



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

Society News

December 2005

Autumn Meeting – was held on Saturday, October 15th 2005 at the Miner's Arms, Greenhow. Before the Meeting, a guided walk lead by Martin Roe, was made across the Galloway pasture to look at the mining remains. Martin pointed out various shaft workings, one of which could have been a cog and rung, and remnants of meer and quarter cord working. It was typical Greenhow weather, cold, and covered in mist. We couldn't see more than about 50 yards, but it was a good turnout with about 20 people attending. We arrived back for the buffet lunch for 1.00pm.

After a short business meeting, there was a very interesting afternoon of slides and talks. Martin Roe gave us a talk and demonstration on Mapinfo, a geographical Information software application, and how the GIS data is used in surveying. Also he gave us an update of the mineshaft and subsequent level he and others have been digging at Far Side, Greenhow.

Yvonne Luke's talk was on the unusual subject of 'clouds'. Using maps, she has been visiting different areas of the country looking for place names that have the word 'clowder' in them. A clowder is an early mining site. She presented a similar talk at the NMRS/PDHMS Seminar, Caphouse Colliery last May, but on this occasion she concentrated on walking the Hawkswick Clowder, which was backed up with lots of photographs.

John Hunter gave us a talk on Flourspar Mining in Derbyshire, particularly from the angle of the environment. He showed with the aid of photographs how opencast excavations are generally restored to conform to the surrounding landscape.

Tony Fretwell brought along a video showing the early exploration of Low Skears Low Level, Hudeshope, Teesdale. Considering it was made about 20 years ago, the quality was not too bad. One felt sorry for the team carrying the heavy batteries for the lighting, it must have been very hard work.

Inside this issue:

Society News	1-2
Ingleton Book Launch	3
NAMHO News	4
Book Reviews	5
Field Meet Report	6
Editors Contact Details	8



Society members looking at the mining landscape on Galloway Pasture, Greenhow (John Hunter)

New members in 2005

A belated welcome to the following 33 individual members of the Society who joined in 2005.

Mrs	H.M.	Bainbridge
Mr	J.	Barnatt
Mr	A.	Bibby
Mr	R.G.	Brooks
Mr	R.G.	Bruce
Mr	L.	Burch
Mr	M.	Clark
Mr	L.A.	Dobson
Mr	J.	Freeman
Mr	J.	Greenhalgh
Mr	A.	Guy
Mr	D.A.H.	Hargreaves
Mr	E.	Hemsley
Mrs	J.M.	Heward
Mr	M.J.	Herron
Mr	G.N.	Hindley
Mr	W.T.	Hollins
Mr	A.B.W.	Holroyde
Mr	F.D.B.	Hudson
Mr	D.	Johnson
Mr	C.M.	Jones
Mr	A.W.	Jubb
Mr	R.	Kearney
Mrs	W. J.	Kinch
Mr	R	Meldrum
Mr	P.	Morris
Mr	P.N.	Pearson
Ms	A.	Percival
Mrs	A.	Richards
Mr	C.	Stansfield

Dr. M. Sweeney
Mr D.J. Turner
Mr D.M. Whitworth

Apologies to anyone I may have inadvertently omitted!

At the present time (late November) the Society has 400 members, an increase of 8 over the same time last year.

Alan Mills
Treasurer

Library News

A recent tip-off enabled me to buy three new books for the library at less than half the list prices. Ivor J Brown's "The East Shropshire Coalfields" and "West Shropshire Mining Fields" are in the Tempus softback series and include plenty of written facts as well as fascinating old photographs. John Cornwell's "The Bristol Coalfield" is a Landmark hardback; as well as many photographs and plans, there is historical detail and then a geographical breakdown of the coalmining areas. The library list may be obtained electronically from sbassham@nildram.co.uk or on paper from Mike Gill. Sallie Bassham (Librarian)

New Newsletter Editor

I have taken over from Anna Davies as the Newsletter Editor 6 weeks ago. I would like to thank her for all the help and advice she has given me regarding the production of the NMRS newsletter.

In future, will you please send to me any material that can be included in the newsletter. You will find my details on the back page of the newsletter.

Richard Platt

Annual Subscriptions due January 1st 2006

Same price as last year - proving very good value for money!

Book Launch – Ingleton Coalfield

Encouraged by strong local interest in the village's coal memorial, it was decided to launch the Ingleton Coalfield monograph at the Ingleborough Community Centre on June 5th. The event, which was advertised in the *Craven Herald* and by posters in the village and word of mouth, attracted around sixty people and over £400 worth of books were sold. It was opened by David Ireton, the area's county councillor, and all three authors spoke about their involvement in the project. Bernard Bond and Dick Chalmers provided a display of local mining and quarrying artefacts and photographs, and Mike Gill set up a continuous slide show of mining pictures, complete with commentary (but the event promoted so much chatter that this could not be heard!).

Fortunately, this chatter brought out more snippets of information and these will, no doubt, be incorporated into John Bentley's forthcoming wider history of Ingleton. Tea and biscuits were served before and after the talks and the event was a great success and raised the Society's profile. It would be a good model for other monograph authors to follow as a means of promoting their work.

Thanks are due to: Carole Bentley, Janet Bond, Dick Chalmers, the editor of the *Craven Herald*, Hazel Martell and the Nutter family for their help.



The authors sign copies of their book (Dick Chalmers).



John Bentley addressing the masses, watched by our former president (Dick Chalmers).

Colliery Announcements

It's naphtha for a Nottinghamshire pit

In July UK Coal announced that Harworth Colliery, which employs 460, would be mothballed when the current face is worked out. The workings, in the Deep Soft seam, are around 1 km deep and are being troubled with difficult ground conditions and methane emissions.

Work began at Harworth in 1913, but the German company employed to sink the shafts had its assets seized and workers interned on the outbreak of war. It was not until 1919, therefore, that the Harworth Main Colliery Company was able to resume

sinking. By 1922 the company was in serious debt to Barber, Walker & Company, of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire, which also owned Bentley Colliery near Doncaster. It took over the Harworth sinking and Nos.1 and 2 shafts reached the Barnsley seam in 1923, on October 29th and November 15th respectively. The Top Hard (Barnsley), Blyth, Deep Soft, Haigh Moor and Swallow Wood seams have already been worked, but boreholes have shown an area of Top Hard Seam, beyond the old workings, which UK Coal would like to develop by driving a 4.5 km long roadway.

Rossington Colliery

With the future of this Doncaster mine in doubt, in August UK Coal proposed the introduction of new working practices in order to increase coal cutting times from 105 to 140 hours per week. The men's response to the proposals would determine the number of redundancies which were expected in the next three months. In the event, however, UK Coal announced its intention to end production at Rossington in the New Year.

An expected walkout by NUM members at Rossington, Maltby and Kellingley, in protest at plans, was called off on November 7th.

Welbeck Colliery

Miners at Harworth were offered transfers to Welbeck, but UK Coal has since announced further cuts in manpower at Welbeck.

Selby Coalfield

The 88 foot high concrete winding tower at Wistow Mine was felled on July 1st. Work on clearing Riccall Mine was due to begin in August.

NAMHO FORTHCOMING EVENTS

RESEARCH SEMINAR

The next in the seminar series will be the topic based, on **Working with Coal; its History and Archives**, and will be held at the Coal Authority HQ in Mansfield on **Saturday 21st January 2006 starting at 10:30am.**

If you would like to make a short presentation at the seminar please contact me soonest. There will be no charge for the seminar but I would appreciate notification if you are attending just to gauge the level of interest. Lunch can be obtained at a local pub.

please contact Dr Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA66 7RE Tel: 01437 532578 or email at P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

The Coal Authority HQ are in Lichfield Lane, Berry Hill, just to the east of the A60 immediately south of Mansfield. A map is

available on the Internet at <http://www.coal.gov.uk/contact/>

SILVER IN THE NORTHERN PENNINES

Northern Pennine Silver: Where and How?

A seminar to be held at the North Pennines Heritage Trust Centre, Nenthead, on Saturday 8th April 2006.

Details of this seminar were given in the August 2005 Newsletter.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dr Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA66 7RE Tel: 01437 532578 or email at P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk
There will be no charge for the seminar itself. Lunch will be available in the Centre's café. To book, please contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3DB. Email Sheila.barker@cybermoor.org.uk

NAMHO 2006 CONFERENCE

The 2006 conference is to be held 9th to 11th June 2006 at the Royal Pavilion, Llangollen. The event will be jointly organised by the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club and the Shropshire Mines Trust Ltd, with assistance from the Welsh Mines Society, North Wales Caving Club, and the Grosvenor Caving Club.

The conference theme is '**Mining in the Landscape**', with the programme arranged to reflect how mines and mining sit in their surroundings. In particular, the conference will look at how differences in the type of material, and changing technology, have influenced the mining landscape.

Initial subjects include: -

- The changing mining landscape; how mines have evolved through history.
- Slate mining landscapes, in particular the area around Llangollen.
- The diversity of mining landscapes.
- Surveying the mining landscape.

It is also hoped a number of mini seminars will run in parallel with the lecture programme, for example – Mining archaeology; Influences of natural history on access to mine sites; Developments in

underground stills and video photography; Why should mining historians be interested in quarries?

The lecture programme organisers are already contacting speakers and invite offers of presentations and posters on these and related topics.

Ideally situated along the Welsh borders, Llangollen is within easy reach of coal, metal and stone mining regions. Running alongside the lecture programme are a series of surface and underground field trips to some of the many sites in the surrounding region of North-east Wales. In addition, it is hoped to provide a coach tour of surface sites on Monday 12th June, and a number of other underground trips during the following week.

The full provisional leaflet is available on the NAMHO website – <http://www.namho.org> If you have an interest in particular sites in north-east Wales, and are willing to help lead a field trip (surface or underground), or are interested in contributing to the lecture programme, please contact Mike Moore mike@moorebooks.co.uk or at the following address 53 Vineyard Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7DF. Telephone 01952 405105

BOOK REVIEWS

A list of fatal accidents in Shropshire Mines from 1850-1979 by Dr Ivor J. Brown
This well illustrated book is the result of over forty years' work gathering details of fatal accidents from local newspapers, inspectors' reports, ballads and other publications. The deaths of some 800 mineworkers are recorded. Most of them died singly, but 22 accidents involved three or more deaths. Perhaps surprisingly, the largest category in the latter group was shaft accidents, followed by explosions and suffocation (by black damp and fumes from fires). Overall, however, falls of ground were the remorseless, though less remarked, killer.

Ivor readily admits that there are gaps in the statistics and explains why that is. Nevertheless, the inclusion of indexes to accidents involving two or more deaths, individuals (with date of death), other people mentioned in the text and a list of named

mines, makes the book an easily usable tool. This ensures that it will be an invaluable starting point for genealogists and mining historians alike.

Published by the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, Account No.24 (August 2005) in A4 format, 86 pp, 24 figs and 20 plates. Price £6.00 (+ £1.00 p&p) – available from Moore Books, 53 Vineyard Drive, NEWPORT, Shropshire, TF10 7DF

The Wand of Science – by David S Barrie

For the first time there is to be a publication dedicated entirely to the development of the British flame safety lamp from 1815 onwards. Other books, published in France and Germany have only touched on the subject. The Wand of Science is the culmination of over twenty years enthusiasm and collecting. It all began with a single lamp inherited from an uncle who was a colliery boiler inspector, and has now grown - though still totally under control! Whilst there have been French and German books which have covered British lamps this is the first volume dedicated entirely to the development of British lamps; from 1815 to date. The text is based on extensive research and it is illustrated with patents, period advertisements, and photographs from some of the best UK private collections. The help of other collectors and mining enthusiasts is gratefully acknowledged.

In December this year a CD will be issued costing £35. This disc will also contain background information, catalogues and other information that there will not be room for in the published book, which will follow, in mid 2006. Any revisions and updates will be dealt with by another issue at time of book publication - which will be free to the original subscribers. The book, which will be in full colour, will cost £60. There will only be 200 copies and nearly 150 have been pre-ordered already.

The author is always happy to talk lamps, and indeed to help with identification - you can always submit queries and photographs via the website. You might even catch him underground somewhere, probably the one panting at the top of a pitch.

Meanwhile you can get further information, download a specimen chapter (though this is quite old now) at

www.thewandofscience.co.uk as well as pre-ordering. Doing this gets you an email that informs you when the disc, and then the book, is ready plus free postage on each.

Incidentally there is a drawing on the right hand side of the home page - there is a small prize of a good quality 'Wand of Science' biro in presentation box, for each of the first three people to guess what the lamp shown was specifically designed to do (apart from test for gas!).

Yorkshire Mining Veterans in their own words by Brian Elliott

Having interviewed retired mineworkers, Brian has compiled 47 of their stories in this well illustrated book to give a compelling account of their experiences from starting work, often on the pit top screens or in cold pit bottoms, their progression through haulage work onto face or development work and, for some, into management or supervisory roles. Their stories, which span from the early 1900s to the pit closures in the early 1990s, give an insight into how the industry changed, the camaraderie, accidents, industrial relations and humour, and also provide a vivid record of the Yorkshire coal industry.

Price £9.99, Wharncliffe Books, ISBN 1 903425 581, 192 pp.

Advanced Notice of a future Ingleton Coalfield and Quarry Field Meet. (depending on landowner's permission)

Lead by Bernard Bond. Date to be given, possibly April 2006

Suggested itinerary: -

Meet in the morning at Bernard's garage in Beech Terrace at 10.30 am, where an exhibition of surveys, photographs and mining artefacts can be viewed. Easy walk to the colliery sites, and the Wilson Wood site where the Ingleton Coalfield monograph shows the shaft repair after the collapse.

Depending on the turnout, lunch could be arranged in a local public house?

After lunch we will drive to Drum Top, Ingleton to see its tunnel the latter portion to the Granite Quarry. Then another drive to Chapel Le Dale in order to view the remains of buildings, aerial ropeway foundations and embankments.

FIELD MEET REPORT

Rampgill Mine, Nenthead – Saturday September 17th 2005

8 members and 1 guest met at the Visitor car park in Nenthead on a typical day for this area, cold, overcast and drizzle. As no mine was mentioned in the Meets List, it was decided to visit Rampgill Mine, as not many members had been there before, and because it is a very interesting mine with its old graffiti, intact underground whim and plenty of new exploration through the NORPEX door. Originally there were three steel doors preventing explorers from entering this area but these doors were 'torched off' several years ago.

After signing in at the Visitor Centre and paying our one pound trespass fee we set off for the entrance. Usually the first place (at 100 yards in) to visit is the massive Brewery Shaft with its splendid views of associated pipe and pitwork. At this point the shaft goes up to surface 90 feet and drops down to the pelton wheels, compressors, and electrical generators 260 feet below. Unfortunately, a stout wooden door is now preventing access to the shaft to which, I think, is a great pity. Continuing along the main level the Scaleburn vein is reached. After about 400 yards the level is blocked, but just back from the collapse there is a series of steps cut to reach a higher sublevel. Here are some excellent examples of 18th century graffiti. Nearby a small excavated shaft leads back into the main level again. From here we reached the horse whim chamber. The whim is virtually complete but is resting on its side. By the side of it, there is a large shaft going down into the level below.

Back to the main level we reached Whiskey Bottle Junction, named after the large collection of empty whiskey bottles stacked

on the wall. Then down Rampgill vein passing through an area with a very high stope and a wall covered in beautiful iron coated formations. Further on the large Low Whimsey Engine Shaft with its interesting pipe work is encountered. The shaft continues down to the Nentforce Level. A little further on we reach the Rampgill crosscut which at the continuation of the level had an solid steel door with an ingenious locking/unlocking system based on hydraulics and a compressed air bottle and for many years this was the termination of this level, but as previously mentioned, a party of explorers managed to get in from the far side and with the aid of an oxy-acetylene torch removed all three steel doors. A great deal of very serious work was put into this passage by the NORPEX group. They dug through countless roof falls and there was an extremely large area of ground that required roof supports. Of interest is an intact miner's thunderbox or toilet and a wooden door which allowed access for the two different Mining Companies working the Rampgill Mine, those being the London Lead Company and Col. Beaumont's Company. Near the final bit of the level, there is a crosscut, which leads to a massive shaft down into a level below. The shaft is completely across the wide passage, and the only way across it is to use the support of the pipes on the opposite wall. Fortunately this has been rigged with a fixed handline but is definitely not for the faint hearted! The passage soon ends but a rise with a completely intact steel hawser 'rope ladder goes up perhaps 50 or 60 feet. It was very tempting to climb the ladder but luckily sense prevailed. At this point we were about a mile from the entrance portal. It didn't take long to get back to the entrance, we reported back to the Visitor's Centre and then walked back to the cars. It was quite a long and strenuous trip for a NMRS underground trip. We went a lot further into the mine than I had expected to, but it was well worth the effort. My thanks to everyone who turned up for the trip.

Richard Platt



The stairs on the Scaleburn Vein
(Steve Mitchell)



The Horse Whim Scaleburn
(Steve Mitchell)

"From the secretary" - Sincere thanks to all who lead and assisted in the 2005 field meets in what proved to be an interesting and diverse programme. Planning for the Society's 2006 programme of field meets is currently under way. If any members can offer to lead a meet (either surface or underground) or would like to suggest a venue, the secretary would very much like to hear from you. You can contact him by phone on 01535 657090

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please continue to send material for the newsletter. Contributions can be sent by email 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 to you as soon as possible. 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

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