



The Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter — December 2000

Society Meetings - 2001

Saturday,
24 March.

NMRS Annual Dinner and AGM, at The Wensleydale Heifer, West Burton, Leyburn, DL8 4LS (0196 962 2322).
Booking form will be enclosed with February newsletter.

Provisional Programme (dates and details to be confirmed)

April

Halkyn (N Wales) - strenuous underground tour.

May

Grinton area (Swaledale) - surface and underground visit.

June

Swinnergill (Keld area) - mainly underground.

July

Kisdon Hill (Keld area) - surface walking

August

Whiteaside/Moulds (Swaledale/Arkengarthdale) underground trip

September

Tom Leonard Museum (Skinningrove) & Boulby Potash (deepest mine in Europe)

October

Teesdale - surface and underground
Autumn General Meeting - slides/social

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2001 Subscriptions - Due on January 1st

Subscriptions have been held at 1996 levels— for the last time! Unfortunately, due to rising costs of publication, subscriptions will have to go up for the year 2002.

Please note that as from 6th April this year, Deeds of Covenant forms, the process by which the Society recovers tax already paid to the Inland Revenue, were replaced by Gift Aid Declarations. Help your society to make the most of your subscription by completing the Gift Aid Declaration on the back of the enclosed subscription renewal form. Additional guidance notes are provided on p.12.

Visit our website: <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/NMRS.html>



Meet the Committee

The Committee is responsible for the day to day running of the Society, and spends a great deal of money on members' behalf. It is likely, however, that many of our far-flung members will never have met the Committee and know of them only as a name on the end of an Officer's report. We have, therefore, prepared the following brief notes about each of us. We are always happy to have comments on our efforts, even the not so good ones, as it helps us in our endeavours to serve members interests efficiently. If you are in doubt about which of us you need, use the contact address which appears on our publications etc. Better still, come along to the AGM or Autumn Meeting and say your piece.

President/Recorder - Mike Gill

A former mining surveyor with degrees in Archaeological Sciences and Economic History, Mike has been on the Committee, with one short gap, since the late 1960s. He has represented the Society at NAMHO and has served as that body's Chairman and Secretary.

Vice President - Bob Burns

An Aero-Acoustics Engineer with degrees in Aeronautical Engineering and Environmental Factors in Engineering, who has been on the Committee since 1985. His special interests include the mines and mineral railways of West Devon and East Cornwall, and steam locomotive preservation- railways

Junior Vice President - Colin Hindle

As well as working for Rail Track's Engineering & Planning Department, Colin is also interested in historic railways. After serving as Treasurer for six or seven years, he stood down at the AGM but is still on the Committee as Junior Vice President. He has a general interest in mining in the Northern Pennines, especially digging in Teesdale, but has not been as active recently as he would like to be. Colin also has an interest in amateur and vintage radio.

Secretary - Steve Mitchell

Joined the Society in 1994 and initially it was just one of several of his interests. Following a fateful meeting at the bottom of Brewery Shaft at Nenthead 18 months later, a rapid "education" process followed and the interest became an obsession. Steve was persuaded to become "acting secretary" in 1998. If anyone spots a blue 1968 Morris Oxford at a field meet, it is Steve's. He is also a classic car enthusiast.

Treasurer - Barry Sudell

Elected to office at the 1999 AGM, Barry's interests include caving and cave diving, mine exploration and recording, and model aircraft.

Editor - Hazel Mary Martell

A former Librarian, with a Masters Degree in Local History, who writes children's non-fiction books and historical romance novels. Hazel has been associated with the Society since 1968 and was Librarian in the early 1970s.

Newsletter Editors - John & Alison Hunter

John and Alison returned recently from working overseas and have now settled in Yorkshire. John, a member since 1966, is a former mineral exploration and mining geologist who is now involved in the investigation of contaminated land. He is interested in most aspects of mining history, as well as orefield geology and the movement of fluids and gases underground. Alison, also a geologist, was director of a small geological museum before returning to her home county. She is now a volunteer at the Sheffield Botanical Gardens, keeping records of the restoration project and helping with the digging, weeding and planting.

Librarian - Sallie Bassham

A retired university lecturer with an interest in the botany and ecology of mining and smelting sites. Sallie is also the Society's NAMHO representative.

Meet Leaders

The secretary will always welcome offers from members to organize and lead a field meeting.

If you have a suggestion for a meet, please contact Steve Mitchell (c/o 38 Main Street, Sutton in Craven, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 7HD)

Society Projects

In furtherance of its aims, the Society occasionally sponsors specific projects which are felt to be important enough to advance the subject of mining history. This would not, however, normally include the day to day research which many members undertake. Examples of such support are the underground consolidation work done by the Cumbria Amenity Trust at Coniston Copper Mine; the archaeological excavation of a potentially ancient piece of mined ground at Alderley Edge Copper Mine; and the taking of a set of low-angle oblique aerial photographs of mining landscapes in Nidderdale and Wharfedale by a professional photographer. The first of these helped to stop a valuable example of 19th century timber head frame from falling into an underground shaft. The second was done at a time when such work was at its infancy and by many thought unlikely to yield results. The third was done at a time when the concept of studying entire industrial landscapes, in this case mining, was again in its infancy.

This year, therefore, the Society commissioned an earthwork survey of the mining landscape near Stump Cross Caverns, at Pateley Bridge. The many reasons for choosing this site include: ease of access, owner's willingness to permit work, its inclusion in the earlier aerial photo-

graphic project, and the longevity of mining - from the 14th century to the 20th century. The aim was to produce a highly detailed, archaeological survey of the area at a scale of 1/500. Besides all shafts, opencuts, hillocks, water-courses, roads, buildings etc, this would include any identifiable features such as changes in spoil type which might be associated with mineral processing. As well as evaluating the best method(s) of doing such surveys, to the required accuracy, the project will result in a map and accompanying data which will be used to develop techniques to help us identify a relative chronology for such complex landscapes. The results will be published and the methodology made available for similar projects elsewhere.

The work has been done by Martin Roe and Anna Davies who, despite working in one of our 'better' summers, have surveyed a moderate sized area between Jamie Mine and the Grassington to Pateley Bridge Road. They have submitted an interim report of their work to the Society and gave an impressive presentation to members at the Autumn Meeting.

Mike Gill

Library News

Many thanks to two members who have donated material to the library. John Knight sent Bill Lang's "Death of a Landmark" from Yorkshire Life, September 1972. The article is about the demolition of the Rosedale ironstone mine chimney. Rob Needham sent "Disaster at the Colliery, John Edwin Vaughan 1859-1892". This is a set of newspaper cuttings about the Ashton Vale Colliery disaster.

Issue 27 of "Archive" has just arrived. It includes a superb article by Tony Fretwell about lead mining in Middleton-in-Teesdale. This is a follow-up article to some photographs and a brief article which had appeared in Issue 23. This included fascinating pictures, which include Skear's Low Level (with wagons and a grindstone, Coldberry North Level (with miners emptying a wagon) and

a leat on Hudhope Burn at Coldberry North. The later article has several photographs of Coldberry including Hunt's Level, North Level, the incline for a shaft on Hunt's Coldberry Vein, Firestone and North Level tips and the London Lead Company Agent's home, Middleton House.

Sallie Bassham

Publications

News of new editions of British Mining and the Society's Memoirs will be provided by the publications editor in future newsletters.

Hazel Martell

Sadly missed...

Eleanor Greenough

It is with regret that we report the death of Eleanor Greenough in August. She was a member of long standing, first with her husband, Geoff (a former President and Treasurer), and then on her own after his death in 1991.

Eleanor was a valuable Committee member and was librarian from 1991 to 1997. She attended meetings whenever possible, despite the distances, but in recent years her health prevented this. At a first meeting, she could appear a most formidable lady, which was no doubt a result of her time as head of an infant school, but in reality she was warm hearted and had a wicked sense of humour.

Eleanor's funeral was at the parish church of St Anne's on Sea, on August 22nd, and was attended by Mike Gill, Hazel Martell and Harry and Sue Houghton. Donations in lieu of flowers were made to the National Trust, one of the many charities Eleanor supported.

ooOOOoo

F. David Heaton

F. David Heaton, another long standing member, also died in late August. Although David had not been active in recent years, some members may remember him from the Easter Meets in Cornwall, during the early 1980s, and the Pie and Pea

Suppers at Sicklinghall. In the late 1980s, David organised a very successful two day meet, which is worthy of remark. On the Saturday a small party of members made one of our first visits to the Boulby Potash Mine. They then decamped to the Appleby area, area 50 miles away, and visited the Silverband Mine on the Sunday. David had taken a great deal of trouble in preparing this meet, with detailed hand-outs and a lift up the fell in a tractor and trailer.

ooOOOoo

John Keavey

Although he was never a member of this Society, many members will be saddened to read of the death of John Keavey (1922-2000) of the Embay Railway, near Skipton. Over the years, John was a good friend to the Society and, in his position as manager of the Station Bookshop, provided a good outlet for our publication - *British Mining*.

Besides his interest in cycling, John was a tireless worker for Industrial History and is probably best known for the journal *Industrial Past*, which he founded 26 years ago and edited until recently. The latest issue opens with his last editorial.

ooOOOoo

Mining History & Related Articles in Other Journals

Hird, D.M., 2000, The Grassington Moor Lead Mines Railway. *Industrial Heritage*, Vol 26 (2), p33-36. (Describes a freight-only railway in upper Warfedale, abandoned before 1884.)

Oswald, A., 2000, Force Crag Mine: understanding underpins management. *English Heritage Conservation Bulletin*, Vol 38, p12-13. (Some results of a joint EH / National Trust / National Park survey of visible surface features.)

English Heritage, 2000, Buildings at Risk: the Register 2000. Can be obtained free from English Heritage Customer Services, PO

Box 569, SWINDON SN2 2YR
(Includes numerous industrial and military sites, some with associated underground structures.)

Ford, T.D., 2000, An unusual bit of hard stuff - Derbyshire Chert. *Geology Today*, Vol 16 (4), P143 - 148. (Concerns chert mining near Bakewell, including the geology of the formations, the mines and mining methods and a map of surface and underground workings and remains. There is also a survey of Holme Bank and Holme Hall mines.)

(from Paul Sowan)

Meet Reports

Keld Meet.

On 12 August, 17 NMRS members and friends met at the car park in Keld. Despite a forecast of extremely hot weather, a moderately sunny day made for pleasant scrambling up Old Field Hush, and those who got wet in Plate level soon dried out as they walked. It was the 'glorious twelfth'; but shooting was on the moor tops and we were able to go and look at the Beldi Hill dressing floors as well as walking along the coast-to-coast path to examine the smelt mill - and deplore its continuing deterioration. Many levels were identified, but few explored. However, the *young and energetic* went to Parkes and Swinnergill levels, while the rest of us examined the restoration work done at Crackpot Hall and explored Old Field Hush, its levels, reservoirs and hush-dams. By the end of the afternoon, the 17 who started the walk had reduced to four; but all who endured to the end (including the meet leader) saw levels they had not known before. Many thanks to all who came and contributed their knowledge, experience and analytical skills in interpreting the various sites. There were however, a couple of questions which no-one could answer. Can any reader help?

QUESTIONS:

At what date was New Level driven and by whom?

It does not seem to be mentioned in Raistrick's books, has anyone got documentary references to it?

Sallie Bassham

Addendum from the "young and energetic"

A group of four split from the main party after the sandwich stop at Beldi Hill smelt mill. We ascended Swinnergill to reconnoitre for potential underground meets for next year. Sites included Parkes level, Swinnergill level, Swinnergill Kirk (an interesting diversion for prayers - actually this is natural cave where C17th religious Dissenters met secretly to avoid persecution) and numerous other levels in the Beldi Hill area to the north of Crackpot Hall (noted to have been rebuilt from its former ruinous state). Richard Platt was eager to offer his undoubted expertise and will be organis-

ing two Swaledale meets next year (including the above mentioned underground venues).

Steve Mitchell.

Boulby Potash Mine meet (4th October 2000)

This meet was organised by Derrek King to compensate for the cancelled meet at the same venue in 1999. Actually only the underground component of the 1999 meet was cancelled - in the event we were shown the potash processing plant and the local C19th / early C20th iron stone mine workings (Grinkle mine).

A talk / video show was given explaining the geology, the extent of the mine workings and the markets for the potash and salt produced. Safety checks were made (no cameras, quartz watches or car alarm fobs) and self rescuers explained. We were then led to the air doors at the shaft top and ushered into a cage to descend 1100 m (the deepest shaft in Europe) to the shaft bottom. The temperature rose as we descended and when we reached the bottom it was about 40° C. From here we were loaded into the back of a specially converted Transit van (there are a fleet of them) and driven 8 km out under the North Sea. The journey was made in the salt layer immediately under the potash, as this is more stable for tunnelling. As we approached the potash panel, a ramp took us up through the salt into the potash strata. At the panel face the immense automated cutting machine (drilling and blasting is no longer used) and the roof bolting machine were demonstrated. Comparisons with the "Thunderbirds" TV series were made and these were not far wide of the mark. We returned to the surface after a trip lasting around 3 hours and each of us having lost about 3 pints of sweat! Finally, a visit to the winding house to look at the "English Electric" winding gear was made. We were told this was purchased second hand from South Africa in 1973 when the mine was opened.

Thanks are due to the management of Cleveland Potash Ltd and in particular to Neil Rowley who made this extraordinary visit possible.

Steve Mitchell.

Mining History Discussion List

If you have email, why not join the mining-history e-mail discussion list devoted to the history and archaeology of mining? It is a useful way of getting answers to questions and finding out what others are working on. Discussion is usually good natured, though it sometimes gets obsessed with inane lists (headgears, deaths in mines etc), which would be far better put on the sender's web-site.

Please note the following change of server:

The discussion list is part of the JISC funded communications within UK higher education. As a result of competitive tendering, the provision of support for discussion lists within JISC is being transferred from 'mailbase' at the University of

Newcastle to CLRC at the Rutherford Appleton, Didcot. The transition is due to take place on 27 Nov. 2000, after which date the mining-history list will be known as:

mining-history@jiscmail.ac.uk

Further information on the transition is available at the following URL - **www.jiscmail.ac.uk**

Transfer to jiscmail will not immediately affect existing users of the list and the 'mailbase' address will remain effective for at least 6 months with all messages being forwarded to the new address.

Peter Cloughton

P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

(co-owner mining-history discussion list.)

Mining on the Internet

There are many mining related web sites and the quality as with most of the Internet varies. Perhaps the easiest way to categorise them is as the good, the bad, and the ugly.

An introduction to the slate industry of North and Mid Wales. Author - Dave Sallery This site begins by clearly stating its aims. It is not intended to cover every quarry, of which there were several hundred. Neither does it go into great detail over extraction methods, labour, geology, preserved railways etc. This is a well-constructed site dealing with the slate industry of mid- and North Wales. The photographs are good; the download time is a little slow but worth the wait. Verdict: I like a site that states its aims and sticks to them, *GOOD*.

(<http://www.btinternet.com/~fourfoot/Slate>)

An Introduction to Underground Archaeology. This site is relatively new and it is fair to say that it is still under construction. Mining is only a small part of this site's interest which reminds us that there are many subterranean sites that can be considered archaeology. The photographs are excellent and the down load time is acceptable. The author Nick Catford describes the web site as dedicated to providing quality images of dis-used, man-made underground structures.

Verdict: It does what it says on the packet *GOOD* (<http://www.swanley1.freemove.co.uk/>)

Lead Mining in Weardale. One for the genealogists here. Lists of names taken from bargain books along with the briefest information on a selection of mines. Fast download times but the layout and page backgrounds are not nice.

Verdict: Sorry but this one is *BAD*

(<http://www.johnstark.demon.co.uk/leadfram.htm>)

The British Mining Database. As it says on the home page, this site consists of a number of websites covering mines throughout the UK and Ireland as well as pages listing societies, useful sources, etc. This site maintained by Adrian Pierce is basically a list of lists. Good place to find links but not always the most interesting site. Fast download times and updated regularly.

Verdict: Worth a look.

(<http://www.ap.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/BMD.HTM>)

Wanlockhead Lead Mining Museum. This is the first professionally maintained site on the list. The people at the Lead Mining Museum at Wanlockhead have cleverly taken the time to secure the domain name Leadmining museum which should ensure many visitors to this site. It is a pity that they then failed to employ some one

who knows about lead mining to write the information on the site. For example, "The Lead ore is taken to the surface where it is separated from other waste materials. This process is called Dressing the Ore. This was usually done by boys for as young as 8 years old. Once the lead ore is separated it is washed. The ore is then crushed by machinery and graded. It is riddled and crushed and then washed again until it was quite clean. Since lead is heavier than any other material it sinks to the bottom and the rest of the waste material is washed away". There are several other little gems like this. The site is well constructed and has a fast download time but the choice of colours used is not nice.

Verdict: Ugly, primary colours are not nice on web browsers.

(<http://www.leadminingmuseum.co.uk/Index.htm>)

Peak District Mining History Society. This site introduces our friends from Derbyshire as "the active mining history society". Worth a look just to see what the opposition are doing, which despite of their earlier claim does not appear to be much. Nasty downloads; please guys get rid of the gif images.

Verdict: Ugly, sorry!

(<http://www.tidza.demon.co.uk/>)

The Mining History Network. Maintained by Roger Burt at Exeter University this site has many useful features including an extensive mining bibliography, and very large links page. This site should be on your list of favourites.

Verdict: GOOD.

(<http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/>)

Photos Needed!

Rob Vernon would appreciate more (recent) photos of interesting mining sites for the next edition of the *NAMHO* Heritage Guide. Rob can be contacted at:

c/o Peak District Mining Museum,
The Pavilion, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire DE4
3NR

Remember, copies of current *NAMHO* guide can be obtained from the above address, price £4.60.

Lead Mining in the Yorkshire Dales. The appearance of the last site prompted me to put together my own web site devoted to lead mining in the Yorkshire Dales. It contains lots of general information on mining archaeology as well as tours of several areas. I have recently added a separate section on coal mining around Halifax. Verdict: have a look and let me know. (<http://www.mroe.freemove.co.uk>)

The olde lead smelt mills of The Yorkshire Dales. This site has already been reviewed in this newsletter and since then, it has changed and probably improved. It is still however full of errors and some very strange ideas about lead mining and smelting. Unfortunately, this site has managed to get listed with a lot of search engines and directories which means that many people will find it and accept its content as fact.

Verdict: BAD

(<http://www.ayresnet.swinternet.co.uk/olsarchboldset.htm>)

Killhope Lead Mining Centre. Killhope does not fare much better. This time the site is maintained by Durham County Council. The site contains very little information about the site or lead mining in the area. More photographs would certainly encourage more visitors. It appears to be a web version of their tourist information leaflet.

Verdict: Ugly more information and images needed.

(<http://www.durham.gov.uk/durhamcc/usp.nsf/web/pages/killhope+index+page>)

Northern Mine Research Society. Finally, don't forget the NMRS web pages which contain information about events, publications etc.

(<http://www.ex.ac.uk/%7ERBurt/MinHistNet/NMRS.html>)

Martin Roe

Moving?

If you change your address, please help us by notifying:

The Secretary
c/o 38 Main Street,
Sutton in Craven,
Keighley,
West Yorkshire BD20 7HD

Slate Inclined

Bryneglwys Slate Quarry: There has been a recent fall within a chamber on 20c level. Anyone intending to enter the workings should be most careful.

South Dorothea Slate Quarry: The tips have been disturbed as slate waste has been used for hardcore etc. for the new Penygroes bypass.

Nantlle Tramway: A wall of stone sleepers from the tramway has been found during clearance work for the Penygroes bypass. The tramway was 3'6" gauge and was horse-worked until closure. It was used by many of the Nantlle Slate Quarries.

Pen-yr-Orsedd Slate Quarry: Working has recommenced on the southern side as McAlpine is trying to get to the green band slate. A number of the old buildings are in danger of destruction.

Oakely Slate Quarry: It is understood that McAlpine has paid off a number of workmen that were taken on last year. The site was formerly part of the closed Gloddfa Ganol tourist attraction. Much of the quarry has now been untopped.

Llechwedd Slate Quarry: After the closure of the working pit by the Inspectorate some 18 months ago, the quarry is now said to be "struggling". The tourist operation has apparently had a good season, and without it, the quarry would probably be closed.

Croes y Ddwy Afon Slate Quarry: The site which was reopened in the 1980's has been abandoned and all the "new" buildings have gone. All that currently remains on site is a JCB digger. The former levels are sited at the rear of the property. The pit is now flooded and the water has a noticeable blue hue, looking like a scene from a film on a tropical island!

Caermeinciau Slate Quarry: On the main dressing level and near the quarry office, a wall appears to have collapsed recently. The site is much larger than I first thought and well worth a visit.

Dorothea Slate Quarry: Grant aid has been secured from CADW (Welsh Historic Monuments) and work has now started on the restoration of the beam engine. Stage 1 is to remove asbestos from the cylinders.

Aberllefenni Slate Quarry: A slab waggon similar to that used by the quarry on the Corris Railway has been rebuilt by a member of the Corris Railway Society and now stands proudly in the yard at Maespoeth.

Croesor Slate Quarry: Photographs were taken of a manifold during a recent visit. This is currently sited on the hillside close to one of the air shafts. It has obviously been dumped, probably because it was too heavy.

Notes kindly supplied by John A. Knight

Our Mining Heritage

The Presidential Address delivered to the North East Branch of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy by N.W. Jackson on 21 October, 1999, was published in full in *International Mining and Minerals*, Volume 3, No 31, July 2000, pages 185 - 190. In his address, Mr. Jackson outlines his family's long association with coal mining in the Northumberland coalfield. The article deals briefly with the decline and future prospects for the industry in this area and then describes in detail the historical liabilities and legacies remaining from centuries of coal mining. Included among these is the discharge of water at the surface

from flooded mines, which, in some cases, requires pumping to control. Emission of the gases firedamp and stythe (essentially, mixtures of methane, carbon dioxide and nitrogen) is common and requires both sealing and positive ventilation of workings. The unsightly wastes left by tipping on beaches is also being attended to and the coastlines are undergoing a much needed facelift with the benefit of Millennium Commission funding.

John Hunter

The Application of Water Power in Mining

**A mining history conference to be held at the University of Wales,
Aberystwyth, UK, July 2002.**

Preliminary notice and 1st call for papers.

Water has proved a hindrance to mining since its inception but it has also been used to the benefit of operations from antiquity until the present day. The positive use of water power was initially limited to the hydraulic working of alluvial and soft rock deposits. By the late medieval period it had been applied as the motive power for pumping and other processes ancillary to mining. Its heyday came during the 19th century when waterwheels and turbines provided the power for a range of applications on mine sites across the world.

In Wales, the metal mines of the Cambrian mountains provided ideal locations for the application of water power to pumping, winding and, later, for generating electricity. A high average rainfall and locations remote from the major coalfields meant water generally found favour over the use of steam power. Examples of the use of water power, and the infrastructure developed to support it, from the period of Roman occupation through to the 20th century can be found within easy reach of the conference venue at Aberystwyth.

Papers are invited on the subject of the application of water power in all aspects of mining from across the world. In addition to examples of its application, based on archival and archaeological research, papers are particularly requested on technological innovation and the economics of water power.

Outlines of papers for submission should be sent to the conference co-ordinator-

**Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Rosebush, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire,
Wales SA66 7RE, UK e-mail: P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk**

This conference will be the central theme of the UK based National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) meeting for 2002, hosted by the Welsh Mines Society, with a full programme of related field trips and underground visits.

Further information will be posted to the Internet on the UK based e-mail discussion list -

mining-history@mailbase.ac.uk

which, from 27 November 2000, will be known as

mining-history@jiscmail.ac.uk

plus the North American based list - MiningHistory@egroups.com - and on the Web at the following URL -

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/namho_02.htm

Information will also be circulated to the various mining interest groups in the UK and, if requested, overseas.

Nidderdale AONB Archaeology Working Party

The Society is represented on the AONB's Archaeological Advisory panel by its President, Mike Gill. Our early efforts concentrated on ensuring the place of archaeology and local history within the developing policies of the AONB and establishing a number of objectives for furthering our understanding of these topics. A guiding principle was the importance of using people with specialist skills to inspire, guide and, where necessary, supervise groups of interested local people in the study of their areas. We then moved on to preparing possible projects for furthering these aims.

The AONB is now putting together a bid for £1.5 million of Heritage Lottery Funding spread over three years. If the bid is successful, this sum will be matched by other funds and part of that money will be invested in projects to investigate and manage the area's heritage. Besides conservation and interpretation of heritage landscapes, this will include improvements in access and measures to maintain and enhance local distinctiveness.

In the last three years or so a Community Archaeology Project, begun by Harrogate Council and run by Kevin Cale, has successfully encouraged locals to examine their areas in detail through WEA night classes and weekend fieldwork. The approach has been to study farmsteads, rather than entire parishes, because results are achieved more rapidly. The classes use a wide range of sources, including aerial photographs, maps and fieldwork. Recently, they produced a report on the 40 fields associated with Mineral Farm, Dacre. Industrial remains include a number of shallow shafts which worked ironstone and probably a thin coal seam.

Mike Gill

A Forgotten Literary Goldmine

The study of ancient mining in this country received a great boost some 20 years ago when several copper mines in Wales were attributed to the Bronze Age by ¹⁴C dating. Since then, there has been almost an industry producing books and papers, from popular to academic, combined with a flurry of archaeological activity at many widely dispersed sites within these islands. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the same exploratory zeal has been applied to the most fundamental of sources - the written word. It is a common failing to which I myself must plead guilty, even after half a century of keeping my eyes open, and yet still somehow missing a vital source until by chance encountering it quite recently in the library of John Bennett. How such a work can have fallen so far into obscurity is a total mystery.

I refer to Alexander Del Mar's *A History of the Precious Metals*, first published in 1880. Its absence from the bibliography of early mining is all

the more remarkable since in its day, and for long afterwards, the work was heralded as a classic in its broad approach and sheer scope. Unlike the narrow treatment of many modern studies, its 500 pages covers, with a depth of practical learning, not only mines and mining all over the ancient and later world, but equally important, the economic and political factors behind such activities - influences which very often were quite different from those assumed today.

Del Mar was an American mining engineer of widespread experience. He exposes, in country after country, the rapacious greed of conquering nations for gold and silver, and the appalling effects of slavery and how such methods renders void any attempt to apply modern economic ideas to such activities. Del Mar was well equipped for such a task, for he was also Director of the U.S. Bureau of Statistics and a Commissioner to the U.S. Monetary Commission, enabling him also to explain the important role of

coinage in the demand for precious metals and copper. He gives details of the enormous quantities of gold obtained from the ancient world from alluvial and placer deposits, pointing out that hard-rock mining came relatively late on the scene. His evidence is backed up by production statistics and a very extensive bibliography, much of it from classical authors.

A History of Precious Metals was revised in 1902, and a reprint appeared in 1969 as one of a series of economic classics published in New York. It sometimes turns up in booksellers catalogues and I have been lucky enough to get one. I feel it is the most important and informative book on early mining history I have ever read.

David Bick, Pound House, Newent, Gloucs.
(8/8/00)

Book Review

MINING IN CORNWALL - Volume 3: Penwith and South Kerrier - L.J. Bullen.

I've not seen the first two volumes (The Central District and The County Explored) in this series by Joff Bullen, but on the strength this one I'll be rectifying that. For those of us 'up country', the area covered is the very end of the Cornish peninsula, which was rich in tin and copper. Many of the photographs have not been published before and show the industry during a phase of modernisation during the first part of the 20th century. Though steam power continued to be important at this time, many photographs show the gradual

transition to the use of electricity. That this change was almost complete by 1950 is shown in the set of photographs covering Geevor Mine.

In the past I've complained that too many books on Cornish Mining are based almost solely on either the Mining Journal or photographs. In this paperback book, which at £9.99 is good value for money, Joff has proved that there is still some mileage in the latter option.

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Mike Gill

Coalfield Mapping

Geological mapping of the Coal Measures by the British Geological Survey now consists primarily of revision mapping, i.e., evaluating and adjusting geological maps that were produced in the early part of the 20th century and integrating them with modern data. Existing maps are transferred to topographic bases and used to generate digital 3D models which can be compared with scanned and registered air photographs using digital photogrammetric techniques. Additional information from the BGS archive of borehole logs, other underground mining records and field checking is incorporated. The final maps are compiled at a 1:10,000 scale and will be published as digital geological maps. (from International Mining and Minerals, Vol 3, No 30, June 2000)

John Hunter

Polluting Water from Abandoned Mine Workings

An article featuring the work of a NERC-funded research project into polluting water issuing from abandoned coal and metalliferous mines has been published in NERC News, Autumn 2000, (p12-13). Information is given on the dynamics of pH changes with time resulting from the relative quantities of pyrite and calcium carbonate present in the material being leached underground. Reference is made to the Wheal Jane mine in Cornwall and to the Kilton Beck mine in Cleveland.

Copies of the journal can be obtained free from:
National Environmental Research Council,
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
SWINDON
Wiltshire SN2 1EU
(email: requests@nerc.ac.uk)

(from Paul Sowan)

The Caldbeck Agreement

On 5th April, 2000, a sub-committee established by the Lake District National Park Authority to consider licences for mineral collecting on Caldbeck Common, met to review applications from four groups and about 20 individuals for licences to collect minerals. Three of the four groups, and 10 individuals were granted licences based upon clearly stated objectives and realistic assessment of risks. A further five individuals were granted licences subject to conditions and restrictions,

while one group and five individuals were refused licences. This agreement could become the model for similar schemes in other areas, such as the Peak District and Dartmoor, which have also suffered damage to historic mining sites from uncontrolled mineral specimen collection.

From: Geology Today, Vol 89, May-June 2000

Gift Aid Declaration

A new, simple and flexible procedure for recovering tax on charitable donations came into effect on 6th April this year. Called Gift Aid, it consists of a one-time declaration to be signed by each member / donor. The only other requirement is that you pay UK Income Tax (or Capital Gains Tax) of at least £4.20 per year for ordinary members. Signing the form costs nothing and no further forms are required to be signed in the future. The subscriptions themselves, of course, still need to be renewed annually. Please read the following guidance notes:

1. You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the Society.
2. You must notify the Society if, in the future, you no longer pay tax on your income or capital gains equal to the amount of tax reclaimed by the Society.
3. You cannot back-date subscriptions made before 6 April, 2000.
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.
5. Existing Deeds of Covenant may run their current four year period. If you recently signed a Deed of Covenant, you need not sign a Gift Aid Declaration, although no problem is created by doing so. If in doubt, sign a Gift Aid Declaration - you will not lose anything if you do.
6. If you have any further questions about Gift Aid tax relief, you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Finally...

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all readers!

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please keep sending articles and other material suitable for publication - it is greatly appreciated. Contributions in text (*.txt) format by email or diskette are most welcome, but please don't hesitate to send submissions on paper if necessary. Photos, plans and sketches can be scanned. Diskettes will be returned with the following newsletter unless instructed otherwise. Contributions for February newsletter by 16th February please, to:

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Tel: 0114 251 4883. Email: john@hunteruk.freemove.co.uk

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