

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1993

SOCIETY BUSINESS

Meet Leaders for 1994

As usual at this time of year, meet leaders are urgently required for the next year's meets programme. Please contact Malcolm Street, the Hon. Sec. as soon as possible. Malcolm's phone number is 0422 839749.

Please come forward and offer to lead a meet and let Malcolm know before the end of November so that it can be included on the meets cards.

Membership Administration

Members will probably be aware that our basic membership records are stored in a computer data file. As the Society is an 'unincorporated body' we are able to do this without registration under the Data Protection Act of 1984 for those members who are happy with the arrangement. The guidelines from the Data Protection Registrar inform us that we need to publicise this from time to time and anyone who objects can have their records removed from the computer list. Any queries should be addressed to the Hon. Sec.

PUBLICATIONS' NEWS

First of all I should like to thank all those members who sent in donations as a result of my appeal in the last Newsletter. These have helped to ensure that I could bring out three publications this year - as promised - and still have some money in the bank towards the next, but, if more members would like to make donations, they would be very gratefully received.

The policy of printing 1500 copies of each of the two Monographs seems to be paying off, but I shall have a better idea of how well (or how badly!) it's doing by the end of 1994 when both publications will have been available for a full year.

Meanwhile, as you will read elsewhere in this Newsletter, Lynn Willies has once again suggested the possibility of issuing NMRS and PDMHS publications to all members of both societies. This matter was brought up several years ago but came to nothing despite a meeting between members of the two committees to discuss it. Whilst I agree with Lynn that large print runs make for lower

printing costs, the fact that there is only a very small overlap of membership between the two societies surely speaks for itself? If members really wanted both sets of publications, they would join both societies, rather than just joining NMRS or PDMHS. What would be more appropriate would some form of co-operative effort on publicity and marketing, an area in which both societies could probably do better.

Finally I'd like to let you know that the text for BM49 - a monograph on the Grinton Mines - is well in hand and so now is the time to start sending in those articles for the 1994 Memoirs. It makes my life easier if these come in as a hard copy and a disk, but if you've only got access to a typewriter, then typewritten copy will do!

Hazel Mary Martell.

LETTERS

Society Publications - 1

I write as a long-standing member of both NMRS and PDMHS, and as the producer of the PDMHS Bulletin, in response to the comments on Society Publications in the last Newsletter, from Hazel Martell and Peter Claughton. Peter's points are good, quality is important, and we need to push sales wherever we can. But David Bick's excellent publications were published with a general market in mind - both of ours are the work of our members, primarily for our members, which is very different, and are unlikely to hit the big time even with our most popular issues. Our main market is those with a particular interest in mining history - most of them already members of our, and a few other, societies.

Peter alludes to a proposal for issuing the publications of both Societies to members of both Societies. The rationale of this was and is simple. PDMHS mostly produces Bulletins with individual articles. NMRS mostly produces excellent monographs. There is a complete geographical overlap in the material published. Assuming the two editors got together amicably, one might do articles in two bulletins, the other the two monographs - doesn't really matter which. The publications are much the same size, though different formats.

I don't know the cost of producing the monographs - since PDMHS supply camera-ready copy, this will probably be cheaper. But taking PDMHS costs, since I know Hazel is looking at the economics of printing very hard indeed,

500 copies cost around £1000

1000 copies cost around £1500.

Thus two monographs and two bulletins a year would have an average cost of £6 - which must be much the same as NMRS members are paying out already, or even less. PDMHS has only two issues - though with the occasional extra goody - but its finances are probably strong enough to absorb the extra cost. Of course there are postage costs too, but careful choice of mailing times for newsletters etc. would help here also.

The two societies would remain separate entities - there are many other services as well as learned publications, and a survey

showed only a minimal overlap of membership: the experience of the formation of BCRA and coherent caving-publishing showed a very considerable increase of people sought membership, and this can reasonably be expected to happen to our two Societies. Might other Societies join also in circulating a National Series of publications, with yet further publishing economies ?

Better value for members - getting costs down even to envisage some colour - a better perception outside of the value of publishing mining with us - and two editors vying to push out the best possible results. And as writers we could choose A4 or A5 as it suited ! Is it not time our two Councils got together again, and really looked at the prospects, reporting back to their members to allow them to make the final decision ? Most of them after all seem to have joined for publications rather than other activities.

Lynn Willies.

Society Publications - 2

Before I change my mind, here is another tenner to keep the publications coming.

I still think, as I remarked strongly at the time, that A4 size is far superior and would sell better.

Mike Breakspear

Dr. A. Raistrick at Stump Cross Caverns

I am trying to trace any notebooks or plans on the subject of Stump Cross Caverns that belonged to Dr. Arthur Raistrick. It would appear that there is nothing of this nature in the Raistrick Collection at Bradford University. I suppose it is possible that these may have gone to NMRS or a member of the Society ?

Len Cook.

J.E.Freeman and the Drawing of the C.B.New Mill

Following my enquiry in the May, '93 Newsletter for any information on the whereabouts of J.E. Freeman, I was pleased to receive prompt responses from two of our members, for which many thanks. Not long after the arrival of my Newsletter I received a phone call from Caleb Wade, which was followed the day after by a letter from Len Cook. Both Caleb and Len were together with Freeman and others as the original group of members of the Northern Cavern & Mine Research Society.

My subsequent efforts to establish contact with Freeman during the next few weeks were unsuccessful, hence the lack of information in the July Newsletter. Len has kindly been able to help recently and has been able to speak to Freeman's wife on the phone, to discover, sadly, that her husband is now in a nursing home and no longer able to take an interest in our enquiries.

The information that Caleb and Len were able to provide is that John Freeman was usually known as "Jack" and sometimes "Jef" from

his initials. I was quite wrong in assuming that he would be quite young when he did the drawings as he would be in his mid to late forties at that time, appreciably older than the other founder members of NC&MRS. Neither Caleb nor Len recall ever accompanying Jack to Arkengarthdale so that we remain ignorant of any details of the visit to C.B., which resulted in the drawing held in NMRS records. Caleb remembers Jack Freeman as being dependent on others for transport, so perhaps someone else may still remember a joint trip to Arkengarthdale. Len tells me that Jack suffered a stroke a few years ago, which deprived him of his walking ability, and we are sorry to learn that his condition has worsened more recently.

Jack Myers.

Lead and Labour

I have been working for a number of years on a book, Lead and Labour, about the social history of Leadhills, and have now put a copy of the MSS in the Society's Library. I have been unable to interest a publisher and, apart from the book's length, c. 90,000 words, I think its style and content are not the stuff for a British Mining monograph. At the same time, I am sure it will appeal to those members interested in the social history of mining communities. I hope they will avail themselves of the MSS, and will welcome comment.

Bill Harvey.

MORE ON PUBLICATIONS :-

The Berehaven Copper Mines - BM No. 42

This book has recently been reprinted in Ireland and copies can be purchased for £5.99 (plus £1.40 p&p). Orders should be sent to :-

A.B. O'Connor & Co. Ltd.,
Kenmare Bookshop,
Shelbourne Street,
Kenmare,
County Kerry,
Ireland.

The lower price reflects a cheaper paper and a lower cost binding but the overall quality of the reprint is still good. Alan Williams, author of *The Berehaven Copper Mines* adds that he is making no money from this venture but that there is a preservation project underway which Alan hopes the reprint will promote.

Erratum

British Mining No. 47, page 21 and elsewhere -
Spelling error - George Liddle should be George Liddell.

NMRS Publications Wanted

Mr. W.J.D. Parkhouse, 36, Bells Place, Coleford, Glos. GL16 8BX
wants good condition copies of BMs. 1,2,3,5,7 & 8 to complete his

collection. If you have any of these, please contact him with the price wanted.

Dr. G.A. Rawlins, Tan-y-Bryn, Garn Dolbenmaen, Gwynedd, LL51 5UQ. wants BMs. 1,2,3,8,16,18,19 & 20 and adds that if any members have spare copies, he would be happy to purchase them, especially if the purchase price went into the publications account.

Where There's a Will

The above shows the demand which exists for back copies of Society publications. Perhaps members might consider bequeathing their own copies to the Society in the event that there is not an interest among family or friends in receiving them.

Dalesman Publicity

BM 46 received a paragraph of publicity in the October edition of the ever popular Dalesman magazine in an editorial piece about Dales lead mining industry remains.

"In some areas, notably on Grassington Moor in Wharfedale, the best of these have been preserved and a 'Mineral Trail' established for visitors.

Literature on the subject remains sparse. Hence I was delighted to receive a copy of a newly published monograph *The Grassington Mines* by Mike Gill, which for the first time sets the story of development within a tight chronology. Including numerous photographs and plans, it is published by the Northern Mine Research Society....."

BOOK REVIEWS

MINIONS. An archaeological survey of the Caradon mining district. 313 printed pages. £12.

St. JUST. An archaeological survey of the mining district. 2 volumes, Vol 1 153 pps. Vol 2 302 pps. £15 for the two.

Published by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

I can recommend these books on the basis of content and sheer value for money, to anyone with an interest in Cornwall's mining history.

The books cover three areas, History, Inventory and Management. The first has mostly been obtained from other published sources, which is probably to be expected, however there is some original research material. The second, under the heading of Inventory, is a detailed description, complete with map references, of every engine house, shaft, adit, spoil heap and upturned stone. As such it is absolutely invaluable as a field guide to anyone who, as I, enjoy fosicking about in old mining areas. The Management sections have been written for the benefit of the Local and County Councils; however even this has much of interest to the mining enthusiast, as it covers such topics as access, parking and probable future developments.

There are other publications by the Unit, including another hefty tome on Kit Hill, but on the basis of mining content the above are of most interest, particularly the St. Just volumes.

Roy Fellows

ROCK SOLID - Britain's Most Ancient Heritage. A Grayson. Natural History Museum. 72pps. 138 ill. £6.95.

Many members will be familiar with this volume, published in conjunction with the BBC's series of the same name. Peter J Challis has sent me a French review of the book ! You'll have to wait for another couple of years until my lad is doing his GCSE to get an accurate translation but the gist is that it's a good little book and is well illustrated, explaining general concepts and drawing on local examples. Human exploitation of ores and building stones are also covered. Like this paragraph, the accompanying photo, of "South hofty" (sic) "derniere mine de Cornouaille en activite", loses something in the translation !

GENERAL NEWS ROUND UP

Mining in the South West in the Twentieth Century

NMRS members are invited to this important conference on a much neglected period in mining history - the present century. It will be held on Saturday 27th November, 1993, at the Camborne School of Mines.

The programme includes the following talks :

Mining in North Devon and Somerset	Michael Atkinson & Peter Claughton
Mining in the Tamar Valley and South Devon	Owen Baker
The Mining Engineering & Supplies Industry	Joff Bullen
Tin Mining Before World War Two	Alan Buckley
Finance of Cornish Mining Enterprise	Justin Brooke
Electric Power in the Mining Industry	Eric Edmonds
The Camborne School of Mines and the Education of Mining Engineers in the Twentieth Century	David Dixon
Mining in the S.W in the late Twentieth Cent.	Kevin Ross

The concluding session, chaired by Roger Burt, will be a round up and discussion of the issues raised.

The cost will be

£ 5.00 for the conference (including tea and coffee)
or £10.00 with a buffet lunch.

Please make cheques payable to 'The University of Exeter'.

Please send bookings to Mr. A.W. Brooks,
Camborne School of Mines,
Pool,
REDRUTH,
Cornwall.
TR 15 3SE.

Northern Ireland

An application to operate the United Kingdom's first open-cast gold mine is to be challenged by environmental groups at a public enquiry which opened in Northern Ireland on 20th. September. If planning permission is granted, the proposed mine on a hill at

Cavanacaw, near Omagh, Co. Tyrone, could yield gold and silver worth £21 million over the next seven years.

In the past decade, several gold deposits have been discovered in a belt of rocks stretching from Co. Mayo in the west of Ireland, through Tyrone and into Scotland.

The applicant for the Cavanacaw project, Omagh Minerals Ltd., hopes the mine will become an important local industry, producing 11,000 ozs. of gold and 15,000 ozs. of silver annually.

The Omagh Gold Mining Action Group, opposing the scheme, fears that sodium cyanide, used in the process, could leak into the ground, and heavy metals, bound into the rock, will be discharged into rivers. The group also objects to a 900 metre long and 100 metre wide trench.

Omagh Minerals Ltd. say that the trench will be filled in after seven years of mining and that the sodium cyanide would be continually recycled and any sulphur residues taken to licensed disposal sites.

The two stage enquiry is expected to last until November.

J.R.H. Seaman

Wales

Mine Tours at Gwynfynydd

Gwynfynydd Gold Mine reopened this year in conjunction with a shop "Welsh Gold" at The Marian, Dolgellau. A courtesy bus takes visitors from the town to the mine during the season (April - October). Eric C. visited the mine during the summer and reports that the shop is in the huge carpark in Dolgellau. At the time of his visit the Gold manufacturing and lapidary sections were not yet ready but that their opening seemed imminent. Up at the mine Robert's Level has been re-opened and connected with the No.6 adit. A crusher and Wilfley Table are underground and panning in the Mawddach is forbidden !

An accompanying newspaper article - "Gold Struck at old Welsh mine" states that Nick Warrell, Gwynfynydd's owner, and his team of eight have retrieved gold from Chidlaw's lode, the vein struck by William Pritchard Morgan who went on to extract £12m worth of gold. Mr. Warrell has spent £500,000 on the shop which sells a range of gold items.

Rhualt Remains Scheme

Plans have been put forward to preserve lead and barytes workings and to establish a countryside centre alongside the A55 at Rhualt. They have led to protests from local residents fearful of harm to wildlife.

The Welsh Mines Preservation Trust stated that the Pennant site retains many important features of mining archaeology and that a mine worked for barytes and witherite during the last century is unusual in its own right.

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust is also in favour of the development and the Welsh Development Agency has stated that grants would be available for restoration and safety.

Eventually the site could be developed further with woodland walks, rare breeds farm, pony trekking centre and bunkhouse accommodation.

Concern has been expressed that the development would be too prominent in an AONB.

Shropshire

Construction engineers and conservationists have been working together to safeguard the future of endangered bats at Snailbeach Mine. Specially designed bat grills are being installed on adits and shafts as part of a reclamation project at Snailbeach near Shrewsbury.

The mines are an important habitat for several colonies of horseshoe bat which use the tunnel systems for hibernation and breeding. The mine shafts have direct access to the deeper levels with a variety of humidity rates and air flows and the bats use different levels depending on the time of year.

Snailbeach was first worked by the Romans and reached a production peak in the 1870's before closure in 1955. The reclamation work is being carried out by Shropshire County Council with a derelict land grant from the DOE and the main contractor is Kinmain Construction of Oldbury, West Midlands.

The first part of a two stage project has involved closing off shafts adits and stopes to make the area safe. A total of 15 of the mine's shafts were identified for treatment and three have been left open and fitted with the grills. The shafts vary between 1.4 and 3.5m in diameter and the deepest runs 505m below the mine head. Many have collapsed and some are still open but flooded to the 102m level.

Kinmain's contract included the infilling of some shafts, adits and stopes mainly with the large stockpile of mine tailings which contain traces of lead, zinc and cadmium dust; an eyesore for local people and an environmental headache for the local authority.

Three separate 10m high stope complexes were identified and ready mixed concrete dropped down to close off the openings. Five of the mine's adits have also been filled.

Contaminated land around Snailbeach Village Hall has been sealed and landscaped and the rest of the "white mountain" as it is known locally will be profiled and covered with topsoil as part of next years phase two operations.

Dave Blundell.

Thanks to all contributors to this Newsletter.

Please send contributions for the February Newsletter by January 15th 1994 to:-

Phil Clayton, 211, Marsh Lane, WOLVERHAMPTON, West Midlands.
WV10 6SA. Tel (0902) 780920.

Views and opinions are those of the correspondents and are not necessarily agreed with or shared by NMRS or its officers.
