

THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY



Newsletter

AUGUST 2000

Diary Dates

Saturday 12th August. Swaledale. Leader: Sallie Bassham Tel: (01524) 241851. Surface and possible easy underground. Meet - 10.00 at Keld village square, NGR SD896011.

Sunday 10 September 10.30 - 16.30 Kelly Mine Open Day

Come and see what the Kelly Mine Preservation Society has achieved. Free admission, light refreshments - regret no toilets. Mine machinery, stamps, ore washing strips and furnace operating. Water turbine and waterwheel will be run if water available. The mine is alongside the A382 between Bovey Tracey and Moretonhampstead, half a mile south of the Lustleigh junction. Parking in an adjacent field (no large vehicles). For further information contact Tony Brooks Tel: 01626 834261

Thursday 28th September. Torn Leonard Mining Museum, Skinningrove. Leader: Derrek King. 775811 Meet 13.00 at the Museum, NGR N271212.

Thursday 28th September. Boulby Potash Mine (a 2 or 3 hour underground visit) Meet - 16.00 Numbers will be strictly limited; maximum age of 60.

Saturday October 14th. Autumn Meeting. General Meeting is to be held at the Three Links Club, at the far end of the Town Hall car park, off the High Street in Skipton. at 14.00. Please support this informal event, which is a good opportunity to meet other members and exchange thoughts on each other's projects. There will be a short business meeting, starting at 14.00, followed by an opportunity for members to talk about what they've been doing this year. A slide projector will be available. Also, for those who only take prints, Mike Gill will be happy to scan some of them onto his computer and project them for you on a multi-media projector. Please contact Mike on 01535-635388 for details, but do not leave it until the last minute. To find the club, go to the round-about at the top of Skipton High Street (outside the Parish Church and Castle) and then go down the High Street for about 100 feet before turning left up the side of the Town Hall. After 100 yards the road enters a big car park - keep going straight on to the far end and the Three Link Club is in front of you. This is the bus and waggon parking area, but there are spaces for cars. The club sells a good, locally brewed beer and there will be a buffet (£3.00 per head). See location map on page 9. A booking form is enclosed with this newsletter. If you wish to attend please return this by 30th September, 2000 to the address shown.

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Meet Reports

Snailbeach Meet – 10 June 2000

At the appointed time, Snailbeach car park was full of cars and it seemed that scores of people had come for the mining trip. Not so, many of them were going hiking. They missed out on a fascinating mining tour. The surface remains have been well conserved and the various interpretation boards were knowledgably supplemented by Mike and other members of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club. Without a guide, we would never have found many of the remains which are hidden deep in the undergrowth. We saw Day Level, and learned of its popularity with many visitors, and also had a longer underground trip and were able to get an idea of the immense amount of work done by the Shropshire group. While looking at the videos of the local mining remains, we were joined by some of those supposed to be hiking. They seemed impressed and found the juxtaposition of old photographs, derelict buildings and their current restored state particularly interesting.

After lunch, we drove past several mining sites, saw numerous engine houses and looked in more detail at the restored one at Lady well. We were also able to see the work in progress at Tankerville Mine, look at the magnificent restored ore bins and share in hopes for the future of that site. The day finished with a visit to Stuart Tomlin's Yard full of rescued artefacts. He was working on a digger of a type which one member of the party had actually used when a coal miner. He was able to advise about further restoration and demonstrate its use in practice.

Many thanks to Stuart for letting us see some of the rescued and restored artefacts, to Mike for making all the arrangements and for a fascinating tour at Snailbeach and to Ken for showing us some of his comprehensive collection of photographs and sharing his personal knowledge of mining at Snailbeach.

Sallie Bassham

Sir Francis Level - 8th July, 2000.

A total of eight NMRS members attended (including the meet leader). The party followed the path on the east side of the gill to the Sir Francis dressing floors and briefly inspected the portal and compressor receiver.

Entry to the mine was gained down the second air shaft which by-passes the blockage in the level. All the party descended safely and huddled around the foot of the ladder, delaying entry to the water until the last moment. The walk to the engine house took less than an hour and involved varying degrees of immersion in cold water, justifying the meet leaders recent decision to replace his wet suit in time for the trip. The mine remains relatively stable but new shoring has been placed in the passage just before the engine house. This work, by parties unknown should ensure access to the chamber for some time to come. After taking the obligatory photograph the party returned to the shaft and one by one climbed the 25 foot ladder to emerge into a sunny afternoon and be eaten alive by the local insect population.

Many thanks to those who attended, the response was good considering the nature of the trip and the closeness to the NAMHO conference.

Graham Dobbs

New Newsletter Editor

Starting with the December newsletter there will be a new Editor. He is John Hunter, 3 Leebrook Drive, Owlthorpe, Sheffield, S20 6QG. Tel: 0114 251 4883. Email: john@hunteruk.freemove.co.uk

Thanks for your support during the six years I have been producing the newsletter and I hope you will join me in wishing John a successful editorship.

Keith Nolan

Mining Bibliographies

Paul Sowan writes:

"I read Roy Fellows' item on the Mining Bibliography CD-ROM with interest, and offer the following comment/information.

Entirely for my own purposes, originally, some years ago I started what might in current terms be called an 'industrial minerals' bibliography. Initially, this was in collaboration with Andy Bowman, and envisaged as supplementing Roger Burt's published bibliography on post-WWII metalliferous mining history. However, there has never been any serious commercial intent in the project. The whole thing is no more than a text-file, but I find searching for any particular word or string very rapid, and I do now use it a great deal for locating items.

Currently, it runs to 700 pages, with over 9,300 entries. However, these include much of the geological and hydrological literature and other areas such as agriculture having a bearing on economic geology. It covers all dates for printed and published material from the earliest to current and the whole of the British Isles including Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, etc. It is not intended to include coal-mining (although many items are included on the strength of associated fireclay working for example), or metal mining (but quite a lot of early titles are in, as well as any which also deal with economic exploitation of gangue minerals.) My own library contains quite a mass of British Isles industrial minerals literature.

Obviously, it would have been better to have started with database software! But that can't be helped now! Just over a year ago, when the entire document would just fit onto one floppy disc, I circulated copies to several interested parties, and gave my permission for Adrian Pearce to put it on his mining history web site, where presumably it can still be found. As soon as time allows, I'll get him to update his web site with the now much expanded version! There is no point in doing all that bibliographical work if you don't let other people have access to it! In the longer term, I am discussing with Jeep Orbons in Maastricht the possibility of converting it to searchable database format. And I suppose it could well end up being available on CD-ROM ... but I am a bibliographer, not a computing expert or even enthusiast! And by definition the bibliography grows ... daily, in fact, as rarely does the postman fail to deliver something worth entering (British Mining 65 this morning!)

If any NMRS members would like details of published literature on, say, oil shale mining or limestone mining, a SAE to me will yield some sort of more or less helpful response. Open pits are also included. And it is easy enough to select and print just those pages with entries by a particular author. Authors, wherever I have found the data, are distinguished by full names and dates of birth and (where relevant) death.

"If you were wondering, in view of all this time spent in libraries and at SB's I do go underground as well!"

Paul may be contacted at: 254 Pampisford Road, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6DD.

Gwennap (Cornwall) Parish Council Buys Former Mine

The offer by Gwennap Parish Council to buy the site of the Wheal Maid site for £1 has been accepted by the owners, Carnon Enterprises.

The council hope to acquire grant funding to help restore the 40-50 acre site and are meeting officers from the Cornwall County archaeology and planning departments shortly.

Buying the site meant that the council could preserve the heritage of the area and help to reinforce the Cornish Way and Mineral Tramways projects that run through the valley.

NAMHO Newsletter

Thomas Manwaring GC

Together with two fellow mineworkers, Tommy Manwaring saved the lives of two workmates when the Arthur and Edward Colliery, Forest of Dean, was flooded by an inrush of water on June 30, 1949. The men remained below ground for seven hours, every moment at great risk of being trapped and drowned - if not asphyxiated - in order to find a route to bring their two comrades to safety after the road to the main Waterloo shaft was flooded.

After the driving of a new heading by the night shift, an increase in water flowing from the heading roof became apparent and pieces of shale began to fall through the roof lagging. A mine deputy on the spot, Ron Carter, gave the order to withdraw all men in the heading and less than a minute later, the roof gave way. A breach had been made into the adjacent and flooded East Slad pit, which immediately began to empty into the Waterloo workings. Carter's swift reaction saved many lives and by 11.10am 177 men had escaped through the galleries.

Manwaring, a haulage man, had received orders to leave the mine but, on hearing that Albert Sims, an elderly haulage driver, was in difficulties, he went at once to find him. All fuses had blown and only shift lamps were available for light. The lift cage was sent down in a final attempt to bring up five missing men, but the water had risen above the workings' entrance so it returned to the surface.

Having found Sims, who was making his way only very slowly due to breathing difficulties, Manwaring met up with another haulage driver, Ernest Barnfield and the three picked their way along the unflooded haulage road in order to find a way out. Unknown to them, two "examiners" (mine supervisors) had also remained underground in the hope of locating the three missing men. Manwaring and his two companions encountered the first of these, Oswald Simmons walking back down the haulage road in search of them; then the four found the other examiner, Frank Bradley, at an engine house where a telephone to the surface was still in working order.

A call to the pit head with the news that the five men were alive and together was greeted with relief, but there was no remaining way out from the Waterloo workings. After rapid consultation on the surface, the five men were directed to attempt to reach an old shaft of the nearby Pludds Colliery, which had been recently re-opened and connected to Waterloo to provide ventilation. The distance to the Pludds shaft was more than a mile and a half underground and the route had a series of rising and falling "dipples". The elderly Sims soon became exhausted and Manwaring and the two examiners were obliged to take turns in carrying him on their backs up the rising slopes. Finding a loaded coal trolley at the head of a dipple, they emptied it and used it to push Sims the final 1500 yards to the foot of a ventilation shaft in the Pludds mine, down which a large bucket manned by two volunteers had been lowered to meet them.

The party of five previously trapped miners reached their rescuers at 3.15 pm, almost seven hours after the first alarm was given in the Waterloo new heading that morning. Albert Sims was the first to be placed in the bucket and hauled 400 feet to safety. The rest of the party followed to be greeted by their wives who had been brought from the Waterloo pit head.

Three men of the five, Bradley, Manwaring and Simmonds were awarded the Edward Medal for their bravery in risking their lives for the safety of the others and for the rescue of Albert Sims in particular. The Edward Medal was instituted by King Edward VII in 1907, specifically to recognise bravery by miners and quarry workers, although the conditions were subsequently changed so as to allow for the decoration to be awarded for acts of bravery in industry generally.

A Royal Warrant of December 1971, rationalising civilian awards for gallantry, provided for all surviving holders of the Edward Medal to exchange their decorations for the George Cross. This had been introduced by King George VI early in the Second World War, primarily for award to civilians for "acts of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of danger".

Thomas George Manwaring was born in Warwickshire and worked in several pits in the Forest of Dean but retired early, partly due to the after-effects of his experience. He exchanged his Edward Medal for the George Cross, donating the former to the City Museum Gloucester. He was one of the last living recipients of the Edward Medal. He is survived by his wife Joan, whom he married in 1940, and their daughter.

Thomas Manwaring, GC, hero and survivor of the flooding of the Arthur and Edward Colliery, Forest of Dean, in 1949 was born on December 11, 1916. He died on March 7, 2000 aged 83.

The Times - March 15th, 2000

Ancient Roads on Islay

The discovery of a network of previously unknown ancient roads thanks to a NASA space shuttle has put Scotland on the verge of a new era of archaeological discovery, it was claimed. A team of researchers from Edinburgh University successfully located the 700 year-old routes using imaging radar pictures taken from an orbiting shuttle.

The images show the area round Finlaggan Castle on Islay, the headquarters of the Lords of the Isles. One particular road, leading from Loch Finlaggan towards the galley ports of Fionnphort and Port Bhorraraic, is expected to give historians new insights into trade and transport. Other tracks leading to areas around nearby lochs suggest that lead and silver mining may have played an important part in the lordship's economy.

Dr. Geraint Coles, of Edinburgh University's archaeology department, said that the findings would help historians solve many unanswered questions on the medieval lords. But it would also provide a useful tool for assessing the impact of future planning applications around the country.

Despite extensive archaeological work, a lack of documentation for the middle ages means much mystery still surrounds the Lords of the Isles. First known to history as a maritime kingdom begun by Somerled around 1150 AD, the lords were the predominant economic, military and political power around the Irish Sea until their decline in the 15th century. But the question of why their headquarters at Finlaggan Castle was inland has long puzzled historians. Dr. Coles said the new finds suggested lead and silver mining was a vital part of the lordship's economy and that, despite it being away from the sea, Finlaggan was chosen as a stronghold to maintain control of the works.

The Scotsman. 22nd September, 1999.

Tara Mines

Alastair Lings

Tara Mines Finnish owner Outokumpu will invest £37 million in expanding production from 140,000 tonnes a year to 200,000 tonnes at the mine.

This follows the introduction of new working conditions for miners, which have seen zinc output soar to its highest level in 15 years. Last February a dispute with the plant's 250 miners almost led to the closure of the Navan facility. At the time, it was losing £21.7 million a year and production had fallen so low that Canadian contract miners were being used. As a result of improvements since then, the managing director of Tara, Mr. Charlie Brown, predicts the mine will move into profit this year. The new production agreement involves miners switching from an eight-hour shift system to a ten-and-a-half hour shift system, as well as accepting substantial cuts in basic pay.

Irish Times. 28th April, 2000.

Roger Bade

Books (&CDs)

Gypsum in Cumbria - Ian Tyler

285pp. Paperback ISBN 0-9523028-4-5 Available from Blue Rock Publications, Threlkeld Museum or Threlkeld Quarry. Price £15.99 + £2.00 p&p.

With the honourable exception of Rogers' *To be a Gypsum Miner* (1994), most of the small number of volumes published on this industry have told us more about the boardrooms and directors than about the mines or associated factories. Ian Tyler's latest volume, along with Rogers', tells us much more about operations underground. The processing and use of mined gypsum and anhydrite are stories yet to be told.

The present volume lacks a satisfactory overview and introduction, but largely comprises detailed account of seven mines or groups of mines. These accounts are accompanied by a very generous provision of black-and-white photographs, of which a high proportion show underground views. About a dozen sketch-maps and plans show the extent and nature of mine workings (distinguishing areas where more than one seam has been worked), and showing surface buildings, and railway links and installations. The photographs, too, contain a fair representation of industry locomotives, trackwork, and the like. Miners who have worked in the Cumbrian anhydrite and gypsum mines are listed in 24 pages, and there is a page and a half glossary of mining terms.

The bibliography (two pages) is disappointing, as too little bibliographic detail is given to allow the user to locate readily, or indeed visualise the nature of, sources cited. Slender and obscure pamphlets can hardly be distinguished from substantial formally published volumes. Volume, part, and page numbers for articles in periodicals would have been helpful. There is no index.

With all its faults, however, this is one of the few substantial sources of published information on the operational mining aspects of this industry.

The East Shropshire Coalfields - Ivor J. Brown

Images of England series: 128pp ISBN: 0-7524-1705-3 pbk £9.99 + p/p from Embsay Steam Railway Trading Co. Ltd. Embsay Station, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 6AX.

Ivor Brown is fortunate, amongst mining historians, in having long-standing family connections in the Shropshire coal-mining industry, and he worked in it himself as a mining engineer. Subsequently, he has been professionally concerned with land reclamation and redevelopment in Shropshire and in West Yorkshire, and in the establishment of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. His doctorate was awarded for researches into Shropshire mining history. This is, therefore, an authoritative work.

The volume is published in association with the National Association for Mining History Organisations, of which Ivor Brown is currently chairman. Three coalfields in east Shropshire are covered (Coalbrookdale, Clee Hills, and Forest of Wyre), and in addition to underground mining for coal some notice is also taken of clay, ironstone, and limestone mining. The last mines have all long-since closed (the last coal-mine being Glanville in 1979.)

The illustrations comprise a very wide and complete coverage, from contemporary views from the days before photography, through illustrations of plant and surface buildings, underground views, and the people involved. Much historical detail is included, from the author's 45 years of researching. A welcome feature if the book is the information included on coalfield exploitation of minerals other than coal, an often-neglected aspect of coal-mining history.

There is an index of mine locations, giving national grid references as well as relevant page numbers; and a valuable page-and-a-half selected bibliography for further reading.

The assistance of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club with access underground is acknowledged.

Paul W. Sowan

Hell Under Haydock - Ian Winstanley

On February 26th 1930 an explosion followed shot-firing in the Wigan Four Foot Seam at the Lyme Pit, near Haydock in Lancashire. It could be the start of almost any local history of coal mining, but Ian Winstanley has set out the story of this event using a variety of sources, including interviews with some of the people involved, newspapers and official reports. By coal mining standard, the explosion was a small affair - killing five outright and eight more died of their injuries. The usual stories of brave deeds include that of Dr. Winifred Bridge, who earned the lasting respect of the community by going into the mine with the rescue team and treating the injured as they were recovered. The evidence given to the inquest and official enquiry, and their findings, are also covered. It is no reflection on Ian Winstanley's book, but I am forced to wonder if there is more to coal mining history than the macabre.

Hell under Haydock (ISBN 1-872895-54-9) is published by Landy Publishing (01253-895678). It has 55 pages, with 6 plates and 7 figures, and costs £6.00.

Mining Heritage Guide - R.W. Vernon (Ed.)

Rob Vernon is to be congratulated for compiling the third edition of this informative guide to mark NAMHO's 21st year. Apart from information on the Association's 88 member organisations, it is packed with photographs of mining scenes and the superb drawings of the late Malcolm Newton. There is also useful information on sources for mining history. There are mining museums and attractions in most parts of the country, so it is one book you must have in your car.

Mining Heritage Guide (ISBN 0-9517437-2-4) is published by the National Association of Mining History Organisations. It has 114 pages, with 68 plates, 5 sketches and 5 figures, and costs £4.60 including p&p.

A Pictorial Tour of the Coniston Copper Mines

If you don't have a computer this is not for you, because David Bridge's tour of this fascinating mine has been put together on a CD-ROM using 300 pages of photographs (mostly colour), plus maps, plans and sections. The tour is in html format and can be viewed on a web-browser. As someone who didn't (having viewed it in a rush the first time), it is worth reminding anyone who buys it to follow the instructions on the inside of the front cover. This ensures that you get the best view and do not have to waste time scrolling pages to see missing bits of text.

The tour is split into four parts - The early 17th century; The 18th and 19th centuries; Exploring the mine; and The Minerals. Annotated, panoramic shots have been used to good effect as they give one a good idea of the layout of the mine, at surface, and the grandeur of its setting. Because of the steep hillsides, these show things like the complex of leats, which served the waterwheels and dressing floors, much better than a map would.

The quality of most photographs is good and some are very good. The text on some maps is rather on the small side, but it can still be read. Users should keep their eyes open for a link button, which usually leads to a plan or section, appearing from time to time in the bottom right corner of the screen. There are also buttons which allow the user to return to the main menu or the last slide.

The CD has been laid out in a linear fashion, rather like a book, and little use has been made of hyper-text links to allow jumps from one topic to another. Without falling too far into the critics' trap of criticising the book that they would have written, I found the 17th century section most useful because the captions had some historical information. The section on the 18th and 19th centuries had frustratingly (for me) rather less. A time-line, giving details of the companies and people involved and any major events, plus a graph of the mine's output would have helped greatly.

Some cross sections of the workings would also have made it clear that the hade on at least one vein reverses as it goes deeper - a complexity that many users will not appreciate. As the CD is presumably aimed at a much wider market than mining enthusiasts, it should also have had a glossary.

It might be useful to consider briefly what advantages the electronic approach to publishing has. Much nonsense has been spouted about publishing on the web, but the signs are that it is not taking off. The CD certainly has the advantage when it comes to publishing large numbers of photographs economically. It would be a shame, however, if that became its sole strength. There is, for example, room for a more selective approach to the choice of photographs and the use of more informative captions. Likewise, the animation of some features might illustrate points better. But I digress.

Returning to Coniston Copper Mine - I enjoyed the tour and I am looking forward to the next one. I am sure that you will too. The CD, which was published by Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, is good value at £13.00 (including p&p) from Sheila Barker (Secretary of CATMHS), The Rise, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DB. Go ahead and treat yourself.

Cononley Mine (An interactive CD-ROM Tour)

In this CD-Rom of Cononley Lead Mine, near Skipton in North Yorkshire, Martin Roe has taken a more ambitious path than the Coniston CD by using a Powerpoint Presentation. You do not have Powerpoint? Never fear, because the CD has all the software needed to view it. Like the Coniston Tour, follow the instructions carefully - especially those in the Read Me file.

The main menu gives three principal options - Introduction; Surface remains; and Underground remains. The first is a brief history of the mine, where lead was mined from 1532 to 1881, and a map of the principal shafts, levels and other features. When you press 'enter', the courses of the Main and Gib Veins are drawn on the map for you.

Because the tour is designed in a non-linear way, viewers can choose the order of their trip by clicking on active buttons, thumb-nail pictures or areas of the maps. On the main mine, for example, it is possible to see pictures of surface features, such as the Engine House, and then divert underground at the Incline or Engine Shaft. Martin has made good use of site maps, 3D models of the workings, and diagrams - including re-constructions. In particular, at the Engine Shaft watch out for the animation of a horizontal pump rod transferring its motion, through an angle-bob, to a vertical rod. It is very effective, as is the use of flying text (which materialises in a pre-set order) as an aid to descriptions. The static captions accompanying most photographs are generally well written and give a good feel for the history, archaeology or technology of what is being shown.

Martin's tour is intended to be of value to a wide audience, from novice to expert, and it works well at many levels. His imaginative use of the technology, without the overindulgence in gimmickry which spoils some web sites, brings the subject to life in the way a book never could. As a member of NMRS, why not take advantage of the special offer price of £10.00 (including p&p) - cheques made payable to Martin Roe, 8 Brighouse Road, Queensbury, Bradford, BD13 1QD.

Mike Gill

A completely new and revised Access Code for the Use of Disused Mines - Guidelines for the leisure use of Mines

This document has been prepared by the National Association of Mining History Organisations, not only for the use of members of its constituent organisations, but, also, to assist all who have an interest in 'old mines'.

The leisure interests may vary widely - geology, archaeology, photography, surveying, ecology or just adventure activities and exploration, but the safety, legal and conservation aspects are the same. The Code outlined has been produced by NAMHO with the cooperation of the Health and Safety Executive's Mines Inspectorate and their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. It is intended to be used by those who visit mines for leisure purposes and does not cover activities where there is an element of work and payment.

The Code covers legal and safety implications, access and responsibility, conservation and insurance. It is expected that the Code will be accepted as the basis for their activities by all NAMHO members, some 40 mining history societies in Great Britain, representing over 4000 individuals and by nearly 30 mining museums and similarly interested organisations. It is hoped, too, that other interested parties will adopt it for everyone's benefit.

The NAMHO council wishes to acknowledge particularly the assistance of Jonathan Wright of Clearwell Caves for preparing the drafts and Graham Gilmour of the Mines' Inspectorate for ensuring the accuracy of the Health and Safety information. Thanks also to representatives and others who have checked and commented on the many drafts that have been produced. The Council is also grateful to the National Stone Museum for arranging the final printing.

The Code is available, price £2, from most member organisation representatives to NAMHO (NMRS Rep is Sallie Bassham).

English Heritage Review

Ivor Brown

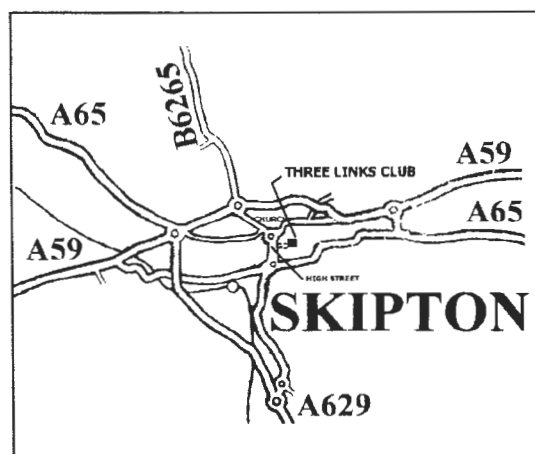
Paul Sowan writes:

"At the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) conference at Truro recently I learned that there is a national-level review of English Heritage in progress, and that an input from the public is sought. This review has hardly been well publicised, and I am aware of no invitation to voluntary organisations to submit comments. I wrote to EH on 29th July with a view to taking part in the public consultation, and received a telephone call from them today, 7th August, to tell me that the deadline for submissions had passed, on Friday 4th August. However, the deadline has been extended to, Monday 14th August, and I have been promised a 'pack' in the post, first-class, to enable Subterranea Britannica to make representations.

Any other individuals or organisations wishing to make some input should telephone EH at Savile Row as a matter of urgency to get in on this exercise! The telephone number is 020-7973-3000 - ask for the Chief Executive's Office - re. the English Heritage Review exercise."

This was received from Paul on 10th August, and obviously, by the time the newsletter comes out the deadline will have passed. This is unfortunate, but it may be worthwhile to make late representations if you have any. - Ed

Location map for Autumn Meeting



Rookhope Old Smelt Mill (Rispey)

The old smelt mill at Rookhope has been seriously damaged by an emergency operation to contain polluted minewater from the recently closed Frazer's Complex just upstream. According to press reports, the Environment Agency had, in their haste, failed to check their own lists of protected ancient monuments before constructing lagoons to contain the minewater which was about to come out into Rookhope Burn.

Apparently the agency had failed to consult the county archaeologist and had not responded to his telephoned attempts to intervene. Sadly it seems 60% of the site has been destroyed but it is hoped a full dig will be carried out to see what can be saved. The Agency agreed to continue work at the site from mid-February under the supervision of an archaeologist. They admitted mistakes were made "but we have made recommendations about procedures for teams in the Environment Agency which we hope will be taken up to ensure we always check before moving in". While the Agency would be acting with the best of motives in an emergency, one can't help but wonder why they shouldn't have checked their lists in any case. The site is a scheduled ancient monument on private land and obviously we should avoid further disturbance.

Mining Sites at Risk

NAMHO Newsletter

One of Cumbria's major former mining centres is among 35 county sites featured on the next "at risk" register drawn up by English Heritage.

Nenthead mine, near Alston, was singled out as the most important mining and processing complex in the North Pennines orefield.

English Heritage chairman Sir Neil Cossons warned that, along with many of the nation's finest civic and public buildings, it was in danger of being lost forever because of decay or redundancy.

Another historic site at risk in the Carlisle area is Roachburn Colliery in Farlam. Also listed are Whitehaven's Saltom pit, Hudgill lead mine at Alston and Greenside lead mine at Glenridding.

Cumberland News - 23.06.00 - Submitted by Alastair Lings.

British Mining

John Goodman is selling his collection of British Mining Journals, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11 and 13-59, a collection of 54 books plus index and Bibliography.

All reasonable offers to John Goodman at 18 Dolcoath Avenue, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 8RY. Telephone: 01029 713113.

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 Decembert, 2000 Newsletter by 19th November, please, to:

John Hunter, 3 Leebrook Drive, Owlthorpe, Sheffield, S20 6QG. Tel: 0114 251 4883. Email: john@hunteruk.freemove.co.uk

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