributed the NMRS leaflet to their members.

Recent additions to the Society Records

A copy of the Archive Report (1990 Season) on the excavations at the Old Gang and Surrender Lead Smelting Mills. An off-print of a paper by R.F.White on "Aerial Reconnaissance: Recent Results. Lead Mining in Arkengarthdale", which appeared in the Yorkshire Archaeological Journal. The paper describes a photograph of the landscape around the Octagon and the New Smelt Mills, at Langthwaite, which was taken as part of a wider programme to enhance the Sites and Monuments Record.

Copies of material from BT31 relating to the formation of mining companies in the Yorkshire Dales. Copies of the Annual Statements of Receipts and Disbursements (relating to mining) of the Duchy of Cornwall's estate, made to the House of Lords from 1849 to 1919. Items relating to mining in Medieval and Early Modern Britain from the Calendars of Patent, Liberate, Fine and Close Rolls. Details of the output from the Grinton Moor Mines, Swaledale.

The Recorder wishes to thank everyone who has donated material to the Records and to add that he is always pleased to receive more information, regardless of quantity.

Mike Gill.

A new system for the Society Records

Thanks to the efforts of a core of members, the Society's Records have grown rapidly during the last ten years. For example, there are now 820 plans, sections and drawings and the number of files has grown from 16 to 62.

Under the old system, files were devoted to mining areas and specific sites were recorded in a paper index. This was adequate whilst the range of material was small, but now the coverage has become more comprehensive and the Recorder is revising the way in which material is kept. The main files are being reorganised and the material split into its pre 1974 County and further sub-divided into its Civil Parish. It is intended that counties, parishes and documents will each have a unique number, prefixed with a letter for the county. This will make indexing and searching easier.

In order to make them a more efficient research tool, the paper indexes have also been computerised and linked to a data base, using dBase IV software. Material relating to the Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors has already been entered and work is progressing with other areas.

Mike Gill.

Register of Sources for Mining History

As members spend increasing time in libraries, Records Offices etc. they will often find material which is not of direct interest to them but may be invaluable to others. It would therefore cut the duplication of effort (and expenditure) if these references were more widely available through a central registry of sources. For some time, the Recorder has run a limited version of such a system, albeit informally, and it works. To that end the Records wishes to extend its services by offering a Register of Sources for Researchers. Will any member wishing to help, please send details of such sources (its locations and reference) and a brief outline of the contents. For example:-

British Library, Add Ms 64817: A map of the Manors, Forests etc. within the Hon. of Clitheroe belonging to their Graces Henry Duke of Buccleuch and Elizabeth Duchess of Buccleugh. Dated 1809. Shows coal pits etc. and lists lessee's names from around Colne to Ramsbottom, in Lancashire. It also shows the location of "Lead Mine Clough" near Baxenden.

Mike Gill.

LETTERS

The Alderley Edge Prehistoric Mines Project

As a result of an appeal from the University of Bradford, Department of Archaeological Sciences, the NMRS made a donation of £200 in support of this project. David Gale who was leading the project has sent in the following progress report.

The Alderley Edge Prehistoric Mines Project, run by the Ancient Metallurgy Group of the Department of Archaeological Sciences at the University of Bradford, was set up with the intention of dating the early mining activity and identifying prehistoric exploitation of the secondary copper-arsenic minerals at Alderley Edge. The Group's work in smelting experiments and metallography suggests that the presence of arsenic in Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age metalwork resulted from a combination of low temperature smelting and the exploitation of secondary copper minerals containing arsenates. The only site in the British Isles where mixed secondary copper arsenic ores are known to occur, and where there is evidence of prehistoric exploitation, is Alderley Edge in Cheshire. None of the Bronze Age Welsh sites so far studied are likely to have produced the earliest metal.

David Gale of the Research Group as part of his research into stone tools used in metalliferous mining in Britain, has been recording grooved hammerstones from the Alderley Edge Mines which are now incorporated in a number of museum collections. He has also been researching the original documentary evidence of these discoveries, made in association with primitive mining pits, at Brindlow Levels in 1874, and at Engine Vein and Pillar Mine between 1900 and 1905.

In September last year a three week excavation was carried out by a small team of staff and students from the University. As the original find sites had been badly disturbed by reworking and prospecting, relatively undisturbed areas with potentially interesting surface features were investigated at Brindlow Levels, Wood Mine and the Engine Vein Fault.

A four metre length of the surface-worked mineralised fault was exposed at Brindlow Levels. This had been initially trenched by pick work to a depth of 1.0 to 1.25 metres. Two trial, pick cut, shaft features were also exposed which were open contemporary with the trenching. One was 2.6 metres square in cross-section and 4.5 metres deep, while the other was narrower and rectangular. At a substantially later

date, judging by the depth of the sand-washed infill, the fault line had been recut by a continuous prospecting trench. No dating evidence was recovered, although the shape of the trial shafts indicates a date no later than the mid-eighteenth century, before the introduction of gunpowder.

Test trenches of two of the three surface pits to the east of Wood Mine identified these as shafts, presumably to be of relatively recent date, and consequently attention was shifted to the Engine Vein Fault.

A complex sequence of surface features can be traced along the Engine Vein Fault from the Openwork, west to Beacon Lodge. These take the form of banked circular pits and trenches, corresponding to surface working of the fault and progression of shafts to deeper levels on the north side. A test trench near to Beacon Lodge on the line of the fault revealed similar systematic pick cut trenching along the entire length of the fault.

In addition a test pit was excavated immediately west of the Engine Vein Openwork. This exposed a buried peat deposit from the base of which was recovered pieces of primary lead/zinc shoe ore. Initial analysis of secondary copper ore from this deposit suggests that it contains a significant amount of arsenic.

Although no direct evidence for prehistoric mining was recovered, the excavations revealed the extent and nature of historic surface working and prospecting. It is hoped that future work may identify the site of the initial find made at Brindlow Level in 1874.

The Group are most indebted to the National Trust for their help and permission to carry out the fieldwork, in particular we are most thankful to Jeremy Milln, the Archaeological Field Officer, and Richard Littleton, the NT warden for Alderley Edge. We are most grateful to the members of the Derbyshire Caving Club, most especially Nigel Dubben and Stephen Mills, for their support, guidance and encouragement throughout the project.

The project received support from the Northern Mine Research Society, as well as Cheshire County Council, the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust, Bradford University, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Derbyshire Caving Club, Manchester Museum and the Peak District Mines Historical Society.

Old Records

Roy Fellows has recently acquired the following which may be of interest to some of our members.

Geological Survey Map published 1908.

Ordnance Survey Map Sheet LXVII SW Published 1887 St. Just area of Cornwall Nanquidno to the Avarack. 6" to the mile. Overprinted in blue to show the geology, mineral lodes at outcrop, mineral lodes at ordnance datum with depth in feet. Names of lodes and shafts, underlie of lodes, minerals and all workings.

Levant Mine Agents Reports and Statements of Accounts as follows:- March 1891, July 1892, Nov 1892, Dec 1896, July 1897, Nov 1897, June 1898, July 1898, July 1899, Dec 1900, March 1902, July 1902, Feb 1914, June 1914, June 1917.

Minutes of Shareholders Meetings for Feb 1892, May 1892, Sept 1892, May 1900. The last has somehow, at a later date, been printed on the reverse with the quarterly ore returns to March 31st 1929, the year before the mine closed.

If you would like to view these then please contact Roy on Tel. 0922 406713.

BOOK REVIEWS

Archaeology in National Parks. Edited by R.F.White and R.Isles, and is available from the National Park Staff Association, c/o Yorkshire Dales National Park, Yorebridge House, Bainbridge, Leyburn, North Yorkshire. DL8 3BP. Price £4.50 + 50p post & pack.

In October 1989, ten of the eleven National Parks in England and Wales were represented at a Workshop on the problems of archaeological management and approaches to conservation. The papers given at that workshop, which form the core of this volume, cover current archaeological projects or topics within National Parks. They are therefore diverse in nature but share a theme which reflects the way that archaeologists are working with the National Park Authorities' policy of pioneering new methods of countryside management and interpretation.

Of particular interest to Society members are sections dealing with gunpowder mills, on Dartmoor; Greenside and Coniston mines and Duddon iron furnace, in Cumbria; Grindledykes lime kiln in Northumberland; a brick kiln in Derbyshire; and smelting mills and other lead industry remains in the Yorkshire Dales.

Mike Gill.

Mines of the Gwydyr Forest. Part 3. Parc Mine, Llanrwst and Adjacent Setts. By John Bennett and Robert W.Vernon. A5. 140pp. ISBN. 0 9514798 2 2. £6.95 (incl. P& P) from Gwydyr Publications, 7 St.John's Way, Cuddington, Cheshire. CW8 2LX.

This is the third book in a series of seven covering the mines of the Gwydyr Forest and includes Parc mine which was the last of the Gwydyr mines to work and which remained actively producing until 1958.

This volume along with its two predecessors is well organised and set out with some 27 diagrams and maps and includes a folding plan and section of Parc Mine Principal Lode workings. Also included are 23 black and white photographs, although in spite of its relatively recent working there appear to be few photographs available from its working period.

The history of the various mining developments is interestingly related and makes easy and compulsive reading. At the back of this volume, as with the others, is a chapter entitled "The Mines as they are Today". This gives directions for walks through the area which take in all the salient surface remains of the mines described. This is an excellent feature and those who follow the instructions for these tours, as I have done, will find them very rewarding and instructive, even if you think that you know the area, as I did!

I would suggest that you pay a visit soon, if interested, since the landowners have wreaked further damage to the surface artefacts since the book was published. They have also made very secure all entry/exit points connected with all the mines in the Gwydyr Forest area.

To sum up; This third volume in the series continues the high standards already set by the authors and if you have bought Volumes 1 & 2 it will be difficult not to follow on with No 3.

Damian J.McCurdy

GENERAL NEWS ROUND UP

Cumbria

Force Crag mine has closed and the Lake District Mines and Quarries Trust has

bought the crushing and fines processing plant, excluding the flotation cells for its museum.

Wales

Anglesey Mining plc. produced its interim report in February '92 which will give little comfort to its shareholders. The company has failed to secure project finance which was essential for the continuance of the project. In technical terms the project has lived up to its expectations. This has been confirmed by two groups of independent technical consultants, but the deterioration in stock market conditions resulted in the company being unable to raise sufficient funds in the latter part of 1991.

The company now owes its largest shareholder Imperial Metals Corporation £1.7 million and has other creditors as well. IMC are reviewing the situation on a monthly basis.

In terms of what has happened on the ground, I visited the site in mid February and found everything mothballed and still on site with the exception of the mine offices which burnt down several months ago. (DJM)

Staffordshire

A proposal to revitalise the present fortunes of the Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum was submitted to Stoke City Council in September 1991. The proposal involves a reworking of coal on a modest scale by developing a working drift mine and reviving the colliery railway.

The drift mine itself is to be sunk on partially derelict land within the present Museum site perimeter. In the process of mine establishment sections of the Colliery's remaining buildings will be refurbished, and small scale mine offices and stores created within existing structures. Once opened, Whitfield's working drift mine will operate daily both to produce coal for the Museum's many surface needs, and to offer all future visitors the sight of a working mine surface on a small scale. It is even believed that, after an initial development phase, public access to authentic pit workings will be possible at certain agreed daily times. A percentage of any coal mined will raise steam for Museum locomotives and heating systems, while the sales of coal mined surplus to such site requirements should raise much needed revenue for additional site development work.

In conjunction with the establishment of a working drift mine the Colliery's main-line railway will be extended and relaid on land adjacent to the present Biddulph Entrance approach road. A public observation point will be established within the Museum to enable visitor viewing of coal mined in the drift being loaded on to railway wagons for transfer around the rear of the site to a road haulage transfer point. This revival of the main line steam railway for its original purpose will ensure no through site movement of loaded road vehicles which, by development of an additional access, will join the Biddulph approach road beyond the present Museum perimeter. The railway's revitalisation will enable the actual demonstration to visitors of coal's railway haulage, in addition to making possible a much greater range of purely demonstration shunting and visitor movement options by Museum Railway. The output envisaged from the proposed drift mine is modest with a target, after first development, of around 500 tons per week.

Since its first beginnings in 1979 Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum has attracted more than 600,000 visitors and successfully competed for national awards recognising excellence in educational and interpretative practice. It is however now no longer unique in offering to the British public an underground coal mine tour since the establishment of similar attractions at the Big Pit in South Wales and

Caphouse Colliery in Yorkshire. Chatterley Whitfield also lost its authentic underground galleries in 1986 and since 1988, on average, has received only 50,000 visitors per annum.

Cornwall

Prehistoric Extractive Metallurgy In Cornwall. A day conference to be held on Saturday 11th July, 1992 at Camborne School of Mines, Redruth Cornwall.

Although the Cornish peninsula combines rich mineral resources with one of the best preserved Bronze Age landscapes in the United Kingdom, comparatively little attention has been paid to the possibility of recovering traces of prehistoric mining in the county. The recovery of evidence for Bronze Age mining in other parts of the British Isles and recent research on early smelting technology has led to renewed optimism that traces of early mining may survive in south-west England. The day conference sets out to review existing geological and archaeological evidence for early extractive metallurgy in Cornwall.

For details of enrolment, the fee is £10 which includes tea, coffee and buffet lunch, write to Mr. David Gale, Ancient Metallurgy Research Group, Dept. of Archaeological Sciences, University of Bradford BD7 1DP.

Yorkshire

Yorkshire Dales Archaeology Advisory Group

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has formed the above group, comprised of invited representatives from universities and other research organisations with interests in or working on aspects of the archaeology of the Yorkshire Dales, together with representatives from local and central government agencies and local archaeological societies, to help it further the interests of archaeological conservation in the Yorkshire Dales.

The group meets twice per year and discusses current research, consolidation projects and aspects of legislation and policy which affect archaeology. The Society is represented on the group by Mike Gill.

University of Leeds

The University is running a course called "Gold Prospecting" on the 16th and 17th May 1992 which comprises the Saturday at the University and the Sunday using course members own transport, with the possibility of some car sharing, in Dolgellau, North Wales. The lectures on Saturday morning will be supplemented by practical introductions to prospecting techniques and gold extraction techniques. The prospecting techniques will be put to the test during the field trip to North Wales on the Sunday. Last year most people found some gold! The course fee is £17.

A project called "The Wharfedale Survey Project" is also being run by the University for two weeks from 30th May 1992. Two separate groups will be working on different aspects of the project concurrently:

1. The Field Survey Group will be based in holiday cottages in Upper Wharfedale.

2. The Documentary Research Group will be based in the Continuing Education Building in Leeds. (Accommodation can be arranged if necessary)

In addition to on-the-spot training and support, lectures will be given explaining the background to the archaeology of the Yorkshire Dales.

If you wish to take part in the project you may sign up for a single week, or for any possible combination of groups on a weekly basis.

For further information on either of the above courses please contact Marlyn Moreland, Department of Adult Continuing Education, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT. Tel. 0532 333220.

Scotland

Ron Callender, one of our members is the Secretary of the Organising Committee for The World Goldpanning Championships 1992 which are to be held at the adjoining villages of Leadhills and Wanlockhead in the Lowther Hills of Southern Scotland from the 3rd to the 6th of September 1992.

Goldpanning competitions had their origins in Lapland when a group of professionals, part-timers and amateurs contested the Finnish national title during the long days of sunshine in the brief summer of 1974. When the organisers realised foreigners were being attracted to the venue, the contests were re-styled as the European Championships. In 1977, the Finnish hosts launched the first world event in the small gold village of Tankavaara - 150 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

Soon other countries offered locations - Ovada in Italy, Rauris and Heiligenblut in Austria, Dawson City in Canada, Goldkronach in Germany and Foix in France. Last year, at the 14th World Championships in Sweden, Great Britain's delegates unveiled the plans for the 1992 event.

Traditionally, the week begins with a sequence of associated events - excursions, walks, goldpanning tuition, a gold symposium and social activities - and the competitions start with a team event on Thursday afternoon in which groups of five panners compete for the world title.

In brief, competitors receive a bucket of gravel which has been seeded with particles of gold. Each competitor in a round receives equal amounts of gold and is allocated a "pond" within the specially designed arena. Any type of pan may be used - up to a diameter of 50cm. and the aim is to test the speed and accuracy of the goldpanner by recovering all the particles of gold within a twenty minute period. Each lost particle results in a time penalty of five minutes.

For further information send an SAE to Ron Callender, 36 Broadlake, Willaston, South Wirral. L64 2XB.

Unique Neolithic Flint Mine Found.

A team of archaeologists has uncovered evidence of Scotland's only prehistoric flint mine near the Buchan coastal village of Boddam.

The discovery of an extensive complex of mine shafts at the flint pits at the Den of Boddam has been described as one of the most significant finds in Scotland in recent years. the 5,000 year-old site is believed to have been the principal source of the raw material for the arrowheads, knives and scrapers used by neolithic man in the north-east.

Ian Shepherd, Grampian's regional archaeologist, said: "The interim results confirm that this is an archaeological site unique in Scotland. It provides significant insights into the industrial activities of the prehistoric inhabitants". Preliminary investigations at the five acre site were made last summer by a team led by Alan Saville, head of the artifact research unit of the archaeology department of the National Museums of Scotland. He is planning to return to the site again this summer to complete his investigations at the complex of shafts, some more than three metres deep. They are hoping to provide a firm date for the mining activity and also

some information about the technology used in the mining.

The Scotsman 17/2/92

Cleveland

The Kilton Mine Site has been saved. Details were given in the November '91 Newsletter regarding the public enquiry held in East Cleveland during August last to examine the proposals of Cleveland County Council to reclaim the site of the former Kilton ironstone mine by reducing in height the prominent conical shale tip and planting trees and shrubs over much of it. It was the intention to demolish the few remaining buildings, allow unrestricted access to this remote site and further treat two 700 feet deep shafts which have already been infilled. At the inquiry two people spoke in favour of the scheme and twenty four objected to it.

The report by the DOE Inspector was published in February 1992 and his recommendation not to allow a Compulsory Purchase Order was accepted by the Secretary of State. He considered that the tip was not an eyesore nor a disincentive to local economic development. It had a role to play in the development of tourism in the area as an historical feature in the landscape and he considered that the proposed scheme would be detrimental to the very wildlife it was claimed would benefit from it. In fact the Inspector found evidence that the shale tip at Kilton was now a uniquely recognisable industrial archaeological relic in East Cleveland, and concluded that the advantages of its retention far outweighed the benefits of its removal.

So after a bitter battle for over three years Kilton shale tip remains and the site can be visited by prior arrangement with Cleveland Wildlife Trust.

Simon Chapman.

Murton Colliery.

Sinking of two shafts commenced in 1838 to work the coal seams lying between the existing South Hetton Colliery and what at that time was known as the German Ocean. In due course immense feeders of water were met with which stopped operations two years later. It was then decided to sink a third and larger shaft and equip this with two pumping engines. Soon the output of water from all three shafts was 10,000 galls. per min. but sinking went ahead and all the shafts were completed in 1842. The third shaft was the West Pit and the deepest at 1,459 feet. Total cost of the sinking was reported to have been well over £300,000.

Murton Colliery became one of the major collieries of the Great Northern Coalfield and in 1901 this colliery with its neighbour South Hetton produced a combined total of almost 1,250,000 tons of coal and employed 3,200 men and boys.

During the 1950's the National Coal Board undertook a major reorganisation and sank a new shaft between South Hetton and Murton collieries. From then on, coal mined at Elemore, Eppleton, South Hetton and Murton travelled underground to be raised at the new Hawthorn shaft where a new coking plant was also established. Output was then in the order of 5,000 tons per day. Murton Colliery reverted to the role of ventilation, pumping, man-riding and supplies. Eventually the other collieries in the combined mine closed and the end finally came for Murton and Hawthorn in November 1991.

A notable feature at Murton was an overhead Keope winding tower erected in 1923 over the West pit and still at work at the time of closure last year. In place of the usual steel headgear over the shaft and a powered winding drum in a separate building, the rope from one cage in the shaft went over a powered pulley wheel then was guided back to the shaft by another pulley before being connected to the other

cage. Both these pulleys and associated electric motor were situated inside the top of a tall concrete and brick tower built directly over the top of the shaft. Methods of working, control and raising and lowering coal tubs were as for conventional winding. In more recent years similar winding towers of much greater size and capacity have been erected at many collieries and although the Murton tower was not the first it is by now the oldest remaining.

Early in 1992 it was expected that salvage of underground equipment would be completed, then the Middle and East Pits and the Hawthorn shaft would be infilled. However the West Pit, which was also the ventilation shaft, was to be equipped with submersible pumps as mining still continues, at present, at nearby Seaham and Easington collieries. On 27th January 1992 the overhead winding tower at Murton Colliery was listed as being of special architectural or historical interest.

Simon Chapman.

Cumbria

William No. 2 Shaft - Bigrigg Moor. NGR NX005131

As reported in the Feb'91 Newsletter, the exposed shaft at Bigrigg had been filled in by the farmer. However it has again opened up, this time with a vengeance. All the previous blockages have dropped, and approximately 120 feet of pump rods are now proudly on display, down to the water. The County Council plan to cap the shaft during the first half of 1992, so then members will definitely lose the opportunity to see those magnificent pump rods, forever.

D.Eilbeck.

WANTED/FOR SALE

Mr. Peter Richardson, author of the forthcoming monograph on the mines of Dartmoor and the Tamar Valley, has for sale a number of scarce mining and geology books. He also has a number of 6" to the mile O/S maps, 2nd Edition (C1908) of selected mining areas of Devon and Cornwall. These he is selling for an average £5 a sheet. Members interested are asked to either telephone Peter or write, sending an S.A.E. for reply. His address is: Pentamar, Crosspark, Bridgetown, Totnes, Devon. TQ9 5BQ. Tel.0803 863267.

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:- Dick Bird, Mike Gill, Alastair Lings.

The next Newsletter will be published in August 1992. Please send any material for inclusion to the Newsletter Editor, at the address below before 30th June 1992.

Damian J.McCurdy, "Denefield", 111 Barn Lane, Golborne, Warrington. WA3 3PR.

Tel:- 0942 718192.

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