

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

FEBRUARY 1999

Diary Dates

27th March, 1999. Spring Meeting.

Annual General Meeting at 12 noon, followed by the Annual Dinner at 14.00. Both at the Kings Arms, Redmire, Wensleydale. NGR SE 045911. Menu and booking form are enclosed with this newsletter. After the Dinner, Clive Torrens will lead a meet at the Hurst Mines, Marrick. Meet at the Kings Arms at 16.00.

28th March, 1999.

Wensleydale. Leader: Clive Torrens. Tel. (01969) 624721. Meet at 10.30 at Wensley Church, NGR SE 092896.

17th April, 1999.

Rossendale/Rooley Moor. Leader: Clive Seal. Tel: 01434 382439. Mainly surface - at collieries and quarries. Meet at 10.30 in the Asda car park at Rawtenstall (near A.T.S). NGR SD 811225.

1st May, 1999. The Ghost of NAMHO '98. Swords, Candles & Old Boots.

An evening of mining related entertainment will be held at Nenthead Village Hall, Nenthead, Cumbria starting at 19.00. Refreshments will be provided and the bar will be open. Come as you are - wet suit, jeans or dinner jacket, but anyone wearing Victorian dress will add atmosphere to the evening. Places are limited, so book early. Write to Sheila Barker, The Rise, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DB. Closing date for bookings is 12th April, 1999.

15th May, 1999.

Keld Heads (Underground and surface working parties). Leader: Clive Torrens. Tel: (01969) 624721. Meet at 10.30 at Wensley Church, NGR SE 092896.

12th June, 1999.

Magpie Mine/Lathkilldale. Leader: Lynn Willies. Tel: (01629) 584322. Meet at 10.30 at Magpie Mine, NGR SK 173682. NB. Please park at SK 173677 on the Bakewell to Monyash Road. Surface at Magpie in the morning, followed by some underground in Mandale Sough and Lathkilldale. Walking - dryish and non-expert.

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12/13th June 1999.

PDMHS 40th anniversary celebrations. Monyash Village Hall.

Saturday programme.

10.00 Welcoming introduction The Chairman, Mrs. Evelyn Dixon

10.05 Formation of Society Founding Member, Dr. J. H. Rieuwerts

10.10 The Geological Scene in Derbyshire Dr. T. D. Ford

10.45 Tea/coffee break

11.00 Session Chairmen Dr. I. J. Brown, Dr. T. D. Ford and Mr. A. Mutter

The Seven Ages of Derbyshire Mining

11.05 PreRoman and Roman Mining Dr. J. Barnatt, Peak Park Authority

11.40 Mediaeval mining and smelting Dr. D. Kiernan

12.15 17th Century mining and technology Dr. J. H. Rieuwerts

12.50 Lunch

14.15 Session Chairmen, Dr. J. H. Rieuwerts, Mr. W. H. Parker and Mr. D. Williams

14.20 18th and 19th Century mining Dr. L. Willies

14.55 Tea break

15.15 20th century mining: Millclose Mine Mr. J. K. Gregory

15.50 Spar mining and other minerals Mr. N. Hardie, Laporte Chem.

16.25 Concluding remarks and close of meeting

19.00 Start of Pie and Pea Supper, including informal slide show of PDMHS members and activities presented by Harry Parker. A bar will be available at lunch time and after 17.00 on Saturday. Sandwiches may be ordered for Saturday lunch.

Sunday programme. Monyash Village Hall is available for meeting point from 9.00

Underground visits: Hillocks Mine, Knotlow, Black Marble, Chert

Surface Walk: The Mines of Lathkill Dale, leader Dr. Rieuwerts

24th July, 1999.

Grassington Moor (Surface walk). Leader: Sallie Bassham. Tel: (0161) 2954905. Meet at 11.00 at Yarnbury. NGR SE 015659.

4th September, 1999.

Nenthead. Leader: Steve Mitchell. Tel. (01535) 657090. Meet at 10.30 at Car Park, NGR NY 781437. Underground in Rampgill and Smallcleugh Mines.

23rd September, 1999.

Tom Leonard Mining Museum, Skinningrove. Leader: Derrek King, meet at 13.00. NGR NZ 712192.

Boulby Potash Mine (likely to be a 2 or 3 hour underground visit) meet at 16.00 numbers will be strictly limited to 8, with a maximum age of 60. Further details in Newsletter.

24th -27th September , 1999.

NAMHO Conference - Forest of Dean. Further details in subsequent newsletter.

16th October, 1999.

Autumn Meeting. Further details in subsequent newsletter.

All meets are subject to weather and permission being granted. Further details in subsequent newsletters. Please contact the appropriate meet leader if you intend going on a meet.

Mining Tours - 1999

Atalaya Tours offer the following itineraries for 1999. Tours are accompanied by expert guides and, where possible, feature visits to working mines. A discount of at least 5% is offered to NMRS members.

Rio Tinto & Southern West Iberia - 9th to 17th April 1999.

This is our long-established itinerary to southern Spain and Portugal: an area that remains one of the most interesting mining fields in Europe, dominated by the mines of Rio Tinto. The itinerary includes the major sites in the Spanish Pyrite Belt and mines in neighbouring Seville province, as well as mines in Portugal.

Greece & Cyprus - 14th to 24th May 1999.

A week long tour that includes the main classical sites of the famous Laurion mines as well as more ancient sites in the Cyclades islands. The tour will also include more recent mining in the Peloponnese area. There will also be the option of an extension tour to the copper mining areas of the Troodos Mountains of Cyprus.

Mines of Northern Spain & Portugal - 25th June to 4th July 1999.

The northern Spanish regions of Galicia, Asturias and Cantabria, form rugged "Green Spain". Our tour includes the major Roman gold mining sites in Portugal and the provinces of Oviedo & Leon (including the spectacular site of Las Medulas), copper and lead mines in the Cantabrian Mountains, and tin mines in Galicia and Portugal.

Germany - 17th to 25th July 1999.

This tour covers the major German metal mining areas: the Harz Mountains and the Freiberg/Erzgebirge region. These are among some of the oldest mining areas in Europe with a particular role in the history of mining due to the work of Georgius Agricola.

Western Britain - 13th to 23rd August 1999.

This tour itinerary has been designed as an introduction to the UK mining heritage, and should appeal to anyone who would like an overall view of mining in western Britain. The tour starts and ends in London and includes Devon and Cornwall tin and copper mining areas in south-west England, and coal, gold, lead and copper mining in Wales.

Mexico - 29th October to 12th November 1999.

This tour will cover the main Mexican sites from Pachuca to Durango including the famous names of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Fresnillo, Real del Monte and others. The tour starts in Mexico City and includes the major mining areas of the central and western highlands.

For our full 1999 programme details or further information on any of the itineraries please write, fax, or phone Atalaya Tours Ltd. Ceinionfa, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HR. Fax/phone (24hr) 01970 828989. Email: atalayajt@aol.com

Books

The Late Tony Wall's Book Collection

Following the item in the December 1998 Newsletter, there were 20 responses and 32 books were sold. I am sorry that 5 people ended up being disappointed, not getting any of the books they sought to buy. Everyone has been replied to.

A tidy sum has been raised for NMRS funds and 4 books have gone to fill gaps in the NMRS Library. The unsold books and 18 further books donated by Mrs. Wall to NMRS will be sold at the AGM on 27th March 1999. One final point, despite what I said last time, excess postage was refunded only if it came to more than 50p and I trust those affected are content to treat their "loss" as a donation to NMRS.

Hafodlas Slate Quarry - Griff R Jones

This superbly-produced A4-size book represents the end-product of 7,500 hours work on site by a dedicated team from Fforwm Plas Tanybwllch in Snowdonia. For your money, you get 136 pp of text, 30 pp of photographs and 40 pp of industrial archaeology drawings par excellence. In the slate extraction industry, the term 'quarry' covers both surface and underground workings, and Hafodlas (near Betws-y-Coed in North Wales) had both. Hafodlas was active, under a variety of names, from 1854 to closure in 1929.

SB 209 pp £12:50 plus £2:50 P&P from the author at Gwylfa, Cae Clyd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd LL41 4AU [ISBN 0 9533692 0 X]

John Hopkinson

Social Approaches to the Industrial Past - The Archaeology and Anthropology of Mining
Edited by **A Bernard Knapp, Vincent C Pigott and Eugenia W Herbert** 1998 306 pp, 35 illus, 6 tables. HB Routledge, London and New York. Price £55.00

Eighteen books in one! Eighteen chapters by eighteen authors on all aspects of Mining Sociology. Most mining books concentrate on what is left, the ruins, the mining techniques and the history of mining. This book takes an innovative stance and concentrates on the lives of miners and their associates. It is based on a series of papers given at an international conference held in Italy in 1996.

Social approaches to the archaeology and anthropology of mining by **A Bernard Knapp**, Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, Scotland, brings together some unlikely bed fellows: archaeologists, ethnohistorians and anthropologists. Together they examine a common theme which encompasses: gender, power strategies and labour exploitation; imperialism and colonialism; and production and technology. Such themes weave together a social theory essential for the study of the industrial past.

The Fabric and Structure of Australian Mining Settlements by **Peter Bell**, Historical Research Pty, Adelaide, Australia, shows the diversity of mining townships, from random scattered tents to model villages, laid out by government surveyors with wide roads based on a square grid plan. Ethnic influences caused variations from Cornish type stone cottages to Chinese huts in thatch and bush timber based on a Guangdong province design.

Gender and Community Structure on Australian Colonial Gold Fields by **Susan Lawrence**, Department of Archaeology, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, presents the feminist outlook. Dwellings associated with mining settlements are no longer assumed to be huts of single miners, and the image of mining as an exotic male domain is exchanged with that of the role of woman and families in the shaping of gold field culture.

Bedroom Politics. Ladies of the Night and Men of the Day by Alexy Simmons, New Zealand Historical Places Trust, Hamilton, New Zealand, highlights the importance of female prostitutes in the mining towns of USA and New Zealand. Spatial controls on prostitution often accelerated the growth of a class system among the demimonde.

Power and the Industrial Mining Community in the American West by Donald L Hardesty, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, USA, focuses on archaeological approaches to the power structure of the silver-gold, and copper mining communities in the American West. The social and cultural context of nineteenth and twentieth-century industrial capitalism is compared with alternative towns which offered saloons, gambling houses, brothels, labour unions' cheap housing and more individualistic lifestyles.

The Mining Camp as Community by William A Douglass, Basque Studies Program, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, USA, indicates that the social anthropological literature on mining is surprisingly sparse. In part this stems from the mining camp's dubious status as a community with any degree of permanence. Drawing upon field and archival research, it is suggested that in the last 50 years of the 19th century there was an established mining community in the American West disposed to relocate whenever there was a new discovery. A focus without a locus!

Mining, Colonialism and Cultural Contact. European Miners and the Indigenous Population in the Sixteenth-Century Arctic by Robert M Ehrenreich, National Research Council, Washington, DC, USA, is a fascinating account of an Elizabethan explorer, Martin Frobisher who travelled to Baffin Island in 1576. His failure to have the ore assayed resulted in the fiasco of bringing 1136 tons of worthless rock back to England.

Find the Ekijunjumira. Iron mine discovery, ownership and power among the Toro of Uganda by S Terry Childs, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA, is an unusual account of mining. A person was considered to be very lucky when he found the glittery stones dug up by the ekijunjumira beetle because the discovery could bring him wealth. Recent ethnographical interviews with elderly iron workers reveal the social and politico-economic consequences of such a discovery. Because of its importance to the Toro economy mining of these stones was banned by the early twentieth century colonialists.

Producing copper in the eastern Alps during the second millennium BC by Stephen Shennan, Institute of Archaeology, University College, London, takes us back to Bronze Age times. The results of recent fieldwork at St. Veit-Klinglberg are described. This was a base for a small community which mined and smelted copper. The site in common with its contemporaries in the region, was fortified, which may indicate the threat of raiding.

Mining as microcosm in pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. An overview by Eugenia W Herbert, Department of History, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts, USA, is an account of the three primary metals: iron, gold and silver that were worked before the colonial period. The 'culture of mining' not only involved technology, but also religious beliefs and rituals involving the use of medicines, sacrifices and invocations to ancestors and deities, the imposition of sexual and menstrual taboos, and so on.

A risky business. Death, injury and religion in Cornish mining c.1780-1870 by John Rule, depicts Cornish metal mining as the most dangerous in Britain with a death rate of two and a half times that of coal mining. Methodism helped the community to come to terms with this situation. The role of funeral ceremonies and of fatalism as expressed in black humour is also considered.

Silver shackles and copper collars. Race, class and labor in the Arizona mining industry from the eighteenth century until World War II by Thomas E Sheridan, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA, describes the lure of silver and gold during the

Spanish colonial period and the early Anglo-American territorial periods. The labour problems are graphically described e.g. paying Mexican miners less than Anglo-Irish miners and during World War One branding striking miners as saboteurs. But after World War Two the Mexican and American veterans united and regained power for the unionised.

Prehistoric copper mining in the context of emerging community craft specialization in north east Thailand by **Vincent C Pigott**, Museum of Applied Science Centre for Archaeology (MASCA), University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, is based on excavations carried out by the Thailand Archaeometallurgy Project (TAP) at Phu Lon on the Mekong River. It is proposed that 'mining expeditions' extracted just sufficient amounts of ore to trade with villagers downstream.

Small-scale mining and smelting in ancient Cyprus by **Vasiliki Kassianidou**, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus, stresses the importance of the copper smelting site of Almyras. Its proximity to the ancient city of Idalion has raised the possibility that this is source which supplied the kingdom of Idalion with copper.

Exploiting the desert frontier. The logistics and politics of ancient Egyptian mining expeditions by **Ian Shaw**, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, England, provides an interesting insight into the wealth of the pharaohs. How were the precious metals obtained? What are the links between the twelfth dynasty fortresses in Lower Nubia and the exploitation of Nubian copper and gold resources? Archaeological sources provide a glimpse of their likely origins and way of life.

Gold-miners and mining at Bin Umm Fawakhir by **Carol Meyer**, The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA, describes a fifth to sixth century Byzantine/Coptic gold-mining town in the eastern desert of Egypt. Gold was extracted from quartz veins in the Precambrian granite, so mining, ore reduction and washing required a large labour force: the population of ancient Fawakhir is estimated at over 1000.

On the value of mixed methods in studying mining communities by **David Killick**, Department of Anthropology and Department of Materials Science and Engineering, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA, results in some revolutionary questions: Why bother with a social history of mining and why now? The answer, in short, is that these studies have lagged behind those of say, factory workers, fisher folk or farmers. The author goes on to say that this book has achieved its objectives in mingling the three disciplines: archaeology, ethnohistory and anthropology in the studies of mining and miners.

Mining communities chaines operatoires and sociotechnical systems by **Bryan Pfaffenberger**, Division of Technology, Culture and Communication, School of Engineering and Applied Science, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, poses the question "Is the term mining community' an oxymoron?" A study of this book will soon challenge the myth of the isolated 'mining camp', in which the rude cabins and tents of temporary residents, exclusively male are found. He concludes that it is necessary to look beyond technology and look at the human and social dimensions of community life to obtain the full picture. Whilst walking round old mine sites I cannot have been the only one who has wondered at the amazing number of man hours required to create what is now in ruins. All too often these sites are in inhospitable locations and one cannot help but be impressed by the sheer tenacity of the old miners and the blood, sweat and heartbreak which must have been a part of their everyday lives. This book helps to put it all in perspective, and all in all this book provides a refreshing approach to an old theme.

The book is available from Tony Oldham, Duncavin, Rest Home for Retired Cavers, Riverside Mews, Cardigan, SA43 1DH. E-mail: anne.oldham@virgin.net Sorry no phone.

A Miners Life - With an Account of the Entombment of Messrs. Bant and Rule re-issue of a facsimile copy

Buried Alive in Drakewalls Mine - Patrick Coleman.

These two publications under the "Eco South West" imprint throw much detailed and new information onto a subject well-known in mining folklore but hard to locate in any useful written form.

The first booklet is a facsimile reprint originally issued in 1889 shortly after the entombment of the miners by J. Normington, an enterprising locally based steamship agent "for all parts of the world" and William Bant, one of the two trapped miners. It gives a rather lurid account of the four days the miners spent trapped underground, written tabloid style, but nonetheless of historical interest, showing the fears and concerns felt by the miners for their dependants. A very rare booklet that will interest anyone who wishes to know more about the working conditions of miners and is a useful addition to those keen to add to their library.

The second booklet is a graphic account by Patrick Coleman which fleshes out the original story in more detail, running to 46 pages, the author only intending to write a few notes as an introduction to the first booklet. However, as this text does not make it really clear what exactly happened in the accident and subsequent rescue, Patrick has used the original Mine Inspector's report plus many contemporary newspaper articles, including extracts from the *London Daily News* to build up an exciting story of the heroics on the part of the rescuing miners and the stoicism of the trapped miners.

A good general account of the historical background of Drakewalls Mine, setting the scene for the fateful events of Tuesday, 5th February, 1889 is given, accompanied by excellent maps, cross-sections of workings plus a two page glossary of mining terms. The dramatic climax of the actual rescue is given in graphic detail being faithfully told by the author and should be read in one sitting to avoid disappointment. Patrick has marshalled his facts in an easy but methodical way.

The A6 booklets (50 and 46 pages respectively) are available for £3.00 each (including p&p) from the author at: Tregennys, Harewood Road, Calstock, Cornwall, PL18 9QN. Cheques should be made payable to Patrick Coleman.

Alan Wright

Ashanti Gold by Professor Edward S. Ayessu

(ISBN 1-84028-275-4) is a glossy coffee table colour celebration of the century of Ashanti Goldfields Company. It is a useful adjunct to the more historical pieces seen recently in the Bulletin PDMHS, i.e. *The Stamp Mills at Ashanti* Vol. 12 No.3 pp 1-18 (1993), *Pre-European Gold Mining at Ashanti Ghana* Vol. 13 No.4 pp 12-16 (1997) both by Nick Laffoley and Colin Laidler and David Tew's Letter in the most recent issue (Vol. 13 No.5 1998 p50).

A number of interesting snippets give a flavour of this book. The two enterprising Cape Coast merchants Joseph Edward Biney and Chief Joseph Ettrusion Ellis, who crossed the Pra River and negotiated the concession at Obuosi in 1890, were natives of the Cape Coast in what is now Ghana.

Many Ashanti castings in both brass and gold are distinguished by their great delicacy and the quantity and precision of the detail they show. This precision can be attributed partly to their use of substantial quantities of charcoal in the investment wax process.

Gold dust was used as currency in Ashanti until the colonial government decree of 12th. April 1889 which established the pound sterling as the sole currency (Tew *op. cit.*)

Gold was literally underfoot in Ashanti but brass had to be imported initially by camel across the Sahara from North Africa, Egypt and the Mediterranean. Once the sea route from Europe was established by the Portuguese at the end of the 15th Century, European brass was imported. An interesting trade in scrap brass developed, and evidence of this can still be seen in some collections of goldsmiths weights. Indeed a study of this may provide insights into the European brass industry.

The book is available on order from book shops, or in case of difficulty from the wholesaler Grantham Book Services, 1 Sax Newton Way, Alma Park Ind. Estate Grantham. NG31 9SD. Cheques made payable to them or via credit card on their order line 01476 541080. The paperback version costs £14.99 plus £2.00 P&P if ordering from Grantham, while the hardback costs £25.00 plus £3.50. P&P.

Nenthead

Roger Bade

There has been correspondence between John Hine and John Lawson regarding the whereabouts of waterwheels in Nenthead Mines, copies of which have been sent to your editor. As this is of wider interest, I give below a copy of John Lawson's reply to John Hine's original enquiry.

"I had hoped that when I mentioned in my article on Thomas Dodds (NMRS Memoirs 1998), the probability of there being water-wheels in Smallcleugh & Rampgill Mines that I would be able to leave their actual location until I had published a paper on the History of the Smallcleugh Mine. Unfortunately, your letter means I will have to come down from the fence, for truthfully I have no documentary evidence for the sites of them. However your letter has lead me to re-examine the situation.

In the article on T. Dodds I stated that these underground engines were in fact waterwheels. I had based my assumption on Dodd's statement "that it would be necessary to arch the wheel-case with stone as the timber was all rotten." It now appears to me that a more likely explanation is that the engines were in fact hydraulic engines. The wheel case would then in fact be a cover for the winding drum. The idea is partially based on Wallace's statement, "The first hydraulic engine in the Manor of Alston was I believe erected in Rampgill mine about the year 1768. Another at a later date was placed at the bottom of the Engine Shaft, to pump water from Scaleburn Vein, in the Great Limestone, and from the works made to prove Rampgill Vein in strata below the Great Limestone." Later he states that "two of Mr. Westgarth's engines were erected in Middlecleugh mines and both were in operation in 1784" (Pages 142 & 143 *Alston Moor Its Pastoral People its Mines and Miners*. 1890 Davis Reprint 1986). I think from this we can reasonably state that one of these hydraulic engines was placed in Rampgill Engine Shaft. This shaft is met with at the random of Rampgill on the left-hand side of the Horse-Level just before it meets Scaleburn Cross Vein. The other engine I would suggest was placed in Brewery Shaft - not at the Nent Force Level as Mr. Hine suggests for this level did not reach this shaft until 1840. (Bell Papers, Newcastle City Library)

This of course leaves the site of the Smallcleugh Engine. Here we must remember that Middlecleugh and its associated veins were all accessed from the Smallcleugh Horse-Level so frequently the London Lead Company management regarded these as one and the same mine. I would suggest that one hydraulic engine was placed in Smallcleugh Mine, (as we know it) and the other on Middlecleugh Vein. Now where are these places? It appears to me that there is only one possible place in Smallcleugh mine in the so called Whim Chamber, situated 20m. from the junction of the Dickenson Crosscut and Smallcleugh Cross Vein Level. The bottom of this shaft would give access to workings in the Great Limestone and the presence of cast iron pipe recently discovered in part of the Proud's Sump Flat workings, may be associated with this.

The position of the other engine I would suggest is just off the Crosscut from Middlecleugh Vein to Middlecleugh North Vein at the Smallcleugh random. Access to this site is difficult. It is found by entering the Crosscut from Smallcleugh Horse-Level to Middlecleugh Vein and 1st Sun Veins. This junction is 20m. from where 1st. Sun Vein level meets Smallcleugh Horse-Level on the outbye side. Travelling distance from Smallcleugh Horse-Level to the Engine Chamber is about 320m. of which the first 120m. is in badly collapsed ground. When Rampgill Horse-Level was driven up, under all of these workings, then both these engines were no longer necessary. This took place in the 1820s.

Query Corner

I recently revisited Drygarn Fawr, a mid Wales lump which rises to the south of the Claerwen reservoir, south west of Rhayader. It's been ten years or so since I last climbed the hill and I was pleased to see that the remains of the lead mine in the Rhiwnant valley on its northern slopes had barely changed at all. The mine itself, complete with remains of powder house (?) is located at NGR SN 877607 and what was presumably a tramway links this site with the crushing works (?) further down the valley at 892611. There are remains of waterwheel pits at the latter and some evidence of leats above the mine itself. I imagine the mine was named Esgair Ganol, after the nearby ridge but I've been unable to find out anything else about the place. It doesn't seem to fall into David Bick's "Old Metal Mines of Mid Wales" area. If anyone can provide me with any information about the place I'd be most obliged. Please contact Phil Clayton, 211 Marsh Lane, Wolverhampton, WV10 6SA.

Does anyone have any information on the explosion at Tudhoe Colliery, County Durham on 18th April, 1882 and/or a copy of *Explosions in Coalmines* by J. B. & W. N. Atkinson published in 1886? Please contact Tony Leighton, 6 Rose Terrace, Stanhope, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.

Roger Bade writes: "Along with a number of other people I am currently investigating the possibility of an early eighteenth century iron foundry industry on Tyneside. If anyone can shed any light perhaps they would get in touch." You can contact Roger at: 104 Monkleigh Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4EP.

That Sinking Feeling

In a landmark case held at Truro Crown Court in November, 1998, a couple who bought a terraced house not realising that it was built over a disused mine shaft have now won £60,000 damages against the solicitors and surveyors who originally advised them when they bought the property in January, 1991. The couple, Kim & Antoinette Pumphrey bought the 1930s property in Wheal Ayr Terrace, St. Ives (surely a giveaway name!) paying only for a timber and mundic test but not being advised to have a search into the possibility of mine workings, even though the area has been heavily mined for hundreds of years. It was during 1996 that they saw Michael Shipp, a mine expert working for Cornwall Consultants carrying out tests on a nearby house in the terrace and asked him to check out their property because of the information he held. This was a copy of the 1880 Ordnance Survey map overlain with a modern map which showed a deep adit coming to an end in a mine shaft opening out directly beneath the Pumphrey's property, which was estimated to be 235 feet deep. This shaft would normally have been covered with old mine timbers and then filled in with mine debris. These timbers would now be in an advanced state of decay and could collapse into the mine shaft at any time.

The Pumphreys decided to sue the solicitors and the mortgage surveyors for negligence and breach of contract because the property was now unmortgageable and virtually unsaleable, certainly not worth £60,000. It was not the general practice of solicitors to advise their clients to do a mine search in 1991.

This really only started after a hole appeared in the garden of a property in St. Austell in May, 1991 and in June 1992 a massive hole appeared at the rear of a row of new council properties in Gunnislake. The judge stated that the case succeeded because the surveyors had failed to mention the possibility of mining in the area on their mortgage valuation report. If the Pumphreys had known this they would have paid for a search and consequently would not have purchased the property. After the judgement Michael Shipp said that he expected a flood of other cases and hoped that this would benefit other people living in Cornwall. The whole of Wheal Ayr Terrace is blighted by old workings. Perhaps a purchaser with a little more knowledge of mining may have been more perceptive over the name.

Greenhow

Alan Wright

John A. Knight writes: In the December issue I asked for some help in identifying a site near Greenhow. I had a reply from a young lady and in my excitement forgot to take her name. Can I pass on my thanks? For anyone interested the site was Toft Hill Lime Kiln. SE 130644.

Nominations for the Election of Officers

Please note that any nominations for the election of officers must be sent in writing, with a proposer and seconder to the Secretary, c/o 38 Main Street, Sutton in Craven, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 7HD at least twenty eight clear days before the date of the AGM.

From the Editor

Your Editor apologises for the curtailment of the newsletter to ten pages, which is not due to lack of material as I have had a bumper crop this time. I have been under the weather since Christmas and not up to doing too much. So if the material you sent has not appeared, then apologies, but be assured that it will be in the next newsletter.

Don't Forget Your 1999 Subscription

Keith Nolan

This is the last reminder for 1999 subscriptions. If you paid a couple of weeks or more ago your membership card should be enclosed. A subscription form and deed of covenant were enclosed with the December 1998 newsletter. If you pay UK income tax please complete the 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.

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. Discs will normally be returned with the following newsletter unless otherwise requested. Attachments to Emails in text (.txt) only format please. Contributions for the May, 1999 Newsletter by 17th April, please, to:

Keith Nolan, West End Cottage, Woodhall, South Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 6TG. Telephone or Fax: 01757 638503. E-mail: keithn@woodhall.u-net.com

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.
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