



The Northern Mine Research Society

Issue
1

Newsletter - December 2002

Society Meetings -2003

Provisional Field Meet Programme (Dates & details to be confirmed)

Sunday **March 30th 2003. Ingleton Coalfield and Storrs Quarry** (Joint meet with PDMHS).
Leader: Bernard Bond, Tel. (015242) 41857 Meet – 10.30am at 1 Beech Terrace, Tatterthorne Lane, Ingleton. NGR SD688722. At the Mason's Arms, turn south off the A65 into Tatterthorne Lane for 500 metres. Meet outside Bernard Bond's house, which once belonged to Edmund Danson, manager of the nearby Wilson Wood Colliery. From there, it is intended to walk to Storrs Quarry for which Bernard has photographs from 1926 onwards. There will then be the opportunity for a quick lunch at Bernies Cafe, followed by a circular tour of the various collieries, a brickworks site and the New Colliery Village. Around four miles of easy walking across fields.

April Teesdale (Tony Fretwell 01388 605965)

May (after Easter) Buckden Gavel (Malcolm Needham)

June Swaledale/Arkengarthdale (Richard Platt)

July Gillheads/Appletreewick (Martin Roe)

August Swaledale/ Arkengarthdale (Richard Platt)

September Faggertill (possibly joint meet with EMRG)

October Goldscope/Newlands Valley Lake District (I Tyler)

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NEWSLETTER ISSUE NUMBER

The Newsletter Editor recently received a request for the Newsletters to be sequentially numbered. In response to this it will be seen that the present issue is numbered No1.

RECORDER'S REPORT

There has been a steady trickle of material coming into the Records this year. This includes modern company reports on South Crofty Mine and Welsh Gold plc; census and parish register material for Swaledale and Wensleydale; pictures of Long Fell Barytes Mine; and data on coal mining in the Dales. This material is not swallowed up and lost, however. It is regularly used by people who are researching specific areas.

MEET REPORT GRASSINGTON 17 August 2002

Eight members met at Yarnbury and spent three hours wandering over Grassington Moor in bright sunshine looking at a variety of lead-mining remains. The meet leader then gave up exhausted and the others went off in twos and threes to find levels, shafts, buddles and mineral specimens.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park have re-written some of the interpretation boards for the lead-mining trail and these were followed for part of the walk. In addition to looking at lanes, barns and fields as they appear now, photographs showed how they were altered for use as background and props in the filming of *Wuthering Heights* here some years ago.

We looked at buildings, tramway, water courses, reservoirs, shafts, bouse teams, meerstones, slags, mills, wheel pits, flues and condensers. Many thanks to all who contributed to lively debates on what? why? and how? at the various sites. Those with good memories provided dates, those with good eyesight found notable slag and mineral specimens, those with wide experience made comparisons with similar sites elsewhere and those with good minds provided convincing arguments. Many thanks to you all for an interesting time.

Sallie Bassham

JOINT MEETING WITH PDMHS

This event, on November 9th, was organised as part of our policy of forging closer ties at Society level and encouraging co-operation between members who share similar interests. This is felt to be important for the development of mining history as both societies have long since shown that there is much more to the subject than simple exploration for its own sake.

Members gathered at Calver village hall, which proved to be a comfortable and self-contained location for such a meeting. There was even a bar and an excellent buffet lunch. The speakers had 20 minutes to talk on aspects of their work and the topics covered included the search for a murder weapon (a gun) in deep, partly flooded shafts around Magpie Mine using plant and resources not usually available to us; the cutting of peat for lead smelting; oil shale and silver mining in the Austrian Alps; the demise of massive drag-lines and other earth movers used in opencasting; the detailed archaeological recording of multi-period landscapes in both the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales National Parks; the importance of the volunteer work underpinning the Peak District Mining Museum and the increasing difficulty in getting and retaining enthusiastic helpers; the importance of British capital and expertise in working mines in southern Spain; a study of mine shops, their archaeology and function; the Swaledale Bales Project; subterranean ventures in the 1950s and 1960s; population studies of lead mining settlements; and the Kennecott Copper Mines in Alaska.

The day was a great success and, besides the varied talks, gave an opportunity for people to renew contacts and discuss the details of their projects. Alan Mutter, who organised the event for our Peak District hosts, is to be congratulated on his choice.

The Spring Meeting (Annual Dinner and AGM)

This is to be held on Saturday 22nd March at The Wensleydale Heifer Inn, West Witton near Leyburn. The meal will be begin at 1.00 pm to be followed by the AGM at 3.00 pm. Full details of the menu, with a booking form, will appear in the February Newsletter.

Gloucester Mines Research Group

On Thursday 3rd October 2002 the South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group held their Inaugural meeting. It was held, appropriately enough, in the former Miners Institute in Coalpit Heath and the amount of recent interest in this subject was reflected in an attendance of about thirty people with several more giving their apologies. An outline of the intentions of the group and the reasons for setting it up was given followed by open discussion. The area covered includes the whole of South Gloucestershire with historical links to Wotton-Under-Edge and the Cotswolds, Thornbury and the Severn Basin, all the way across to Marshfield and down into Kingswood and Bristol itself. Areas of interest ranged from archaeological and documentary research through to talks and presentations. Not only is it the mines themselves that are of interest but the communities that grew up around them, the schools the chapels and the people themselves. A number of suggestions for places where restoration and preservation works could be undertaken were also made. There is also a considerable amount that could be done in recording local peoples memories & researching the family history of those who worked the mines.

A number of those at the meeting were from other organisations and local history groups. It was stressed that the intentions of the new Group were not to be a rival for membership but to compliment and work alongside these, sharing research and offering specialist expertise where appropriate. The Kingswood Museum kindly offered their support by giving access to their records of mining in the Kingswood area and the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology donated a sum of money.

A steering group was set up to organise such things as the constitution and programme as well as the general format of the group. A date for the next meeting was set for 5th December 2002. Anyone interested or seeking further information about this group or with anything they would like to share can

contact David Hardwick Tel. 01454 299 035
Email David@dhardwick.co.uk

Flood damage to mine sites

Flood damage to Hilton and Murton mine site.

In July 2002 a major flood in Scordale, Cumbria severely damaged the Hilton and Murton mine site. The remains on the valley floor, already badly degraded by decades of erosion, are now almost completely obliterated. The gully beneath Dow Scar, normally dry, now looks like a fresh hush and has carried away tons of mine waste. The stream below has changed course and is now impinging on the lower Murton tips, portions of which are beginning to slip into it. Damage to the culvert upstream has also resulted in mine waste entering the stream. Several portions of the track have been swept away preventing vehicular access by army and farmers. It remains to be seen if the track will be repaired, the damage to the mine site itself is irreparable.

Unless they cause damage to valuable property (e.g. the legendary lost silver at Greenside), or loss of life (e.g. Aberfan), such events are rarely recorded and soon forgotten. This may lead to an impression that they are unimportant as causes of damage to mining heritage and mineral localities. It seems possible that, in fact, they are a good deal more significant than generally appreciated.

I am interested in gathering further examples from the British Isles, to see if this is really the case, and would appreciate any examples readers can offer. Locality, date and a few words summarising the damage is all that is needed, for example, "Roughtongill mine, CaldbeckFells, 1895, half the tips swept away".

Please send examples to: Stephen Moreton, 33, Marina Avenue, Great Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 1HY, or e-mail to: stephenmoreton@totalise.co.uk

Book Reviews

BLOWN TO BITS IN THE MINE

by Eric Twitty.

ISBN: 189043714X; January 25, 2001

Published by Westen Reflections Publishing Company.

Obtainable from amazon.com Price \$24.95.

Hard back, 208 pp, 140 Figures.

This book is very easy and enjoyable to read, many of the figures are reproductions from manufacturers literature and are generally of good quality.

The author has an M.A. in American History and is at present researching the history of the Colorado Mines.

The book covers from about 1830 to the middle of the 20th century. The changeover from gunpowder to high explosives is well documented both for underground mining and quarrying. It describes in detail the methods of using the explosives, from drilling the holes to setting the charge and finally firing the charge.

The subjects covered are:-

Chapter 1. Explosives used in mining.

Chapter 2. The technology of mining and blasting.

Chapter 3. Miners and explosives.

Chapter 4. Open pit mining and blasting.

Chapter 5. Quarrying and blasting.

While the book is devoted to the USA the parallels with British mining and quarrying techniques are obvious because of the interchange of technology between Europe and America.

Ray Fairbairn

I am indebted to Helen Wilkinson for bring this book to my attention

THE MINE EXPLORER ISSUE V

Various authors. Published: 2002 ISBN: 0266-5700 by Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society: iv + 176pp. Price / availability: £ 9.50 + p/p from Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, The Rise, ALSTON, Cumbria CA9 3DB

Email ian@rothayholme.freemove.co.uk

This issue of The Mine Explorer, is possibly the biggest and best yet (issues 2-4 were published in 1986, 1989, and 1994), and contains reports of exploration, reports of historical research, reminiscences of former miners, and much else. A substantial and well presented volume, with a mass of information in rather small print, with numerous black and white photographs of surface and underground scenes, mine plans and sections, etc.

The individual papers are as follows:

Peter Fleming - The German copper miners at Coniston (pages 1 - 23)

Adrian Barrell - The Third Way (pp.24 - 30)

Ron Calvin - Fans and pumps, Haig colliery 1966 -1984 (pp. 31 - 36)

Ron Calvin - Lamp 184 - memories of Haig pit (pp. 37 - 38)

On Calvin - Inspection of stoppings, Haig pit, 1966 -1984 (pp. 39 - 42)

Jon Knowles - The exploration of Croesor slate mine (pp. 43 - 56)

Warren Allison - The re-opening of Lucy Tongue level, Greenside mine (pp. 57 - 61)

Anton D. Chenylle-Proctor-Thomas - Furness mine & furnace proprietors: a register of mine and furnace proprietors with operations within the districts of Furness, Cartmel, and Millom (pp. 62 - 66)

John Helme - Newland iron furnace, Part II (pp. 67 - 72)

Ian Matheson - Letters of John Barratt, 1824 -1834 (pp. 73 - 79)

Ian Matheson, Dave Bridge, and Mark Simpson - Coniston coppermines survey, 1995 -2002 (pp. 80 - 84)

Mark Simpson - Caudale slate quarry (pp. 85 - 95)

Dave Bridge - Frog shaft (pp. 96 - 116)

Peter Holmes - Haweswater aqueduct and the Mardale tunnel (117-119)

Sheila Barker - Hudgillburn mine (pp. 120 -135)

John Brown - The re-opening of Grey Crag level at Coniston coppermine (pp. 136 -139)

Richard E. Hewer - The Kennecott copper mines, Alaska, USA (pp. 140 -176)

Paul W. Sowan

METAL MINES OF LLANENGAN (Mining ventures in a North Wales parish)

by John Bennett and Robert Vernon

This is the latest book by the authors of seven other studies of mining in the Gwydyr Forest area of North Wales.

Although remote from the main mining fields, St Tudwal's Peninsula, near Abersoch on the Llyn Peninsula, has a recorded history of mining from the 1630s, when Thomas Bushell searched there for silver-lead ore. The next 240 years saw a succession of adventurers making largely fruitless searches for the elusive bonanza from the ores of lead, copper, manganese and iron. Even John Taylor came and quickly went. The profits never really materialised, however, because the mines were most productive in the 20 years or so after 1870 when lead prices were weak.

Anyone who has worked on the *Mining Journal* for this period cannot have missed the optimistic reports and share puffing statements in support of companies which were accused of the dubious practices that tainted so many Welsh mines, and the mines here were no exception. There was even criminal negligence when the lack of proper mine plans caused water from old workings to burst into the New Engine Shaft, killing three men.

The 148 page narrative is illustrated by helpful plans and sections of the mines (now largely inaccessible), plus plans of their surface layouts. There are four production tables, 20 photographs of the principal features and suggestions for a guided walk around them. It is also fully referenced with an index.

Copies are available from Gwydyr Mines Publications, 78 Oakenshaw Lane, Walton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 6NH for £15.00 each (post and packing free). Please make cheques payable to Gwydyr Mines Publications.

Mike Gill

COLLIERIES OF SOUTH WALES 2

John Cornwell Published: 2002

ISBN. 1-84306-017 Landmark Publishing: 192pp. Price £ 19.99 + p&p from Landmark Publishing, Asbbourne Hall, Cokayne Avenue, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1 EJ

Email landmark@clara.net

This substantial hardback volume, in the same style as the earlier volume, is a photographic record of 29 collieries, using over 200 photographs many of which are of underground views. There is brief text and extended captions supplementing the photographs, and an index.

The photographs include surface buildings and plant, railways and rolling stock, drift entrances and shaft-tops, spoil tips, miners' housing, personnel, underground roadways and faces, and roadheaders and coal cutters. These are supplemented with some maps and mine plans.

The collieries featured in this volume are Aberaman, Aberpergwm, Abertillery New Mine (formerly Rose Heyworth), Bargoed. Bedwas, Blaenavon ironworks early mining, Blaendare, Blaenserchan. Bwlfa, Cwm / Coedely. Cwmburgwm, Cymmer, Elliott, Ferndale, Glyn, Glyntillery, Hafodyrynys, Lianhilleth, Llanover. Mynydd Maen, North Celynen / Craig Fawr, Scotts Pit St. John's, Taff Merthyr, Treforgan, Trelewis, and Ty Trist. There are sections on 'miscellaneous collieries,' landscapes of the Rhondda valley, South Wales coking works, coalfield housing, and steam locomotives

Paul W. Sowan,

TOWER OF STRENGTH / The Story of Tyrone O'Sullivan and Tower Colliery

by Tyrone O'Sullivan with John Eve and Ann Edworthy 2001

Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh. HB DW £14.99 available from Mike

Moore:

mike@moorebooks.co.uk

Books about the miners' strike seem to be experiencing a flush of popularity in Britain today and there can hardly be anybody who was not aware of the drama being enacted at Tower Colliery in the mid 1990's. We all saw the news and read the papers, but what really went on behind the scenes. Because of the part he played in the struggle, Tyrone O'Sullivan became a kind of folk hero of the 90's and this book is written by him from the inside looking out. A good proportion of this book is taken up by setting the scene, describing the background of the miners' strike, basically the desire of the Conservative

Government to close all the mines on the grounds of cost against the wishes of the miners to keep the mines open to ensure continuity of employment and retain an industry that had, for hundreds of years, ensured that Britain maintained its place as a major manufacturing nation.

Margaret Thatcher, Arthur Scargill, Mick MaGahey, Ian MacGregor, Kim Howells, Emlyn Williams and Neil Kinock and many more players in the drama are named, praised or shamed. No matter what side you are on, this is a warts and all story, mainly warts. Tyrone comes across as a committed socialist, a David facing Goliath, a valley boy who went from mining apprentice to union official and finally to company chairman. He is committed to the fair distribution of profit amongst the workers and to supporting the local community.

The saga of how the miners, in 1995, against all odds bought Tower Colliery, with their redundancy money from British Coal is well known. What is not so well known is the blackmail, connivance and just sheer ill will that the miners were up against. Raising the money was never going to be easy, 238 miners each put £8000 of their own money into the pot. Money which could have been used to pay off loans or supplement their dole money. Instead they all took an enormous risk and invested for the future. Barclays Bank came up with £2 million and Price Waterhouse agreed to be their financial advisors for 150% on top of their final bill. The latter was Tyrone's master stroke. After 3 months, Price Waterhouse were owed so much money, there was no going back, they just had to make it work.

If raising the money was the easy part, getting the mine to work was another matter. All miners know how to haul coal, but there is more to running a mine than simply extracting the coal and the miners needed help. Fortunately they knew a man who could give the help they needed. Cliff Jones. Cliff had closed many mines and this was a chance for him to redeem himself by opening up a mine. As an experienced colliery manager he also knew what it cost to insure a mine and how to run it. Lots of interesting facts came to light. Despite British Coal trying to show that the mine was running at a loss, Tower Colliery made £4 million pound profit before tax in the first year and was able to pay off a lot of the bank loan. The second year showed a similar profit which was turned into improved conditions, with extra rest days and longer holidays. Later Tower received a government subsidy of £2.7 million to help it to compete with cheap imports from countries such as Germany where coal has a subsidy of £80 a tonne.

Marketing was always a problem. Early in Tower's existence a company called Ryan offered to buy £18 million worth of coal, only to go back on the deal when it came time to sign the contracts. Again Tyrone showed that he was nobody's fool and refused to sign. Ryan said "You will come back". He did not, they

did. With hard work, other contracts were signed including a three year contract with Aberthaw Power station which, now, if all goes well, could be the start of a twenty year contract.

The book highly readable and with Christmas coming up would be a welcome addition in any stocking.

Tony Oldham

THE ROCK CANNON OF GWYNEDD

by Griff P. Jones.

ISBN 0-9533692 -1-8. Only available from Plas Tan y Bwlch, Snowdonia National Park Environmental Studies Centre, Maentwrog, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd LL41 3YU at £8.50 including post and packing.

It is well known that Rock Cannon were habitually used to celebrate heydays and holidays in north west Wales and most people knew several survived but Griff locates well over 200 sites with full descriptions and some supported by photographs. He researches the history of individual sites, an overview of their use as well as technical details of firing methods. There are 147 pages with around 60 photographs including the largest cannon in Bethesda with 195 holes! There is a fully fisted appendix showing map reference, location and number of boles. The book is well produced and is excellent value at the price.

John A. Knight

BOX FREESTONE MINES 3RD EDITION

By Fred Tee and Simon Muir, 2002,

ISBN: 0-9539419-0-6 Available from Cotham Caving Group, 25, Sunny Hill, Sea Mills, Bristol BS9 2NG iv+76pp, 4pp colour photo's. 4pp maps/plans.

This admirable A5 paperback booklet! whilst In its own words not setting out to be a complete and definitive history of the underground building-stone quarries in and around the Box and Gorsham areas of Wiltshire! is nevertheless highly recommended as an exceptionally well presented and accessible introduction to these very extensive spaces.

The history of quarrying in the area, from Roman times onwards: is outlined with, as is to be expected, far more detail for the period following the great expansion of quarrying after the opening in 1810 of the Kennet & Avon Canal and, in 1840, of the Great Western Railway

The relationships, both functional and accidental between the GWR's Box tunnel and the Corsham and Box quarries is described, as is the conversion and use of large parts of the quarries for munitions storage from the 1930s onwards.

The geology of the stone beds, and the extraction methods used, are described. A substantial part of the booklet (pages 33 - 52) constitutes a guide for those visiting the quarries. One large coloured centrepiece map locates the several areas of undermined ground between Box and Corsham, and relates them to the Box tunnel, built up areas, and the areas shown in detail in

the recommended quarry surveys published by the Shepton Mallet Caving Club. The booklet's own three quarry plans are simplified sketches shewing the major recommended underground routes and features of interest. The seven colour photographs of the underground landscape show a built stone arch in the Cliftworks passage. a stack of ashlar blocks! a stone-built water tank, two cranes, the toolmarked last face worked, and a muck or spoil box. The main text contains, additionally, a number of black-and-white illustrations,

There is a two page bibliography which, although lacking some bibliographical details! will nevertheless be helpful to those seeking further and more detailed information. Seven pages are devoted to a glossary of local or technical terms, and there is a three-page index,

Paul W. Sowan, Subterranea Britannica, 254 Pampisford Road, 0311012002

UNDERGROUND MYTHOLOGY

edited by Sylvia P Beamon 2002 [6] + 123 + [5] pp illus. Price £15.99 + £2.25 UK or £4.00 Europe Post & Packing.

Available from: Sylvia P Beamon, 2 Morton Street, Royston, Herts. SG8 7AZ.

The editor is famous for being the founder in 1974 of Subterranea Britannica, the national society for the study of man-made and underground structures used by man. She is an author of numerous papers and books on these topics including "The Ice Houses of Britain" and The Royston Cave Used by Saints or Sinners".

This current book covers a wide range of topics under the general heading of "Underground Mythology". The numerous papers are not only thought provoking, but leave a wide gap for further research. The numerous authors, all top people in their own fields of expertise have cast new light on a little aspect of the subterranean world.

The papers include: "The Shell Grotto at Margate", "Exploring Water in Underground Mythology", "Post-Mesolithic Finds from the Bohemian Karst Region and the Exploitation of Caves in the Post Mesolithic Development of Central Europe", "The Motif of the Cave in Folk Culture", "Cave of the Nymphs - Archaic Mind, and the Symbol of a Cave (Examples from the Czech Republic)", and "Mithraism - a 'Subterranean' Religion"

But, it is the following paper which is likely to attract most discussion on the list: "Who, or What Were the Knockers or the Knackers?" by Sylvia P. Beamon. This is part of the superstitious folklore believed by miners all over the world. It is suggested that the influx of Saxony tin miners to Cornwall first highlighted the "little people" who could be heard tapping away in the depths. When the Cornish miners immigrated to

The editor has linked together these topics to show how legends can evolve through time and travel from country to country. This book takes a fresh look at fairy stories and has also touched on ancient religions, folklore and superstition. As such it will appear to mine explorers everywhere.

Tony Oldham

LIMESTONE INDUSTRIES OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES

by David Johnson

Published by Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG, price £16.99

Despite few parts of the Yorkshire Dales being unaffected by them, this is the first detailed account of the limestone quarrying and lime burning industries in and adjoining the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It covers the design and technology of pre-industrial kilns; the growth of the lime industry from mediaeval times to the industrial period; the principal figures in the area's industry, their quarries and contributions to the development of large-scale lime burning.

The book is well illustrated with photographs, figures and plans, but sadly the printer has not done justice to some of the photographs. Obviously, David Johnson could not give a detailed history of each site or its archaeology in a book of 192 pages, but he has given a great deal of background information and a very useful bibliography. Hopefully, therefore, the book will stimulate interest in the subject and this society, for one, will benefit from the results of fieldwork and research. It is a must for anyone with more than a passing interest in the extractive industries of the Dales.

Mike Gill

RECORDINGS

NORTH WEST SOUND ARCHIVE

Available from North West Sound Archive, Old Steward's Office, Clitheroe Castle, Clitheroe, Lancs. BB7 1AZ. e-mail nwsa@ed.lancscc.gov.uk

I am grateful to Bernie Bond for drawing my attention to this source of information. He wrote that '*the mining list received from them totals 28 A4 sheets listing details of each recorded tape, each A4 lists an average of twelve tape info*'.

Also included in their list is a series of Dialect Dictionaries, No4 of the series being Coal Mining cost £2

I. A. RECORDINGS

Obtainable from I. A. Recordings, P. O. Box 476, Telford, Shropshire. TF7 4RB e-mail info@iarecordings.org

Their Summer 2002 catalogue includes,

- A Tour of Clive Copper Mine**, underground exploration of an old mine 33 mins £14.95
- Snailbeach**, A history of the famous Shropshire Lead Mine 20 mins £14.95
- Visiting Snailbeach**, A dramatic introduction to the mine shown to visitors 11 mins £9.95
- Glengowla**, A tour around this amazing, mineral rich lead mine in Ireland 12 mins £6.95

The following are mining related tapes extracted from their general list.

- 17. **Sygun Copper Mine, Beddgelert** (Underground tour of this "Show" mine): 7mins £6.58
- 18. **Donisthorpe Colliery** (A surface tour before closure, inc. steam winder in use): 37mins £11.75
- 20. **Snailbeach, Shropshire's Greatest Lead Mine** (Combination of 20a+b+c): *[In Preparation]*
- 20a. **Snailbeach-The Final Frontier** (A trip from the surface down to Perkin's level): 28mins £9.87
- 20b. **Snailbeach-The Forty** (Continuing the trip from Perkin's to the 40 yard level): *in preparation*
- 20c. **Snailbeach-The Surface Remains** (A detailed above-ground tour): *[In Preparation]*
- 23. **Bagworth Colliery** (A surface tour just before closure): 45mins £11.75
- 28. **Morse's Level** (A unique underground tour of a Forest of Dean Free Mine): 19mins £9.87
- 29. **The SCMC in Cornwall** (40 mining sites recorded in 1983, 87, 93 & 94, above and below ground including underground tours of South Crofty and Cligga Head, plus Geevor mill in operation): 144mins £16.45
- 32. **The SCMC in Ireland** (17 mining sites recorded in 1995 & 96, above and below ground including underground tours of Silvermines and Tara (the largest zinc mine in Europe) and Allihies): 90mins £14.10
- 35. **Old Glengowla Lead Mine** (An underground & surface tour of a fascinating Irish lead mine.): 15 mins £9.87
- 37. **Wren's Nest East** (Exploration of the caverns & canal basin before partial infilling, 1998): 17 mins £9.87
- 42. **The SCMC at Onslow Park** (SCMC & Shropshire Mines Trust exhibits at the 1998 steam fair): 31 mins. £9.87
- 44. **Nenthead Lead Mines** (surface, plus Smallcleugh, Rampgill Horse & Capleclough Levels): 28 mins. £11.75
- 45. **Twelve Mines of Ireland** (Excerpts from C.32 with added commentary): 31mins £11.75
- 48. **Draglines** (The walking of 'Oddball', plus huge draglines at work in Northumberland): 71 mins £14.10
- 49. **Annesley-Bentinck Colliery** (tour of surface, washery & rail loading bunker): 28mins £9.87

The Editor has not viewed any of these tapes, they are included without any critical review.

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

A MINING HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH EAST

I recently had a weeks holiday in the Northern Pennines and ventured over into Co. Durham and Tyneside. I have a few notes on various developments which might be of use for the forthcoming NMRS Newsletter.

Killhope has just added an excellent Mineral exhibition. Concentrating on the mineral wealth of the orefield, some of the specimens are rather small but very high quality.

The Power of Water exhibition at Nenthead, has been open a little while, but offers excellent reconstruction's of the different types of waterwheel. Coupled with a high level walkway, one could spend hours playing with water wheels. They even have an enclosed water wheel, bringing back to life the enclosed Sedling waterwheel picture that is one of my Beamish favorites. The lighting of Brewery Shaft is also impressive, particularly the virtual falling stone.

If you recall I led a few years ago a trip to Blackdene Mine in Weardale. After our visit the processing plant was demolished, and the resulting pile of rubble has been eventually removed. The site is now transformed and grassed over, with only a small pile of rubble remaining. The level still exists with water flowing out of it. It is located at the back of the field, but is gated and padlocked.

There is a sign at the entrance to the track to Rotherhope Fell Mine at Leadgate indicating that the Mine Cottage is a building site. I didn't have time to investigate further, but I assume this development is related to the grouse moor.

While in the area I ventured into the Great Northern Coalfield. The new Roman Fort Museum, Segendum in Wallsend, next to Swan Hunter's Shipyard is not much of a Roman Fort Museum, but there is a small exhibition about the coal industry. This includes the foundations of the Wallsend 'B' Pit, although this can be inspected without entering the museum. Wallsend was the quality household coal of the 19th century, so much so that other collieries added the name.

One such colliery was West Durham Wallsend which was located in Shildon Co. Durham. I picked up a booklet Shildon Coal, at the Timothy Hackworth Railway Museum, which is a tour of the town and its coal mining heritage. A few old colliery buildings survive as well as a number of tramway trails.

I found another walk leaflet entitled Tow Law's Industrial past. This tour includes the Inkerman Bee Hive Coke Ovens that date from 1846, and Attwood Place, which was built in 1850 by the Weardale Iron Co for its founder Charles Attwood, and to provide accommodation for his Company Manager. The field opposite used to be the Ironworks which were in production between 1844 and 1882.

I also noted the new Gaunless Valley visitor centre near the Stags Head in Butterknowle. It is open daily from 11am to 3pm, Easter to September, and from October to Easter on Saturday and Sunday, also from 11-3. Unfortunately it wasn't open on a wet October Friday afternoon! It is well worthwhile some effort to get there when open, as Butterknowle and Evenwood are on the outcrop of the Durham Coalfield, and so have a coaling history leading back to Mediaeval times. Park Drift Colliery in Willington Co Durham (NZ203359), which I last visited over years ago (see Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society Newsletter no 4 Dec 1992), has now closed. The coal yard appears to have been opencasted, but the mine offices, which were the offices of NCB's Brancepeth Colliery have a new lease of life as an extension to an engineering works.

Finally I picked up an interesting book at the Darlington Railway Museum. Entitled 'Staith to Conveyor - An Illustrated History of Coal Shipping Equipment' by Terry Powell, and published by Chilton Ironworks, 23 Atherton Drive, Chilton Moor, Houghton-Le- Spring, Tyne & Wear DH5 8AN. ISBN 0 9523672 5 4. The title says it all, but it is worthwhile addition, even though there are a few typos. I believe the price is £15, £17.50 including postage but I am checking this with Chilton. I was particularly interested in the breakage problems that mechanisation presented and the various efforts that were devised to mitigate the problem, although the book doesn't go on to describe unloading methods devised by the customer.

Roger Bade