



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

May 2005

NMRS Meets List 2005

Saturday June 25th - Grassington Moor Leader: Martin Roe (01422 251237) Surface. 10.30am at Yarnbury NGR SE015659

Friday/Sunday 8th/10th July - NAMHO Conference Juniper Hall Field Study Centre, Dorking, Surrey. Details online @ <http://www.namho.org>.

Saturday July 23th - Facit Stone Mines Leader: Richard Platt (01204 362892) Underground. 10.30 am at layby on A671 NGR SD888194

Saturday August 13th - Swinnergill Swaledale Leader: Wayne Martin (01642 875498) Underground. 10.30 am Keld Village NGR SD896011

Saturday 17th September - Nenthead Leader: Steve Mitchell (01535 657090) Underground. 10.30 am at the Visitor Centre car park. NGR NY781437

October 15th - Autumn Meeting Details via next Newsletter.

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Society News

Presidents Report

Being voted in as the new president at the AGM in March I have now had time to ponder the task ahead and the responsibilities of the position. Mike stepping down has left a very big pair of shoes to fill.

Will I still be a member of the society after 40 years and still be making a significant contribution to the work of the society? Well its something to aim for.

I would like to formally thank Mike for the contribution that he has made to the society over the years and it is really useful to still have him on the committee as recorder and also at the end of the phone to advise on how the society has dealt with matters in the past. Before the AGM I suggested to the other committee members that to mark Mike's stepping down and his 40th year of membership it would be an appropriate time to promote him to the esteemed position of honorary member. Sadly the constitution did not allow us to just do this and therefore surprise Mike. We must first hold a vote at a General Meeting after giving adequate notice to all voting members. As my first action as president I therefore propose that at the Autumn Meeting the society votes to make Mike Gill an Honorary Member of NMRS, the inclusion of this proposal in the spring newsletter providing the required adequate notice to the membership.

As Mike pointed out in his final report the future looks bright for the society and as President I will be working hard to ensure that this remains to be the case.

Martin Roe

Too much coal mining?

The committee always like to know what members think, even if it puts us on the spot! One member recently remarked that we seem to be leaning more and more towards coal mining and that is not what attracted him to join us. What do you think?

The growing interest in coal isn't the result of a policy change by the society which, since 1960, has encouraged the study of "all historical and technical aspects of mining and associated subjects". We have never specified the minerals which are, or are not, of interest to us.

The content of British Mining reflects what members make available for publication. That has varied greatly over the years - for example, Welsh material was dominant in the 1970s and early 1980s, while in the 1990s we had more monographs on the mid and north Pennines.

The Society has done much to define how metal mining history is studied and presented, and sees its place in doing the same for the coal industry.

Have your say - please contact the Newsletter Editor, by post or email.

Membership matters.

Membership stands at 378, slightly ahead of the same time last year. We have 18 new members whilst just less than 40 have yet to renew.

Those that have renewed before 21st May should have received their membership card with this or the previous mailing; if you have not received your card then please contact me as below.

Would those who have not yet renewed please note that the latest monograph was included in this mailing for current members only. Those who now fail to renew will receive no further publications so to ensure you continue to receive future newsletters and this year's monographs please return the form sent earlier or simply send me a cheque made payable to NMRS; (Full - £15; Family - £15.50; Overseas - £18); don't forget to include your name and address!

Alan Mills - Hon. Treasurer NMRS
Sorrel Sykes
Sunnybrow
Reeth
North Yorkshire



Spring meeting

The Spring AMG and Dinner was held in Harrogate on 15th March 2005. Starting

with an excellent 3 course meal, we followed on with the AGM itself. Committee nominations were carried out and Mike Gill stepped down as President. The mantle has now been taken up by Martin Roe. Hazel Martell joins the committee too, as Junior Vice President. Mike Gill was presented with a commemorative etched Tankard. Hazel Martell was presented with a bouquet of flowers for being 'the power behind the throne' for so many years. A good time was had by all and thanks go to Mike Gill for organising the event and thanks to the Hotel for such a good meal. Hopefully we will see more people at next years Spring AGM.

Joint NMRS/PDHMS meet

The joint Northern Mine Research Society/ Peak District Historical Mines Society Seminar Day was held at the National Coal Mining Museum, Caphouse, Wakefield last weekend (21st May 2005). The day was very well attended by members of both societies and there was an opportunity for members to go on two special underground tours at 11.30am and 1.15pm. The day began at 9.30am with tea and coffee and a chance to chat before Martin Roe introduced the first speaker - Ivor Brown - who detailed the fascinating beginnings of Caphouse Colliery as a Museum. The second Speaker was Peter Hughes who gave a talk on the Dixon Rock Drill. After a coffee break, we heard from David Carlisle who briefly talked about the History of the Yorkshire Dales Mining Museum in Earby before outlining recent developments in renovating the museum. The third talk of the day was from Geoff Warrington who gave a talk entitled 'Cheshire Cobalt - 200th Anniversary'. There was a break for lunch where we had the opportunity to eat an excellent buffet and explore the Caphouse museum.

After lunch There was a Film shown about the excavations and Exploration of High Rake Mine in Derbyshire, filmed by David Webb. The next talk was from Rob Vernon on what can be found in PRO files at Kew. John Barnett gave a talk about the Fire Setting Project, showing us how to recognise the evidence for fire setting. We took a break for coffee before coming back for the last three talks, the first from Yvonne Luke on the evidence for 1st Millennium AD mining using Place Names,

specifically the name 'cloud'. Lynn Willies gave the penultimate talk about Rio Tinto, showing a number of pictures and detailing the changes that have occurred over the last 20 years. The last talk was by Martin Roe on Horse Gins in the Yorkshire Dales. The day was concluded with closing addresses from the PDHMS and NMRS presidents.

Thanks must go out to Mike Gill for organising this excellent day and to Caphouse for such good facilities.

Other News

Keld Heads Mine

Linda Smith of the NYCC (Heritage Department) is seeking volunteers to help with a programme of scrub clearance at the Keld Heads Mine in Wensleydale. Work will initially be concentrated near the engine house. Will anyone interested in helping please contact Linda at 01609 532911.

Mike Gill

A press release dated March 15th 2005, **Common sense above and below: outdoor adventure sector welcomes resolution of working at Heights impasse.**

Representatives of over forty organisations in the outdoor adventure sector have welcomed a decision in principle by Minister Jane Kennedy to allow for the development of sector specific Temporary Working at Heights Directive regulations in relation to specified adventure activities such as climbing and caving.

The sector and MPs had lobbied the Minister following lengthy negotiations with the Health and Safety Executive, on the grounds that the Directive was not aimed

at sporting activities, and that imposing it in its entirety could have severe and damaging effects on safety and businesses.

Alistair Burt MP for North East Bedfordshire accompanied John Cousins and Doug Jones of Mountain Leader Training UK, Tom Redfern of the British Caving Association and Brian Lamb of the Institute of Outdoor Learning to a meeting with the Minister and Health and Safety Commission Chairman Bill Callaghan on March 8th.

Alistair Burt MP said "We are very pleased with the outcome. The sector always recognised the point of the Directive in relation to those whose work temporarily involved working above ground, as in scaffolding or construction, but felt very strongly that it was never intended for sport. This view is held throughout the EU, and was confirmed in a legal opinion prepared for the Minister last November, which offered the opportunity that we had been seeking of allowing National Governing Bodies in climbing and caving to remain the key guardians of safety, a responsibility they have exercised superbly over the years.

This decision finally lays to rest the threat which had hung over the sector of inappropriate safety provisions applying to mountain training and mountain surfaces. It is a victory for common sense, and we are grateful to Jane Kennedy for her understanding of the situation"

John Cousins, Executive Director of Mountain Leader Training UK said "we set out to ensure that adventure activity providers could continue their activities unhindered and believe that the proposal to except us from specific elements of the Regulations is an excellent outcome. We are grateful to everyone who has made their views known and for the support of the media and politicians, especially Alistair Burt and Jane Kennedy. We can return to the business of developing good practice and enjoying our sports."

Alistair Burt MP 0207 219 8132

John Cousins 01690 720272

Thank you to Sallie Bassham for sending this in

NAMHO 2005 Conference - Surrey

Everything is now in place for a very enjoyable conference in Surrey. The field trips are all in place, there is a full lecture program, and a variety of accommodation is on offer.

The theme of the conference is very much centred on the subterranea of the South East, and my guess is that for many of you, this is outside your normal sphere of activity. All the more reason to come along, and enjoy what we have to offer. If you are thinking of coming, please may I ask you to get your bookings in as soon as possible. Deadlines are approaching, and some critical decisions need to be made very soon, and with bookings currently at a disappointingly low level, there is a very real risk that the conference

format will have to be changed.

By that, I mean the weekend may have to be restructured to something more akin to the old NAMHO field meets, with a local hall thrown in for the lectures. We really do not want to do this - it is a big distraction from adding the final touches to a great weekend, and it will disappoint those who have already booked, in that new arrangements would have to be made for accommodation, and we would have to cut back the list of field trips.

Please help us to make this year's conference as successful and enjoyable as previous events. The best way to do this is to decide to come along! Booking is very easy - visit namho.wcms.org.uk, or www.wcms.org.uk and click the link to namho2005. The booking forms can be downloaded, filled in, and the whole lot posted off to us within a day. All the details for the weekend are there on line for you to browse - accommodation choices, field trips, lectures, meal options. We look forward to meeting new and old friends!

Peter Burgess

WCMS and NAMHO 2005 committee

NAMHO 2006

The NAMHO conference is to be held in June 2006 in Llangollen the theme will be mining landscapes with the intentions of including a short section specifically on the practice of mining archaeology.

David Poyner

Obituary - Peter Neaverson

NMRS member Peter Neaverson died just before Christmas.

Peter was joint author with Marilyn Palmer of British Mining No.32 The Basset Mines: Their History & Industrial Archaeology.

Their other publications that society members may have come across include; Nineteenth Century Tin and Lead Dressing: A Comparative Study of the Field Evidence, Industry in the landscape 1700 - 1900, Industrial Archaeology: Principles and Practice. The latter has been a very influential publication that has helped to integrate industrial archaeology with more conventional archaeology.

Peter was for many years joint editor of Industrial Archaeology Review which in 1989 produced an edition devoted to metalliferous mining. In recent years Peter compiled publication abstracts for Industrial Archaeology Review and British Mining making regular appearances and receiving very favourable reviews.

Book Reviews

John Taylor the "Cornish Mining Engineer" or "Devon Mining Engineer"? (NRMS Newsletter, February 2005) Reply by Lynn Willies (male) to Mike Gill.

What Lindsey Porter and John Robey actually wrote in their Copper and Lead Mines around the Manifold Valley (2000 p72) was "John Taylor the celebrated mining engineer and manager", which they attached to Taylor's introduction of Cornish influences to Ecton. Could this be doubted?

It was Mike who introduced "John Taylor the Cornish Mining Engineer", in his review, before belittling the concept. Unfair to Lindsey (and John), as I said originally. I argue here that such an attribution would, in any case, be fully justified. One day Taylor's influence on their behalf may even be acknowledged by the Cornish themselves.

The soubriquet, "John Taylor the Devonshire, mining engineer", despite Mike's position on this, somehow never seems to have caught on. Later, John Taylor himself might have preferred "John Taylor and Sons of London", but by then his fame was inextricably linked with Cornwall and for very good reasons.

Mike is right over the importance of Taylor's success at Devon's Wheal Friendship at an early age and that it catapulted him to the notice of influential backers. It demonstrated his ability to seize on a lucky event and capitalise on it. But at that time there was no concept of the fame Taylor would achieve in developing and exploiting the Cornish System.

In the early 19th century it was Taylor who seized the new mining technology, then somewhat ineffectively being utilised by the Cornish adventurers, which had been developed by men like Trevithick (who left the scene for South America) and Woolf, who was obsessed by his compound steam engine design. It was Taylor who initiated the trial of the big single "Cornish engine" versus the Woolf compound, and came down on the side of the former, largely on the grounds of its simplicity. He then had Woolf install four very big singles at Consolidated at Gwennap, over which sett the Cornish had vacillated for years. In the next twenty years, in modern money equivalent, he there produced approaching a billion of pounds profits for his "friends", i.e., investing clients. After losing Consolidated in 1839 to a small group of perfidious Cornish adventurers (any in doubt of this should read the contemporary accounts in the Mining Journal), he

expanded operations at his adjacent United Mines and repeated his success. And did it again and again, even minimising losses to general shareholders by rapid retreat from obvious failures

The mining engineering and management methods known as the Cornish System were dominant throughout the mining world in the first half of the 19th century and for long after in many places. John Taylor III, the grandson, showed similar skills and achieved success in the Kolar Goldfield in India from the 1870s (continuing to 1953), using exactly the same principles, and yielding his lucky friends involved there many more billions of pounds of dividends measured in modern equivalent money. So no clogs to clogs in three generations either.

Taylor & Sons became widely and justly famous. First for his Cornish successes then for the successful international exploitation of the Cornish System. It was certainly not on account of his small Devon adventure. This was recognised in his time, not least in the leading weekly mining publication of the day. Lindsey and John would thus have been fully justified in awarding him the accolade as the Cornish Mining Engineer, had they done so. Within a group of well known names associated with Cornish mining no other individual did more for the fame of Cornish mining engineering over the world. Unless Mike has some undisclosed, bang-up-to-date, sources which convince otherwise.
Lynn Willies

Coal Not Dole - Memories of the 1984/5 Miners Strike - Compiled by Guthrie Hutton 64pp card covers

This was the beginning of the end of a great industry the politics we all

remember, the effect. The book pulls together scenes, postcards, media and memories of this sad time for the industry. The material is compiled from the NUM (Scotland) exhibition "STRIKE fighting for our communities". An excellent piece of social history and comment many of the pictures of police action and leaders of the strike will evoke many memories. We all recall this time which is now 20 years ago and most of us will probably regret the outcome
Mike Moore

The Mines of South Western Scotland by Tony Oldham 2005. 35 pp.

The mines of south-western Scotland are virtually unknown to most of the inhabitants of England and Wales. In many ways it is a lost and forgotten area. An area of wild beauty, noted more for its agriculture and scenery than for its industries. It has never been of great importance as a centre of mining; nevertheless the scattered occurrences of metalliferous ores that have been worked from time to time are relatively poorly covered in literature. The two main works by G V Wilson (1921) and James R Foster-Smith (1967) are long out of print and difficult to obtain. This present work hopes to overcome this problem by recording those deposits, which are known to exist, and which have been worked or investigated in past times. There is no active mining in the area at present, though some small-scale mining continued as late as 1954.

Thunder Underground; Northumberland Mine Disasters 1815 - 1865 - Author Roy Thompson

Burdon Main, Coxlodge Burradon, New Hartley, (Seaton Delaval) and Walker Collieries.

The book recounts the horrors, bravery and the curious way in which the coroner (all the inquests were held before the same coroner whom the Miners considered biased) conducted the inquest. This is well produced and interesting volume and shows an insight into mining in the North East

Mike Moore

Water Power in Mining Mining History Vol 15, Nos 4/5.

After waiting for nearly three years the conference papers from the 2002 NAMHO conference have been published. A wide range of topics are covered from mining areas both in the UK, Europe and North America. There are a number of papers on the Yorkshire Dales on the use of water at Grassington, hydraulic engines in

Swaledale and Sir Francis Level: Driven by Water a discussion of the history and archaeology of Sir Francis Level. Like previous conference proceeding published by PDMHS, such as Boles and Smelt Mills and Mining Before Powder this publication provides a useful collection of themed papers full of references essential for anyone studying the use of water power. If there is a negative side to this publication it is that although the A4 format allows the inclusion of larger and more complex line drawings than we see in British Mining, the reproduction is poor in places, similarly some of the colour photographs are very flat and have a green cast.

Mining History can be obtained from the Peak District Mining Museum at Matlock Bath Price £20

Martin Roe

Meet Reports

Anglezarke Lead Mines - Saturday April 23rd April 2005

Nine of us met at 10.30 am in the picturesque hamlet of White Coppice. Not much there; It's basically consists of about 5 white walled cottages, an immaculately kept cricket ground and a couple of small dams. The weather was perfect, being warm, dry and sunny but with a pleasant breeze. Before we set off, our Leader, Iain Williamson gave us a short history of the mines and a geological introduction to the area.

We proceeded firstly to the White Coppice Quarry to look at two easterly trending mineral veins and the site of a small adit at the base of the quarry. This has been walled up about 10 years ago because of Health and Safety regulations. It went in about 30 feet to intersect the vein. We

then went to look at another walled up adit in Dean Brook. It goes in about 60 feet to the base of a shaft. The next place we visited was a line of impressive bell pits at Drinkwaters, named after a large farmhouse that was pulled down by the Water Authority last Century. They were obsessed with the idea that sheep grazing would pollute the water in the reservoirs! At the lowest bell pit, Martin Roe found evidence of a watercourse running to a small dressing floor and a possible adit entrance near the bank of the brook. We then basically retraced our steps back to White Coppice. At this point we had lunch in nearly pleasant surroundings sitting on benches under the trees watching a game of cricket.

After lunch we got in our cars and drove up the valley to Stronstrey Bank to look at a couple of bellpits where it was reputedly

the first location where witherite was discovered. We had a dig around but didn't find any signs of the mineral. Nice views of the Anglezarke reservoirs and the Lancashire Plain could be seen from here.

Our last port of call was Lead Mines Clough. This location has the largest number of mining remains. The wheel pit and pumping shaft had been beautifully restored. There were remains of a water leat stone structure leading up to a spring a bit higher up the hillside. On the opposite side of the brook, there is a very small adit that reaches the base of a shaft after a short distance. Nowadays you can't actually crawl to reach the underground shaft because there is a bricked up wall in the way. There are extensive spoil heaps scattered over a wide area indicating a highly mineralised area. The area was approximately worked between 1690 and 1830. The spoil heaps yield galena, sphalerite, barite and witherite. We had a good look around at the bottom of the heaps, but I fear all the good surface specimens have been removed. We finally went to look at the two large grassed over shaft workings behind the spoil heaps. From here, impressive views of the West Pennine Moors could be seen. These included Rivington Pike and Winter Hill.

My thanks to Iain for sharing his expert knowledge of the area with us, and to rest of the members who turned up on the day.
Richard Platt

Buckden Gavel Mine Sunday May 8th 2005

Six people turned up for this meet of which only three were society members. Two further members did accompany us up to the mine before continuing up

Buckden Pike.

Unavoidably this meet was moved from the Saturday due to a double booking and this may explain the low attendance. The change was on the website and if you turned up on the Saturday without checking the website or contacting the meet leader, which the meet card says that you should, then you will have missed the official trip.

Only two of the six had visited the mine before and the extensive nature of this mine came as a surprise as did some of the obstacles to negotiate such as a sump on the Old Man's Crosscut that has to be crossed on bendy metal rails. The aim was to reach the far end of the mine and climb up into and explore a series of flat workings. Although we did get up into the flats, time did not allow for much exploration although I have probably got the photographs that I wanted.

The return trip via the three dimensional maze of the main pipe included the usual navigation difficulties and bruised knees and elbows and the exit from the level was made more difficult by the presence of a bat. This had been seen on the way in and had not been disturbed however on the way out it took flight and for a few minutes it refused to either leave the level or pass us to move further into the mine. Visitors to the mine should be aware of bats and try and avoid disturbing them if at all possible.

Martin Roe

Photographs from recent and future meets



The two photographs above were taken by Steve Mitchell on the recent meet at Anglezarke, lead by Ian Williamson.

Photographs from the Buckden Gavel Meet will be in the August Newsletter.



These photographs were taken by Martin Roe in a recent trip to the Facit Stone Mines. If you would like to visit the Stone Mines see the details on Page 1.

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, please ask and it will be returned with the next newsletter. In particular, photographs, plans and pictures are welcome as long as they can be reproduced well in black and white.

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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.