

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 1997

Diary Dates

22nd March, 1997 - Annual General Meeting and Dinner.

A change of format for the Annual Dinner is planned for 1997. It's going to be at Yorkshire dinner time; 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The venue will be The Wensleydale Heifer at West Witton (NGR SE 056 884). Tel: 01969 622322. Fax: 01969 624183. The AGM will start at 12 noon and dinner (or lunch, if you live south of Sheffield) will be at 14.00. A menu and booking form appear at the end of this newsletter. The Wensleydale Heifer offers bed and breakfast accommodation and other local accommodation is available at Ivydene, West Witton (B&B). Tel: 01969 622785, and Chantry Caravan Park. Tel: 01969 622372. For the more strenuous among us an evening meet has been arranged at 17.30 on the 22nd, starting at the Wensleydale Heifer and visiting Wetgroves Mine, Carperby. For those who intend to go on this meet it is essential that they contact the meet leader, Clive Torrens. His telephone number is 01969 624721.

23rd March, 1997 - Keldheads and Cobscar Mines.

This meet has been arranged in conjunction with the AGM and dinner but, of course, all are welcome. Meet at 10.30 at Wensley Church (NGR SE 093 895). Surface walks and some underground trips - Leader Clive Torrens.

29th April, 1997 (Tuesday) - Robertsbridge Gypsum Mine & Works.

A visit has been arranged to the British Gypsum Mine and Works at Robertsbridge in East Sussex (NGR TQ 745 194). This is limited to **eight** persons only. Anyone wishing to attend **must** contact the organiser, John Heaviside on 01273 832910 (home) or 01293 822602 (work). The visit will commence at 10.00 and will include a mine tour (hats and overalls will be provided, but bring heavy footwear), lunch (provided!), and a tour of the board making plant. The visit will finish at about 15.30. The mine is seven miles from the plant, connected by an aerial ropeway. For those who would like to make a weekend of it, this is quite a tourist area and there are many attractions in the vicinity.

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7th June, 1997 - St. Aidans Open Cast, Leeds.

Draglines at the St. Aidans Opencast Site, Leeds. Leader, Dr. Ivor Brown. Tel: 01924 257137. Surface walk. Meet at 10.00 at NGR SE 399 827. More details in May newsletter.

8th June, 1997 - Old Flockton Collieries.

Leader, Dr. John Goodchild. Tel: 01924 891871. Meet at 11.00 at the National Mining Museum on the A642. NGR SE 254 165.

19/20th July, 1997 - Slate Mines in the Dyfi Forest and Dinas Mawdddy Area.

Leaders, John and Sue Hopkinson. Tel: 01490 420651. Meet at 11.00 (both days) at the lay-by on the A470. NGR SH 858 144.

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. Equipe 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.

This event will be hosted by The Peak District Mines Historical Society. The conference will be based at St. Elphin's School, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire. The centre will have facilities for camping and caravans as well as residential accommodation. Catering facilities will be available to all those attending the event.

The theme of the conference will be "Mud and Water" and a number of eminent speakers are being invited to give short papers on the subject. Our Recorder, Mike Gill, will be giving a paper entitled "Blood is Thicker than Water". A full programme of industrial visits, surface walks and underground trips of varying difficulty will be arranged. It is expected that the Saturday Evening Social will be very informal. Further details and booking forms may be obtained from John Thorpe, The Old Bakehouse, Cobden Road, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3JR. Tel: 01629 582521.

9/10th August, 1997 - Arkengarthdale Lead Mines.

Leader, Clive Torrens. Tel: 01969 624721. Meet at 10.30 at the lay-by opposite the CB Inn. NGR NY 999 031. Surface walks and underground.

Strewth, Bruce!

Scientists in Australia's Northern Territory have found what could be the largest known single crystals in the world. Daryl Manzie, the Territory's Mines and energy minister, said that they had positively identified up to three huge garnets but were not yet sure of their exact size. However, he said the biggest was "the mother of all garnets" and could be as much as thirty metres across, weighing thousands of tons. - (The Guardian, 28 November, 1996.)

A. S. Mousdale

Mining Songs

Peter Cloughton writes concerning "The Bonny Moor Hen" in the December 1996, newsletter.

"Does anyone know the tune and has it ever been recorded? There is a dearth of traditional songs and ballads related to non-ferrous metal mining, compared with coal. A result of the demise of much of the industry beyond the memory of those alive during the folk revivals of this century. Added to which the lower level of proletarianisation and the consequent militancy, which characterised deep coal working, perhaps did not inspire hard hitting songs of protest.

The nearest I've seen to a "Trimdon Grange" of lead mining is a ballad recording an accident at Frongoch in 1850 - O fawenydd, can gwynfanus (Tegwyn Jones, Baledi ywaun merion, Bala, 1980. pp. 112 - 121.)

There are areas where non-ferrous metal mining continued into contemporary memory. Cornwall, the northern Pennines and Derbyshire all had reason to immortalise the successes and hardships of mining in song. So where are they?" If you know anything about metalliferous mining songs, please tell us.

Incidentally, it has been pointed out that the full story behind the Ballad of the Bonny Moor Hen appears in *Men and Minerals of the North Pennines*, published by the Friends of Killhope, 1992. p.31, *et seq.* Something your Editor should have remembered as I have a copy in my collection.

Man Engines

I have been in touch with a German engineer, Dr. Thomas Krassmann, who has compiled a provisional list of all known man-engines, in the Harz Mountains, in Cornwall, and elsewhere. He says that in the German Mining Museum at Bochum there is a replica of the monument at Silkstone to the children killed in the terrible accident there, with a caption which he has translated as follows:

In the afternoon of the 4th July 1838 the children workers of Silkstone coalmine had already worked for a nine hour shift when there was a sudden order to return immediately to the surface. Apparently thinking a mine fire caused this order, the children did not wait until *the defunct steam powered man engine* [my italics] was working again, but tried to escape by using the ladders in the air-shaft.... The words in italics are in the original German "ausgefallene dampfbetriebene Fahrkunst". Fahrkunst is the normal German term for a man-engine.

I find it difficult to believe that a man-engine had been installed at Silkstone by 1838: the man-engine was only invented by Herr Doerell in the Harz in 1833 and I find it surprising that news of the invention had reached Yorkshire by 1838. Furthermore, though there were man engines in German, French and Belgian collieries, I know of no other man engine in an English coal mine.

Can any member cast further light on this? I suspect that an English term (possibly "winding-engine") has been mistranslated by someone who wrote the caption at Bochum Museum.

Incidentally, Dr. Krassmann reports that at St. Andreasberg in the Harz, there is a man-engine in the Samson shaft which is still used twice a week for servicing a hydro-power plant.

Mining History Databases

David Tew

Do you use a database to record details of mines, photographs, etc? Recent discussion amongst enthusiasts suggests that a seminar on the subject would be welcome. Would anyone interested please contact Peter Cloughton at Blaenpant Morfil, Rosebush, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, SA66 7RE. Tel/Fax 01437 532578.

Damaged Mining Remains

Robert White, Archaeological Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park writes:

"Graham Dobbs makes a very valid point in his comments on damaged mining remains in the December newsletter. While the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has been active in consolidating and recording the remains of the lead industry within the National Park, only a few sites have received any attention. The Authority's consolidation work includes the Beldi Plate Holes (Low Level) dressing floor; the mills and associated features at the Grinton, Old Gang and Surrender lead smelt mill complexes; the Braithwaite smelt mill and chimney; and the Grassington Moor smelt mill and flue. Pre-consolidation surveys include the Keld Side smelt mill; the Yarnbury dressing floor and the principal sites in Gunnerside Gill. Last year topographical and geophysical surveys were carried out on a series of bale smelting sites on Fremington Edge. In addition the National Park has provided funds for historical research on the mills along Old Gang Beck and on the mining industry in Gunnerside Gill. As part of English Heritage's Historic Landscapes initiative we commissioned Mike Gill to map the Lead Mining Affected Landscape of the Yorkshire Dales. The Authority has also given grants towards the publication of three British Mining volumes, Grinton, Arkengarthdale and Wharfedale. We have also given grants to individuals and groups wishing to carry out repairs to a wide range of man-made features through our Local Historical Features Scheme.

Over £197,000, excluding staff time and materials, was spent on the lead industry between 1987 and 1996, funded through the National Park's Archaeological Conservation budget. This includes grants of £69,000 from English Heritage. This accounts for a major part of the National Park's total expenditure on archaeology even though the lead industry, important though it undoubtedly is, forms only a small part of the archaeological resource of the Yorkshire Dales. The archaeological data base for the National Park includes over 22,000 records of sites. These range from caves with evidence of human activity over 10,000 years ago to Royal Observation Corps Posts dating from the Cold War of the 1950's.

The concentration on the lead industry is in part due to the fact that the remains of the industry are at present suffering from a rapid decay rate. All man-made structures decay after they cease to be maintained. The decay rate is at its most rapid in the decades after abandonment as roofing materials are robbed, timbers rot and walls collapse. Gradually the decay rate declines and, if land use and climatic conditions remain the same, monuments reach a degree of stability. While most prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological sites in the Yorkshire Dales are now relatively stable few remains of the lead industry have reached this stage. Perhaps only shaft mounds from medieval and early post-medieval phases of the industry can be considered stable.

Relatively few industrial remains currently receive any statutory protection although the results of English Heritage's Monuments Protection programme are beginning to work through the Department of National Heritage. The formally protected area at Grinton How Mill has been extended to include the two earth dams. The first new scheduling in the National Park is the Stonesdale complex. Most remains of the lead industry, however, will not be identified as being of national importance. While we all have favourite sites I have attempted to concentrate the Authority's resources onto sites which I think would rank highly in most people's lists and onto sites where statutory designations and sympathetic landowners means that progress can be made at reasonable cost. Most sites remain at some risk through still being perceived as industrial eyesores, as sources of building and road materials or just through vandalism and natural decay. Some areas also have valid planning permissions for the reprocessing of old spoil heaps although at present this appears to be an uneconomic activity.

I hope that the National Park Authority, which becomes an independent, free-standing, organisation in April 1997, will continue to invest in the conservation of the archaeological resource of the Dales. I also hope that the lead industry will continue to receive a high priority.

I am however aware that the Authority's knowledge of the mining remains of the Dales is limited and that, as the saga of Grovebeck mine demonstrates, most of the information about lead industry sites that we do have is based on documentary or aerial photographic sources. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive set of descriptions, supported by photographs, of the current state of buildings and structures associated with the industry and for information on underground sites.

A couple of members have kindly completed the Association for Industrial Archaeology IRIS forms (Index Records of Industrial Sites) for some lead industry sites. I would be delighted to hear from other members who spend time in the Yorkshire Dales visiting industrial sites who can provide detailed descriptions, especially if they would be prepared to complete standard forms describing the remains of the industry or indeed other industrial remains. We know even less about the coal mining and stone extraction industries! This isn't just a sterile exercise in data collection. I have already been able to raise the profile of one site, which was brought to my attention by Ian Spensely with a completed IRIS form, with the landowner and expect to be commissioning detailed recording and consolidation work here later this year.

Graham mentions some specific sites in his letter. We have had some discussion about the bridge to Victoria level with the landowner but unfortunately this bridge does not carry a definitive public right of way. Repairs to carry the convoys of 4WD vehicles used in grouse shooting would cost in the order of £20,000. I do not think that this would be an effective use of archaeological resources - it would commit nearly all of the current 1997/98 archaeology budget - but I am trying to see whether we can include it in the programme of works associated with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Project and get the bridge dedicated as a public right of way. I was unaware of the removal of building materials from the Danby Level area or of the bridge collapse by Prys Mine although the latter is unfortunately outside the National Park and thus we are unable to intervene. Level House is associated with the family of a former colleague but is it of sufficient historical or technical interest, or seen by sufficient members of the public, to warrant consolidation? Inevitably consolidation would change its present character. I would be interested to hear member's views on whether decaying industrial sites should be monumentalised and indeed to learn of any sites which members feel are important where consolidation might be appropriate if resources become available."

Robert White, Archaeological Conservation Officer, Yorkshire Dales National Park, Yorebridge House, Bainbridge, DL6 2QT 01969 650456.

Old Gang Mine

Anyone planning to visit the Old gang mine in Swaledale via Hard Level may find it blocked. The first air shaft (Victoria Hopper) has recently moved and is very unstable. It is planned to carry out repairs during January, but until these are completed, the area is best avoided.

The only other present access to this side of the mine is via the very wet route through the Black Cross-Cut from the foot of Brandy Bottle Incline, which includes a section 150 yards long which is only 5 feet high and is flooded to within two inches of the roof. If anyone requires further details please contact Martin Roe at 165 Wellington Street, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD3 3EP. Tel: 01484 461975.

Mining Tours 1997

In addition to the programme given in the December newsletter, Atalaya tours plan tours to Andalucia and Southern Spain from 19 to 29 April and the mines of Western Britain from 30 August to 9 September. Further details from Atalaya Tours Ltd. Ceinionfa, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HR. Tel/Fax: 01970 828989.

Nenthead-Weardale Underground Connections

There are many underground connections in the Nenthead area by which, theoretically, a miner could enter a mine in one part of the orefield and come out to day in another part of it. Unfortunately no connection was ever made between Cumberland and County Durham, so the assertion by Whellan is incorrect.

Dunham¹ considers Middlecleugh 2nd Sun Vein to be Killhopehead Vein, but it could also be Longcleugh 2nd Sun Vein (not mentioned by Dunham), or even Longcleugh vein itself. In any case, no drivage was made on the first and latter veins more than 230 metres east of Smallcleugh Cross Vein². So, it has never been possible to go underground from Cumberland to Weardale.

However, other underground connections have been made and I would suggest that Whellan was confused by one or other of these. The most likely one is between Rampgill Mine and Barneycraig Mine in West Allendale. This journey would involve travelling about 4500 metres, or 3 miles underground. This journey would, of course, take the miner from the London Lead Company's lease to that of the Blackett Beaumont mining ground, and since the latter company had extensive leases in Weardale it is possible that Whellan made the mistake that it was in fact possible to go from Nenthead to Weardale underground whereas it was only possible to go into West Allendale.

At the present time the entrance to Barneycraig Mine has almost collapsed and the alternative Coalcleugh entrance is bricked-up. Access from Rampgill mine will take you to the Norpex door, a barrier placed inside the mine just after the junction of Rampgill Cross Vein and Rampgill Vein. It is believed that the Norpex group have dug beyond their door for some 300 metres, but access seems to be restricted, so this cannot be confirmed. The Barneycraig Mine connected via the Williams vein to the Swinhope Horse Level in East Allendale, a distance of a further 4000 metres.

The Guddamgill Vein worked from the Broomsberry Horse Level also connected Nenthead to West Allendale. Here the connection was made via a long crosscut called the Dod Level. The author has travelled along the Dod Level in the early 1980s when the level became accessible from Scraithole Mine. Unfortunately, progress was stopped at the county boundary by a rise in the Great Limestone. The Dod Level itself is filled with large blocks of fallen shale and progress along it was very difficult.

Access from the Broomsberry end of the route is through deep water when the first fall on the Guddamgill Burn cross vein is reached, and it continues like this for a further 500 metres until it meets the Guddamgill Vein. Further progress is then blocked by a major fall about 50 metres from the junction. The master vein of this mine, the Brownley Hill Vein, does not connect to the Scraithole Mine, although it does cross into Northumberland where further progress is again blocked by a major fall. Even if this were to be dug through it would only lead to the Vielle Montagne Company's 1921 forehead.

Haggs Mine also connects the Nent Valley to part of East Allendale, but the way is blocked by major falls at the Northumberland boundary. Access to the East Allen Valley is via either the Wellhope shaft or an internal shaft which should lead up to the Wellhope Low Level, but again the entrance to this is blocked. There are no other cross-county underground routes north of Haggs Mine.

The only other underground route which goes from one valley to another is the route from Capelcleugh Horse Level to Browngill Level, a distance of 3000 metres as the crow flies, but in excess of 4500 metres by the circuitous underground route. At present, Capelcleugh Level is open to Capelcleugh Shaft on Browngill vein and with a little digging accessed the Vielle Montagne Company's forehead some 200 metres further on. Browngill Level itself is blocked some 200 metres in and despite having fairly extensive digging carried out, this blockage is causing water to back up at Capelcleugh Shaft, hence Browngill Level cannot be accessed from it.

Finally, mention must be made of one of the longest underground trips in the north of England and possibly in the UK. This is the trip from Capelcleugh Mine to Haggs Mine via Smallcleugh,

Rampgill, Scaleburn and Brownley Hill Mines. This route was suggested by the author to the secretary of the West Cumberland Mines Research Society in August, 1991. The trip was subsequently carried out by two Weardale men on 10 November, 1991³.

For those who do not know it, the way is as follows:

The entrance is on the west side of the Nent, close to the car park. This is Capelcleugh Low Level, which begins as a cross-cut and then follows Brigal Burn Vein to the internal incline, at the end of which, the Black Ashgill cross-cut leads to Black Ashgill Cross Vein. Further south, Capelcleugh Vein is reached and continuing further leads to a ladder rise on Middlecleugh Sun Vein where old wooden ladders (at least 100 years old) ascend to the Smallcleugh Random on the same vein. Continue north-east until Smallcleugh Cross Vein is reached and on towards the entrance where Proud's Sump is met. A drop down here (30m) leads to Proud's Sump Flat and a further 4 metre drop leads into the level on Smallcleugh Cross Vein at the Rampgill Horse Level Random. Continuing north along here, pass Rampgill Vein and take the next right turn which is Scaleburn Vein. Continue along here to some stone steps. Ascend these and look for a left turn. This is Scaleburn Cross Vein. Go along here until you meet a sump split in two steps which leads down a further 30 metres to the Brownley Hill Random on the Cross Vein. Continue north-west down here until the Guddamgill Burn Cross level is reached. Further down, the Broomsberry Horse Level head is passed and onto the Wellgill Cross Vein. Going north-west leads to a severe right turn in the passage where a well hidden sump gives access to Haggs Level Random on the same vein. Eventually, Nentsberry Haggs vein itself is reached and then daylight. **Be warned, however that this is a trip suitable for only the most experienced.**

References.

1. The Geology of the Northern Pennine Orefield Vol. 1990 p.146.
2. J. Lawson - Personal explorations.
3. West Cumbria Mines Research Group Journal. No. 15 p.8. 1994.

John Lawson

South Crofty Mine

An unfortunate side effect of the recent strength of sterling in the international money market has caused a cash crisis at Cornwall's last working tin mine. Tin is always priced in dollars and the growing strength of the pound against the dollar has meant that the price per tonne has dropped from £4,400 to £3,600 recently. The managing director, Kevin Ross, stated that 32 of the 310 mining jobs had to go as from 21 November, 1996 in an attempt to balance the books and reduce the short-term costs. Management and workers at South Crofty hope that the lay-offs will only be temporary as they are convinced that the mine still has a future. They believe that the price will increase. When this happens, they hope to re-employ workers.

The collapse in the tin cartel, almost ten years ago, led to mining being suspended at South Crofty with flooding of the underground workings. It re-opened three years after the initial closure but it nearly closed again two years ago and was only saved from permanent closure by the public's faith in buying up a portion of the share issue, which threw a lifeline to the ailing company.

The company is now Canadian owned. Mr. Ross said the redundancies would allow the mine to operate at a break even figure of £3,600 because no-one anticipated that the pound would become so strong with tin still very much price dependant. It is thought that the tin market is undervalued and that there is a deficit in supplies with world stocks beginning to fall. There are fundamental economic reasons to believe that the mine will rise again and that the mining industry, which was once responsible for more than a third of all jobs in Cornwall in Victorian times will continue into the 21st century, continuing a tradition which stretches back for almost 4,000 years.

W. A. R. Wright

Nenthead

Roger Bade writes:

"I wish to apologise to the Directors of the North Pennine Heritage Trust for my suggestion in the December, 1996 newsletter that there were no prominent mine historians on the list of the North Pennines Heritage Trust. I now know this not to be the case, and I have caused distress to a number of North Pennines Heritage Trust directors, who are long standing members of the Northern Mine Research Society, by making those comments. These people have committed much time and effort over the past twenty five years, in first gaining access to the underground splendours of Nenthead and Alston Moor and have fought, and continue to fight, to maintain this access.

When I wrote my original comments in the newsletter I was also unaware of two important appointments to the board of the North Pennines Heritage Trust, both of prominent mine historians. Arthur Roberts is co-author with Arthur Raistrick of the *Life and Work of the Northern Lead Miner*, while Jake Almond, who I first met at Killhope on a Royal School of Mines Association trip that I had organised, wrote *The Nenthead and Tynedale Lead and Zinc Co. Ltd. 1882-98*, in the NMRS Memoirs in 1971.

I think that while continued underground access at Nenthead is not guaranteed, there are a number of active NMRS members who will continue to influence events as North Pennine Heritage Trust directors."

There was an outbreak of messenger killing over this issue. I would firstly draw attention to the disclaimer on the last page of the newsletter. Secondly, whilst I am delighted to receive copy for the newsletter in response to published pieces, either by mail, fax or Email, long phone calls to me complaining about newsletter articles benefit nobody but BT or Mercury. - Ed.

Everything Must Go

Bill Mudie sends greetings to all who remember him. At 63, Bill decided he was too old for going down wet holes and so has taken up sky-diving! He says that conditions are a lot cleaner up at ten thousand feet and has recently qualified at category 8.

He now wishes to sell his underground gear and is open to offers. The battery no longer holds its charge, but everything else is in very good condition - suits, helmets, ammo-boxes, belt, size 10 caving boots, wet socks, knee pads, battery charger plus various bits and pieces. Contact Bill at 29, Dovewells Drive, Brechin, Angus, DD9 6BW. Tel: 01365 625454.

Pikedaw Calamine Caverns

Steve Warren has made several visits over the past three or four years to gather information for Jack Myers to finalise a paper that appeared in *British Mining* recently on the activities of the miners. One interesting feature which came to light was that the original entry was by a small shaft leading into a low natural passage. This had been enlarged by drilling and blasting from the inner end, evidence coming from the disposition of shot-holes. Alan Speight and his colleagues of YSS have now dug through the choked passage and got into the old shaft. They hope to radio-locate the shaft on the surface and possibly even open it up to add support to Jack's theories.

From WRPC Newsletter, Vol. 15 No. 2. (May, 1996) pp. 2-3.

Society Library

Members are reminded that the library often has copies of specialist books, leaflets, etc. which are difficult to get elsewhere. Most items may be borrowed for the price of two postages (at the most economical rate). SAE will get you the latest library list. Contact Eleanor Greenough, 22, Elmhirst Road, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancashire, FY8 3JH.

NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER - 22nd MARCH, 1997

Menu

Cream of Mushroom Soup (1)
Broccoli and Hazelnut Crêpe (2)
Chicken Liver Paté and Melba Toast (3)
Wensleydale Cheese and Leek Tartlets with Watercress Sauce (4)

Steak, Kidney and Mushroom Pie (5)
Roast Topside of Beef with Yorkshire Pudding (6)
Poached Fillet of Wild Salmon with Hollandaise Sauce (7)

Crème Caramel
Ice Cream Selection
Spotted Dick with Custard
Lemon and Lime Cheesecake with Lemon Curd

Coffee

Please enter the number of your selection on the order form



THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY Booking Form - Annual Dinner - 22nd March, 1997.

Please book ___ place(s) at £12.50 per person.

I enclose a cheque for £_____ payable to NMRS.

Name _____ Tel: _____

Address _____

Please indicate your
choices using the Starter _____ Main
numbers on the menu Course _____

Please return this form by 8th March 1997, to: Clive Torrens, Jubilee House,
Preston under Scar, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 4AH.

South Crofty Miners Complete Water Link Tunnel

A massive tunnel, bored beneath an Exmoor hillside to carry water to one of the region's biggest reservoirs was completed on 31 December, 1996 by a group of Cornish miners from the South Crofty Mine. The miners saw daylight at the end of the half-mile long tunnel marking an important milestone in one of the West Country's most ambitious civil engineering projects.

The 20 strong team from South Crofty Mine created an almost square 2.4 metre tunnel. Their work won praise from South West Water, noting their dedication and impressive skills. The tunnel, the first of its kind in the South West, will carry a pipeline from the River Exe to Wimbleball Reservoir as part of a £6 million scheme to ensure that supplies to customers over a large area of east and central Devon. It was bored under Haddon Hill to avoid pipeline works disturbing a site of special scientific interest in the Exmoor National Park.

The proposed storage scheme involves taking water from the Exe at times of peak flow in the winter and transferring it through the tunnel to Wimbleball to help ensure that reservoir levels are maintained during periods of peak demand in the dry summer months and help to conserve water which would otherwise flow out to sea.

W. A. R. Wright

Finally

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 May newsletter by 19th April, 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 normally be checked by the Newsletter Editor for validity. Neither the Society, its Officers nor the Newsletter Editor accept responsibility for the content of articles submitted by individual members or groups.

1997 Subscriptions were Due on 1st January

If you have not yet paid your 1997 subscription, please send it to the Treasurer, Colin Hindle, as soon as possible. The society really values your membership. A renewal form and deed of covenant were attached to the December, 1996 newsletter. If you pay UK income tax please complete a deed of covenant form. Although it is for four years, it doesn't matter if you fill one in every year. The Society derives a lot of benefit from reclaimed tax and it costs you nothing extra.

If you have paid your subs but have not received a membership card within 28 days, please contact Colin at 19, Durham Street, Langley Park, Co. Durham, DH7 9YJ. Tel: 0191 373 3740.