

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

AUGUST 1999

Diary Dates

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. Tel: 01609 775811. Meet at the museum 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.

24th -27th September , 1999.

NAMHO Conference - Forest of Dean. The Conference will be based at the Civil service Motoring Association (CSMA) site at Whitmead Park, Parkend village. Accommodation is available at Whitmead in the form of chalets, camping or caravanning and an accommodation list will be sent out with the booking form. The conference will include lectures which will illustrate the history of mining in the Forest of Dean and other mining regions.

There will be a number of underground trips catering for a wide range of abilities from gentle walking to difficult and extensive trips lasting up to seven hours. Trips planned include Clearwell, Wigpool, Westbury Brook, Robin Hood, Noxon Park, Whittington Stone, Brinchcombe Level, Morses Coal Level, Perseverance Mines and many more. Surface walks will take in some familiar and several lesser known mining sites, with leaders interpreting as the walks progress. Areas for these walks will be Bixdale valley, Howlers Slade and Wimberry Slade, Oakwood Valley and around Clearwell.

If there is sufficient demand training courses will be arranged in Ladder & Lifeline, basic SRT and surveying.

On the Saturday night there will be a gathering that will allow people to discuss the day's activities over a three course meal. A vegetarian option will be available. A bar will operate throughout the evening.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1..... *Diary Dates*
- 3..... *Society News*
- 4..... *Books*
- 7..... *Raygill Mines*
- 7..... *Marine Colliery*
- 9..... *Biographical Sketches*

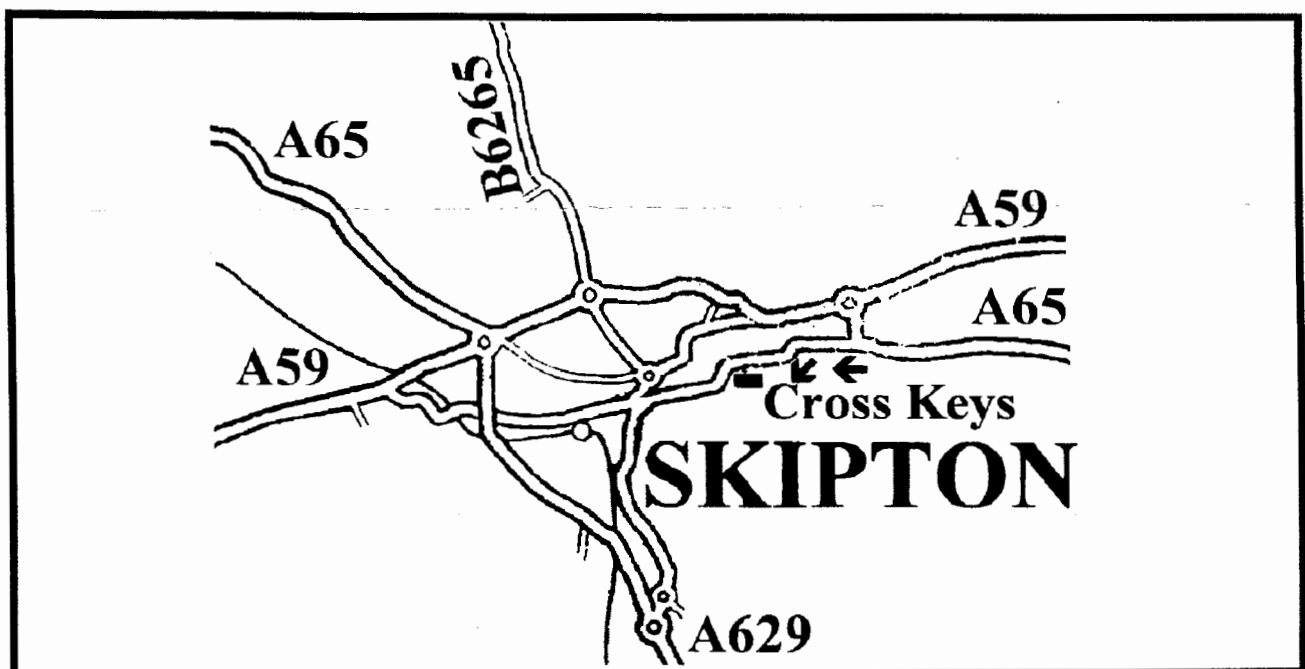
It is essential for all those attending the conference to have adequate public liability cover. If you are a member of a club check you have BCRA or equivalent insurance cover for the duration of the conference. If you do not have adequate insurance cover, Gloucester Speleological Society (GSS) have made arrangements for people attending to join their club as a guest member.

For a complete information pack please send an A4 SAE to the conference co-ordinator: John Hine, NAMHO '99, The Grottage, Mile End, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 7QF.

16th October, 1999. Autumn Meeting.

This will be held at the Cross Keys Hotel (on Otley Road, Skipton) on Saturday, October 16th, starting at 2.30 pm. The Cross Keys, which has a good sized car park, is handy for the town centre and the by-pass. The bus and railway stations are about 1/3 and 3/4 of a mile away respectively. Members coming by car from the south, west and north are advised to follow the Skipton by-pass to its junction with the A65 (see map) and then turn back towards Skipton.

The Autumn Meeting is an ideal opportunity to get to know other members and to discuss common interests. Please bring along a few slides, say of your latest project or of something that you need identifying, or just spend a few minutes telling us about your work. It need not be a full-scale lecture. There will be a buffet (see booking form) which will include vegetarian food.



4th-5th November, 1999.

A Hidden Resource. An international conference is being organised by the Geological Survey of Ireland, Shannon Development and the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland on behalf of the MINET project.

MINET is an EU funded project established to develop a pilot network of European Mine Heritage Centres - The project involves partners from France, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the UK - A 2 day conference is planned for November 4th-5th 1999, based in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. There will be pre and post-conference field trips (Bunmahon and the Irish National Mine Heritage Centre at Shallee, Silvermines) - The topic of the conference is mine heritage as a tourism resource. Further details can be got from Mr. Eamonn de Stafort, Shannon Development, Connolly Street, Co. Tipperary, Ireland Tel. +353-67-32100 Fax. +353-67-33418, email DESTAFORTE@shannon-dev.ie

Friday 14th to Tuesday 18th July 2000. 1st International NAMHO Conference

National Association of Mining History Organisations 21st Annual National Event hosted by Carn Brea Mining Society and Camborne School of Mines at Truro, Cornwall.

Visit our web site at www.ex.ac.uk/~ajbeer/namho/namho.html or E-Mail : NAMHO@cs-m.ex.ac.uk or contact Lawrence Holmes at Rivergarth, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1SS. Tel: 01872-278234

The conference will be held in the beautiful Cathedral City of Truro, Cornwall. The City is well served by rail and road connections and the airport is some 15 miles to the north west at Newquay.

Truro has a large selection of High Street Stores together with many small specialist shops. The City has a wide variety of cafes, restaurants and top entertainment at the new Hall for Cornwall.

The conference venue is at the spectacularly sited Truro School and is only 10 minutes walk from the City centre. The venue offers lecture halls, on site bedroom accommodation together with dining and leisure facilities. There will also be ample space for Trade and Society stands, car parking, camping and caravan areas.

The Theme of InterNAMHO2000 will be: Acquire, Record and Display The Conference The four day event will include indoor lectures at the main conference venue and a large selection of excursions to many of Cornwall's Mining Heritage sites.

Speakers already booked include Ian Cowburn (France), Jan Verbruggan (Holland), John Morris (Eire) as well as national and local speakers of note.

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.

Society News

Please note that the new address of our Treasurer, Colin Hindle, is:

15 Kirkstone Court,

Kirk Merrington,

Spennymoor,

Co. Durham,

DL16 7XJ.

Telephone: 01388 819949

Colin wishes to step down as Treasurer by the date of the next AGM. If you feel you would be interested in taking over the job please write to the Secretary, Steve Mitchell, c/o 38 Main Street, Sutton in Craven, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 7HD. Email martgill@legend.co.uk

Note from the Publications Editor

Sharp eyed members will have realised that the publications accounts have not yet been audited. Please do not be alarmed, there is nothing amiss. I have been occupied with a family problem and have not had the time. The accounts are done, but, to further the delay, Eddie the auditor is busy with a new baby. Everything will be completed by the Autumn Meeting, however.

Hazel Martell

Society Librarian

Please note that the Librarian Sallie Bassham's temporary address is:

c/o The Post Office, Horton in Ribblesdale, SETTLE, North Yorkshire, BD24 0HE.

Books

W.H. Auden Pennine Poet - Alan Myers and Robert Forsythe.

Few of us know that one of this century's greatest poets was inspired by the rugged North Pennines and the lead mines there. If pressed to name a W.H. Auden poem, most might manage "Stop all the Clocks" (Twelve Songs IX) or Night Mail - even his biographers have skirted round his passion for mines and limestone hills.

Alan Myers and Robert Forsythe are, therefore, to be congratulated for illuminating this aspect of Auden's life. His interest was stirred during childhood visits to the area, when the mines were on their last legs, and, despite his later travels, his writings are liberally sprinkled with place names and mining references. The authors have identified those places and matched them with the poet's visits to the north to produce an intriguing story. The whole is flavoured with excerpts from Auden's poems and pictures of mining scenes.

The book is No.7 of a series published by the North Pennines Heritage Trust, at A5 format, with 60 pp., 17 plates and 2 figs, ISBN 0 9513535 78. Copies cost £3.50 and may be obtained from Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre, Nenthead, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3PD. Please add £0.50 for p&p.

Memoir of Localities of Minerals of Economic Importance and Metalliferous Mines in Ireland Grenville A.J. Cole.

When the Bibliography of the History of British Metal Mining was published ten years ago, it had no section for Irish mines because of the lack of modern material. Fortunately, the work of the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland is going to change that. The book under review is a facsimile of a 1922 Geological Survey of Ireland Memoir, with modern biographical notes on the author and photographs of selected sites.

Cole spent most of his working life in Ireland and wrote 527 papers on diverse geological topics. His Memoir originated in work done during the 1914-18 war, which showed the need for a systematic review of Irish mineral resources. For each site Cole gives a very readable, brief description of the nature and location of the deposits, with copper, lead, iron, zinc, barytes and bauxite getting the greatest coverage. Some rarer metals, plus Felspar, gypsum, rock salt and sulphur are also covered, but coal, sands, clays and marble were excluded, because they were covered elsewhere.

Like Dines for south-west England and Dunham for the North Pennines, Cole's Memoir must be part of the core reading for visitors to Ireland.

A5 format, with 155 pp., 28 plates and 5 figs, ISBN 0 9534538 0 4. See the accompanying flyer for details of how to purchase your copy.

Mike Gill

An Archaeometallurgical Survey for Ancient Tin Mines and Smelting Sites in Spain and Portugal. Mid-Central Western Iberian Geographical Region 1990-1995 - Craig Merideth.

This book details the ongoing archaeometallurgical studies in the area and also includes the author's PhD thesis. The main theme is to locate and assess evidence that the cassiterite ore in the Mid-Central region of Iberia had been mined, smelted and used for bronze production in antiquity. This was achieved by visiting and collecting samples including pottery, flints, slag, stone hammers, grinders, and metal from a number of known tin mines and previously recorded cassiterite mineral areas. The sample collection was backed up by extensive library research and interviewing local people. The latter turned up some surprises as in some cases the local population had little or no knowledge of mine locations, ores mined or the working dates of local mines. The origins of tin mining appear to be lost in antiquity but Roman mining is well documented in Spain by the written works of Pliny, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. There appears to be little other written references until Davies, *Roman Mines in Europe* was published in 1935.

The next significant book appeared in 1984, Rothenburg's *Ancient Mining and Metallurgy in Ancient Spain*, followed by Penhallurick's *Tin in Antiquity* in 1986, and Domergue's *Catalog des mines et des fonderies antique de la Peninsule Iberique* in 1987.

Pure tin quickly deteriorates at low temperature or if it comes in contact with water. Consequently objects made of tin are a rare archaeological find. Pure copper can be hammered to a hard cutting edge, but for tough working implements the copper needs to be hardened either with arsenic, which either occurs naturally with the copper ore, or is specially added. For extra strength tin is added to the copper to form bronze. Later in the Bronze Age lead was added to the copper and bronze to make it easier to cast. The complex discussion on the arsenic / tin content of bronzes will be of great interest to the archaeologist who is contemplating excavating and dating a site.

The two chapters on the "Geological Formation of Tin" and the "Location of Tin Deposits in Europe" provided a useful overview and emphasise the importance of the Iberian peninsula as a location for tin deposits. This topic is enlarged upon in the chapter on "The Geology of Western Mid Iberia".

The chapter on "Archaeology and Prehistory of Central Mid-Iberia" gives the background to the colonising of the Iberian peninsula after the last ice age and the start of the Chalcolithic period.

The main body of this book comprises of a log of visits to 42 sites in southern Spain / southern Portugal. For each site the usual information is given: Name, province, municipality, co-ordinates, photograph and description with numerous references. Some mines are difficult to miss; like the "La Mina de Tres Arroyos" which covers 750 hectares, whilst others like the "Mina la Lapa", last worked in 1976 is now so overgrown that there is little left of either buildings or slag. "El Mina Terruco" presented another problem; a locked gate prevented access! This section of the book will proved to be an invaluable guidebook for anyone visiting the area, be they archaeologists, mining historians or, dare I say it, mine explorers.

It is refreshing to read a work such as this in the English language and the author is to be congratulated on the thoroughness of his research.

However, I feel that this volume has thrown up more questions than answers: How many tin mining areas are there in Mid-Central Iberia? How much tin was mined in antiquity? Was the tin traded to other areas? I look forward to learning about the consequent expeditions which I feel sure will be arranged with a book like this to whet the imagination. 205 pp, 49 photos, 23 drawings, 19 tables, 4 graphs. BAR International Series 714 1998 price £46.00, available from Tony Oldham, Rest Home for Retired Cavers, Riverside Mews, Cardigan, SA43 1DH.

Tony Oldham

Secret Underground Sites / An account of some of Britain's subterranean defence, factory and storage sites in the Second World War - N J McCamley.

The mining historian could well be excused for overlooking this book in a bookshop or library. But, strange to relate, this book is 90% stone mines! Perhaps I should explain. During the 1920s Britain's political and military leaders realised that the greatest threat in any future war would be swift and annihilating attack by bombing aeroplanes, and that the only real protection for the nation's armament factories and ammunition stores was to be found by locating them underground. But financial constraints, disarmament and appeasement delayed practical progress in this direction for nearly twenty years.

When war seemed inevitable in the late thirties a number of huge, sophisticated, and technically complex ammunition depots, buried deep underground, were built to house the million of tons of explosives, bombs and shells of all types needed by the allied troops in the Second World War. The author describes the many problems that had to be overcome in converting the stone mines with their 100% humidity and shaky ceilings.

By the end of 1940, with invasion imminent and the Luftwaffe endeavouring to destroy the aircraft industry upon which Britain's survival was ultimately to depend, work started belatedly on a series of vast underground engine factories. Great underground repositories were fabricated in the stone mines of Box Hill, near Bath in Wiltshire.

Today it is still possible to visit some of these workings and many mine explorers will be familiar with the Cliff Working and the Wind Tunnel.

However, a far more illustrious use was found for The Manod Slate Mine, in North Wales - storing the art treasure of the National Gallery. In contrast to the stone mines, at Manod huge chambers [which the author describes as natural?], over 400 feet long, 60 feet wide and up to 100 feet in height were encountered. These chambers were far too large and damp to be used for storage, so a series of brick buildings were erected within the mine.

In fact, the use of stone mines by the military was not unique to the Second World War. During the First World War Chiselhurst Caves, another stone mine, near London was used to store explosives. The author quotes a length of 22 miles for the caves, one of the many tall stories given out by the cave guides. One mile would be a generous length.

Nick McCamley was born in Bradford-on-Avon in 1950 and is clearly an expert on the local stone mines. In 1984 he acquired Monkton Farleigh Mine, the largest and most run-down of the Corsham sub-depots and until 1991 it was opened up as a mining museum.

In this book he tells the extraordinary story of these underground factories, storage depots and treasure houses constructed at unimaginable cost and under the most hazardous conditions. He describes the myriad technical and physical difficulties that had to be overcome and vividly conveys the urgency and importance of the work required to create these secret underground cities.

I am looking forward to the sequel as this volume only scratches the surface of this topic and there are many more sites to be described, but perhaps these are still covered by the Official Secrets Act.

1998, reprinted 1999 273 pp 45 photos, 8 maps. Price £25.00 published by Pen & Sword Books.

Available from Tony Oldham, Rest Home for Retired Cavers, Riverside Mews, Cardigan, SA43 1DH.

Raygill (Hunger Hill) Mine

This site is near the A684 road between Bainbridge and Hawes in Wensleydale. It is marked as a copper mine on a late 18th century map of the Yorkshire, but most of the workings date from between 1855 and the mid 1870s when it was worked by the Wensleydale Mining Company Ltd. for lead. The site's principal features are a two storey mine shop, complete with roof, a level, a series of spoil heaps and a dressing floor. The walls of the shop are basically sound, but there is a broken lintel above the southern doorway, a collapsed flight of steps on the outside of the southern gable and some of the roof timbers have failed.

As roofed mine shops are rare in the Yorkshire Dales, the Society has supported the owner's application to the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust by for support in consolidating the mine shop and entrance to the level.

Marine Colliery - Ebbw Vale, Gwent

Mike Gill

Years ago some of us became aware of the existence at Marine Colliery in South Wales of a large horizontal stationary steam engine for pumping water from the mine. Fortunately it was on the surface and accessible although out of sight and unknown to many who actually worked at the colliery.

About 1992 this modernised long-life colliery was closed and the huge site converted to a car park for the nearby Garden Festival held about that time, only two monuments remaining to mark the shafts. However, because of the interest generated by those in the know writing letters to various national bodies, the opportunity was taken to retain the steam engine, clean it up and paint it black and display it on a concrete plinth in the new car park. There at present it remains; a totally incongruous feature which has suffered minor damage since display through the attentions of the local children and is beginning to show rust slightly.

This engine, which was non-rotative, has two tandem compound cylinders 36" and 68" diameter, with a 10' stroke, and was built in Leeds by the firm of Hathorn and Davey- (No. 5102) about 1893, being fitted with their celebrated differential valve-gear. Dozens of these engines were built and supplied world wide for water pumping and two examples may be seen preserved at Cheddars Lane Pumping Station near Cambridge, but the Marine Colliery engine is the only one preserved with a mining background. Another example does exist in South Wales, of a larger and later design, but this was buried in a surface location when another modernised and large colliery was obliterated in recent years.

We must be grateful that ways and money were found from official sources to preserve this historic engine almost on its original working site. At over 50 feet in length and weighing several tonnes, no mean feat, although a significant linkage has been reassembled incorrectly and numerous large bolts, carefully stamped by tile makers with a number have been wrongly inserted into holes also carefully; stamped by the maker with a corresponding number.

The site in question is at SO 188043, fellow members of NMRS are requested to visit the engine if at all possible to keep track of it; as we should all by now know from experience in mining history what we take for granted today call be forgotten tomorrow

Simon Chapman

Aerial Survey of Mines

English Heritage has agreed to fund a proposal from Derbyshire County Council for an aerial survey of the county to record evidence of earlier mining. The cost of the scheme is £10,400. Photographs taken will identify the location of spoil heaps and mine shafts.

Derby Evening Telegraph 19th June 1999. Submitted by Tim Jeffcoat.

Charcoal Pits in County Durham

Recent evaluation of medieval and prehistoric settlement sites in Upper Teesdale for the English Heritage Monuments Programme has drawn attention to the existence of a large number of charcoal pits in association with bloomery sites. Both the pits and the bloomeries were first recognised by Dennis Coggins and Ken Fairless. The pits occur in an area which is particularly rich in bloomery slag heaps. A portion of the charcoal pits are close to with the bloomery sites, but many appear to be spread more widely across the landscape, and probably reflect the distribution of medieval woodland.

The pits are visible as slight hollows about 2m. in diameter and up to 4m. deep. There is often a slight ring of spoil visible around them. They are identifiable as charcoal pits because of the charcoal-rich soil brought up by animal disturbance. I am informed by Peter Crew that these are the first charcoal pits to be found in the UK, although they are well known in association with bloomery sites in Scandinavia. At the time of writing more than 30 pits have been identified.

Dr. Tom Gledhill writing in the newsletter of the Historical Metallurgy Society. Vol. 41. Spring 1999
Submitted by Roger Bade,

Down the Pit

A 64 year-old widower watched in horror as his home for 50 years collapsed into the remnants of a 19th century mine shaft and disappeared underground. Sam Hodson was staying with relatives last night after most of his home had been swallowed up by the earth as it fell into a huge hole in Hughes Road, Moxley, Walsall.

West Midlands Fire Service said Mr. Hodson and two other family members fled the rented council property after cracks appeared in the brickwork on Sunday, escaping the collapse by just 10 minutes. The houses were built at the end of the second world war on the site of mid-19th century mine workings.

Derby Evening Telegraph 11th May, 1999. Submitted by Tim Jeffcoat.

New Enterprise on Mining Site

Thortergill near Alston in Cumbria was sold to the London lead Company in 1780 for exploitation as a lead mine. thirty years ago, Ian Johnston a descendent of the original owners of Thortergill decided to reclaim the site, clearing the spoil and planting trees. He also opened a forge on the site as a commercial venture. He is investing £20,000 in equipment including a three tonne power hammer. The output, all hand made ranges from latches, lighting, brackets and other items and other items for interior designers to consumer items like candlesticks and plant pots.

Financial Times 4th June, 1999. Submitted by Roger Bade.

Stalactite Concern

Plans to open an Irish cave to the public have caused concern to Clare County Council. Last April the owners of Pol, an Ionian cave near Doolin applied for planning permission to allow public access to the seven metre stalactite inside. The plan includes excavating a 97 metre long tunnel from the surface to the chamber which contains the stalactite by means of drilling and low level blasting. They are also seeking to develop a visitor centre, a shop and a car park for 70 cars and 4 buses. Clare County Council has put on hold any plans to develop the site.

Irish Times 15th June, 1999. Submitted by Roger Bade.

Mining Biographical Sketches

SIR PAUL EDMUND STRZELECKI (1796 - 1873)

Australian explorer, known as Count Strzelecki of a noble Polish family was born in 1796 in Polish Prussia. He was educated in part at the High School, Edinburgh. When he came of age he finally abandoned his native country, and, encouraged by friends in England, commenced in 1834 a course of travel in the remote East.

On his way back from China he called in at Sydney in April 1839, and was introduced to the Governor of New South Wales, Sir George Gipps, who persuaded him to undertake the exploration of the interior. Following in the footsteps of Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, he devoted himself especially to the scientific examination of the geology, mineralogy, flora, fauna and aborigines of the Great Darling Range, conducting all of these operations at his own expense. Upon completing his survey of the Darling Range, Strzelecki and his party, including James MacArthur and James Riley, decided not to return to Sydney, but struck out along a spur of the Range leading southwards into Victoria. On their way, on the 7th March 1840, they unexpectedly encountered the prospecting party of Angus MacMillan. The latter had named the district, distinguished by its grand scenery and mild climate, Caledonia Australis; but, at the suggestion of Strzelecki, it was renamed Gippsland. Upon leaving MacMillan's camp, with provisions running short, the Count and his men attempted to reach Melbourne by a short cut across the ranges. They had to abandon their pack-horses and all the botanical and other specimens and for twenty two days literally cut their way through the scrub, seldom advancing more than two miles per day, and being in a state of starvation. Their clothes were torn away piecemeal, and their flesh was lacerated by the sharp lancet-like brambles of the scrub; but they succeeded in reaching Melbourne by the middle of May. During this memorable journey Strzelecki discovered in the Wellington district, two hundred miles west of Sydney, a large quantity of gold-bearing quartz. He mentioned to Gipps upon his return to Sydney the probable existence of a rich goldfield in the locality, but the Governor earnestly requested him not to make the matter generally known for fear of the serious consequences which, considering the condition and population of the colony "were to be apprehended from the cupidity of the prisoners and labourers."

The first official notice of the discovery of gold in Australia was thus entombed for some twelve years in a parliamentary paper, framed upon a report communicated by Gipps; and it was not until 1851 that the rich deposits were turned to practical account by Edward Hammond Hargraves and others. The priority of the discovery undoubtedly belongs to Strzelecki.

The explorer returned to London in 1843 and two years later issued his 'Physical Description of New South Wales and van Diemen's Land accompanied by a Geological Map, Sections, and Diagrams, and Figures of the Organic Remains' (London, 8vo). The work, though lacking in arrangement and power of presentation, contains most valuable statistical information. It is dedicated to the author's friend, Sir John Franklin. The plates were engraved by James de Carle Sowerby.

The fact of the discovery of gold was suppressed in fulfilment of a promise made to Governor Gipps, but a few specimens of the auriferous quartz were taken to Europe and, having been analysed, fully confirmed Strzelecki's views, which were further corroborated by the opinion of Murchison and other geologists. The Count was not tempted to renew his colonial experiences. About 1850 he was naturalised as a British subject through the good offices of Lord Overstone. He was selected as one of the commissioners for the distribution of the Irish famine relief fund in 1847-8; was created C.B. in consideration of his services on 21st Nov. 1848; was consulted by the government upon affairs relating to Australia, and assisted in promoting emigration to the Australian colonies. He accompanied Lord Lyons to the Crimea in 1855, and became an active member of the Crimean army fund committee.

He was elected F.R.S. in June 1853, and was created D.C.L. by the University of Oxford on 20th June 1860. He was made a K.C.M.G. on 30th June 1869, and died in Savile Row, London on 6th October 1873.

His name is commemorated in the Strzelecki range of hills in the district of Western Port, Victoria; by the Strzelecki Creek in South Australia; and by several species amongst Australian fauna and flora. By way of a supplement to his 'Physical Description', he published in 1856 a brief pamphlet giving an account of his original discovery of gold in New South Wales.

References

(Foster's Alumni Oxon., 174-1886; Annual Reg. 1873; Times, 7 & 17 Oct. 1873; Blair's Cyclopedia of Australasia, Melbourne, 1881, pp. 560-1; Meynell's Australasian Biography; Calvert's Exploration of Australia, i. 199; Westgarth's Colony of Victoria, p. 316; Simpson's Many Memories, 1898; Fraser's Hic et libique. Edinburgh Review, July, 1862; Brit. Mus. Cat.)

Tony Fretwell

Irish Labour Dispute

Tara Mines in Navan are negotiating with the unions in attempt to bring in new working practices which the management believe will allow the mines to survive. The plunging price of zinc on the international markets is the root of the problem. In May it fell from \$980 to \$958 per ton. The cost of getting it out of the ground at Navan is \$1,150 per ton. Tara Mines management had threatened to introduce new work practices unilaterally, but in the face of strikes by the unions their introduction has been deferred and the matter has been referred to the Irish Labour Court.

Irish Times. 4th June, 1999. Submitted by Roger Bade.

Stabilising Unsafe Mining Land

A new initiative to stabilise unsafe mines, the Land Stabilisation Programme, was launched in March, 1999 by the Regions and Regeneration Minister, Richard Caborn.

The programme will be administered by English Partnerships and will make finance available to local and National Park authorities to stabilise zones which have been left in a hazardous condition by non-coal mine workings.

Is this another threat to the mining heritage of our country?

Finally

NAMHO Newsletter

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please keep the contributions rolling in - they are very much appreciated. Contributions on 3½" discs are 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 December, 1999 Newsletter by 20th November, 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.