



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

February 2004

Society Events — 2004

Please remember to contact the meet leader before attending an event

- **Saturday March 20th Spring Meeting/Annual Dinner.** Ascot House Hotel, Kings Road, Harrogate. SE303561. Meet at 12.30pm and eat at 1.00pm. Followed by the AGM
- **Saturday April 17th Nenthead.** Leader Martin Roe (01422 251237) Underground 10.30 am Visitor Centre car park NGR NY 781437
- **Saturday May 8th White Coppice/Anglezarke.** Leader Ian Williamson (01539 432702) Surface (6 miles) 10.30 am car park NGR SD 618191
- **Saturday June 26th (provisional) Reigate, Surrey Sand mines/stone quarries** Surface & Underground Leader Alan Mills (01484 861904) Limited numbers booking essential
- **Saturday July 10th Tan Hill collieries** Leader Les Tyson Surface 10.30 am Tan Hill Inn NGR NY897067
- **Friday/Sunday 23rd/25th July NAMHO Conference** Organized by CATMHS Coniston. Details in Newsletter.
- **Saturday August 14th Booze Wood/Slei Gill** Leaders Malcolm Needham (01257 452304) & Alan Mills (01484 861904) Underground & Surface 10.30 am Langthwaite car park NGR NZ 005023
- **Saturday 18th September Hill Top/Sharneyford colliery area** Leader Clive Seal (01434 382803) Surface predominantly 10.30 am Hill Top entrance (off the Todmorden/Bacup Rd) NGR SD 889246 - precise meet details per later Newsletter.

Inside this issue:

<i>Society News</i>	2
<i>Other News</i>	5
<i>Biographical sketches</i>	7
<i>Book Reviews</i>	10
<i>Editors contact details</i>	12

Society News

Are you interested in surveying?

Over the years NMRS members have produced surveys of both surface and underground sites, many of which have been published in British Mining. Surveys like these make a big contribution to our knowledge and understanding of mining and have enhanced not only the society records but also the local and national archaeological records kept by local authorities, national parks and organisations such as English Heritage. This has helped to raise awareness of the importance of the archaeology of mining and has contributed to the management and protection of sites.

Surveying need not be difficult and with a little basic training and simple equipment it is quite possible to produce very good results. New technologies such as GPS have introduced new options for recording landscapes, and computer modelling is making it much easier to produce underground surveys.

Given that a body of expertise is building up, I suggested at the Autumn Meeting that the Society forms a Surveying Group. This proposal was well received. The objective of the group would be to seek to both develop and share best practice in the Society. It might well organise training sessions in order to learn new skills or improve existing ones and to help society members produce work to recognised standards. The Group might also acquire some surveying kit for members to borrow.

If there is sufficient interest Martin Roe has offered to lead two workshops, one of underground surveying techniques, the other on surface methods covering both traditional and new methods.

If you think the formation of a Surveying Group is a good idea, or indeed a bad one, or are interested in joining a Surveying Group of the Society then please let me know. Contact me, preferably by email on alanfmills@lineone.net or 'phone on 01484 861904.

Alan Mills

GPS Receivers

The society has now taken delivery of five Garmin Geko GPS receivers. By receiving signals from geo-stationary satellites they are able to accurately pinpoint your position. In ideal conditions this can be as good as within 5m, but this is reduced if under tree cover. They are a very useful tool for recording shafts, levels and other features, and are similar to the equipment used for the recent Greenhow Hill Survey. The receivers are available for society members to borrow for their own projects but the recorder would be very grateful for copies of the data produced for the society records. If there are any volunteers who would like to help the work of the society by recording the location of levels and shafts their help would be gratefully accepted. This is not at all technical and takes no longer than taking a photograph so if you go walking in mining areas why not consider making a contribution to the Societies collection of information.

The receivers can be borrowed by contacting Mike Gill. A £20 returnable deposit is required and advice on their use is available.

Martin Roe

Temporary Treasurer's Report

As most of you will know, I took over temporarily as Treasurer during the winter as, although Barry had planned to resign at the end of the year ahead of his move to Ireland, he had a bad accident at work and so he was finding it difficult to continue with the Treasurer's job. He left our accounts in a very healthy state, however, with £10315.08 in the current account and £22520.73 in the National Savings Account on December 31st 2003. Expenditure for the year was £21992.00 and income was £19708.72. To the latter must be added the interest on the National Savings Account when this is known.

My job has been mainly one of keeping everything ticking over during the period while all

the renewals were coming in and – thanks to an excellent system set up by Colin Hindle in his time as Treasurer – this has gone remarkably smoothly. To date 285 full members, 22 family members and 3 overseas members have renewed and we have received donations totalling £330.00. We also have six honorary members and 4 new members, plus three resignations – one through ill health, one through wanting to spend more time travelling abroad and one unspecified.

I should like to express my thanks to all those who sent donations and to those who were kind enough to add little notes of appreciation to their renewal forms. It *does* make a difference! (I'd also like to thank the anonymous member who addressed me as "Treasured" rather than Treasurer. Mike unkindly said that it was a slip of the pen, but I prefer to think otherwise!) Barry has been thanked elsewhere, but thanks are due to his wife, Cely, for keeping things going while he's been laid up, and also to Bob (Burns) for updating the details on the membership list.

Most of all, however, I'd like to thank Alan Mills for volunteering to take over the job from me. He seemed a bit surprised at the last committee meeting to find that this ac-

tion got him promoted to my Number Three Hero (after Mike at Number One and Sean Bean at Number Two). I hope I've made it easy for him to follow on, but, if you think you've paid and you haven't got a membership with this newsletter, do get in touch with either me or Alan at the Society's usual address (38 Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven, Keighley, BD20 7HD) in case something's gone astray temporarily in the change-over period.

And finally a note to those who pay by standing order – these seem to be paid into the Society's account at various times of year and so, if you pay this way and you haven't got a membership card with this newsletter, please let me or Alan know.

Hazel Martell

(Probably the shortest-serving Treasurer in the history of the Society)

Yorkshire Coal Project – help offered from BGS

When I wrote about my work on the Yorkshire Coal Industry, using the *List of Mines* and other sources, one member who works for the British Geological Survey kindly emailed me about it. Unfortunately, my hard drive died at Christmas (guess what Santa brought me) and I have lost his details – will that member please contact me again at martgill@legend.co.uk

Mike Gill



What on earth?

Can any member help Bernard Bond identify the pictured object, which was found at the mouth of a level in Arngill, Swaledale. It is made of cast-iron and has three slots in one end.

A note from the Publications Editor

I am currently looking for papers for the 2004 memoirs, so if any member has a manuscript in preparation I would be pleased to hear from them. Likewise for monographs.

I can be contacted by email at johnhunter.2000@btinternet.co.uk and by regular mail at 3 Leebrook Drive, Owlthorpe, Sheffield, S20 6QG. Digital material is preferred, but typewritten pages capable of being scanned for OCR are also welcome (new ribbons help a lot here).

John Hunter

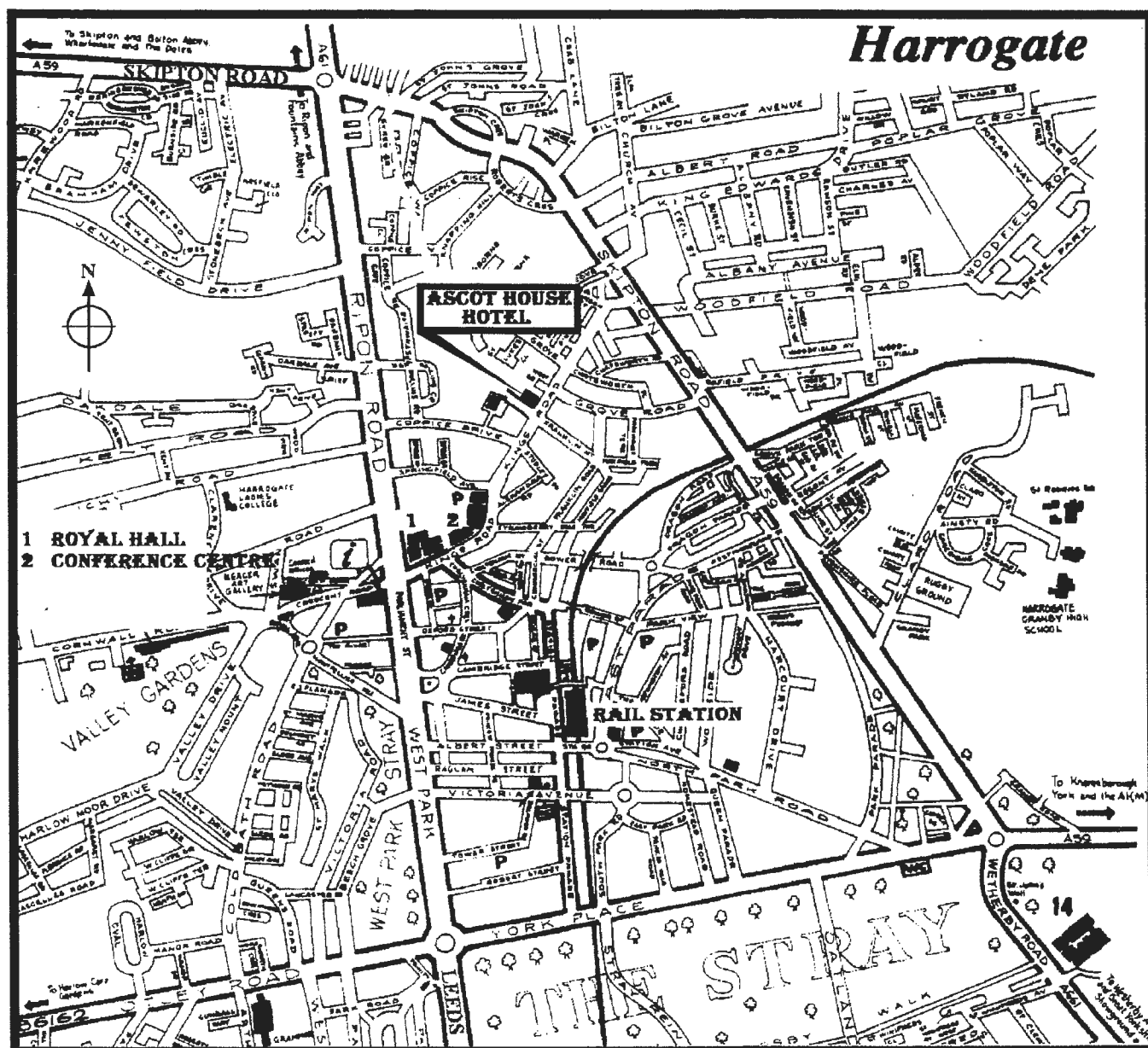
Saturday 20th March – Spring Meeting/Annual Dinner

Ascot House Hotel, 53 Kings Road., Harrogate (SE303561).

Annual Dinner – Gather from 12.30pm and eat at 1.00pm. A menu and booking form are enclosed with this newsletter (see below for a map of Harrogate). The Dinner will be followed by the AGM at approximately 2.30pm. Please note that the dining-room is non smoking, but you are welcome to smoke in the bar lounge.

Further details from: Mike Gill, 38 Main Street, Sutton in Craven, KEIGHLEY, BD20 7HD. Tel: 01535 635388.

Email: martgill@legend.co.uk



Other News...

From a BGS newsletter....

New publications available now: Sheet Explanations. These are the new-style BGS memoirs; they are A5 booklets which provide a brief overview of the geology of the 1:50 000 map sheet area. They are available either as booklets alone (£9), or in a pack with the relevant 1:50 000 map sheet (£18) - subject to the availability of the folded map. More detailed geological information on the same area is available via the print-on-demand Sheet Description series:

Geology of the Leadhills district (Scotland 1:50000 scale map sheet 15E) 0852724535 also

Sheet Description

Geology of the Leadhills district (England & Wales 1:50000 scale map sheet ?) 0852724616 £31

John Hunter

From the publications editor...

It is pleasing to find that an occasional paper in the Society memoirs will provoke some subsequent discussion of a particular topic, as additional information may often be revealed, to the benefit of other members. Constructive feedback is definitely encouraged, and a perfect example is shown below:

Coalmining in Saddleworth

John Goodchild writes: Mr. Fanning's dismissal of Saddleworth as a coalmining area in his essay in the NMRS 2003 memoirs (British Mining 73) leads me to refer to a number of collieries which have worked in that area, now a part of Oldham metropolitan district.

The working of coal in the huge area of Saddleworth - nearly 20,000 acres - was perhaps more extensive than has been suggested by earlier writers. The availability of a network of turnpike roads from the 1750s, of a canal from the 1790s and a mainline railway from the

1840s no doubt made the importation of coal easier for textile mills and other industrial, as well as domestic purposes, but there were also local coalmines, and papers relating to some of them are preserved in the writer's Local History Study centre at Wakefield.

The Ashes Coal Mine company was formed in 1815, when the recent purchaser of that estate leased coal, cannel and bass to a number of partners at a rent of one tenth or the sale's income plus fixed sums for the surface land required. The lease refers to (presumably, potential) - engine(s), railways and waggons, the making of coke and bricks; and a banksman. The lease was for 99 years and the colliery was to be opened within twelve months. The 1822 trade directory refers to "a cotton concern and a coal mine at "Top o' the Meadows", while the 1830 edition refers to the names of four coal proprietors - at Scout Head, Beswick, Wood and Green Leach. The mountain Mine seam under land stretching across the border between Saddleworth - of course in Yorkshire - and neighbouring Lancashire, was leased in 1838 for £100 an acre.

Subsequent 19th century trade directories refer to various colliery owners in Saddleworth. In 1818 George Evans of High Moor in Saddleworth leased coal and cannel at Scout Head, on High Moor, where he already had an adjoining colliery with a drainage sough, and persons of that surname were colliery owners listed in the trade directories of 1838, 1842 and 1847. The first Government list of mines (1853-54) lists no coalmines in Saddleworth, but the 1853 trade directory may hide a couple of them under the heading coal dealers - which of course any colliery owner was too. The 1864 list of mines refers to Ashes Colliery and to one at Strinesdale, as does that of 1869, but the list of 1876 refers to no collieries in Saddleworth. The Catalogue of Plans of Abandoned Mines of 1929 refers to a plan of Scout Head Colliery in Springhead only, without date; this probably closed about the time of the 1872 Coal Mines Act.

A list of fatal accidents in coalmines inclusive of the period 1868 to 1888 records no such fatalities in Saddleworth, and Green's huge memoir on the Yorkshire Coalfield of 1878 does not allude to such workings.

The above is merely a listing of references to coalmining in Saddleworth which have come to the writer's notice. One hopes that other readers will know of others. Apparently these collieries were in the south western corner of Saddleworth.

Gerry Fanning replies: I would like to thank Mr. Goodchild for his comments on my paper in BM73. However, rather than being dismissive of Saddleworth as a coal-mining area, in fact the opposite is the case: I spent many unproductive hours searching for evidence of coal mining there. I am sure John will know that whereas in some areas, like Werneth, everything can fall into your lap at the first attempt, in others a lot of research may yield little or nothing at all.

British Mining 73 was an addendum to my monograph in British Mining 68 and was intended to offer more information to people who had read that work. I was concerned with coalmining in the present Oldham Metropolitan Borough and played rather 'fast-and-loose' with internal boundaries for several reasons: e.g., how does one classify a colliery which has its shaft in Shaw (Oldham) and sends its galleries under Rochdale?, or one in Lees (Lancashire) which sends its galleries under Yorkshire? And how does one tell where Glodwick ends and Lowside begins? James Butterworth's 1826 edition of the History of Oldham gives 300 Cheshire acres of High Moor as being in Crompton, but the rest of High Moor was in Saddleworth, whilst the boundary between Oldham and Chadderton, through Hollinwood, changed every few years. And Bardsley, now in Oldham, was once part of Ashton-under-Lyne.

On page 8 of BM 68 I wrote "At Saddleworth, no coal was found beyond Grotton, Moorside and Scouthead because the coal measures were denuded, forming a break between the Lancashire and Yorkshire coalfields." and this does not disagree with what John says. Coal

was only found in small quantities, not commercially viable, in Saddleworth on the very edge of that area.

Ashes Estate, was I believe in Springhead. I could find no evidence of a coalpit there. The projected mining at Ashes may never have come to fruition. (I think the 1864 list of mines refers to Ashes Colliery at Milnrow, now in Rochdale.) A coalpit at Scouthead was advertised for sale by John Platt in the Manchester Guardian, but I can't put my hand on the date now I am in Australia, and I could find no further mention of it. I found one mention of a single coalpit in Austerlands, just in Saddleworth, but any coal it produced would surely go downhill to the hungry mills at Waterhead. In May 1795 an auction was held at the Angel Inn in Oldham (later Yates' Wine Lodge, and now MacDonalds I believe) for Thornlee farm, Saddleworth, that could be mined "to great advantage, there being no other collieries within three miles thereof". The pit at Thornlee (in Grotton) worked until into the 20th century, but never employed more than about ten men and mainly produced fireclay. The Mountain Mine seam he mentions was mined from Strinesdale, which is in Oldham, though it undoubtedly brought some coal out of Yorkshire.

Page 42 of my Memoir shows Coll's Old Pit at Delph, quite definitely in Saddleworth (though unfortunately it was not displayed on the Saddleworth page). But that was a small, shallow affair just catering for the local trade. The pit at "Top o' the Meadows" was probably similar, possibly just producing coal for the villagers and the local mill.

In 1880 Oldham Corporation found coal at Readycon Dean, in Saddleworth, at a height of 1228 feet above sea-level, but the seam was only 8 inches thick and was never (officially) worked, but no doubt some of it was got out by the local people.

A few other comments:

"Evans" is an important name in Oldham coal; Evans, Barker and Company (later the Oldham, Middleton and Rochdale Coal Company Ltd.) owned many pits in the area, and

it is not inconceivable that George Evans once worked the pit at Scouthead, but I could find no reference to it.

All Oldham coal owners sold coal from the pit head, and also had a flourishing cart-trade, so they were coal-dealers as well. I do not think that this can necessarily be taken as evidence that coal-dealers listed in Saddleworth directories were producing their coal from Saddleworth pits.

Saddleworth woollen mills did not have the same need for coal that Oldham mills had; some of them had far more horsepower available from water wheels than the early steam

engines could produce and this continued well into the steam age. The cottagers would get coal from wherever they could find it, so there are probably many more little breast-heids dotted about the area that have never been recorded (because they didn't pay any rates.). This is true in the rest of Oldham also; there are probably dozens of coal mines, some quite large, that are not mentioned in my essay – because I found no evidence of them.

Many Thanks to the two correspondents for this additional information.

John Hunter (publications editor).

Biographical Sketches

William Hedley (1779—1843)

An inventor, was born at Newburn, Near Newcastle on Tyne, on the 13th July 1779. He was educated at a school at Wylam, and when not yet twenty one years of age, was appointed viewer at Walbottle colliery in Northumberland. He subsequently held the same position at the Wylam colliery, and took charge, in addition, of the Blagill lead mine at Alston in Cumberland. The difficulty and expense of the method of conveying coal from the pits to the river Tyne drew his attention to the necessity of improving the means of transit, and it was as a result of his ingenuity that the locomotive engine of Trevithick, Blenkinsop and Chapman first became practically, or at all events extensively, useful.

Hedley first saw clearly that a locomotive engine and wagons needed none of the old rack rails and toothed wheels to secure sufficient friction to induce motion; his patent for the smooth wheel and rail system bore date the 13th March 1817. Soon afterwards the smooth rails were laid down at Wylam. Hedley was a designer and maker of locomotive engines, and discovered, though he did not perfectly develop, the principle of the blast pipe, a method of producing a greater draught by returning the exhaust steam into the chimney. This was certainly introduced into engines of his which at work as early as 1814. Hedley

had been a shipowner since 1808. In 1822, during a strike of the keelmen, he promptly placed one of his engines upon a barge, and, working it with paddles, towed the keels to the coal shoots without the men's assistance. Steamboats had been invented earlier but they were little used, and the action was characteristic of Hedley's energy and resource.

In 1824 he took the Crow Tees colliery near Durham, and later that at Callerton, near Wylam. In 1829 he removed to Shield Row, where he rented for some time the South Moor colliery. Whilst at Callerton he invented an improved system of pumping water out of the collieries, which though adversely criticised at the time, was soon in general use in the North of England. Hedley died at Burnshopeside Hall, near Lanchester, Durham on 9th January 1843, and was buried at Newburn. Four of his sons survived him.

The inventions connected with the steam engine have all been matters of dispute. Hedley's discoveries were not widely known or publicised at the time, and, owing to the desire of popular writers to simplify the story and to add to its picturesqueness by consolidating what should have been a widely distributed credit, he was not until later times in receipt of due recognition. (Archer's William Hedley. 3rd Ed.; O.D. Hedley's Who Invented the Locomotive Steam Engine?; Galloway's The

Steam Engine & Its Inventors. pp212, 218, 220; Smile's Lives of the Engineers. lii, 91, 497, 499, & 500).

Thomas Robinson (d.1719)

A writer on natural history, was appointed Rector of Ousby in Cumberland in 1672. After service on Sundays he presided over a kind of club or meeting convened in the village alehouse, whereat each member spent a sum not exceeding one penny. He was also an ardent encourager of village sports, especially football. He spent all his leisure time and was devoted to the collection of facts concerning the mining, minerals and natural history of the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, which he placed before the world in a quaint book 'Anatomy of the earth', London 1694, 4to. This was followed by 'An essay Towards a Natural History of Westmorland and Cumberland, to which is annexed a Vindication of the Philosophical and Theological Praphrases of the Mosaik System of the Creation', in two parts, London, 1709, 8vo.;and then 'New Observations on the natural history of this world, of matter, and this world of life...To which is Added Some Thoughts concerning Paradise, and the Confligation of the World, and a Treatise of Meteorology', London, 1698, 8vo. (The same, with a different title

page, 1699, 8vo.) Records relating to the Goldscope mine near Keswick, indicate that in 1697 Robinson approached the Duke of Somerset (the then owner of the mine) with proposals for the working of the mine. Robinson obtained the Duke's agreement, but, not being a skilled practical man, made a complete mess of the venture and accrued considerable debts before abandoning it before five years had elapsed. It was to be about one hundred years before any activity of consiquence took place at Goldscope. It is not known whether this envolvment at Goldscope was Robinson's only mining adventure. Robinson died whilst Rector of Ousby, in 1719. He was married and had eight children. (Hutchinson's History of Cumberland, I. P.224-5; Nicholson & Burn's History of Westmorland and Cumberland; Jefferson's History of Leith Ward, p.257; British Museum Catalogue; Mines of the Lake District Fells, p.27; M.B.Donald's Elizabethan Copper, 1955, pp.188-190.)

With thanks to Tony Fretwell for providing these biographical sketches

Threlkeld Mining Museum Open Day Sunday 7th March 2004

We are pleased to announce that our annual open day will be on the 7th March 2004. The event is free and all members are welcome Hopefully the Cumbria mines ore rescue team and ambulance will be on site again as they were last year.

The day will commence with a guided walk to THRELKELD LEAD MINE starting at 10.30am from Threlkeld village by four seasons foods and return by 12.30pm to the museum for official opening. The launch of Ian Tyler's latest book "Carrock Mine and the mines of Blencathra and Skiddaw" will take place. The book will be about 250 pages with dozens of original photographs on the mines of Carrock, Threlkeld, Carrock End, Brandy Gill, Glenderateera and the mines hidden beneath the Skiddaw massif. At about 1pm a light buffet, will be served.

There will be self guided mine tours so please bring a lamp/helmet if you have one and see the most realistic underground show mine taking you through mining from 1560—1960. We look forward to seeing you.

Ian & Jean Tyler.

Archaeology and the Historic Environment in the Yorkshire Dales

**A day school organised by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in association
with the Yorkshire Archaeological Society**

Saturday April 24, 2004

10.00 am - 4.30 pm

Grassington Town Hall, Grassington

**The Yorkshire Dales National Park, designated 50 years ago in 1954, has some of the
best preserved and extensive historic landscapes in the country.**

**This day school will discuss some of the results of archaeological and historical survey
and research in and around the National Park.**

Fee: £10 (£7.50 - full time students and YAS members)

10.00 -10.15 Coffee

Session 1 Chair Richard Muir

10.15 -11.00 Archaeology in the Dales 1954 - 2004 - Robert White

**11.00 -11.30 Revisiting old bones from Craven caves - Professor Terry O' Connor and
Tom Lord**

11.30 -12.10 Community Archaeology: Approaches to Nidderdale - Kevin Cale

12.10 - 12.20 Discussion

12.20 - 1.40 Lunch

Session 2 Chair

1.40 - 2.10 Broadwood, Ingleton: A Community Project - David Johnson

2.10 - 2.40 North Flatts - Roger Martlew

2.40 - 3.10 Parks and Ancient Trees - Richard Muir

3.10 - 3.20 Discussion

3.20 - 3.40 Tea

Session 3 Chair Robert White

**3.40 - 4.00 Investigating medieval landscapes along water pipelines through Malham-
dale and Coverdale - Chris Fenton Thomas**

4.00 - 4.30 Traditional houses in Swaledale - Don McLennan

Book Stalls and Poster Displays

**For further information and booking please telephone 01756 752774
or e-mail grassington@ybtbic.co.uk**

Book reviews

Pits—A Pictorial History of Mining by John Threlkeld published by Wharncliffe Books, 2003 price £16.99 ISBN 1-903425-50-6.

The book is hardback, size 302 x 156 mm, with 192 pages with one or more photo's on nearly every page. This book is described as being a merger of the author's two earlier books 'Pits 1' and 'Pits 2' which were subtitled 'a pictorial record of mining in Barnsley' although the author admits that he has had to leave out much text and many illustrations is reducing a work of about 400 pages and over 400 plates to its present size. He has chosen the photo's that give "maximum impact" and there does seem to be an increased percentage of non-Yorkshire material particularly from Lancashire and the North east.

The new book is rather oddly titled, almost claiming to be a definitive history of mining but it is still almost entirely mining in the Barnsley area. Here again, it is weak on Pre-Victorian times but concentrates heavily on the post 1947 period. A period which the author obviously knows well as he had in the year 2000 completed 40 years service working for local newspapers among the mining communities.

It is a fascinating book to read but perhaps a little flowery in places; too many references to "titanic numbers of fatalities" and "bible-black faces" but the author does well in his understanding of mining terminology. It is much more about people and social conditions than about machinery and there are some most interesting opinions and memories given. Indeed there is a whole chapter of about eight pages near the end of the book on "mining memories".

The book covers well such topics as mining disasters, strikes, and demonstrations pit ponies, rescue work, the periods of expansion, the great 1983/5 dispute and the draconian pit-closure programme that followed in the late 80's and early 90's. This latter

part in particular is thoughtfully done and a very good read without being biased. It is a book to be commended not so much as a 'history' but more as the story of what happened in one of the areas most dependant on mining in Britain over the past 150 years. There is a good index to people and places but no references or bibliography is given—although some of this is covered in the text.

Ivor J Brown.

Pit Women; Coal Communities in Northern England in the Early Twentieth Century, Griselda Carr, (Merlin Press, London, 2001), 174 pp., paperback, ISBN 0-85036-495-7. Price £12.95

This is unfortunately rather a belated review. The book turned up on my desk at a rather busy period well over a year ago and, whilst I read it as a welcome diversion from what I was doing at the time, it was not until now that I had time to put my thoughts on the book into some form of order.

Given what little I know of the publisher, reinforced by the flyers enclosed with the review copy, I fully expected this book to follow a left wing agenda but it does not. Carr's approach to the role of women in mining communities is realistic as it portrays the struggle to maintain a better standard of life in an increasingly fragile coal using economy.

In the first half of the 20th century mining communities around the deep collieries of Yorkshire and the north-east of England were dedicated pit villages. Serving one or more collieries, they were inhabited virtually entirely by miners and associated workers occupying houses rented from or provided free by the colliery. Much of the housing stock and infrastructure, dating from the mid 19th century, was inadequate although new villages were being built in Yorkshire to serve the new deeper pits in the 1920s and 30s. Outside the family group, social activity for miners centred on the male only clubs; for the women there was chapel, the neighbours and

little else. However, with a large family to look after, there was scant time available for socialising, particularly with husbands and sons working on different shifts. Carr provides us with a well written account of the women's struggle to manage their life within such a physically restricted environment.

The book begins with a brief history of the developments affecting the coal industry in the early 20th century but the author clearly finds herself more at ease with the social rather than the economic aspects of mining. She makes good use of the statistical evidence to back up her arguments for the poor living conditions / high birth rate and the high infant mortality amongst coal mining families. Central to the women's role, child bearing and rearing are seen for what they were - security of income. A miner's family were at their economic peak once the male children were in employment but unmarried. Yet there was little thought given to saving for the later, less affluent period. Miners on the whole did not look far into the future, they lived for the present, adopting a fatalistic attitude to work practices which greatly increased the risk of accidents. Success in mining prior to large scale mechanisation relied on strength and team work within small partnerships. Social activity brought the men together, through the

clubs, but it was major events - accidents and strikes - which brought the whole community, including the women, together. It was at such times that the women came to the forefront in supporting the family and the community. Carr finds similarities, and contrasts, between the role of women in the early 20th century and that during the miners strike of 1984-5. No more so than in their treatment of 'black leg' labour, although there is little mention of the wives of those who chose to work. Political and social activists amongst the women were evidently few and formal organisation to forward the cause of women in the mining communities generally short-lived. Not surprising given the lack of what we today would call leisure time - any long term commitment to the cause would mean turning her back on the community and it is not surprising that the activists were, for the most, middle class rather than miner's wives.

Carr has used her personal and family experience, combined with the historical evidence, to provide us with hard hitting but realistic account of the life of women in the half century running up the nationalisation of the coal industry. Certainly worth reading.

Peter Claughton



Storrs Quarry, Ingelton. Cart returned to site 14th October 2003. *Bernard Bond*

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please continue to send material for the newsletter. Contributions can either be sent by email via the website or direct to me. Alternatively, you can post contributions either as text, or on disc, all are welcome. If you require anything returning, it will be returned with the newsletter unless instructed otherwise. In particular, photo's, plans, and pictures are welcome as long as they can be reproduced well in black and white. Contributions for the May newsletter should be with me by the end of March please to:

Anna Davies, 1 Ashleigh Street, Ovenden, Halifax, HX3 6QZ

davies_al@hotmail.com

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of its correspondents and are not necessarily agreed with or shared by the Northern Mine Research Society, it's officers or the Newsletter Editor. The accuracy of statements made in articles submitted for publication will not normally be checked by the Newsletter Editor for validity. The responsibility for the contents of articles submitted by individual members, or groups, remains with the authors and cannot be accepted by the Society, it's Officers or the Newsletter editor.

Visit our website www.nmrs.co.uk

Data Protection Act

Members are reminded that the NMRS maintains a list of their names and addresses solely for the purpose of printing labels for membership cards and posting newsletters and publications. Such details are deleted from the database for any member who leaves the Society, either after the committee has been notified or after it has been determined that an overdue subscription has not been paid for several months.