

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

AUGUST 1996

Diary Dates

Saturday, 14th September, 1996. Alston Moor Collieries.

Leader: Clive Seal. Tel: 01434 382429. Meet at 10.30 at Alston Railway Station, NGR NY 716468. Guided walk to principal sites and an underground trip.

Sunday, 15th September, 1996. Rampgill Mine, Nenthead.

Leader: Damian McCurdy. Tel: 01942 718192. Meet at 10.30 at Nenthead car park, NGR NY 781437. Underground. Involves wading through a foot of water, so bring your wellingtons.

Friday, 27th to Sunday, 29th September, 1996. NAMHO Field Meet, 1996.

This will be hosted by the Plymouth Caving Group and will be based at the "Plume of Feathers", Princeton on Dartmoor. Bunk space accommodation has been pre-booked. Caravan and camping facilities are available together with other accommodation. A programme of 4 surface walks and 12 underground trips has been arranged. Details from Pia Benson, 7, Marchants Way, Meavy, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6PW. Tel: 01822 855263.

Saturday, 9th November, 1996. General Meeting - Pies & Peas.

Sicklinghall Village Hall, NGR SE 364484. Starts 14.30. Booking form is in this newsletter.

July, 1997.

As part of the International Congress of the History of Sciences, to be held in Liège in July 1997, Paul Benoit and Catherine Verna are organizing a symposium on the study of coal before the use of coke in Europe. They intend looking into all aspects of the issue, including extraction and its techniques, the economic and social production context, commercialisation and uses of coal, and are seeking papers on British work. Further details from: Dr. Paul Benoit, Université de Paris I-C.N.R.S. Équipe D'Histoire des mines et de la Metallurgie, 9, Rue Malher, 75181 Paris cedex 04. Tel. 44.78.33.73. Fax 44.78.33.89

11th -14th July, 1997. NAMHO Conference.

Hosted by The Peak District Mines Historical Society. The conference will be based at Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire. The centre will have facilities for camping and caravans as well as residential accommodation. Further details will be given nearer to the date.

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Meet Reports

Florence Haematite Mine, Cumbria - Sunday, 29th April 1996.

Brief April showers greeted the 23 NMRS members gathered at 10.00 at Florence Mine. The meet leader, Shirley Everett, was nowhere to be seen. After introducing ourselves to Phil, the Chief Guide, and after the NMRS Secretary left a short, but ever so polite, message on Shirley's ansaphone back at Skipton, the Everett quartet hove into view. It transpired that one of the children had succumbed to car-sickness on the A65, and although oxygen was at hand, it was in the form of a 44-tonne BOC tanker up ahead, causing Shirley further grief and delay.

At about 10.30, having paid our fees, the visit got under way, led by Phil, Howard and David, volunteer guides from the West Cumbria mining group. The mine has 5 full-time employees, bringing up some 100 tonnes of ore a week; some is crushed to -3/8 and goes for the annealing of ferrous castings, the rest is ground smaller and goes to the colouring industry, for use amongst other things, in lipstick.

We were shown the twin cages and electric winding gear of Florence No. 2 shaft, which was sunk in 1945; then led down the 1 in 4 drift (driven in 1984) up which the ore is now drawn in 5 ton, side tipping wagons. The ore is found in irregular-shaped masses in the limestone, some bodies containing hundreds of thousands of tonnes, some only 305 mm wide. We descended to a depth of 275 feet below surface, and saw the current ore-bin, loading shovel, and rock drill. The large chambers are worked by drilling and blasting overhead, bringing down 6 feet or so at a time. The roof is supported only by leaving pillars, which are later robbed; where the ore-body extends vertically for any distance, pillars of one chamber are positioned above/below those of the next lower/higher chambers in the ore-body, similar to the practice in slate-mining. The final stage of extraction is to remove the pillars, starting with the top-most chamber until the roof comes down, and then to go one floor below and repeat. One chamber so formed is reputed to be 800 feet high.

We were shown the water table, from which BNFL extract 3 million gallons/day. Without the nuclear industry paying for the pumping it is doubtful if the mine, an employee buy-out in 1982, would be economic.

After getting all our parts (or most of them anyway) a deep red colour, and after admiring *in-situ* specimens of kidney ore, specularite and barytes, we made for the surface via the way we had come in, where the April showers had turned to hail.

The Museum and public tours are organised and run by West Cumbria Mines Group, supported by sponsors NIREX, and our thanks go to both.

John Hopkinson

Weardale Tour - Saturday, Sunday, 8/9th June, 1996.

Having parked at Stanhopeburn Mine (NY 986410), the extensive flats at West Pasture Level were explored. *The Journal of The Russell Society*, Vol. 2 No. 2 p 50. 1989 describes the discovery of the rare supergene mineral Rosasite ((Cu,Zn)₂CO₃(OH)₂). Alas, I am inclined to believe that the blue mineral that we found in the flats is the more common light turquoise Aurichalcite ((Zn,Cu)₅(OH)₆(CO₃)₂), while very pale yellow Pyromorphite (Pb,Cl(PO₄)₃) was also to be seen. The article also mentions Malachite, Goethite and Gypsum. West Pasture is clearly worth a careful return journey.

In Widley Water Level (NY 987403) I counted 850 paces to the fall. According to BM 56, *The Weardale Mines*, by R. A. Fairbairn (Fig.14), the Air Shaft on Crawley Vein is about 650 metres from the portal. Perhaps my paces are not 1 metre, particularly when wading, but the fall cannot be far from the vein.

Walking upstream from this portal, another arched level was discovered and briefly explored. It was curious in being double the normal width. It led in the direction of the Noah's Ark Opencut (NY 694406) where Limonite limestone was worked. (See the *Geology of the NPO*, Vol. 1, Tyne

to *Stainmore*, by Dunham, p 207). Within the opencut was another level. There is a logic in these two levels connecting, bouse being trammed out of the bottom of the quarry.

Walking back from Noah's Ark, past a primrose covered bank, one had good views of Stanhopeburn Smelt Mill's three flues.

We then drove to Blackdene Mine and mill (NY 868900). The mill, last worked in 1987 and is now being demolished. Initially we did not find Blackdene Level, but returned on Sunday to explore it. Beyond the underground shaft, the depth of which my sources do not reveal, the level deteriorates to a fall.

We then walked up Ireshopeburn to Barbary mine (NY 859383), where a large open stope is developing to surface. Drainage is occurring to a lower level as this was dry. Extensive but confusing remains were to be seen at Carrick's Mine (NY 861379), which was our next destination. This ironstone mine is well described by both Dunham (p. 193-195, including fig. 32) and Fairbairn (p. 108 and fig. 19), but neither explain what is seen today on the surface. Craig's Level had run-in after a few paces. Old mine buildings are mixed up with new farm buildings, whilst the odd hopper arrangement at right-angles to the direction of the level adds to the confusion. The surface incline, complete with strange intermediate station and winder, petered out before reaching Ireshopeburn village and the railway.

Keeping to the ironstone theme, Saturday's last visit was to the West Rigg Opencut (NY 911392), a Site of Special Scientific Interest (see Dunham, p. 210-212 and plate 6). Here, large metasomatic ironstone flats in the Great Limestone adjacent to Slitt Vein have been removed, leaving the vein as a conspicuous rib across the centre of the quarry. Old lead workings in the centre of the vein are also to be seen.

On Sunday morning we were able, with permission, to park just by Jackson's or Watt's Level (NY 887367) on Greenlaws East Vein. This allowed us to walk down the gutter to Middle or Mill Level (NY 889369). Greenlaws, a Regionally Important Geological Site, is renowned for its mineral specimens. The area has been well collected following a recent flood but deep blue, banded deep blue and amber fluorspar, ironstone modules with pyrite, sphalerite, galena, chalcopyrite, malachite and azurite specimens were all noted. At Middle Level a decline was followed as it descended. As this was dry, a connection to a lower level is suspected. The wheelpit and dump, complete with arched level, were inspected with interest.

Sedling Burn hosts a number of important mining sites. Unfortunately Burtree Pasture Mine Level (NY 860413) was impassable, but time was spent looking at the old mine buildings of Burtree Pasture Mine and the old wooden shaft headgear of Sedling Mine. From the sources I have to hand it is difficult to establish how deep this shaft is. The description by Fairbairn (p. 114-121) and Dunham (p. 61, fig. 13) refer to the shaft beyond the Burtree Pasture Mine portal.

Making our way back to Rookhope Arch we drove past New House, the former headquarters of WB Mines in Weardale, the large Silverdikes Mine dump and another Weardale mining mystery. The Middlehope Bank Plantation (NY 884404) is growing on tailings. The line of Sedling Vein is further to the north and I can find no record of past mining activity at this location. Perhaps someone knows where these tailings have come from. Middlehope Old Level (NY 890405) was quite extensive but ran before leading anywhere interesting.

The last port of call was High Yarncleugh Groove (NY 889411), where aurichalcite, malachite and pyromorphite were noted, as were some interesting fossil specimens. The level was full of silt which gradually rose to the roof. Of note was the icy water inflow.

Most of the sites visited were initially lead mines, subsequently reworked or explored for fluorspar this century. The use of underground shafts reached by levels as in Stanhopeburn, Blackdene and Burtree Pasture is curious but must relate to how the mine developed above. It would be interesting to know if any electric underground winding gear replaced waterwheel installations of old.

Whilst Fairbairn's book is a welcome addition, it only scratches the surface of what can be seen. The history of each site warrants its own NMRS monograph. To that end, can I commend Paul Webster's recent newsletter request for any information, as he appears to be undertaking such a task?

Thanks to all who attended, and special thanks to Paul Webster and Mike for their contribution in terms of local knowledge and negotiating closer access to Greenlaws.

Finally, an explanation of the cryptic clues.

RIGS - Greenlaws

Methodist Chapel - Rookhope Chapel, best place to view Stotfieldburn Mine buildings.

Black Grouse Lek - *En-route* to High Yarncleugh Groove

North African Pool - Barbary Pool and Mine

Smelter site with three flues - Stanhopeburn Mine

Fangio's last gasp - Only if you worked for Weardale Minerals would you understand this one.

Rossendale Revisited

Roger Bade

Following the meet to Gambleside village during April, John Bowers, Steve Mitchell and myself returned to investigate Swinshaw colliery, which could be accessed further up the hillside from Gambleside village. The main pithead was situated above Crawshawbooth, next to the now abandoned Greenfold reservoir. The main drift was a stone arched horse road, known as the 'Gall road', Gall being a corruption of Galloway pony. The main drift was blocked and culverted, the culvert being about 5 yards in length, 18" x 12". This dimension is fine when you are 14, but on those occasions we were stopped by a fall about 50 yards inbye which had waist deep red water behind it. North West Water would not have taken kindly to two schoolboys turning their reservoir red, so we never ventured any further. In 1986, when the reservoir was no more, the land owner took a fancy to investigate whether Swinshaw was worth re-opening and he ever so kindly re-opened the Gall road with his JCB. The fall was cleared, the water let out and off we went. The Gall road was driven from a point about ¼ mile away from the outcrop and rose in a steady gradient till it intersected the coal approximately 300 yards inbye of the crop edge.

The pit was worked entirely with horses and drawers, there was no mechanical haulage at all, as far as we know. About 300 yards from daylight, we entered a large shunt, here the pit split into two main districts. Each road was followed, but in both cases, the roads were blown in at the intersection of the Lower mountain seam. We had drawn a blank yet again. The day wasn't entirely wasted as the Gall road had been enjoyable, the shunt contained cobbles between the rails, to help the horse get a grip as it set off towards the Night Hill district on the Water side of the hill. The Gall road varied in height from about 6 feet to at least 9 feet where the Lower Foot coal entered the strata at roof level and had been worked as the road was driven.

In 1989, two dogs got lost in the northern edge of the pit, above Gambleside village, where the Lower Mountain outcrops along Limers Gate. The dogs were lost for five days, indicating that there was access to extensive workings. After the dogs had come out under their own steam, a party of enthusiasts entered the fox hole armed with cameras and plans. We ventured for 1000 yards in the Lower Mountain along a railed road which had been last used in the 20's and 30's as a travelling road. The road was coal height, 3 feet, and 5 feet wide. The roof supports were still *in situ*, though they were rotten and in places we were walking in the roof over large falls of shale. Each roof bar was notched into the coal at one side, whilst it was supported by a prop on the other. Eventually we came to a trough fault which brought the Upper Mountain mine down to the level of the Lower Mountain. Shortly after here we were stopped by water. We had now been underground for about 4 hours and I knew Big John would be getting a little anxious on the surface, so we set off to return.

A little way outbye of the trough fault, was a 4 way junction, each road being railed. The branch to the west lead to surface at Meadow Head farm, but the eastern branch headed down dip towards the old Gall road, and the area I had tried to reach three years earlier. Having no proper flame lamp. I was a little dubious of venturing to the dip, knowing that if bad air was going to be anywhere, it would certainly be in this dip. My appetite was whetted as I could see new bords which had been begun just before the pit closed.... I must return soon.

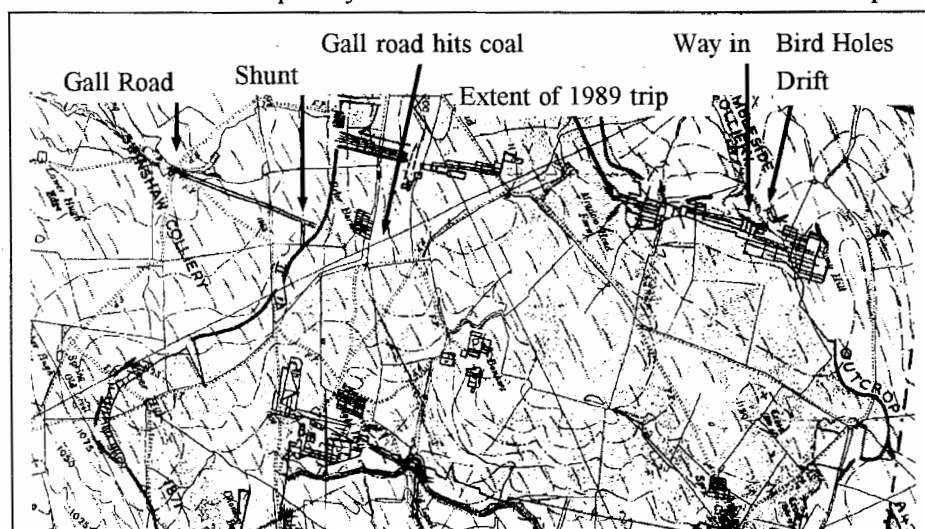
It was during June of 1996, that I finally returned, with a little encouragement from John Bowers. We reached the site of the old Bird Holes Travelling Drift and looked for our fox hole. Disappointment reigned when we discovered the hole was big enough for a small badger. Unperturbed, we were in within 20 minuets. "We turn left, then right and straight on for 1000 yards," I said excitedly, but alas, nature had other ideas. The dry summer of last year, and the hard frost of winter had done untold damage on the roadways, rendering them almost impassable. What was passable was a tight squeeze up in the roof, with your backside catching on loose shale, with no room to get yourself turned around. One of our party, had already gone home and whilst John and Steve were happy to trust my judgement, my judgement was telling me to go home and see how England were getting on against Switzerland.

We did try the workings on the opposite side of the clough after dinner, but we met with similar problems. With a little work, it would be possible to get to the foot of Bird Holes shaft where the going may be easier, but for the time being Swinshaw colliery is keeping a tight hold of its secrets. In the late afternoon we walked across to Porters Gate colliery which is the prime interest of two mining companies, though the parish council are plotting murder. Time was getting late so we planned to return to Porters Gate again another day.

If any one else decides to venture in the interim. **Beware!!** Porters Gate is connected to Hapton Valley colliery and there is gas present, the explosive kind as well as the suffocating kind. When one door closes, another opens? Let's hope so anyway. Grimebridge colliery finally closed for the last time at the end of June. Billy Clayton is transferring operations to Hill Top Colliery, Sharneyford, where he plans to work the coal on contract for Clay Coal Company. He has sold the land at Grimebridge, so it really is the finish! I can't shake off the feeling that my Granny has just died. Hill Top is not yet open. There is quite a bit of coal to opencast first before underground mining commences. The colliery was closed in 1966 by the NCB.

On the plus side, Clargill Colliery, Alston, has been re-opened after being closed for two years. Clargill is well over 100 years old and got the nick-name of 'Linger and die' during the 20's and 30's because it kept limping on against the odds. This brings the total of collieries in Cumbria to a staggering one!

Finally, Big John Davies, who is a very good friend and has helped me so much with the Rossendale meets is poorly with cancer. Let's wish him a full and speedy recovery.



Clive Seal

Swinshaw Colliery

Crawshawbooth, Rossendale.

Officers' Reports to AGM

Recorder's Report (Mike Gill)

Since the November meeting two reports for the Yorkshire Dales National Park have been finished. One was on the Mining History of Gunnerside Gill and is part of a much larger assessment of the gill's mining remains. The other was on Mining Landscapes and involved mapping the general extent of surface workings (hushes/opencasts), shallow shafts (less than 100 feet deep), deep shafts (over 100 feet deep) and levels. The Society has been paid for both items.

Part of the payment for the above work was spent on a copy of the Microsoft Office Professional software for use in the preparation of British Mining and for the Society Records. In 1990 a database of mining sites in Yorkshire using Dbase III was compiled, but the software went awry. Fortunately, the data remained intact and it was possible to read them into an Access database which has 2372 records of shafts, levels and other mining features and gives such details as their name, location, age, depths/lengths, vein worked and a brief history. Similar databases have been opened for other parts of the country.

As part of a wider study of mining personalities and their interlinking interests, a database of people who either held shares or were important at the Grassington Mines in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries has also been created. This complements a similar project for Swaledale, Arkendale and Wensleydale, undertaken by Ian Spensley, and together, the data will eventually cover the whole of Yorkshire (and then beyond). So far, at Grassington alone, there are 713 people, most of them shareholders, concerned with a large and informal mining share market.

Another long-term project which has been advanced is a demographic study of Grassington and Hebden (British Mining Nos. 46 & 49) in order to get details of the workforce. This is a large task and, so far, has details of 13,775 weddings, baptisms and funerals (between 1600 and 1812) from the Linton in Craven Parish Registers. This has been supplemented with full data from the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 censuses. When complete, the data will allow for easier recognition of family relationships, occupational structure and inward and outward migration.

The transfer of mine plans and surface information onto 25 inch to one mile overlay sheets is progressing steadily, with all of Gunnerside Gill now covered and work started on the Surrender area.

Lawrence Barker has kindly made available to the Records a large amount of information on the activities of the AD and Old Gang mining companies. This is an invaluable source which supplements the material in the North Yorkshire Record Office.

The Email address for the Society Records and Publications is: martgill@legend.co.uk

Treasurer's Report (Colin Hindle)

Membership statistics	1994	1995	Change
Total members	399	423	+24
Total subscriptions	£5531.00	£5661.50	+£130.50*

*This is the actual subscription income for 1995. The calculated nominal figure should be £5586.50. The excess of £75.00 is made up of £45.00 prepayments, forgetting to book in one member and a £15.00 surplus which I can't explain.

Membership currently stands at 396 and is composed of 342 full, 44 family, 5 overseas and 5 honorary members. To date (23 March, 1996) I have received a total of £5399 in subscriptions and donations. All except a few hundred pounds has been banked and the bulk of this has been transferred into the investment account to earn interest until a use is found for it.

Northern Mine Research Society - Summary of 1995 Accounts

Income	£	Expenditure	£
1995 subscriptions	5 661.50	Subs to Societies	43.00
Donations	312.33	Annual Dinner	361.35
Annual Dinner	350.40	Pies & Peas hall hire	20.00
Pies & Peas	51.50	Pies & Peas food	23.26
Interest - Investment account	305.01	To Publications account	9 750.00
Total	6 680.74	Returned cheque	20.00
		Stationery	683.63
		Insurance	58.00
		Newsletter postage	156.16
		Officers' Expenses	
		President	14.72
		Vice President	60.62
		Jnr Vice President	19.00
		Secretary	19.15
		Treasurer	23.07
		Total	11 251.96
Cash Flow (Income-Expenditure= - £4 571.22)			

Cash Balances	Current a/c	Investment a/c	Total
Opening balance	£674.53	£7 736.95	£ 8411.48
Movement	+£373.77	-£4 944.49	-£4 571.22
Unpresented cheques	£200.70		£200.70
Closing Balance	£1 249.00	£2 791.96	£4 040.96

Publications Account

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Sales	6 853.31	Printing	15 613.50
General account	9 750.00	Postage	2 240.81
Grants	750.00	Bank Charges	12.00
Donations	10.00	Photographs	16.22
Interest	108.86	Total	17 882.53
Income from Recorder	329.37		
Repayment from General Account	207.44		
Total	18 008.98		
Opening Balances	Current £105.74 + Deposit £2 202.75		£2 308.49
Income			+£18 008.98
Expenditure			-£17 882.53
Closing balance	Current £784.27 + Deposit £1 650.67		£2 434.94

Mining Remains Damaged by Track "Improvements"

"Improvements" to a track for grouse shooting on Harkerside and Whitaside Moors, Grinton in 1995 caused considerable damage to 3 lead mining sites.

The spoil heaps and dressing floors at Grovebeck Mine (SE 027967) were badly affected by spoil removal from the mine tips for track surfacing. The bouse teems in particular were partially bulldozed to help provide a larger parking area.

On High Harker Hill an area of shaft mounds and the water management system for the Harker Hushes was devastated by spoil removal and quarrying for track surfacing.

At Smithy Level, Whitaside Mine, spoil heaps and crushing waste were also partially removed in a haphazard manner for surfacing.

Discussions are in progress with the estate regarding possible means of rectifying some of this damage and ensuring that similar losses do not occur again. Robert White, Archaeological Conservation Officer Yorkshire Dales National Park, would be very pleased to hear from any members who may have photographs or survey information of these sites prior to spoil removal in 1995.

Nenthead Survey

Barton Howe Warren Blackledge of Leeds are preparing to undertake a detailed archaeological survey of the Nenthead lead mining complex, near Alston, Cumbria, on behalf of the North Pennines Heritage Trust.

They would be pleased to hear from any members of Northern Mine Research Society who might know the whereabouts of any photographs, plans and other records which might aid their interpretation and understanding of the site. All phases of activity on the site are being considered, from the medieval period through to the 19th and 20th century developments associated with the London Lead Company, the Vielle Montagne Zinc Company and more recent owners.

Any members with information should contact Mr. E. Dennison at BHWB, 5 North Hill Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 2EN (Tel: 0113 274 1490). Any information received will be acknowledged in their report and any loaned material will be returned as soon as possible, with due consideration of copyright and other matters.

News from the Yorkshire Dales National Park

European money is to assist in conservation of lead industry remains. The Yorkshire Dales National Park has recently been successful in a bid for money from the European Regional Development Fund for conservation and interpretation of remains of the lead industry in the Yorkshire Dales.

A total of £27,000 has been offered in 1996 and 1997 which needs to be matched by money from the National Park. This formed part of a larger bid for £115,000 between 1996 and 2000 but allocations have so far only been made for the first 2 years.

The money will be spent on extending the National Park's existing consolidation programme in Swaledale and Wharfedale and on providing a range of on and off-site interpretation, including site leaflets, trails, information boards and plaques.

Consolidation and survey projects already planned for 1996 include: a third phase of detailed pre-consolidation survey in Gunnerside Gill including the area of the Barbara and Dolly dressing floors, and the Blakethwaite dams; survey of the area around Surrender Mill, including the crushing mill and earlier smelt mills and the water management system and a further phase of consolidation and recording at Grinton Smelt Mill, including repairs to the culvert and the smithy building and removal of much of the layer of sheep droppings inside the mill which is a potential fire hazard.

Books

Timber for the Mines - Mike Brown

This is a small booklet in the series entitled *Transcripts and Guides for Dartmoor Researchers*.

It deals with timber sales from the Buckland-in-Dartmoor Estate to mining companies in the period 1850 to 1873. Using a ledger book held at the West Devon Records Office and the estate papers of the Bastaud family, an intriguing set of records has been painstakingly put together from the shambolic accounting system used in compiling the ledger. A useful table of all timber sales from 1850 to 1873, giving a percentage of the total sold to mining companies, shows that certain trends can be discerned, including the dramatic upsurge of exploration of Dartmoor in the 1850's, the slump of the late 1850's and early 1860's and a slight recovery in the 1870's.

The author has assembled the chaotic records to show listings for individual mines in a succinct but professional manner. Amazingly, it is shown that only two cases of non-payment are recorded throughout the whole ledger, and these by companies which failed! There are many fascinating facts about types of timber supplied, transportation and the actual uses made of the timber on an average mining site. One can, of course, draw conclusions as to whether the company was conducting exploration, working old levels or whether it was just a speculative venture which failed, by checking the timber usage and the amounts purchased. A final set of tables lists, year by year, each mine's expenditure on timber, and I found the author's probing style refreshing and thought provoking throughout.

At only £1.99 post free this 20 page A4 booklet is a real bargain and could become a useful tool for anyone wishing to research the mines of the south east corner of Dartmoor. Furthermore, it gives an outlook on an important aspect of any mine's development. It may be purchased direct from the author at Dartmoor Press, 24 Lipson Court, Greenbank Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 7JG. Cheques should be made payable to M. Brown.

A Guide to Calstock - Patrick E. Coleman

Here is a no-nonsense approach to giving a background history of Calstock from the earliest times to the present. Calstock sits astride the River Tamar in the heart of the old Victorian mining area of south east Cornwall and west Devon and acted as the conduit for all its products.

There are four detailed walks, with maps, through various mining sites together with background sections on scenery and geology. However, the majority of the booklet is given over to sections of real interest to the mining historian, including the famous inclines, hoist and viaduct which all helped to transport the copper, tin and other minerals from the surrounding mines to Calstock Quay. These are vividly described. There is a section on the Tamar barge which, before the coming of the railways, was the mode of transport down the River Tamar to the smelters in Wales.

This booklet is an ideal companion for anyone wishing to explore this rich and diverse mining area, where the present day green valleys and sluggish muddy river belie the tremendous industrial activity that once shrouded this valley in a smog of pollution.

It is a useful addition to the library of those interested in mining in Cornwall and is of 44 pages in A5 format. It costs £2.50 + postage and is available from Eco-Southwest, Tregennys, Calstock, Cornwall.

W. A. R. Wright

Les Tyson writes to say that he has recently purchased a set of Dr Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufacturers and Mines edited by Robert Hunt at an incredible bargain price. Should any researchers wish to have photocopies of relevant sections he will be most happy to supply them. Just get in touch with Les at Flat 2C, Hillcrest, Woodville Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2AN. Tel: 0161 929 5716

Gold at Tyndrum

An increase in the price of gold in the late 1970s stimulated widespread interest in prospecting for the metal. In 1983 the discovery of a potentially viable gold prospect in the Sperrin Mountains of Northern Ireland by Dublin based Ennex International PLC resulted in the formation of a subsidiary Company, Fynegold Exploration Ltd., to explore in Scotland. The initial exploration area was selected on the basis of geological setting and known mineralisation, and in 1984 systematic sampling of mineralised outcrops, boulders and mine wastes led to the discovery of the Eas Anie structure. This runs southwest from Eas Anie Gorge, above Cononish Farm near Tyndrum, for 1.5 km to the Allt an Rund. A few shallow manually dug trenches were excavated in 1984 followed by a major campaign of trenching in 1985, when some thirty trenches were dug across an accessible 250m length of the structure. In parallel with the trenching some 10 exploratory boreholes were drilled, with mixed results. Prospecting work in 1986 concentrated on the area to the south-west side of the gorge and subsequent drilling in 1987-88 traced mineralisation south-westwards well below earlier trenching and drilling.

In early 1988 a planning application was lodged for underground exploration. Stirling District Council granted consent to allow exploration to take place, and work commenced in the autumn of that year, with the widening and extension of old mine workings in the Eas Anie Gorge.

Work then started on a new tunnel, and by early 1990 some 1110m of horizontal and 175m of shaft development had been completed. This underground exploration and a total of 10,700m of surface and underground drilling defined a reserve of 750,000 tonnes, of this 514,000 tonnes being mineable at a grade of 9.4 grams per tonne gold and 53 g/t silver.

Feasibility studies made in 1990 estimated the operational costs at US\$230 per ounce of gold extracted and, taking into account the capital costs, the mine would not be profitable with a gold price below \$400 per ounce.

In October 1990 the company submitted a planning application to the District Council for an underground gold mine. In December 1994 an agreement under section 50 of the Planning Act was made between Stirling District Council and Fynegold Exploration, agreeing in principle to mining at Cononish. Stirling District Council Planning Committee have recently indicated draft planning conditions for mining at Cononish.

In January 1995 Ennex International sold the prospect to Caledonian Mining Corporation, a Canadian based company for a reported £5.1 million

The company plans to invest around £7 million in the project which will create 50 permanent jobs. The life of the mine is expected to be at least eight years.

Alastair Lings

Vale of Rheidol

The Vale of Rheidol suffered a major disruption to its train services when a landslip occurred north of Aberffraw on 23 April. A lead mine working dating back to Victorian days and disused since before the railway was constructed, opened up on the down side of the line and caused a landslip back to the line of the route. Some 200 tons of material have had to be moved, and the repair work has progressed in stages. The first half was completed by the third week of May when the top of the mine working was plugged and work began on concreting the top of the working to seal it for the future. A mini-excavator was moved by rail to the site which is 500 feet up on the valley side. The logistics of the operation have been difficult and the railway has hired a 2 foot gauge tunnelling car to get materials to the site. The Vale of Rheidol Railway has had to throw all its resources into the repair work.

Railway World - June, 1996.

Tim Jeffcoat

Monuments Protection Programme

Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (including the former Cranstone Consultancy team) are continuing their coverage of the extractive industries for Monuments Protection Programme. Their Step 3 reports (the specific site assessments and recommendations) for Tin and Arsenic have now gone through public consultation, and they are grateful to all who responded. Step 3 reports on Copper, Zinc, and the various minor metals and vein minerals should go out to consultation this summer (the Step 3 consultation on Iron Mining has been held up, and will probably go out with the rest of the Iron and Steel industry). They are now working on the Stone Industry (quarrying, mining, and features such as grinding mills), and on Lime, Cement, and Plaster production. The Step 1 reports (the general framework of the industries) are being circulated by English Heritage in early May, with a deadline for replies at the end of June. They are now working up short-lists of sites for field assessment, and would be glad to consider any recommendations that readers may have. Sites should be in England, and there should be a serious case for considering them to be of national importance (preferably in terms of the priorities set out in the Step 1 reports). Ideally the recommendations should reach them for the end of June, but if you have not seen this note in time, please contact them as soon as possible. The short-list for Stone is being put together by Eric Instone and for Lime and Cement by Mike Trueman; write to them both at: - LU AU (Newcastle Office), Bolbec Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SE. If you want to phone, Eric is on 0191-221-0772, and Mike is on 01636-812279.

News from Wanlockhead

Jeremy Landless writes to say that the show mine entrance has been fully re-timbered giving access for wheel chairs. The museum goes from strength to strength and the library is now open to the public. The contract for the emergency access shaft to the show mine is well under way with capping and laddering being done. The next major project will be the refurbishment of the church, hopefully to be completed by 1998. After 16 years of involvement, Jeremy is now leaving to go into full time Christian work with a group called Operation Mobilisation and to travel the world on a ship called Logos II spreading the Gospel. I am sure all members will join me in thanking Jeremy for his past work and wishing him all the best for the future.

Alastair Lings has sent a cutting from the Scotsman about Wanlockhead's 1756 grade A library. The library, which closed in 1948 was re-opened on 26 April, 1996 by author, Tom Weir and houses more than three thousand volumes.

Secretary's Phone Number

Please note that the Secretary is now on the phone. Tel: 01969 624721.

Yorkshire History Quarterly

The bi-monthly journal, *Yorkshire History*, has been superseded by a new publication which will be called *Yorkshire History Quarterly*, and will be published in August, November, February and May. Each issue will be in A4 format of between 40 and 52 pages dependent on contributions. All material will be relevant to the ancient county of Yorkshire and will include general history, local and family history, industrial history (including a regular water-mill feature), etc. There will be a help and research page and book reviews. The annual subscription is £12.50. More details from the Hon. Editor, Phil Hudson, 4, Cork Road, Bowerham, Lancaster, LA1 4AJ. Tel: 01524 33649.

Share Certificates in Mining Companies

Bernard Moore writes to say that he has combined his hobby of collecting mining share certificates with a business and is offering certificates for sale. He also offers a search service. Lists and further details are available from B. R. Moore & Co., Dolwar House, Dolybont, Borth, Cardiganshire, SY24 5LX. Tel/Fax: 01970 871795. Please state your area of interest.

Warning! - Burgham Mine, Shropshire

SCMC warn mine explorers that there have been reports that the lower adits of Burgham Mine are being used by local youths for drug taking and that hypodermic needles have been found abandoned in the adits. The potential dangers of abandoned needles are obvious and people are warned to be careful when exploring these adits. There are plans by South Shropshire District Council to gate these adits in the near future. SCMC will be given a key for continued access.

Finally

NAMHO Newsletter

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please, keep the contributions rolling in - they are very much appreciated. Contributions on 3½" discs are welcomed. ASCII text format only please. Discs will normally be returned with the following newsletter unless otherwise requested.

Contributions for the November newsletter by 12th October, please, to: **Keith Nolan, West End Cottage, Woodhall, South Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 7TG. Telephone or Fax: 01757 638503. Email. kjn1@york.ac.uk.**

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of its correspondents and are not necessarily agreed with or shared by the Northern Mine Research Society, its Officers or the Editor. The accuracy of submissions is the responsibility of the authors and will not necessarily be checked by the Editor for validity.