

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

MAY 1998

Diary Dates

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.

4th July, 1998. Milwr Tunnel.

Meet at 10.30 at NGR SJ 201 677. Compulsory insurance will be required which will cost £7.50 on the day. This charge includes six months membership of the Grosvenor Caving Club. Numbers will be limited. This will be a long and arduous trip and only those members who are both properly equipped and experienced will be taken underground. The meet duration will be until approximately 18.00. The trip is not technically difficult but will involve some 400 feet of fixed ladders (in 20 foot stages) and a few short electron ladders. If you are interested please contact Steve Mitchell on 01535 657090 who has further details of the meet location and accommodation available. **Do not turn up at the meet without ringing Steve Mitchell beforehand.**

18th July, 1998 Gillfield Level.

Meet at 11.00 at SE 155 649, by the Leeds University hut at the level; or 10.40 at Miners' Arms, Greenhow on B6265 at SE 116 642.

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Access is courtesy of Leeds University Mining Department staff, who are giving up a day for us. Only eleven people can go underground at one time, but the staff are willing to make two trips. (There are lots of surface remains to be seen too.) Please let Sallie Bassham know if you are coming (answering machine on 0161 295 4905), so she knows how many underground trips there will be. Bring your own hard hat and light if possible (although Leeds have a few). Wellies are suggested but there is no need to get very muddy - unless you want to.

12th & 13th September, 1998. Upper Swaledale Mines.

Leader: Clive Torrens. Tel. (01969) 624721. Meet at 10.30 at Keld village square, NGR SD 896 011. Underground.

26th September, 1998. Lord Carlisle's Collieries

Leader: Clive Seal. Tel. (01434) 382439. Meet at 10.30 at Alston Railway Station, NGR NY 716 468. Guided walk to principal sites.

18th October, 1998. (Sunday) Autumn Meeting. Ascot House Hotel, Harrogate.

General Meeting at 14.30 followed by a pot-pourri of members' slides and short talks and a chance to socialise. Savoury buffet to follow.

Meet Reports

28th March, 1998. Burtersett Stone Mine.

Following the AGM and Dinner at West Witton, five members, led by Clive Torrens drove the short distance to Keld Heads Mine. The engine house, chimney, shaft and level (in the process of excavation) were all inspected and Clive gave a brief explanation. The whistle-stop tour over, we then drove up the dale (just managing to keep Clive's car in sight!) to Burtersett. A short walk up the track to the obvious spoil heap brought us to Burtersett stone mine.

On entering the opening in the walled-up portal of Redgate Level the size of the haulage level was immediately apparent and we walked upright with several feet (yards in some places) of headroom for approximately 800 yards before our hard-hats came into contact with the roof shortly before the forehead of the haulage road was reached. (Recent graffiti reading E.M.R.G. was noted.)

We had noticed many cross-cut workings as we progressed along the haulage road and it was a through a tightish crawl along an initially unpromising cross-cut that Clive led us into a maze of linked pillar/stall type workings. This gave an indication of the considerable quantity of stone excavated prior to closure in the early twentieth century. Several photographic opportunities were provided by the stalactites which have developed, and on the floor of some of the galleries calcite flowstone, often stained with iron showed more than a passing resemblance to fried eggs.

After negotiating a route through these workings back to the haulage road, we exited the workings after about ninety minutes. It was an interesting alternative to metalliferous and coal mines previously visited.

Steve Mitchell

28th March, 1998. Annual General Meeting and Dinner

The Annual general meeting of the Society was held at 12.00 at the Wensleydale Heifer at West Witton. The minutes of previous meetings were agreed and the names of new applicants for membership were read to the meeting. The Officers of the society gave their reports for the year. Sallie Bassham was confirmed as Librarian and Steve Mitchell was welcomed onto the committee to fill the vacant post of Junior Vice-President.

The meeting closed in time for a preprandial drink and at 14.00 eighteen members sat down to an excellent meal. Thanks are once again due to our secretary, Clive Torrens, for organising a most enjoyable event.

29th March, 1998. Apedale Mines.

Five NMRS Members had gathered at Wensley church at 10.30 so we set off to our venue at Apedale, which is a high moorland valley behind Castle Bolton on the north side of Wensleydale.

Harkers Level was inspected first. It is open for 400 yards until the vein is reached at which point the level is blocked. We next viewed the site of Apedale and Bobscar smelt mill and walked over the hill to see the extensive remains of Bolton Park Mine. The wheel-pit and dressing floors are still fairly complete although underground access is restricted by a fall forty yards along No. 3 level.

Bobscar Mine and Virgin Mine were visited after a lunch stop. Virgin Level was entered and is open for 150 yards to a fall. We then traversed bog and heather back to the top of Apedale. The sites of Apedale Head and Juniper Levels were examined before we made our way down to Apedale shaft. The wheel-pit and buttress at the shaft collar are clearly visible, dated 1870.

A quiet stroll down the valley back to the cars followed and the cattle grid was reached by 17.00. All present enjoyed a day of exploring many previously unvisited mines and Dr. Whitaker's knowledge of moths certainly added to the days memories.

Clive Torrens



Underground in Burtsett Stone Mine - 28th March, 1998 - *Steve Mitchell*

Roachburn Pit Disaster

John Hunter emails from Wyoming: "I wonder if you can help with a question? I noticed a book review in the journal "International Mining & Minerals" of the book "January 28th, 1908 - The story of the Roachburn Pit disaster". I would like to get hold of a copy of this. The author is Alastair F. Robertson, published by Hundy Publications, Alston, printed by Total Postweigh Ltd, Garrigill, Cumbria, May 1997. Do you know the address of the publisher?" John's address is jhunter@trib.com If you do not have internet access please send the information to your newsletter editor and I will pass it on to John.

The Internet and Mining History

There is a rapidly growing number of mining history-related web sites which will interest members. The principal site is that hosted by Roger Burt at <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet> and it has many links to other sites throughout the world. There is also an email mining history discussion group, which can be joined by contacting mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk with the following message:- *join mining-history FIRST-NAME LAST NAME end*

More details of the above may be found at <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/>

From any PC which is linked to the Internet you can access almost all the university library catalogues in the world. There are two reasons why you might want to do this; first the search for books on a topic in a library which has books that your local library doesn't; and second to find a book in a library which you can visit. There are two interfaces that enable you to access these catalogues; the usual WWW browser Netscape, and a dumb terminal interface eXceed Telnet. You can save what you see on the screen in several ways. With Telnet click on *file: open capture file* and save everything that comes onto the screen into a file. With Netscape click on *file : save as*, it's best to save as plain text.

British Library OPAC catalogue

The British Library is a copyright library which means it has a copy of every book published in Britain (as well as many books published abroad). An online catalogue of books published since 1975 is available via Netscape at the Internet address <http://opac97.bl.uk>.

University Libraries

There are at least two routes to these. Probably the easiest is to use Netscape and go to <http://src.doc.ic.ac.uk/~uk-academic.html>. This is a listing of all UK universities on the web. Choose your university and then navigate your way to the library (look for information services, library, resources etc). Usually when you contact a library Netscape will open a Telnet screen for you to access the catalogue. Two libraries that are good for searching are Oxford (Bodleian) and Cambridge since both are copyright libraries. You can also find your way into other library catalogues via library OPACS's. This is a consolidated catalogue from several major research libraries to allow you to search for books not in your local library. You access it through the Internet. Start Netscape and click the open button, type <http://copac.ac.uk/copac>, and follow the instructions.

BIDS

Library catalogues enable you to find books, and periodical titles, but not individual articles in periodicals. BIDS (Bath Information & Data Service) consists of an index of journal articles from 1981 in all the major journals. BIDS also contains details of book reviews, and enables you to see who is cited in an article and find the articles which cite particular authors or articles. Again the way to BIDS is using the WWW at <http://bids.ac.uk>. You can search books either with the Telnet interface or a Netscape interface; Netscape is usually easier. BIDS offers several services, the one you want is the BIDS by ISI service. You will need the following username and password.

Username iex001 Password djdo4235

Case is important (and the fourth digit is the letter o). Choose the database you want, (e.g. Social Sciences) and then search for your articles. Look to see how many 'hits' you got and then display them in one of the forms shown. Remember you can save these (as described above) or by using the BIDS download facility. Although BIDS has most major journals it does not have many (any?) local history journals.

Historic Manuscripts Commision

Another useful site is <http://www.hmc.gov.uk> using the password *public*.

Mike Gill

M.O.L.E.S. Mining Weekend

The Society's seventh Annual General Meeting and Social was held once again at the Ullswater Hotel, Glenridding on Saturday March 7th. The day commenced for over a dozen members, led by V. Allison, with a trip underground into Greenside lead mine. This entailed a walk up the main Lucy Level, a distance of about a mile, to the head of Smith's Shaft where, during the working life of the mine, lead was hauled up from this point through the workings from nearly 1,500ft below. In 1991, the Society was given permission by the L.D.N.P. to open up the old mine in the interests of industrial archaeology. The party returned some six hours later, wet but exuberant and discussing their trip into the past.

The evening's events commenced with the opening address by Ian Tyler, the Society's chairman. As usual, this was a brief and lively report ending with the annual awards presentation: "Dead Mole, Meritous Mole and Supermole".

This was followed by a first class hot buffet, which even managed to fill our hearty explorers. From here on it was entertainment of the highest order, provided you are into mining, whether your interest be in coal, hardrock or quarrying and there was ample room for discussion. Numerous mine exploration videos were played revealing the epics of members, whilst others viewed the dozen or so photographic displays reflecting the Society's achievements over the last seven years. A further highlight was provided by member Clive Seal who sang numerous mining songs much to the delight of the 60 people in attendance. He sounded very much like Mike Harding...so he had better watch out!

The Sunday heralded the re-opening of The Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum, near Keswick. The day began with a guided walk through the old Threlkeld quarries of Klondike, Spion Kop and Bramcrag where the guides, Ian Hartland and Donald Angus informatively explained the history and topography of the area before returning the thirty odd windswept walkers back to the museum for a hot buffet. By now the numbers had swelled to well over a hundred and this included local quarrymen, miners, historians, writers and experts in geology and minerals, many having travelled from as far away as Belgium, London, Cornwall, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle.

The Museum was opened by Ian Tyler, who was also launching the reprint of his well known Greenside book, which describes the history of the famous lead mine and other neighbouring mines in the Ullswater Valley. The museum is still expanding and over the last year particularly, the quarry and geology room have been greatly enhanced. The shop likewise has been improved with more space created for mining and geology books. Outside on site, The Mine Experience, which is due to be completed by 1999, is now well under way thanks to the grant aid received from The Fells and Dales Leader 11 Project, based in Penrith.

Visitors were guided round and shown the delights of "Angus's Rise", "Tylers Trial" and "Tindal's Stope". When completed, the Mine Experience will reflect many aspects of Cumbria's mining and quarrying heritage from the early endeavours of the Elizabethan miners through to the present day. Due to the extreme ruggedness and wildness of the area, a further outside project is under way, the construction of a nature trail and again, the target date for this will be early 1999.

NAMHO Heritage Guide

The NAMHO Heritage Guide has been re-written, expanded and re-issued. It costs £5 a copy through NMRS (or any other NAMHO member) or £6 from good bookshops. The guide gives details of Mining 'Organisations' and Mining 'Museums'. It is very useful if you are holidaying away from home and want to know Show Caves and Mines or mining sites to visit. It also has information about local societies. If you want to buy a copy let me know (answering machine on 0161 295 4905) and I will make a bulk purchase. Also, say whether you want me to post your copy/copies to you, or if you want to collect it/them at an NMRS meet.

Sallie Bassham. NAMHO Representative

Mining Biographical Sketches

At the Annual Dinner on 28th March, Tony Fretwell mentioned to your newsletter Editor that he had a number of biographical profiles of people connected with mining. He wondered if it would be of interest to members if they appeared in the newsletter from time to time. I thought this was a good idea, and Tony subsequently sent me several biographical profiles. The first one is of Thomas Bickford.

WILLIAM BICKFORD (1774 - 1834)

A currier and inventor of the safety fuse, was baptised in Ashburton, Devon, on the 23rd January, 1774, the son of William and Mary Bickford. He was in business as a currier, dressing and colouring tanned leather, initially rather unsuccessfully in Truro, and later in Tuckingmill, near Camborne in Cornwall.

He was not involved in any way with the mining that was carried on in the surrounding area, but he was greatly affected by the frequent serious and often fatal accidents suffered by the miners through premature blasting explosions. Gunpowder had been in widespread use in Europe in mining and quarrying since the early seventeenth century, but two hundred years later the techniques available for detonating the charges were still very primitive. One of the commonest methods was simply to set fire to a 'train' of gunpowder leading to the charge itself, the length of the train corresponding roughly to the time delay before the charge exploded. A later method involved a kind of fuse of goose quills filled with gunpowder. Both methods were dangerously unreliable, even when (and it was not always the case) the greatest care was exercised by the shot-firers.

Bickford was determined to manufacture a safer type of fuse, and although he was no scientist he carried out a series of experiments involving many different combinations of materials, until, having nearly despaired of ever achieving his goal, he visited a friend in his ropewalk and suddenly hit on the idea of spinning a light rope or cord round a tightly packed central core of gunpowder. The idea was simple, but devising a machine for the manufacture of his 'safety fuse' was beyond Bickford himself, so he took into partnership Thomas Davey, a working miner with a talent for solving mechanical problems. The Bickford 'safety fuse', as patented in September 1831, consisted of two layers of flax yarn enclosing a central core of gunpowder, the whole being made watertight with varnish or tar. The resulting fuse was much more accurate and consistent in its timing, and had a much better resistance to water and the various kinds of treatment to which it was inevitably subjected in the mines. It raised the level of both safety and productivity and was therefore popular with both miners and management.

Bickford himself fell seriously ill before his fuse could be manufactured in any quantity, and it was only after his death in 1834 that a factory was established in Tuckingmill which continued to make various types of fuse, seldom departing very far from the original specifications, for almost 130 years. His family, along with those of his partner Davey and his son-in-law George Smith, were involved in the management of Bickford, Smith & Company up to the time of its final closure in 1961.

William Bickford probably married Susanna Burall in April 1802 at Illogan, Cornwall. They had two sons, baptized in Truro in 1808 and 1809, both called William (presumably the first son died). Bickford died in Tuckingmill and was buried there on 7th October 1834.

T.G. Tullock (Ed.) *The Rise and progress of the British Explosives Industry*, 1909; ICI Magazine, vol.xxxiv, September, 1956, p.239)

Tony Fretwell

Query Corner

From Wendy Nicholson: "I am an ecologist working in East Allendale, Northumberland, investigating plant species diversity in this area. I should like to pinpoint the source of mineral contamination which I have found in some of the vegetation here and would appreciate any information which can be given about the following local mining sites.

The Weardale Lead Company undertook exploration of certain mineral deposits during and after the war in this dale. Their activities, I believe, were based at Sipton Mill, near Allenheads. From here they treated ore from St. Peter's mine and Esp's vein for lead and possibly for fluorspar (Certainly British Steel were mining fluorspar at Allenheads between 1969 and 1981.) If anyone has particular knowledge of Sipton Mill during this period, and of the Four Fathoms, St. Peter's, Esp's or Smith's Veins, I should be delighted to hear from them.

I also need to know the history of the weir constructed over the East Allen beside the Black Bank Plantation, Sinderhope. I think this was constructed in the last century to drive mining machinery at Holmes Linn, further downstream. When it finally collapsed water levels in the river were altered and this would affect river flow and river bank." Will anyone with any information please contact Wendy at Black Bank House, Sinderhope, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 9SL. Telephone: 01434 685042?

From Justin Brooke: "I am assisting in compiling an archive on the open-cast coal workings at Wentworth in Yorkshire, just north of Rotherham. The operations between about 1943 and 1947 were some of the first in the country, and I would welcome photographs (which will be copied and returned), plans, descriptions and recollections of any kind. The areas worked were known as Swallow Section, Church Section, Sawmill Section, Doric Section and Mansion Section." Information please to Justin at Chymorvah Vean, Marazion, Cornwall, TR17 0DQ.

From D. P. Harris: "Does any member have or know of any information concerning the terms of the mining leases granted by Sir John Stanley of Alderley in Cheshire to the Alderley Edge Mining Company in 1857/59, or to the Alderley Copper Mines in 1909? If you can help please contact Mr. Harris at Whitebarn Lodge, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7AW. Tel: Alderley Edge 582201.

From Albyn Austin: "In the period between 1870 and 1920 much ore was shipped by boat to South Wales for smelting from ports such as Aberystwyth and Aberdovey. The ore seems to have been taken by cart to the nearest station and then by rail to the port. A photograph exists of a special wagon to carry lead ore built by the Gloucester Wagon Co. in 1871 for Mr. J. B. Balcombe of the Blaencaelan Lead Mines. The wagon is only about 1'-6" high at the eaves and 3'-0" at the peak of the roof. How was it loaded and unloaded, the ends being perhaps four or five feet from the hatch and the fixed roof so low? The load is given as 8 tons. Lead ore was also carried in old lime wagons. These were about ten feet by six feet, but with three foot high sides and peaked ends connected by a beam. A tarpaulin could be placed over the beam to keep the rain out and the dust in. This wagon was emptied by means of drop-down side doors. Both these wagons are illustrated in *Cambrian Railways Album* by C. C. Green (Ian Allan 1977). Apparently segregated tarpaulins were kept for lead ore traffic. These were not to be used for ordinary traffic. I have read somewhere that lead ore was transported in 56lb. bags made of linen inners protected by an outer hessian bag. Can anyone confirm this? In the 1930s Laporte Chemicals had a fleet of open goods wagons for the transport of barytes from their Shropshire and Pennine mines to Luton. The wagons were dark grey with 'B Laporte Ltd. Chemical Manufacturers Luton' painted in white on the sides." Has anyone any further information? If you can help please contact Albyn at: 28 Wordsworth Road, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 6UA.

Northern Mine Research Society - Summary of 1997 Accounts

Income		Expenditure	
1997 Subscriptions	£6248.50	Subs to other Societies	£58.00
Donations	351.13	Donations	10.00
1998 Subs in Advance	15.00	Annual Dinner	312.50
Tax refund	725.87	Autumn Meeting	130.00
Annual Dinner	312.50	Printing & Stationery	855.58
Autumn Meeting	104.00	Transfer to Publications a/c	5025.82
Publications	25.82	Insurance	41.00
Re-presented cheque	15.00	Newsletter Postage & Printing	306.72
Investment a/c interest	339.08	Librarian's expenses	1.70
		Returned Subs Cheques	30.00
Totals	£8136.90		£6771.32

Cash Flow Income - Expenditure = £1365.58

Membership Statistics - 1996

Category	1996	1997	Change
Full	400	404	+4
Family	54	53	-1
Overseas	10	9	-1
Honorary	5	5	0
Total Members	469	471	+2
Total Subs	£6189.00	£6248.50	+£59.50

NMRS Library

It seems that a number of members borrowing items from the NMRS Library do not really want a whole book, journal or Newsletter, but only a few pages. It would be cheaper for these borrowers to pay only for photocopying and letter post, rather than parcel post. Therefore, in addition to the existing loan scheme, a photocopying service will also be provided on a cost-to-the-Librarian basis. Photocopies will be provided at 5 pence for each A4 sheet. When using the library, please make clear whether you want a full-volume-loan or a photocopy, and for photocopies give author, title and page details of the item(s) to be copied.

Sallie Bassham (NMRS Librarian)

Northern Mine Research Society - Publications Account 1997

Income

Sales	£6431.14
General account	5025.82
Interest	101.20

Expenditure

Printing	£4779.09
Postage	622.49
Stationery	69.58

Totals **£11558.16**

£5471.16

Cash Flow Income - Expenditure = £6087.00

Account Reconciliation

Opening balance	£1185.51
Income	11588.16
Expenditure	-5471.16
Closing balance	£12743.67

Society Officers for 1997/98

The following were elected as Officers of the Society:

President	Mike Gill
Vice-President	Bob Burns
Junior Vice-President	Steve Mitchell
Secretary	Clive Torrens
Treasurer	Colin Hindle
Editor	Hazel Martell
Librarian	Sallie Bassham
Recorder	Mike Gill
Newsletter Editor	Keith Nolan

Obituary

The Society regrets to announce the death of Joseph Denis Jopson Wildridge. Joe, who was very active in the Society's early years and was President in 1969, died peacefully, aged 75, at the West Cumberland Hospital on 19th January. Mr and Mrs J.C. Wade attended the service at Distington Hall crematorium on 29th January 1998.

Books

Small Mines of South Wales Vol. 2 - A. J. Booth. 1997.

What is a railway society doing, publishing a mining book? Well, all these mines have one thing in common. They have a narrow gauge railway, or to be precise, a tramway. It might only be 100 yards long on the surface, but anoraks from all over the country have come, not to collect train numbers, but to measure and photograph these final remnants of the iron horse. The valleys of South Wales are famous for their coal. The well known deep mines are now all closed, with the exception of the privatised and re-opened Tower Colliery. However, the industry limps on though the number of licensed private coal mines still operating in the Principality, is now down to nineteen, compared to hundreds which operated in the heyday of the industry. In volume one (still available for £9.95) the author describes with illustrations 32 small mines, and this book now presents a further 34 mines, all with NGR description, type of coal, method of haulage, etc. Little is ever published about these small coal mines and all the information herein, such as mine histories, details of coal seams, track gauges, etc. has been gleaned by the time honoured method of gaffering. The author has talked to mine owners, workmen and local people and so this book is interspersed with many anecdotes. It is amusing to consider that whilst fox hunting is banned, horses are still used in the mines.

There is also an appendix listing all known mines of the period 1980 to 1997. These mines were full of character, as witness the book's 145 superb photographs and 34 site plans. A timely historical record. 112 pp. SB £15.00. (£17.50 post free).

The Forest of Dean in the Mining Journal and Other References - Tony Oldham. 1998.

One of my favourite pastimes is reading The Mining Journal. I have started at the beginning, Vol. 1. 1835, but being a slow reader, I have only got as far as 1851, although I have flittered through later journals as well. Using quantity as a yardstick, rather than quality I tend to rate each entry by length instead of content. Often, I have quoted verbatim, and if I remember quotes are enclosed in inverted commas. Col or column refers to the length, or part of the length of a page, about 16 inches. I have used the £ sign instead of the small letter L [cf. lamina] and tried to retain original punctuation. Three full stops, [thus ...] denotes a Mogadon attack or lack of interest and I have omitted a small or large chunk of text. This bibliography not only covers the Forest of Dean mines, but includes its mine workers, mine owners, the Mushets - the legendary iron smelters, and to a lesser extent the railways. This is not just a boring index but a pot-pourri of anecdotes, like that of the two miners who survived a 510 foot plunge down a shaft when the rope broke. How? Sorry, you will have to buy the book! SB 21 pp. illus. £3.00 post free.

The Slate Quarries of Pembrokeshire - Alun John Richards. 1998.

Having lived in what is now Pembrokeshire for the last 22 years, this is the book I have been waiting for. Reading it from cover to cover I was amazed at the number of sites I have yet to visit. The author is very thorough, I could not find any omissions. Naturally this book is much more detailed than his "Gazetteer of the Welsh Slate Industry" (1990) and includes some good historical accounts of some of the larger undertakings. It identifies and describes almost one hundred sites in Pembrokeshire, southern Cardiganshire and western Carmarthenshire. Underground working is rare in this area, but the numerous tunnels, drainage and trial levels, are all noted. 197 pp 21 photos, 13 maps. SB £5.50 or £6.00 post free.

All the above books are available from Tony Oldham, Rhychydwr, Crymych, Pembrokeshire, SA41 3RB. Tel/Fax: 01239 831371. Email; anne.oldham@virgin.net URL: <http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/~arb/speleo/guides.html>

Machinations in Coal Mining - Charles Round. 1996.

This is a fascinating autobiography of a man who left secondary school without any qualifications and started work at the at the age of 14 as an underground pony driver. By sheer hard work at night school and later technical college he qualified at an early age as a mining engineer and a manager. He soon progressed through general and area management posts to the highest area production and planning managerial posts. This book will appeal to a wide audience, both technical and non-technical, and will take its place in posterity as an invaluable and essential historical record of the evolution of the British mining industry from the pick and shovel, steam engine, belt driven era to the modern fully powered coal-cutting, road driving, roof-supporting, underground coal and personal transport systems with their vastly, improved productivity and safety.

The author is a brilliant engineer and throughout the book one is impressed by his ingenuity in designing or re-designing coal mining equipment. The constant drive to achieve a fully mechanised scenario increased production by over twenty times. Unfortunately this came too late to save the industry from the savage effects of the Thatcher government. The author is also a dazzling diplomat, well able to negotiate with top management or at shop floor level. The difficulties experienced in overcoming backward looking practices, "management by fear" and "small minds in big jobs" are vividly portrayed. In every position he was able to able increase productivity, only the stubborn Welsh miners thwarted him.

He describes many well known personalities and was on first name terms with Lord Robens. Some Board members proved to be difficult people to get on with and his "warts and all" vignettes of these folk will probably provide the lawyers with work for many years to come.

Finally the management of the NCB proved too much and he took early retirement at the age of 58. Following this he undertook mining consultancy work for a number of years with assignments emanating from within the UK to Spain and the USA. xi + 399 pp. 68photos, 15 figs, 4 plans, 3 charts. SB. Price £18.00. Available from The Archive Shop, 47-49 High Street, Lydney, Glos GL15 5DD. Tel 01594 844 776. Please add £3.40 for postage.

Tony Oldham

Out of the Pennines - Friends of Killhope

The second pot-pourri of papers on the Northern Pennines was published by the Friends of Killhope in the Spring of 1998. It is a well produced book, with plenty of clear photographs and figures, and covers the orefield from Teesdale northwards. It has something for everyone, with social and economic history, as well as straight-forward accounts of mines, mining and geology, and an interesting account of a walk in the Upper Nent Valley.

Many of the contributors are well known mining historians and geologists who have written widely on their subjects, whilst several newcomers introduce a different perspective to the area and its mineral-based economy. Their 15 papers are on topics ranging from Sir Kingsley Dunham writing on his work in the area, especially the Rookhope borehole, through to Westgarth Forster's rule on thickness continuity in strata; special minerals of the Northern Pennines; mining and quarrying in Teesdale; biographies of the Westgarth and Forster families and Lancelot Allgood and Mary Loraine; and the trading activities of Thomas Walton in Upper Weardale from 1833 to 1842.

The book is in A4 format, with 124 pp. 36 plates and 36 figs. Copies cost £9.00 and may be obtained from Killhope Lead Mining Centre, local bookshops or by post from: Brian Chambers, 18 Cheveley Walk, Belmont, Durham, DH1 2AU. Please add £2.50 for p&p.

Mike Gill

Second-Hand and Rare Mining Books

Already Britain's largest supplier of mining books, the Peak District Mining Museum is offering a new service, the selling of second-hand mining (and mining related) books. Only one of the same book will be accepted at a time, on sale or return. The books will be on display and if the response is sufficient a booklist will be issued periodically.

The price can be set by the vendor, though a lower price may be recommended after three months. The Museum will retain the right to refuse or return any book and invoices will not be accepted until after sale. A third of the sale price will go to assist in the running of the Museum, which is non-profit making and run by PDMHS members.

Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR (Telephone 01629-583834) is open every day for sales from 11.00 to 16.00 at least. A telephone call before arrival with books for sale would be appreciated, to avoid times when staff are especially busy.

A Respectable Trade

A Respectable Trade is based on the slave trade of Bristol in the eighteenth century¹. The author also reports "...with a few exceptions, such as gangs of black slaves labouring in the marble quarries of Dent in Yorkshire at the end of the eighteenth century, most British slavery was domestic²."

Is anything known of these quarries and the work of the black slaves? Why Dent? Was there a Bristol connection or perhaps through the tobacco trade at Whitehaven, or the export of gunpowder?

1. *A Respectable Trade*. Shown on BBC1 television in April 1998. Based on a novel by Philipa Gregory.

2. *The Times Magazine*. 12 November, 1994. The Slave Trade of Britain - Philipa Gregory.

R. H. Seaman

Minerals '98

Minerals '98 is a new website which has the support of a team of trade and industry associations and research organisations. The site will provide a constantly updated source of information covering both national and local events, educational resources and industry data. On the educational front the site will demonstrate the importance of minerals to our quality of life and will include a region-by-region guide to which minerals are available in different regions of the UK. Communication will be two-way and will include a discussion forum about minerals. The URL is <http://www.minerals98.com>

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 (.txt) or .tif format only please. Discs will normally be returned with the following newsletter unless otherwise requested. Contributions for the August newsletter by 25th July, please, to:

Keith Nolan, West End Cottage, Woodhall, South Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 6TG. Telephone or Fax: 01757 638503. E-mail: kjn100@york.ac.uk.

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