

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 1998

Diary Dates

14th/ 15th March 1998. Mining in the Yorkshire Dales (Course Co-ordinator. Michael Gill).
Weekend School, Bradford University. See page 6 for full details.

28th March, 1998. Annual General Meeting and Dinner.

After the success of the 1997 AGM and Dinner it has been decided to follow the same formula for 1998. Once again it's going to be at Yorkshire dinner time; 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The venue will also be the same as last year, The Wensleydale Heifer at West Witton (NGR SE 056 884). Tel: 01969 622322. The AGM will start at 12 noon and dinner will be at 14.00. Cost will be £14.00 per person. A menu and booking form are enclosed. The Wensleydale Heifer offers accommodation, and other accommodation is available at Ivydene, West Witton (B&B). Tel: 01969 622785, and Chantry Caravan Park. Tel: 01969 622372.

29th March, 1998. Wensleydale.

Meet at 10.30 at Wensley Church, NGR SE 092 896. Leader: Clive Torrens.

19th April, 1998. New Road Community Centre, Earby.

The Earby Mines Research Group presents "Tales from the Yorkshire Dales Mines", an illustrated talk, with slides and video, by local mining engineer, Dave Carlisle. Admission by ticket only - £2.50 each (£3.00 on the door) includes Pie & Pea Supper and Free Raffle. Begins at 19.30.

26th April, 1998. Ingleton Coalfield.

Meet 10.30 at NGR SD 687 722. Address. 1, Beech Terrace, Tatterthorne Lane, (lane is next to gable of the Mason's Arms, A65, Ingleton). Morning, surface walk - easy. Afternoon, surface walk - easier. Meal stop at the Bridge Inn, Wennington before the visit to Clintsfield Colliery.

This the third surface meet at Ingleton and takes in: The New Winnings Pit (1830-76) and the House built by the colliery manager, Joseph Hunter; the workings of the Old Ingleton Colliery sites, Richard, Grove and Nellie Pits, (1870-1914) Moorgarth Pits (1828-90), Engine and Bye Pits, New Ingleton Colliery, (1912-40), Enter Farm and Pit, (1829) and Beech Terrace, known locally as Brick Row, miners cottages (1850). Directions will be given to the Bridge Inn, Wennington, a four mile car journey, for lunch and a pint, not provided for by Bernie or John!

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Clintfield Colliery, off Old Moor Road, Wennington, (SD 629 698), has changed ownership. Also the site is being viewed by a Royal Commission. Closed after 1845, due to market competition in the Ingleton area, this finely preserved Cornish type engine house stands on excellent grounds and gives distant views. A strong word of warning about our visit. Visits are severely limited with regards to the numbers in the party and vehicles taken to the farm. Rules on the day will have to be followed. Leaders: Bernard Bond & John Bentley, Tel: 015242 41857 (after 18.00).

15th - 17th May 1998. NAMHO Field Meeting 98.

The Friends of Killhope and the North Pennines Heritage Trust will jointly host this event which will be based at Nenthead. A variety of surface and underground field trips are proposed.

Surface field trips: Cowshill and Coptcleugh, Allenheads Mine and village, mines in the Rookhope valley, Rotherhope Fell Mine and mining and geology of the Nent valley. Underground trips: Browney Hill Mine, Rampgill horse gin, Brewery Shaft winch, Killhope Mine, Tyne Bottom Mine, Capelcleugh to Rampgill, Smallcleugh Mine, Barhaugh Coal Pit, Rotherhope Fell Mine and Frazer's Hush Mine.

The field meet fee is £5.00 per person + £2.00 insurance for those without suitable cover. There will be a Saturday night social gathering in Nenthead village hall. The cost will be £5.00 per person. A selection of accommodation is available. For further information and booking forms contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DB.

6th June, 1998. Rossendale Collieries.

Leader: Clive Seal. Tel. 01434 382439. Meet at 10.30 in the Asda car park at Rawtenstall (near A.T.S.). NGR SD 811 225.

Keld Heads Mine

Since NMRS members visited the site in March, 1997, much progress has been made. Much of the site has been cleared of saplings and bushes and the buildings are now clearly visible. The engine bed has been uncovered and the site of the winding drum has been discovered.

A reconstructed working plan is presently being prepared by Derek King of Northallerton. Derek and Gordon, along with myself and others have spent many weekends on site. The dead tree which stood on the engine bed and perilously overhung the building was removed by a wagon and grab in November before the worst gales of winter.

Progress underground is slowly being made by a group of four of us every week. Ashbank Level, the lowest level open to day, was blocked by a fall. The water in the level behind the fall was lowered by seven feet in the summer. Progress was made for another three hundred yards, but after the first rise, the air was of a dubious nature. Since then, the situation has worsened. Attention has now been turned to Keld Heads main level. A fall sixty yards from day is passable but inbye from this point the level silts to the roof within forty yards, possibly due to it being used as a dumping ground for slurry in the 1960s. The first fall is nearly clear and we envisage gradually progressing along the level, digging out the silt to original floor level. Being so close to day, it is amazing how much muck four people and two barrows can shift in three hours each week.

On a more theoretical note, contact has been made with Roy Adlem, whose great grandfather, John Adlem, was Engineman at Keld Heads from 1875 to 1881. Some anecdotes and pictures have been obtained from him.

There is still much work to do and it is planned to hold an NMRS meet in the summer to arrange a further surface clean-up to include clearing out the old wheel pit. For further details ring Clive on 01969 624721

Clive Torrens

Northwich Salt Mines

There is concern that the town of Northwich in Cheshire may collapse into the cavernous salt mines beneath the town which were worked until 1928. A series of reports from consultant engineers have warned that the town will sink into the mines within thirteen years.

Disaster is imminent, say the reports, because the thin salt pillars left by the mining companies are crumbling. The pillars hold up three hundred feet of earth and hundreds of houses and businesses on the surface.

Vale Royal Borough Council says that it will cost £16 million to fill the total of around ninety mines with soda ash-concrete mix and make them safe, but nobody knows where the money will come from. English Partnerships, the government urban regeneration agency, has spent £500,000 on studies of the town's four main mines and says that it can pay only half the monitoring cost.

ICI, which owns a large chunk of the mines, said it would contribute to a monitoring exercise and offer "technical expertise", but made no commitment towards the cost of infilling the mines. The Government and its agencies are showing little interest. Their priorities lie elsewhere.

From *The Observer*, 18, January, 1998.

Tim Jeffcoat

Buckden Gavel

At the October meet at Buckden Gavel mine in Wharfedale a number of people asked both myself and Steve Mitchell what was the derivation of the name Gavel? We didn't know at the time, so I consulted Mike Gill and the English Dialect Dictionary, compiled by Joseph Wright, a Yorkshireman, who is usually a pretty reliable source for Yorkshire words and place names.

Mike Gill informs me that the whole of Buckden Pike on which the mine is situated was at one time known as Buckden Gavel and this leads to the most probable origin of the name, as "gavel" is a form of gable and had been used in Cumbria to describe a "*mountain with an end resembling the gable end of a house*". Therefore Gavel refers to the hill and not the mine. However in Derbyshire and the Forest of Dean it has been used to describe the process of "*freeing a mine by paying the customary duty*". As Mike notes in *The Wharfedale Mines*, BM49, customary mining laws were in use in this part of Upper Wharfedale until the late 18th century. As these laws had their origins in the ancient mining laws practised in places such as the Forest of Dean and the Derbyshire Dales could it be that the name does in fact refer to the mine, and was perhaps corrupted to mean the whole hill as a result of a mistake made by a surveyor or cartographer? This would not be the first such case, and it was almost common practice in the early days of the Ordnance Survey, as any one who has studied old maps will know. Finally there is another form of gavel worth mentioning. In Northumberland it has been used to describe "a strip of land". Could this be another link to customary mining law and refer to a Meer of ground?

Martin Roe

For Sale

Mike Moore has a complete set of Society publications from British Mining No.1 to No. 45 for sale. If anyone is interested please contact Mike at 35 Masons Place, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7JS. or telephone 01952 405105.

Junior Vice President

Now that she is Librarian, Sallie Bassham is standing down as Junior Vice President and Stephen Mitchell has been proposed in her place.

Yorkshire History Quarterly

Yorkshire History Quarterly is a journal for local history, archaeology, family history and heritage topics, dealing only with material relevant to the ancient County of Yorkshire's three ridings.

The journal is now seeking subscriptions for the third volume. Issues are in A4 format, 48 pages, containing a wide range of topics with illustrations. Its content is designed to appeal to a broad readership, experts and amateurs alike.

The journal exists to publish new works by new and established writers, articles that are often not considered suitable for the 'glossies' or the academic journals are always welcome. Phil Hudson, the editor, hopes to encourage students and local enthusiasts to write about the history of their local areas, villages, buildings, families, agriculture, old industries, mills etc. A booklet 'Writing for Yorkshire History' has been prepared as an aid to those wishing to contribute. If you are interested and need to discuss anything, do feel free to phone Phil on 01729 825773 anytime.

Recent issues have included articles on Pocklington; Huddersfield, Ingleton Mills; Flamborough Head; Wombwell; the ancient family of Wharncloffes; Wortley near Sheffield; Ribbleshead Station; Coverham Abbey and Middleham Castle; Monastic lands in NE Yorks; The Squire of Askrigg; Vintage Cycling; Graveslabs and Cross Fragments in the Wolds; Watermills at Ingleton; Turnpike Roads; New Hall, Hawnby; Quakers & the Burial Ground; Kirkby Overblow; Poll Tax of 1379; Yorkshire Genius; North East Monasteries and Saltmaking. The new editions will include items on industry; East Coast fishing industry; early town history; famous Yorkshire men and women and archaeological sites. All issues have occasional features on Landscapes, Family History, Places-Names, Places to visit. Regular book reviews, research and help pages, comments, letters and Local Society listings.

We also have a history bookshop, which is open most days, offering services to authors, publishers and readers. We stock new (mostly self-published works) and second-hand history books (sold on commission), a postal sales service and free listings in the quarterly journals. Write or call in for details. desktop publishing to camera ready stage, and printing quotes.

If you wish to open an annual subscription to Yorkshire History Quarterly please send £12.50 (includes p&p). Cheques should be made payable to Yorkshire History. Send to Hudson History, Procter House, Kirkgate, Settle, North Yorkshire, BD24 9DZ. The Vol.3 No.3 will be available in early February 1998.

Society Officers

President

Mike Gill, 01535 635388
38, Main Street,
Sutton-in-Craven,
KEIGHLEY,
West Yorkshire,
BD20 7HD.

Secretary

Clive Torrens, 01969 624721
Jubilee House,
Preston-under-Scar,
LEYBURN,
North Yorkshire,
DL8 4AH

Treasurer	Colin Hindle, 19, Durham Street, LANGLEY PARK, Co. Durham, DH7 9YJ.	0191 373 3740
Editor	Hazel Mary Martell, 38, Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven, KEIGHLEY, West Yorkshire, BD20 7HD.	01535 635388
Newsletter Editor	Keith Nolan, West End Cottage, Woodhall, South Duffield, SELBY, North Yorkshire, YO8 7TG.	01757 638503
Librarian	Sallie Bassham, 4, Pen-y-Ghent View, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, SETTLE, North Yorkshire, BD24 0HE	01729 860446
Recorder	Mike Gill, 38, Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven, KEIGHLEY, West Yorkshire, BD20 7HD.	01535 635388

The official address of the Society is 38, Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven, KEIGHLEY, West Yorkshire, BD20 7HD. The Society is a registered charity, No. 326704.

Weekend School

A weekend school will be held on Sturday, 14th March, in D4 Lecture Theatre, Richmond Building, Bradford University, followed by a field trip on Sunday.

Mineral extraction has been second only to agriculture in its impact on Dales landscapes and settlement patterns. It includes coal, ironstone and stone as well as the better known lead mining. Work by the late Arthur Raistrick and Robert Clough formed a broad basis from which further, much more detailed work has developed. This has led to the revision or abandonment of many earlier interpretations. Today's series of lectures will look at some of this work in more detail.

Saturday programme

09.45 Arrival and Registration

10.00 Introduction

10.00 Medieval Mining: A New Perspective - Stephen Moorhouse

11.00 Coffee

11.15 Lead Mining and Ore Dressing - Michael Gill

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Lead Smelting and the Market - Michael Gill

14.15 Stone Industry in Upper Nidderdale - Geoffrey Blacker

15.15 Tea

15.30 Mining Populations - Hazel Martell

16.15 Summary and Close

Saturday fee: £19 full fee, with reduced fee of £15 for those receiving State/occupational pension and members of Bradford University staff, £13 for claimants and students (includes tuition fee, refreshments and buffet lunch)

Sunday visits: Set price of £10.00 per person, to be added to the above fee, (includes tuition fee and guided walks).

(Map of meeting point will be sent out to you) Two field trips will be made to visit sites which illustrate the Saturday lectures. Transport - your own individual cars. Sturdy footwear & warm waterproof clothing essential plus packed lunch & warm drinks. 10.00 - Grassington Lead Mines - (Meet on the road immediately beyond Yarnbury (SE016659) 12.30 lunch break. 13.30 Medieval lead and iron working sites in upper Wharfedale and Wensleydale (exact locations to be confirmed on the day).

You may book for the Saturday day school only, or for the full weekend, but as places are limited, we cannot take bookings for the Sunday walks programme only. To enrol on the course, Mining in the Yorkshire Dales (code number: S901/25) please contact: Bradford University, Continuing Education, 2 Claremont, Bradford, BD7 1BQ Telephone 01274 235363.

South Crofty RIP

Members will no doubt have heard the news of the imminent closure of South Crofty Mine, bringing to an end an era of Cornish Mining together with the loss of 275 jobs. Tin mining has been carried on in Cornwall for over 2500 years and at its height employed some 30,000 people. South Crofty itself has been active for more than 400 years. In 1994 the mine was rescued from closure when thousands of local people bought shares in it.

Books

A History of South Crofty Mine - J. A. Buckley

The book describes the history of South Crofty from before 1710, covering on an almost yearly basis the changes of name, the discovery and mining of different lodes, and the development of mining, pumping and milling techniques. It is impressive that this mine has been more or less continually worked, first for copper and then for tin, over this period of time. It never seemed to make a fortune for anyone except for a few years in the 1960s and 1970s. It seems that it has now reached the end of the line.

The book's yearly record of progress is a little repetitive, but I think it is more successful than those books which jump from subject to subject and period to period. There are a couple of typographical errors, and I would have preferred a few more plans and sections of the underground workings to place the various shafts and lodes mentioned more in context.

Nevertheless, this is a useful addition to any collection, particularly if one did not buy it first time round. Tor Mark Press inform me that Cyril Noall's *Botallack* is to be reprinted very soon.

The book is available from Tor Mark Press, United Downs Industrial Estate, St. Day, Redruth, Cornwall, TR16 5HY. It costs £14.99 in paperback or £18.99 in hardback + postage.

Roger Bade

A List of Mines in North Devon and West Somerset (2nd edition) - Peter Claughton.

A new edition of this booklet has given an opportunity to introduce this publication to those who may have missed this veritable "mine" of interesting information on this somewhat neglected subject, the first time round.

Peter Claughton, a noted expert in this field of research, has assembled a mass of fascinating facts and figures to produce a concise, well written work of reference whose aims are, in Peter's words "to provide the reader with a brief history plus details of surviving features on all known mines, being in a sense, a halfway house, not a full history, but not just a list of sites". He has, I feel, succeeded admirably in his objective and I found it a delight to just dip in at will and pluck out useful nuggets of detailed information.

The booklet is of A4 format of 30 pages and consists of a brief introduction and a bibliography followed by the main body of the work listing 180 sites by parishes, with an identifying number for future reference. Two further sections complete the text, section 3 being an index of mine names/company names, the parish in which the site was found and, finally, the identity number. Section 4 is an index of the mines by NGR with appropriate parish and identity number for easy reference. A small criticism is the lack of a map showing the location of the mines, which would be helpful to those who struggle with map references, but with so many (180) to be placed in a small area, this may have caused confusion. This should not, however, deter anyone from purchasing this gem of a publication and Peter needs to be congratulated in his efforts, which proves that you do not always need a massive backup team to produce an excellent piece of reference work.

The book is available for £3.50, post free from Tony Oldham, Rhychydwr, Crymych, Pembrokeshire, SA41 3RB. Tel/Fax 01239 831371.

HSE Archives

W. A. R. Wright

The historical archives of the Health and Safety Executive have been registered with the Public Records Library. The archive contains documents and books of historical importance on the mining industry, some dating back to the early 19th century. Access can be arranged through: The Librarian, HSE Library, Broad Lane, Sheffield, S3 7HQ.

NAMHO Newsletter

Dyer, Poynter & Gunther

Roger Bade writes;

"I found a reference in *A History of South Crofty Mine* which stated that both Penhellick Vean mine and Tregajorran mine were visited in about 1670 by a famous botanist and mineral collector called Richard Dyer of Oriel College, Oxford. He made a collection of interesting specimens from mines all over the country. Dyer's collection eventually came into the possession of John Poynter MA, who listed the specimens. (Rich. Dyer Matric, 1669, Fellow of Oriel, 1673) *Early Science in Oxford. Vol 3. pp479-9.* R. T. Gunther.

When I first read this passage I thought that this was all new to me and I immediately began to wonder what minerals Dyer collected from the Northern Pennines. If he collected from mines all over the country this could be an interesting record of mines operating in 1670. For Northern Pennines substitute Peak District, Yorkshire Dales or Caldbeck or whatever your area of interest.

After extensive searching through my collection, the only reference I have found to Dyer, Poynter or Gunther is in *Mines of Cornwall* by Embrey and Symes (British Museum, Natural History, 1987) where Gunther, 1925, *Early Science in Oxford*, Borlase collection Vol. 13 pp223, 239, 376 is listed in the reference section. No mention of Dyer nor Poynter is made in the text.

Perhaps more knowledgeable NMRS members who have studied Dyer, Poynter and Gunther in the past can put us in the picture as to which mines were operating in England and Wales in 1670".

Nenthead Bunkhouse

The Mill Cottage Bunkhouse at Nenthead, which is owned and operated by the North Pennines Heritage Trust has recently been opened in the village. It is an eighteenth century building set amidst a spectacular landscape.

All of the usual facilities are provided together with a washing machine and tumble drier. The bunkhouse is open all year except January. The costs are £8.00 for a bed only or £12.00 for bed and breakfast.

For further information and bookings contact Jill Fenwick, Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre, Nenthead, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3PD. Tel: 01434 382037. Fax: 01434 382294 Email: np.ht@virgin.net

1998 Subscriptions

NAMHO Newsletter

1998 Subscriptions were due on 1st January. If you have not yet paid, please let us have your 1998 subs as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support.

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 welcome - ASCII text format only please. Discs will normally be returned with the following newsletter unless otherwise requested. Contributions for the May newsletter by 25th April, please, to:

Keith Nolan, West End Cottage, Woodhall, South Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 7TG. Telephone or Fax: 01757 638503. E-mail: kjn100@york.ac.uk.

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