The Northern Mine Research Society

Issue 4

Newsletter - August 2003

Society Meetings -2003

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

September 21st Faggergill, Arkengarthdale
Meet leader Steve Mitchell Tel 01535 657090
Fairly strenuous underground, initially wet.
Meet at 10.30 am on CB Inn car park near Langthwaite. NGR SD999031

October 4th Yewthwaite/Goldscope, Lake District
Meet leader Ian Tyler Tel 01228 561833
Six mile surface walk and underground.
Meet at 1030 am at Littletown car park (by bridge) NGR NY232194

October 11th NAMHO Seminar see inside for details
Underground Archaeology of Mining, Grassington

NB The notice of a meeting for October 26-27th in the Hude Valley in the previous Newsletter was an error and no such meeting will take place.

SOCIETY NEWS

PETER CLAUGHTON'S THESIS

Peter Claughton has very kindly printed out an extra copy of his thesis and lent it to me first - fascinating! If others who would like to read it will contact me I will post it on. Peter has asked that when borrowers have finished with it, this copy be returned as a donation to the NMRS library.

SallieBassham

BUCKDEN GAVEL MEETING REPORT Saturday 10th May 2003

Six members met in National Park Car Park for the stiff climb up Buckden Beck to Buckden Gavel Lead Mine for this meeting organised by Malcolm Needham. One further member arrived, discovered he had left his hat and lamp behind and with some sorroe (sic) had to return home. On the one hand the turnout for the trip into this extensive and interesting mine was disappointing, with members perhaps put off by the description of the way up to the mine. On the other hand the group knew each well and were all able to benefit from one another's knowledge and experience.

The hike to the mine follows the pretty Buckden Beck with several attractive waterfalls on the way. After 40 minutes or so, and an ascent of about 300 metres, the ruins of the Smelt Mill are passed and the portal is approached across the extensive spoil heaps on which fossils (crinoides) and small pieces of Galena are easily spotted.

Approximately 4½ hours was spent underground.

The adit level (Flank Level) is a little wet, around wellie-boot depth, for about 250m; after that the mine is basically dry and relatively easy going. Around 450m from the portal is a junction with Wiseman's Sun Level to the right (south) and Wiseman's West Level North to the left. Straight on leads to Sunter's North Level, which was explored on the route back.

Wiseman's West Level North leads to Old man's Crosscut. This is a hands and knees job for approximately 75m and involves a potentially difficult crossing of a deep sump, using old rails for support. This crosscut leads to the Old (or Main) Pipe, about 3m below. Turning left (north) up the Old Pipe one encounters a number of minor roof falls, one of which had occurred since our 'reccie' in early March, indicating the deteriorating condition of the mine. Access along this route may become problematic, perhaps impossible, soon. This would be unfortunate since this section of the mine contains some very interesting artefacts including the remains of clogs and tools, some inscriptions (see below) and the old wooden cistern the use of which was discussed by Martin Roe in his recent article (Memoirs 2000 p64 ff). Access to this part of the mine is a bit tricky requiring a crawl on one's stomach through the fall excavated by the Earby Group, but well worth it.

At this point the planned return was changed and rather than retrace our steps, we decided to utilise Richard Platt's extensive knowledge of the mine and return via the Old Pipe haulage route, into Sunter's North Level. The major fall in the area of Sunter's Pipe and Bouden's Second Crosscut necessitated some detouring both up rises and down sumps and despite the doubts expressed by some regarding Richard's navigational skills and his frequent

protestations of "Trust me – I'm a Yorkshireman" we all returned virtually directly to the portal.

One very interesting aspect of this mine is the number of initials etched into the walls. Mike Gill in his article (Memoirs of the Northern Cavern & Mine Research Society Volume 2 No.4 June 1974 pp179-181) refers to the following: "IA 1808" in the main crosscut (Flank Level), "John Simpson April 12 1844 age 23" and "Henry Wiseman March 18 1844" in Wiseman's Sun Level; these latter two etched into clay.

In addition, at the forehead of a crosscut, on the left towards the end of the Old Pipe are 3 inscriptions which appear to be "J.H.S 1860"; "T H B 1870"; "R.F.S 1870". Mike also refers to "IA 1822" in Wiseman's West Level North but we must have passed this by.

Overall a very interesting trip. My thanks to Malcolm for organising it, to Richard for turning it into a round trip (and getting us out!) and to Paul, Paul and Wayne for their conversation and good company.

Alan Mills Sunday, 11 May 2003

BRITISH MINING PUBLICATIONS

British Mining 72, 'The Mines of Yorkshire', was dispatched to members in May. This volume is a major achievement by the authors and will form a valuable reference work in your collections. The large size of the monograph (416 pp) could only be accommodated by using a thinner grade of paper than usual, but this does not detract from its appearance, as there are no dark photographs or figures to cause 'bleed through'.

2003 Memoirs - **At present I not received sufficient written material (nor even the promise of additional papers) to produce a complete memoir this year.** If readers are involved in any field studies during this spell of fine summer weather, or are continuing with other ongoing research, please consider writing it up in whole or in part to contribute to the next British Mining volume.

JohnHunter Publications Editor

ERRORS IN THE MAY NEWSLETTER

I can only apologise for the inclusion of several errors on Page 1 of the May Newsletter. I only hope that they did not cause inconvenience. How many turned up for the NAMHO meeting at Aberystwyth this year which was last year's location. Apologies also to Tony Fretwell for inserting his last years meet in this year's program. By now you will realise that I accidentally pulled details from last years Newsletter, computers do not cause the errors, but they greatly assist.

Ray Fairbairn

CALL FOR PAPERS AND A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS (BRITAIN AND IRELAND) ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 2004 will be held at Coniston, in the English Lake District, 23-25 July.

The Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society is hosting the 2004 NAMHO Conference. It will run from the 23rd to 25th July 2004 and will be held in the old mining village of Coniston, in the heart of the English Lake District. There will be a varied programme of lectures, underground and surface trips

Papers are invited on 'The Extractive Industries of Cumbria'. Contact Sheila Barker <sheila.barker@cybermoor.org>

Booking forms should be available in January 2004. Accommodation can be problematic in summer in the Lake District - book early - accommodation lists will be found on the Cumbria Amenities Trust Mining History Society web site - http://www.catmhs.co.uk

Contact Hon. Sec. CATMHS Sheila Barker: The Rise, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3DB or sheila.barker@cybermoor.org

Peter Claughton

NAMHO. The Underground Archaeology of Mining: A Hidden Resource.

A one day seminar on the Underground Archaeology of Mining to be held in the Yorkshire Dales at Grassington on October 11th 2003.

The seminar will raise awareness of the wealth of archaeological information, which survives underground and is currently playing a very small part in the understanding of one of the oldest and most continuous industries in the UK. Case studies will include a range of sites including metal mines and underground stone quarries.

Aimed at those involved in underground exploration and recording and those responsible for the management of archaeological sites and information; the seminar will explore main three themes:

- **What exists underground.?**
- **Why should underground sites be recorded?**
- **Approaches to recording underground sites.**

If you are unfamiliar with underground archaeology a site visit to Cononley Lead Mine has been arranged for the following day.

GEOLOGICAL MAPS

The Society wishes to thank Mr R.W.L. Allsop, of Chester, for donating a number of geological maps, mainly of north-west England, to the Society's Records. Mr Allsop's grandfather, R.W. Allsop, was a mining engineer in Bakewell. He and his son, A.R.L. Allsop, worked quarries in Derbyshire and the Penygarreg and Penrhenblas quarries at Halkyn in Flintshire. The collection of maps, some quarry and mine plans, and geological memoirs, was broken up by the Friends of Wrexham Museums and, through the good offices of Christopher Williams the non-archival content was offered to NAMHO for dispersal to relevant societies or libraries. Thanks are also due to Peter Claughton for getting the maps to us.

Mike Gill

INGLETON COALFIELD AND STORRS QUARRY MEET 30th MARCH 2003

The photo was taken at the site of Wilson Wood Colliery 1842-87 during the Ingleton Coalfield and Storrs Quarry meet on Sunday 30th March 2003

Despite "counting heads" the days group was twenty two and a border collie dog. The weather remained good for the entire meet, and Bernie expresses his thanks to all that attended.

Bernie Bond

DATABASE OF YORKSHIRE COLLIERIES

In early June this year, the Society grant aided my proposed project to build an Access database of Yorkshire Collieries taken from entries in the annual *List of Mines* and the *Guide to the Coalfields*. In various forms, these publications run from c1865 to the present and the type of information, whilst it varies, is typically: a mine's name, location, owner, seam(s) worked, numbers employed and the manager and undermanager's names and certificate numbers.

I have restricted the project to England's largest, pre-1974 county in order to complement British Mining No.72 (*The Mines of Yorkshire: Metalliferous and associated minerals*) and because an attempt to cover the whole of Britain would be impossible with the resources available. As it is, I estimate that the database will have around 35,000 lines of data. A separate database for the locations of Yorkshire's coal, fireclay, ironstone and stone workings has over 1700 named entries, of which half have been located and given an eight figure grid reference.

The most efficient way of gathering data is to photocopy the original pages and then enter data onto the computer at my convenience. Because no one organisation has a complete run of the source publications, this will involve trips to the National Coal Mining Museum for England (Wakefield), British Library (Boston Spa), Geological Survey Library (Keyworth), Bradford and Leeds City Libraries and the Coal Authority's Mining Record Office

So far, I have concentrated on material in the library of the National Coal Mining Museum at Caphouse Colliery and, to date, the data from 1947 to the present, plus large parts of the 1920s and 1930s, have been copied and much of it has been entered onto the database. I have also used the map collection at Bradford Central Library and the 'Old Maps' website to determine the locations of collieries.

Coal mining is a rapidly growing area of interest and the resulting database will give the Society a major tool for studying Yorkshire's coal, fireclay, ganister and coal measures ironstone mining industry. The original sheets will also be kept in the Society Records. Apart from making the data much more accessible, the database will allow the network of ownerships and management career paths to be traced. In due course, the new data could also be prepared for publication in a format similar to that used for British Mining No.72.

Mike Gill

EARLY RAILWAYS CONFERENCE

The Third International "Early Railways Conference" will be held at the National Railway Museum from the 16th to the 19th September 2004. For details of the Conference contact: *Early Railways Conference Office, National Railway Museum, Leeman Road, York Y026 4XJ U.K. email:* early.railways@nmsi.ac.uk *fax + 44 (0)1904 611112*

CALL FOR PAPERS

This third international conference follows the successful conferences at Durham in 1998, and at Manchester in 2001 the papers from which are now in the final stages of publication. Researchers into the history of early railways (defined as being *railways which were pre main-line in concept if not necessarily in date*), who would like to present their findings in 2004, are invited to indicate their intention shortly to the Conference Editorial Panel. Authors are also requested to submit a 300 word synopsis of their paper for the panel's consideration by the end of 2003.

Proposals for papers, which may be on economic, business and social history topics, as well as technical subjects, should be sent to: *Michael R. Bailey : 'Ferroquin', 14 Winton Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2PB, U.K. email:* m.r.bailey@talk21.com

Mike Gill

AUTUMN MEETING

This will be held on Saturday, October 18th 2003 at the Cross Keys Hotel, Otley Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire (opposite the Police Station), where there is plenty of free parking. This informal event kicks off with a short business meeting at 2.00 pm and is followed by a pot-pourri of members' slides and a savoury buffet at £4.00 per head. Remember, your talk does not have to be of earth-shattering importance. For instance, it might be about something that you've seen and want other people's opinions on. It might be a few pictures of mines that you've seen on holiday (at home or abroad). It might even be about a project that you are involved with or planning to start. There will be both slide and multi-media projectors available. Please contact Mike Gill (01535 635388) if you wish to use Powerpoint, but do not leave it until the last minute. Please use the booking form provided.

Mike Gill

BOOK REVIEW

JACOB WALTON MINING ADVENTURER 1809-1863
By Alastair Robertson
A 500 copy issue 8 pages Price £1
Available from the local mining museums and by post or collect from the Information Office, The Town Hall, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3RF at £1+50p p&p.

The booklet has been published to help to raise funds for the Jacob Walton Memorial Group. It gives a fairly brief outline of the life of Jacob and his involvement in the mines of the region. The memorial was erected by public subscription in 1864, and removed by the County Council in 1960 as part of a road widening scheme. It is rare for mine adventurers to be commemorated in this way and must reflect considerable public regard for him. Hewas involved in the working of some important lead mines on Alston Moor, e.g. Brownley Hill Mine, and in Tynedale, Stonecroft and Greyside Mine. He did not limit his activities to lead mining, he also mined zinc, witherite, and was involved in an attempt to create an iron mining industry on Alston moor.

MINE WATER TREATMENT: A DECADE OF PROGRESS (Proceedings of a conference at the University of Newcastle, 11-13 November, 2002. Published in: Land Contamination And Reclamation, Vol.11, No.2, 2003.

In 1993 the Environment Agency (as the National Rivers Authority) and British Coal agreed a framework for tackling the problem of acid mine drainage (AMD) associated with numerous abandoned coal mines throughout the country. Prior to that time, there was no single organisation responsible for addressing the issue. This conference was organised to discuss the progress achieved in the 10 years since the memorandum of understanding was signed.

The series of papers in this journal volume describe both active and passive water treatment operations to neutralise AMD at various abandoned UK coal mines and also at Wheal Jane tin mine. It is an interesting fact, however, that many discharges from abandoned coal mines are actually net-alkaline, due to the quantities of powdered rock that were used underground as a coal dust suppressant during mining.

A problem common to all such waste water treatment systems is a satisfactory disposal route for the accumulated iron ochre sludge that is the inevitable by-product. Removal of dissolved manganese is another challenging aspect of the water treatment. Ochrous sludge is gelatinous and low in density and solids content, making sludge disposal a significant component of the water treatment costs. It requires settling and dewatering before it can be transported. Some attempts have been made to find a use for calcined ochre, e.g., as a pigment for building materials, as H_2S and phosphate absorbants and as an iron coagulant. In many cases, however, elevated concentrations of arsenic and other toxic metals in the ochre render the product unusable. An attempt has been made at artisanal smelting of metallic iron from ochre, but this is unlikely to become a competitive enterprise. In a separate development, beneficial use has been made of some abandoned coal mine workings by installing heat pumps for residential heating at sites in Glasgow and Lumphinnans, Fife.

One paper of note to mining historians, authored by Keith Whitworth, describes how rising water levels in several coalfields are flooding old, long-abandoned mines by exploiting a complicated plumbing system of interconnections with more recent workings. These old mines had effectively remained dewatered by the regional-scale drainage associated with pumping from the remaining mines that were still in production. Following the closure of most of these mines in the 1990's, groundwater levels have recovered across entire coalfields. As water levels reach drainage adits and soughs linked to older mines, some of which are collapsed and unrecorded, other unexpected problems have begun to occur. A common situation is the backing up of water behind collapses and blockages inside old adits, causing seepages from the ground at other locations or occasionally, sudden dramatic discharges if a blockage fails. Several examples of these situations are provided in the paper and the author concludes with the recommendation that a thorough understanding of the layout of many abandoned workings is essential before any mine water treatment scheme is attempted.

John Hunter

SILVER MINING IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1066-1500 submitted by Peter Frederick Claughton, the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economic and Social History, March 2003. 357 pp, 27 figs, 8 tables, 15 Appendices.

There is a wealth of literature on post 16th century metal mining in Britain, but until the appearance of this thesis very little was known about mining in medieval Britain. Now after 10 years research Peter has made an important contribution to the history of silver mining in England and Wales. Silver played an important part in the medieval economy. Lead was in demand for the roofs of castle and cathedrals, but silver was needed for minting currency (even

pennies were made out of silver), the wool trade in particular requiring payment in coin or bullion. The church also liked silver, so much so that tithes were quite often paid in silver which was then readily turned into church plate or communion goblets.

Peter has identified the main silver producing areas of this period: the Northern Pennines, Mendip, the Welsh borders and South Devon. All the silver from the period was obtained from Silver-Lead ores. The proportions of Silver to Lead varied from 250 ounces or less per ton of lead.

The scope of this thesis is quite encompassing and covers English and Welsh Silver mining in context with other metals. The documentation relating to silver mining appears to be quite sparse and is usually in Latin. Silver production levels, including comparing outputs from the difference areas are discussed. The techniques of silver mining, where English methods are compared with those used in Europe has been included, and smelting, refining, transport, the use of labour and the crisis caused by plague are also outlined in some detail.

The ownership of minerals, and the organisation of mining, are described and compared with parallels from Europe.

The appendices provide a useful set of reference articles including silver output and productivity, lists of miners, mining accounts, the Lumburn leat, production and smelting costs, wage rates and finally the weights and measures used in silver mining.

The bibliography runs to 14 pages and I predict will be a useful reference work for many years to come.

Although this work has only been published as a PhD thesis so that only 2 copies exist, it deserves a wider audience,and it is to be hoped that some enterprising publisher will seize the opportunity to make it available to a more extensive readership

Tony Oldham

A RIVER NEVER SLEEPS / A LOCAL HISTORY OF MARTLETWQY, MINWEAR, NEWTON AND COEDCANLAS
by Robert Ll Davies and Jane Nelson 1999 166 pp, illus. SB. Published by SPARC, no address given. £8.00

I searched high and low for this book, since I saw it reviewed in the Western Mail four years ago. I finally located a copy in the Museum at Narbeth. NMRS members will find pp 49-55 of interest. Entitled "A Mining Community", this provides a good account of the flooding of Garden Pit in 1844 when there was a loss of thirty-nine lives. It appears that the coal miners tunnelled too close to the Eastern Cleddau River and at 3.30 pm at the height of the Spring Tide, the river broke into the mine. The inundation was so sudden that only 4 men and 14 boys survived.

A quick perusal of the rest of the book provides a glimpse of who lived in which house. Numerous families had collieries in their households, eg William Richards is described as an "Engine Driver" and his daughter Mary as a "Colliery Bankwoman".

An interesting vignette of mining in West Wales a century and a half ago.

Tony Oldham

FRAGMENTS OF MINE AND MILL IN WALES,
Alun John RichardsQuarto p/b 128pp Colour, and B&W photos. £9.50+ £1.00 P&P.

I have read and used Aluns books onslate mines for many years and when I first heard about this title I figuredit would be one of the usual photo books with one full of arty photos. Well I was wrong this is a well constructed, well written book full of good photography of industrial remains that are fast disappearing. This includes surface and underground remains. As you would expect there is a Slate bias but Aluns background is that of an Industrial Archaeologist and he feature Metal Mining and Coal just as much. Throughout there photos of artefacts I too have visited and unlike Alun failed to record a lot of which are now lost forever, he has also recorded lot of interesting things that a casual observer may take for granted.

As I said at the beginning there is more to this book it there is a veryinformative text and throughout there is a strong evocative message. See it and record it before it is lost forever. Alun at least has ensured that some of his precious photographic records will last for a long time to come

Mike Moor

A FIRST LOOK AT BUTERSETT STONE MINES

Brian Skipsey Yorkshire History Quarterley 8(3), 2-8. Avaiable from Hudson History, Procter House, Kirkgate, Settle. N. Yorks. BD24 9DZ

This article reports field observations above and below ground at underground quarries in the Yordale Grit beds around Hawes. The fissile sandstones were used for making 'stone slates' for roofing, and general building. A location map indicates the position of 10 underground quarries, or mines. Photographs include two entrances to underground workings, and two or three views underground. There are also four sketch plans shewing surface features including tramways and buildings, and underground workings.

Paul W. Sowan
Subterranea Britanea,

MINING IN WORLD HISTORY

By Martin Lynch, Reaktion Books £25.00 ISBN 1-86189-125-3 hb

This book is a history of the last 500 years of mining, though of course the historical record begins much earlier. The pre-modern history of mining is dealt with in a necessarily rather breathless prologue (' Let us now jump ahead to AD 1000. After a period of damaging civil wars, Imperial China was once again prospering ...'). The tale proper begins in 1453 with the invention of the liquation process for liberating silver from copper.

The tail when told, is handled in a narrative that is controlled, directed and easy to read. Martin Lynch, who works as a researcher in the mining industry in Australia, takes the reader from Slovakia to Peru without ever losing his thread or causing confusion, a remarkable achievement in so potentially complicated a subject. He describes the trials and tribulations of mine managers and captains, the movement of capital and the needs of statesmen and governors.

Oddly enough, for a book written by someone in the industry there is comparatively little emphasis on technology This doubtless reflects the author's remit, yet the successful extraction and processing of minerals depends on machines and devices of one sort or another, and their diffusion worldwide is as much a part of the story as the activities of bankers and politicians.

The mineral-carrying primitive railway, with its roots in the medieval period if not the Roman era, is only introduced after about 100 pages, to be dismissed as a technology instantly made redundant by the arrival of the steam locomotive in the early 19th century. Horse-whims and flat-rods, which enabled power to be distributed over a wide area, are nowhere mentioned. For this reason, this book will be of comparatively little interest to archaeologists anxious to interpret traces of human activity on the ground, though it will provide useful and readily-accessible contextual information for anyone anxious to place particular sites within the broader picture.

An even more striking omission is any extensive reference to the world of the working miner. Chinese coolies, skilled Cornishmen and German master miners all figure in the story, yet essentially as adjuncts to the needs of industry rather than as individuals in their own right. Admittedly, it is difficult to encompass all the important aspects of the miners' experience from a global perspective, though this volume might have been just the place to make the attempt.

The difference between bond and free workers is fundamental to the way mines were run, reflected, for example, in the reluctance of mine managers in South America to invest in machines when slaves were so readily available.

Mining was never anything other than back-breakingly hard work, so consolations as various religion and alcohol loom large in their lives.

Their distinctive settlements are to be found all over the world, in places as different as Kalgoorlie and the Rhondda. yet here the miner only makes his presence felt, and his identity known, in the evocative photograph on the dust-jacket, standing with a drill bit in his hand between the point blades in a level.

Review by David Gwyn
British Archaeology, May 2003
Submitted by Paul Sowen

COLLIERIES OF NORTH EAST LANCASHIRE,
Author: Jack Nadin, Paperback, 128pp, 235mm x 165mm. Price: £12.99 post free to members Details: The Burnley Coalfield covers an area through to Blackburn and Darwen, Higham Village to the west and Worsthorne Moor to the east. A number of pits in the Bacup area have also been included. Four Companies - John Hargreaves, George Hargreaves, Brook and Pickup and the Cliviger Coal Company dominated coalmining in the area. The book provides the story of these pits using black and white photos to help describe the history there many surface and underground features shown.

Mike Moore

OUR STORY 77 HOURS UNDERGROUND
Author:- The Queecreek Miners, Hardback, 176pp, 13 Black and White Photos and a sketch plan. Price: £14.95 Postage and Packing: £1.00

On 11 September 2001 nine Pennsylvanian Coal Miners were trapped underground for 77 Hours. They were trapped as a result of an inrush of water which burst through one of the walls from an adjacent mine working. The miners became aware of the problem and escaped to higher ground to avoid the water but then with no exit. They were rescued by use of a borehole and rescue capsule. Members may recall the debate when it was proclaimed as the first ever underground rescue by this method which we all know was not the case. Regardless of the debate the Miners give a personal recount of their own stories and perspectives of what happened. It is a captivating story and makes very good reading and at least we know it has a happy ending.

Mike Moore

SECRET UNDERGROUND BRISTOL (New Edition)
by Sally Watson Paperback, 245mm x 185mm, 128pp Price £14.95 + £1.00 post and packing

This is a very nice book which the details of a mixture of very interesting underground features in the area. There are dedicated chapters for the following, Grottoes, Caves, Hot Springs, Clifton Rocks Railway, Corsham Wartime Citadel, Combe Down Stone Mines, Bristol Coal Mines, Sewers and Drains, Oddities and legends, Medieval Cellars and Conduits, the Frome and Castle Moat.

Each chapter and description of features is supported with a mixture of colour and black and white Photos. Tony Robinson (Time Team and Baldrick fame) provides an opening forward in all this is a highly informative book produced in an pleasant style which both entertaining and interesting.

Mike Moore

MINING IN CORNWALL – VOLUME SIX: MID-COUNTY TO THE TAMAR
by L.J. Bullen, (ISBN 0 7524 2878 0) 128 pp with 200+ illustrations, published by Tempus Publishing Ltd at £12.99

This is the final volume of L.J. Bullen's series on *Mining in Cornwall*, which ranks as 'the most comprehensive pictorial archive of mining and mining related activities in Cornwall'. The book covers an area extending from Launceston and Saltash in the east, to Padstow in the north-west and to the south-west of St Austell. Almost all of the area's mines are shown, but, as with most books on Cornish mining, it is dominated by pictures of engine houses, boilers and pitwork which skew the impression given. Ore preparation, for example, is limited to one photo of some vanners.

The subject area is sub-divided into four chapters, and the first, on the St Austell district, concentrates on the china clay workings which still dominate it and are the source of a major export. Some views of the pits usefully illustrate how they worked, with streams of water with clay in suspension running to the foot of a shaft to be pumped to the surface. Waste sand was hauled up steep inclines onto conical sky tips.

Chapter two is a selection of 40 images showing the reworking of Castle-an-Dinas during World War II – interestingly, considering its strategic importance as a wolfram producer, the author omits to say what mineral it worked.

The reopening of Phoenix United Mine, between 1907 and 1914, dominates chapter three on the Liskeard District, but there are pictures of Silver Valley, Hurtstocks, Craddock Moor, South Caradon, Marke Valley and Herodsfoot Mines.

The greatest number of mines is covered in the final chapter on the Tamar District, where some operations survived into the 1950s and two, Hingston Down and the Prince of Wales Mines, were being considered for reopening immediately prior to the collapse in World tin prices of 1985.

Mike Gill

FOXES BRIDGE COLLIERY (IN THE FOREST OF DEAN) SICK FUND

One such example of a self-help charity in the Forest of Dean was the Foxes Bridge Colliery sick fund. This fund enabled the work-force to receive some medical treatment when they 'became disabled by sickness or accident' and each man or boy employed at the colliery subscribed sixpence per month to the fund.

Below the names of the 203 subscribers who had received payments in the 1893 annual statement there was a strict set of rules to be adhered to, to be overseen and applied by a committee of 14 Fellow workers. There was a secretary, John Carrier, and a treasurer, Arnold Thomas.

Among the rules were that as well as each man and boy subscribing sixpence per month; doorboys - who opened and shut the ventilation doors underground along the roads - were to pay threepence per month and receive half-pay.

A committee of 12 workmen, plus the 'bailiff' and his deputy managed the fund were able to make extra grants in exceptional cases.

No person could have any claim upon the fund unless he was actually employed on the works at the time of his disablement and no benefit could be paid for less than one week.

The sick pay was five shillings per week for 12 weeks, two shillings and sixpence per week for the following 12 weeks, and no further benefit until the recipient had returned to work for a period of four weeks. If the worker again became disabled by sickness or accident after working for four weeks, he could again be entitled to full benefit. (One can imagine a desperately sick or injured miner forcing himself back to work in order to carry on feeding his family.)

Injury from accident had to be reported to the weighing machine at the top of the pit, and in the case of sickness, a certificate had to be obtained from the 'Works Doctor and produced to the secretary on the Thursday previous to application for payment.

Payments were made on the Monday after each pay day at three o'clock.

In the case of fatal accidents, the sum of £3 would be paid to the legal representatives of the deceased, in addition to any sick pay which would be due at the time of death; excepting doorboys where half of that amount would be paid.

The right of any person to the benefits of the fund stopped as soon as he left the employment of the Foxes Bridge Colliery.

The balance sheet stood at £252 11s 11d, out of which payments to the sick amounted to £231 13s 4d, and payments to the Management £10 6s 4d.

Contributions by the Management to the fund were nil. The Foxes Bridge Colliery Co. Ltd. was owned by CharlesA.Goold, John Richardson of Swansea, and Henry Crawshay. There were various other smaller shareholders.

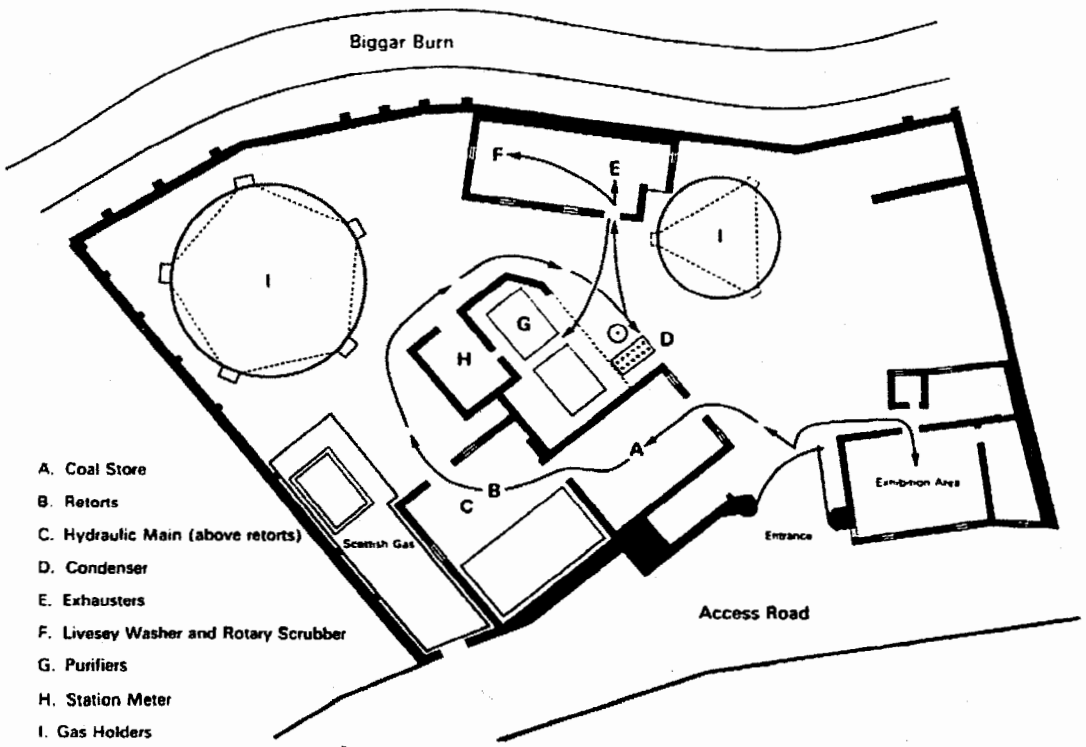
So after the benefits had finished from a fatality, or permanent sickness, or injury, what happened to the families who were now without income?

While there were various charities; there was the chapel or church; there was taking in washing; there were relatives who would share their own meagre incomes or savings; and as a last resort there was the dreaded workhouse for the poor at Westbury-on-Severn.

extract from THE FORESTER 16TH January 2003
submitted by *R. A. Needham*

BIGGAR MUSEUM

Bernie draws our attention to this museum that he and Mike visited earlier in the year. In particular he focused on the Gasworks Museum which he accepts is not mining, never the less he feels it is close enough to coal mining to be of interest. " the museum to me is for the purest, there are no frills, I'd best describe it as if the workers had picked up bait bags and jackets and gone".



Guide Plan of Biggar Gasworks