



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

Society News

February 2006

An appeal from the acting-President for new committee members/trustees

The Society's committee of trustees has had an eventful year, to say the least. By an unfortunate coincidence several committee members, some of whom have given not only several years, but several decades of loyal service, have either

resigned or are retiring at the AGM in March and will not be standing for re-election. This leaves the committee somewhat depleted at the present time. At a committee meeting held on February 4th, 2006, I volunteered to serve for the time being as acting-President in addition to my role as Publications Editor. Because the committee is so short-handed and as we have a number of urgent tasks to attend to in the near term, it was decided to dispense with the 2006 dinner and only hold the AGM in March.

**YOUR
SOCIETY**



**NEEDS
YOU**

The Society continues to thrive in its endeavours. Membership has remained stable at around 400 for a number of years and sales of publications have steadily improved since the downturn in 2001, which we assume was linked to access restrictions imposed in the Dales following the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. Last year the income from publication sales, thanks in part to the terrific promotion of BM 76 (Ingleton Coal) by its authors, approached £7,000 and was equivalent to the annual subscriptions from 451 additional members. As a result of this effort, the Society's funds are very healthy and we are in the fortunate position in being able to give grants to

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individuals for research work into mining history. We have a valuable collection of library books and journals, an extensive set of historical records and an ongoing digital database and GIS project. In recent years, however, rarely have more than 5% of members attended any of the Society's meetings at any one time. Society activities can only function properly if a sufficient number of volunteers donate some of their time to help with the routine management of the Society and also become involved in special projects.

As a consequence of the request for nominations to the committee distributed with the December 2005 newsletter, two volunteers have stepped forward to fill the positions of Vice President and Newsletter Editor. Three of the existing trustees (Editor, Librarian and Recorder) have also agreed to continue in their existing posts for the coming year. At the AGM on March 25th we will still require nominations for other members to become trustees and fill the posts of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Junior Vice President. Following the AGM, it is likely the committee will consider whether some routine tasks can be reallocated or possibly delegated to a non-trustee role, for example, the creation of separate posts for membership renewals and publication sales. If any members think that they may be able to help with any routine Society tasks or even with occasional one-off jobs, please contact me via the Society's official address or by email, as follows:

miner@aditlevel.co.uk

I will be very pleased to hear from you.

Please also show your support for the Society by coming to attend the Annual General Meeting on March 25th. I look forward to seeing you there.

John Hunter

Cancellation of the Annual Dinner

The Committee has decided to cancel this year's Annual Dinner on March 25th, but the AGM will still be held at the Miners Arms, Greenhow Hill, near Pateley Bridge. There will be bar food available for all who want it and the Annual General Meeting will begin at 1.30 pm prompt.

Membership Matters

Many thanks to those of you who have already renewed your membership and to the four new members who have joined this year. Currently we have 313 paid up members so around 100 have yet to renew. If you are one of the 100 or so, then please complete and return the renewal form which came with the December Newsletter. On the reverse of the form is the Gift Aid declaration. If you are a UK tax payer then by completing this you enable the Society to claim back the income tax you paid on your membership fee, thereby increasing its value to the Society by 28%. Last year this enabled us to reclaim nearly £1300 from the Inland Revenue. If you have not completed a Gift Aid form before then please do! If you cannot remember whether you have completed one recently or not, then please take a few minutes to do it as it does not matter how many you do as long as we have at least one!

If you have mislaid the renewal form then fear not! Simply send a cheque made payable to the NMRS to me at Sorrel Sykes, Sunnybrow, Reeth, North Yorkshire, DL11 6TJ; the subscription rates are £15 for a full member, £18 overseas, and £0.50 for each additional family member.

Alan Mills
Treasurer

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members, who have joined since January 1st:-

Mr W.D. Allison
Dr J.K. Almond
Mr M. Anderson
Mr P.J. Appleton

Ingleton Book fare Sunday May 28th 2006

A book fare is to be held at Ingleborough Community Centre, Ingleton between 10.00 am. and 4.30 pm. The Society will have a stall there in order to sell its publications and to attract new members. Please try to support this venue.

Society Meets and Other Events

Saturday March 25th
AGM at the Miners Arms
Greenhow Hill, starts at 1.30 pm.

Saturday April 22nd
Ingleton coalfield/Granite quarries
See below.

Friday-Sunday June 9th to 11th
NAMHO Conference
The Royal Pavilion, Llangollen
<http://www.namhoconference.org.uk/>

Ingleton coalfield/Granite quarries
Surface Meet with P.D.M.H.S.

Leaders: Bernie Bond & John Bentley.
Contact 015242 41857 (Answer phone.)

Meet 10.15 a.m. at 1, Beech Terrace,
Tatterthorne Lane (SD68757224):-

Turn by the Masons Arms off the A65 at Ingleton. Follow Tatterthorne Lane for 500 metres; meeting by the terrace of houses and the double garage (Miners cottages and site of miners shop). Owing to parking congestion, some cars will have to be left on pub car park area.

Itinerary:

Exhibition of local artefacts and drawings, the shaft collapse of October 2003 and the machinery required.

Handouts showing the five collieries – Wilson Wood, Newfield, The Winnings and Ingleton Old and New – to be visited on the meet, covering the period 1842 to 1940.

View our Coal Memorial adjacent to A65 erected in June 2004 and much more!

The morning viewing of the collieries having been completed by approx. 1.00 pm, we will return to the Masons Arms



where the landlord, John, will provide a Grand Butty Lunch (to be paid for, sorry). We will then move on to Chapel-le-Dale in the afternoon.

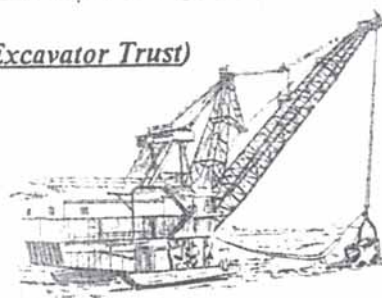
Car journey to the Granite Quarry (1887), view the building remains, fixed artefacts, the aerial ropeway foundations (1926). Finally, follow the quarry's tramline (railway) to the impressive "Drum Top". Here the wagons linked to the 1 in 6 descent into Ingleton's former railway and goods yard.

Weather permitting drawings of all sites will be taken with us.

Friends of St Aidan's BE 1150 Dragline

(affiliated to the Vintage Excavator Trust)

Chairman: Paul C Thompson
Treasurer: Alan Mutter
Secretary: Dr. Ivor J Brown



DRAGLINE OPEN DAY

**COME AND SEE THE LARGEST
PRESERVED WALKING DRAGLINE
EXCAVATOR IN WESTERN EUROPE**

**SIT IN THE DRIVERS SEAT:
HAVE A LOOK ROUND INSIDE:
SEE THE 20 CUBIC YARD BUCKET:**

**ST AIDANS OPENCAST COAL SITE
SWILLINGTON, LEEDS (Signposted)**

SATURDAY 8th April 2006

SATURDAY 17th June 2006

SAT, SUN, 9/10th Sept 2006

2.00pm to 4.0pm

ADMISSION FREE

**Contact: Paul C Thompson 07889 286634
St Aidans Trust & the Heritage Lottery Fund**

Obituaries

Unfortunately, this winter's list of obituaries is rather a long one, with the deaths of some long-standing members and important figures in the world of mining history. Mike Gill & Hazel Martell (with contributions from Christine Evans, John Frankland and Bernard Bond).

Mike Goth (1929 to 2005)

Mike, who died on December 11th at the age of 76, joined the Northern Cavern & Mine Research Society in its very early years, and was the first president after the society name was changed. Born in Morecambe, except for a spell in the RAF, he spent most of his life at Hornby, in Lunedale. He married Anna in 1959 and they both enjoyed holidays in the mountain areas of Vent and Untergurgl.



The summit of the 3000 m. Spiegelkogel, with Mike in the pointed bobcat.

Mike's time in the RAF left him with a love of flying, but unfortunately whilst piloting a glider in thick fog, in 1962, he crashed into the side of a hill near Tebay. Although he seriously damaged his spine, it was typical of Mike that his comment was "I knew I was in trouble when I could hear sheep!".

His interest in caving began over 50 years ago, with the Morecambe Rock and Pot Club. He was active and vigorous, but spoke better than many members, most of whom called him "The Posh Lad". He still pushed caves to the limit and never complained. In later years he supported the science of caving. This interest led him to join the NCMRS and extended his interest to old mines. He was a regular attender of society meets and social events and always had a good tale to tell. Accident prone, he was a regular winner of the Golden Chicken Award for the most inept act of the year. For example, his love of gadgetry led to him building and

using a U.V. light source to detect fluorescing minerals. He caused great mirth when, having gone up Carrock beck in the dark, he grabbed a prize specimen of scheelite, only to find that Seagull lime also fluoresces!

An interest in local amateur dramatics saw Mike take parts in Gilbert & Sullivan operettas. It also meant that his presidential guest at the 1975 Annual Dinner was David Pownall, now a well known playwright and author. Mike's good singing voice was also put to good use when the church choir at Hornby was one short.

As well as introducing many longstanding members to the NMRS, Mike was also an active member of the Cave Rescue Organisation, taking radio control in the radio contact room at the depot whenever required. This tied in well with his interest in wartime radio equipment.

Hornby church was full for his funeral, which was attended by many friends from the mining history and caving world, as well as the local community. Although not as active in recent years because of illness, Mike will be very much missed.

Harry Houghton (1943-2005)

Harry died suddenly on December 21st, two days after his 62nd birthday and four days after we saw him at Mike Goth's funeral. Although he left the society in the late 1990s, when ill health caused him to cut back on his many activities, Harry kept in touch. With the help of his wife Sue, he was a mainstay of the society for much of the 1970s and 1980s, when Harry's official role was Public Relations Officer, which included the role of Newsletter Editor. In those far off days, the Newsletter was printed on a Roneo duplicator and Sue gallantly typed all the stencils. She also did them for the first issue of British Mining. Collating the Newsletter was a family affair with a very young Emily and Edward being pressed in to help. They also distributed the Newsletter and publications to members.

Having re-read some of the old Newsletters for this obituary, I was reminded what a good job Harry and Sue did and rediscovered some really useful short articles, written by members, commenting on specific points in the British Mining series. Harry's personality came through from the pages and he was briefly alive again.



Harry was President in 1982-83 and through his friendship with Pete Brears, then Director of Leeds Museums, he was able to secure Armley Mills (Leeds Industrial Museum) as the venue for the second NAMHO biennial conference, which was hosted by NMRS.

Harry was also very active in the St John Ambulance and the Venture Scouts. These organisations along with members of this society were well represented amongst the very large congregation at Meanwood Parish Church, Leeds. Members of the St John Ambulance formed a guard of honour as the coffin, which was carried by close friends and Scouts, entered the church.

Harry had the ability to see the wider picture and his support for spending practically all the Society's reserves in order to allow the then new editor, Hazel Martell, to implement her proposals for reinvigorating British Mining, proved pivotal. The subsequent expansion of the number of issues and the growth in sales proved them both right.

Never a mere participant, Harry will be greatly missed in circles well beyond mining history. Flowers were sent to Sue and her family on behalf of the Society.

Justin Brooke (1920 to 2005)

Although a major player in Cornish mining history, Justin's interests were much wider and he joined the NMRS in the early 1960s. As well as writing a number of papers for British Mining and the old Memoirs, as a Swedish speaker, he also translated Henric Kalmeter's journal of his visit to Cornwall, Devon & Somerset in 1724-25. His other mining books were *Stannary Tales: Shady Side of Mining* and *The Tin Streams of Wendron*.

For news of the sale of Justin's library, please see p11.

John Cornwell

Although he was not a member of the society, members will be sorry to hear that John Cornwell, of Hallatrow near Bristol, coal mining photographer and writer, died on Saturday 28 January.

David Bick

One of the pioneers of mining history in Wales and the English border areas died on January 19th, aged 76. His interest in industrial archaeology was born when, as a boy, he cycled with his father and friends from Cheltenham into the Forest of Dean, where coal mining and railways were plentiful. After graduating from Leeds University, he joined Dowty Engineering's design department, where he designed a hydraulic retarder for slowing railway waggon. In 1980 he was awarded the Bramah medal of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers for this design.

David's series of books on *The Old Metal Mines of Mid Wales*, published between 1974 and 1978, and subsequent books introduced many of us to areas of Wales we might not otherwise have discovered.

In 1979 he became the founder and the leading personality in the Welsh Mines Society and was also instrumental in the formation of the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust in 1992.

David's sage pronouncements (e.g. I have always had a strong opinion on everything – even if I do not know the first thing about it) and his great willingness to help others with their work in the field of mining history will certainly be missed by all who were fortunate to know him.

His funeral was a family affair, but his friends and mining history colleagues were

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invited to a Memorial Service on January 31st at Hatherley Manor, just outside Gloucester.

J.S. Tamblyn

We also regret to report that a long-standing member, Mr J.S. Tamblyn of Dobwalls in Cornwall, died last July. He

was active in the society in the early 1980s, when he attended meets in the south-west.

Arthur Thomason

The death of Arthur, who lived in Warrington, was announced in the autumn.

NAMHO & General News

NAMHO Research Seminar, "Working with Coal: its History and Archives", held on 21 January, 2006

A NAMHO research seminar organized by Peter Cloughton at the Coal Authority headquarters in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, on January 21st this year was attended by around fifty people.

After Peter's introduction, the morning session consisted of five excellent short talks and presentations on the existence and whereabouts of a variety of historical records by the following speakers:

Ivor Brown "Using the library at the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Caphouse, nr Wakefield".

John Goodchild "Local preservation of coal mining archive material, its collection and study" (John Goodchild collection, Wakefield library).

Mike Gill "Towards a chronology for Coal" (NMRS Records and databases).

Tom Elliott "History of coal face mechanisation".

David McCaffrey and Bill Kaye "An outline summary of the contents of the British Coal Utilisation Research Association (BCURA) and the British Coal Corporation Library".

After lunch, the audience was taken on a tour of the archival facilities at the Coal Authority record office, where over 100,000 coal mine abandonment plans are stored in a purpose-built repository. These plans are available for consultation by industry, researchers and members of the public alike, but as some are very fragile and are starting to deteriorate, funding was provided a few years ago for scanning and digitization of this valuable resource.

An archive of approximately 60,000 colliery photographs that was inherited from the NCB and British Coal is also being scanned. As some of the abandonment plans are very large (the size of a carpet), a special scanning apparatus had to be custom-designed and constructed because nothing was available commercially that would do the job. Installed in its own building, the large plan scanner consists of a glass frame to hold flat the unrolled plans and six overhead-mounted digital cameras, each capturing a part of the image. Custom-written computer software is used to merge the separate tiles together into a single 300 dpi, 24-bit colour image. The images are stored on magneto-optical disks in a juke-box type storage library. At the present time, approximately 2/3 of the total number of plans have been scanned and they can already be viewed by members of the public, by appointment, using a limited number of computer terminals in the data access room. Prints of scanned images can also be obtained, as can digital copies, although their enormous file size prevents them from being viewed on most computers. When the scanning project is complete and if sufficient funding is available, the record office team intend to produce reduced-resolution 'thumbnails' of each scanned image which will be made freely available for searching and downloading over the internet.

The staff members at the record were willing and enthusiastic hosts to the visitors and showed justifiable pride in their achievement. Everyone enjoyed the day immensely and was impressed with what they saw. We expressed our grateful thanks to Coal Authority record office staff for giving up their Saturday and also to Peter Cloughton for arranging this fascinating and successful seminar.

John Hunter

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Northern Pennine Silver: Where and How?

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

Full details of this event were given in the August 2005 Newsletter

This seminar is being held to consider the evidence for silver production and discuss how our understanding of mining in the area during the late medieval period might be advanced. The intention is to hear presentations from all those with an interest in the area - geologists, historians, archaeologists and mine exploration.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dr Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA66 7RE; tel. 01437 532578; e-mail P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

The seminar itself is free – lunch will be available in the Centre café.

To book, please contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, ALSTON, Cumbria CA9 3DB; e-mail sheila.barker@cybermoor.org.uk

NAMHO Conference 2006

Mining in the Landscape

The Royal Pavilion, Llangollen,
June 9-11th, 2006

The conference booking forms will be available on the Internet at
<http://www.namhoconference.org.uk>

If you don't have Internet access, telephone Andy Wood 01743 718668 and ask for the forms to be sent by post. Early booking is advisable as this should be a popular conference and the Saturday night dinner will be restricted in numbers.

There will be lectures, underground trips and surface walks. For those able to stay in the area after the end of the formal conference, local mining history groups are organising additional trips.

For your 2006 calendar

March 5th – Keswick Mining Museum Open Day - see below.

March 25th – Museum of Yorkshire Dales Lead Mining reopens at Earby. See p14.

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April 8th – Nenthead - Seminar on North Pennine Silver - see above

April 18th, June 17th & Sept. 9-10th
Dragline open days in 2006 - Friends of St Aidan's BE1159 Dragline

April 30th – Open Day, King Edward Mine - see below.

May 3-13th – Exhibition - Carn Brea Mining Society and King Edward Mine at the Cornwall Centre, in Alma Place, Redruth - see below.

May 20-21st – The Friends of Killhope are having a Mineral Exhibition weekend as part of the Northern Rocks North Pennine Festival of Geology and Landscape. This will be in the Town Hall, St John's Chapel, Weardale. Light refreshments will be available. For information, please contact Ian Forbes at the Killhope Lead Mining Museum,
Tel: 01388-537505,
or e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

June 9-11th – **NAMHO conference**
See above and in the last newsletter.

September 30th – Advance notice is given of a **Day School** to be held on Saturday, 30 September 2006 in the Town Hall, St John's Chapel, Weardale. This will be a joint venture between the North Pennine Heritage Trust and the Friends of Killhope. The topic will be "Recent Industrial Archaeology in the North Pennines". It is hoped to produce a publication in due course. For more information, please contact Ian Forbes at the Killhope Lead Mining Museum, tel: 01388-537505, or e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

Red tape stymies £300m Nenthead mine bid.

That was the headline in the Hexham Courant Nov. 11th 2005. Apparently a Canadian company was considering investing in exploratory work with a view to opening up a new zinc mine, but has been deterred by the area's designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the planning restrictions that entails.

News from Carn Brea

An open day is going to be held at King Edward Mine, Troon, Camborne on Sunday 30th April 2006. This is the day after the Trevithick Day celebrations in Camborne. The Mine Museum will be open and there

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is every chance that the stamps will be run sometime during the morning.

If last year's day was anything to go by there will be something for everyone. There should be a display of static engines and old cars. The Great Flat Lode Pasty race is not for the faint hearted. It will be a chance to meet old friends & possibly listen to a local male voice choir.

From Wednesday 3rd May to Saturday 13th May 2006, we will be staging an exhibition about both Carn Brea Mining Society and King Edward Mine at the Cornwall Centre, in Alma Place, Redruth. During this period it is intended to launch 'Friends of King Edward Mine'.

The Keswick Mining Museum Open Day Sunday 5th March 2006

Ian and Jean Tyler would like to invite any NAMHO group members to their annual open day. This has been a successful event in Cumbrian Mining for 19 years.

The Museum at Keswick has gone from strength to strength. The shop is larger, as is the Museum by nearly 50% over our previous location. Consequently, our book stock, both new and second-hand, on the subjects of mining geology and minerals is, perhaps, the finest in the north of England.

The programme for the day is:

10.30am Guided Walk to Goldscope Mine - Meet at Littleton, near Keswick

12.30pm Museum open to our guests

12.45pm Ian Tyler's latest book "Goldscope and the Mines of the Newlands Valley"

13.00pm Free Buffet

Other museum walks -
19 March - Force Crag Mine (Meet Whinlatter Road, Braithwaite) 6 miles

23 April - Coniston Slate Mines (Meet Walna Scar Road - Boo Tarn) 6 miles. All walks start at 10.30am. Boots or strong shoes must be worn; waterproofs and spare clothing should be carried, also packed lunch. Most walks take a minimum of 5 hours. Not suitable for unfit persons and children

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under 16 years. Charge £5.00 per person. Tel 017687 80055 or 01228 561883 (evenings) email: coppermaid@aol.com
Website: keswickminingmuseum.co.uk

NAMHO AGM & Council Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is at 11am on Saturday 18 March, to be followed by a Council Meeting, and will be held at The New Inn, Cononley (direct trains from Bradford and Leeds. Travellers using the Carlisle or Lancaster lines need to change at Skipton). Observers are always welcome at NAMHO meetings.

The protection of mining heritage and what that means.

Many mining remains are acknowledged as important parts of the historic environment and are protected, but what does that mean for members of mining history groups who might be considering a surveying or restoration project.

Listing

Listing is usually applied to standing buildings, of special architectural or historical interest or both, particularly those that are still in use. The building is immediately protected by law, and any changes to it must first receive listed building consent. Listing does not mean that a building is mothballed, but it ensures that any alterations respect its character, and that the case for its preservation is fully taken into account when any redevelopment proposals are considered.

Scheduling

Scheduling protects a wide range of both upstanding and buried archaeological sites. On mining sites this could mean ruined buildings and structures or even areas of landscape. 'Scheduling' is shorthand for the process through which nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a list, or 'schedule' by English Heritage. Scheduling is applied only to sites of national importance.

A monument which has been scheduled is protected against disturbance or unlicensed metal detecting. It is illegal to damage a scheduled monument by carrying out works without consent or to cause reckless or deliberate damage to a monument. It is also illegal to use a metal

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detector or remove an object found with one without a licence from English Heritage. The Secretary of State must be informed about any work which might affect a monument above or below ground, and English Heritage advises the Government on each application.

Some people think that scheduling stops work being done on a site, but this is not true and English Heritage encourages owners to maintain their scheduled monuments in good condition and has locally-based monument wardens who can offer advice on how to do this.

So how do you find out if a site is protected?

The first point of contact should be your local authority archaeologist. This could be your county archaeologist, but the national parks also have their own specialist archaeologists. In each case one of their main roles is to maintain a list of archaeological, and historic sites in their area. This used to be called a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), although increasingly the term Historic Environment Record (HER) is replacing it. Here you can find out what is known about a site and if it is protected. If you are planning any survey work or restoration work then this is where you will be able to get initial advice. Survey work on a scheduled or listed site only requires the permission of the landowner.

Cwmystwyth Mines

The Crown Estate is doing safety works at Cwmystwyth Mine, Ceredigion. When the work is complete, the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust hopes to meet the Crown's agents, to discuss its involvement in the future management of the mine, and a possible access agreement. Will member organisations please respect our possible involvement with the future of this site and refrain from visits, until negotiations have taken place. Once talks have taken place with the Crown Estate, the Trust will advise NAMHO what arrangements have been made.

Thank you for your co-operation.

G. Levins, Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Email graham.levins@btinternet.com

Further to the Crown Estate's work at Cwmystwyth

I recently took the opportunity to look at the work carried out by Crown Estate to close the mine entrances at Cwmystwyth and, on the whole, the impact is not as great as I was expecting. Once the new wood on the fencing has weathered the visual impact will be reduced and the grilles on the level entrances, although in most cases they are not set inside the levels, have been toned down with grey paint. However, the close spaced wooden palings around some of the more significant workings e.g. Herbert's Stope, will continue to be visible from some distance away. It should also be noted that damage has been caused to the miner's sled tracks to the east of the Nant yr Onnen by the tracked vehicle(s) used to access the site.

There is, however, little logic to the position of some of the fences with very obvious workings left unsecured whilst other, insignificant, features are fenced. The Level Fawr has not be grilled; mind you the chance of someone inadvertently crawling through an 18"/2ft pipe is pretty remote. Yet, on the other hand, a minor openwork high to the east of Nant yr Onnen warrants a fence on either side, albeit 6 feet away from the edge and open at either end!

Peter Claughton

Fred's Mineshaft project is saved

Bolton Journal – 1/12/2005

A Victorian mineshaft built by Fred Dibnah as a "monument to his life" in his back garden has been saved. Council officers met at Bolton Town Hall to discuss the future of the controversial mineshaft, and agreed that it can stay. And it could now form the centrepiece of the Fred Dibnah Experience – an attraction celebrating engineering and the celebrity's life.

Fred, who died November 2004, aged 66, built the mineshaft without permission at his home in Radcliffe Road, Bolton. He later sought retrospective planning permission for the shaft, which he said was going to be a monument to his life.

The steeplejack had dug 20 feet of the 70 ft shaft and had plans for a 90ft tunnel from the mineshaft to the banks of the River Tonge.

New Opencast Coal Mine for Bolton Bolton Evening News – 28/12/2006

Controversial plans to resurrect coal mining in Bolton are due to get underway next year after a delay caused by endangered newts. Workers were stopped in their tracks when an ecological survey by the landowners of the Cutacre Colliery found dozens of colonies of great crested newts living on the site.

After moving a number of newts to new colonies, machinery is now due to move on to the land, to the south of the A6 close to Over Hulton, early in 2006 and the mining operation could start by May. A three-year programme of coal extraction will follow, including opencast mining at a shallow underground level and washing of spoil heaps. UK Coal won the right to mine nine million tons of coal from the site at a government inquiry in 2001 following a 20-year legal battle, which infuriated residents.

Shaft collapse in Darcy Lever, Bolton

On Christmas Day 2005 the ground gave away in a stable owner's farmyard. Without any warning a giant hole swallowed up Mr Michael Lomax's tractor and four mature sycamore trees. It was very lucky that no one was actually using the yard to exercise their horses or park their vehicles at the farm on that day. A colliery air shaft top that had been capped in the 1970's gave way. The Coal



Shaft collapse at Darcy Lever
Photo by Adrian Turner

Authority, based at Selby, is investigating the reasons for the collapse. A new housing estate in the immediate vicinity could have contributed to the collapse.

The Darcy Lever area was riddled with collieries. The above shaft was part of the Croft Side Colliery, which was owned by the Darcy Lever Coal Co Ltd, and was abandoned in January 1902.

Richard Platt

Sale of Justin Brooke's Library

Justin Brooke of Marazion (28/02/1920 - 06/11/2005) was well known in the mining world for his researches into the history of the west country mines.

His library, now consigned for auction, is particularly rich and extensive in all aspects of mining, but the highlight could well be a complete run of "The Mining Journal" 1835-1955, bound in 292 volumes. This is one of only three such sets and the sole example in private hands.

It was Justin's wish that his mining library should be thrown open to auction so that those interested in the subject, which was so important to him, should be given the "thrill of the chase" (his words), and also he had the strong opinion that knowledge was useless unless it was shared.

For further particulars of the Auction – on February 28th, 2006, please contact David Lay FRICS, Alverton, Penzance. TR18 4RE. Tel: 01736 361414 or email: david.lays@btopenworld.com

Worked out

A five part series began on Radio 4 on Tuesday February 14th from 9:30-9:45. Ian McMillan explores the marginal and forgotten coalfields of England. Across Britain, most pits closed 20 years ago and memories are fading. Away from the major coalfields, many people don't even remember that coal was recently mined in Somerset, Kent, Shropshire, Cumbria and The Forest of Dean. The series began with Shropshire and will be followed by The Forest of Dean.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Goodbye Old Pick" by Ann Goddard

This is a book, which should be on every mining enthusiast's bookshelf. Personal memoirs from miners from the work face are scarce, one who built in a degree of home spun philosophy is rare.

Charles Lawton was the great grandfather of the author who was born in 1839 at Kidsgrove in Staffordshire and at the age of eight he was employed at the Big Banbury Pit, Talke-o'-th'-Hill as a surface errand boy and achieved his ambition to work underground with his father and brothers at the age of ten. He witnessed two major disasters in this pit, well known for being "fiery" and rescued many men some seriously injured and many dead: an explosion on 13 December, 1866 killed 91 men, at Number 1 Pit a further explosion in 1873 killed eighteen, at Bunkers Hill Colliery in 1875 killed forty-three men. In 1883 he moved to Ripley, Derbyshire to manage the Ford's Marehay Main Colliery after thirty-six years underground in Talke. He applied strict

rules especially where safety was at stake and he made a few enemies. He retired at the age of 69.

He received a gold medal in 1908 for his part in a rescue at the local Hampstead Colliery and a silver medal from the North Staffordshire Mines Rescue Association. He was recognised as an authority on mine explosions and he was a founder member of the Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers and was elected a councillor on the first Urban District Council. His was a life lived to the full during a period of great change in the mining industry.

Goodbye Old Pick is available from Ann Goddard, 1, Plains Lane, Blackbrook, Belper, Derby DE56 2DD Tel/Fax: 01773 823548 for £11.60 including post and packing. Payable to J. & A. Goddard (Publishing).

Peter Naylor

Life on the Hill – Greenhow

by the Greenhow Local History Club

This book seeks to give an impression of the character and hardy nature of the community which lived in one of England's highest villages and worked in the local lead and, later fluorspar mines.

Many families left as the lead mines closed, while others went into farming and quarrying – returning to mining during the brief renaissances of lead and fluorspar working. Very few of the original families are now left and the village is very different to the run-down state that it was in by the mid 1960s, when one could still hear the local accent in the bar of the Miners. As a poem by local poet, Thomas Blackah, shows – this process was happening in nearby Hardcastle by 1867:

*For some's flit away, but main part on em's deead
An they're nearly all freshens 'at lives in their stead
Bud t'time 'al soun come, an nut lang befooare,
We sall all on us hev' to leave Hardcastle Moor.*

wheelbarrow for 100 yards from the Miners Arms and back again with little sign of tiredness. The latter man was probably the reviewer's great-great-grandfather Thomas Fryer, who was a lead miner on Greenhow.

The book does not purport to be a detailed historical study, but it gives some fascinating insights of this small community – including the 1978 football team with four members of the Mawer family. It has an interesting collection of photographs.

Copies, which cost £10.00 plus £2.40 p&p in the UK, can be bought from: The Local History Club, c/o Coldstones Quarry, Greenhow Hill, Pateley Bridge, HARROGATE, HG3 SJ0 or from Shirley Everett – tel. 01756 792120

Mike Gill

One tale refers to Thomas Stobbs, an old miner, who although aged nearly 90 pushed his friend Mr Fryer, aged 81, in a

The Wand of Science – Although the content is at present in CD format, there will be a book version in full colour in Mid 2006. I have reviewed the CD and found it to be extremely interesting and comprehensive. It describes the development of the British flame safety lamp from 1815 onwards. The standard of the many photographs and sketches are impressive. The CD layout is very easy to navigate through, each of the 16 main chapters are cleverly arranged as a lamp shelf. You just simply click on one of the pictures of a flame lamp to launch that particular chapter. Of particular interest to the collector, is the Archives Section, with its extensive catalogues of the lamp manufacturers and glass markings. These archives, together with the copious use

of private collection photographs, will enable the reader to identify virtually any British flame lamp.

The search facility is very quick in finding a relative name or key word. My only slight criticism is that, because the large pdf files are read directly from the CD, a fairly new and faster PC will load up the display pages a lot quicker than an aging PC. But if you purchase the book, you would not have to wait to turn over the pages!

A description of this work was covered by the Author in the December 2005 Newsletter. For further information, log on to www.thewandofscience.co.uk.

Richard Platt

**The Story of Mining in Cornwall –
A World of Payable Ground**
by Allen Buckley

This sumptuous book, with its high quality reproduction of photographs and documents, is an excellent overview of Cornish mining history and is essential reading for newcomers and old hands alike.

Where others have restricted themselves to single topics or periods, Allen Buckley's approach to the subject is much more comprehensive. He covers the entire industry from ancient times to the present and, while concentrating on tin and copper mining, he also touches on large-scale quarrying and the production of other metals for completeness. Moreover, he also seeks to understand the industry within the context of national and international events.

I've complained in other reviews about authors using outdated sources and it is a real pleasure to find that, as an experienced historian, Allen never shies from reassessing long accepted 'truths'. He tackles the many myths and misconceptions which surround Cornish mining. For example – the belief that the Phoenicians traded directly with Cornwall is rubbish. At a more fundamental level, however, he gives a long overdue critique of the 'Tutwork' and 'Tribute' system of piece-work used in Cornish mines. As someone with experience of mining, Allen stands the accepted model on its head

and concludes that the system was much more complicated than the simplistic and often romanticised interpretations given to it by others. Men often swapped from one task to the other, and tutwork was just as, if not more, skilled than tributing.

Allen's pride in the Cornish mining industry is evident in his writing and more than once my eyebrow went up at some claim or other – the export of stamps to Germany, the invention of the 'Cornish' crushing roll, and the apparently easy acceptance of the supposed antiquity of some of the opencast workings. Even the great John Taylor thought that the roller crushers were developed in the North of England and he first used them at Wheal Crowndale, in Devon. Still, if this stimulates other mining historians into viewing the big picture Allen will have done us all a service.

Beside his own encyclopædic knowledge of Cornish mining, Allen Buckley has used a catholic range of sources to produce a well written and readable account which will become the datum from which all subsequent work on Cornish mining is judged.

The Story of Mining in Cornwall is published by Cornwall Editions Ltd, 8 Langurtho Road, Fowey, Cornwall, PL23 1EQ. ISBN 1-904880-20-7. The price of this large-format book (290mm x 220mm) is £45 plus £6.50 postage and packing.

Mike Gill

Mountains and Orefields: metal mining landscapes of mid and north-east Wales, by Nigel Jones, Mark Walters and Pat Frost. York: Council for British Archaeology Research Report 142, 2004, 192pp, illus. ISBN 1 902771 47 8. £19.95

This book gives examples of archaeological surveys of 76 mine sites in Powys, and 330 in the Flintshire-Denbighshire orefields made during the 1990s. Aware of this, I picked up the book with high expectations. What contribution to our knowledge would it make?

The introduction defines metal mining landscapes in terms such as 'moonscape' and 'scars', and comments "metal mining landscapes are more discrete and less well known than those for coal, slate, etc." - hardly a mining historian's perception

The first chapter gives a historical account of Welsh mining and ore dressing, and describes what was found. It could have been sub-divided to reflect the industry's technological complexity. The authors were clearly unfamiliar with the subject matter, with 'smelteries' often being used for 'smelt mills'. Another inadequacy is that this chapter is littered with un-sourced statements. For example, Barton's classic work on the *Cornish Beam Engine* is relevant to Flintshire and Denbighshire and, had the authors read it, they would have realised that pump rods were rarely encased in the rising main (glossary). To say that "... in earlier periods the smelting of ores was carried out in furnaces at smelting mills which were often at some distances from the mines", is also misleading. It ignores boles, as described in the glossary. Surely some evidence was found for them, if they were looked for, during the survey.

Chapters 2 and 3 are well presented with good descriptive archaeology, surveys and photographs (including aerial). They will benefit mining historians and help with planning future work. The mention of geophysical prospection at Talargoch is pleasing, but the results and interpretation of the survey were not included.

The final chapter, on mine site management and display, outlines the many problems that can lead to their destruction, and uses Bryntail and Minera to demonstrate how mines can be presented to the public. The authors also

comment on the mismanagement of mine sites. Van mine, in Powys, reduced to a few unrelated structures by dumping, 'reclamation work', and other peripheral activity, would have been an excellent example. Similarly, limestone quarrying in north-east Wales has destroyed parts of mining landscapes, such as the Aberduna engine house.

A major shortcoming in the book is that the chapters are disjointed with no real comments as to why particular examples were chosen. The factors distinguishing the two landscapes were never brought out. Geology is important in this, but it was never clearly expressed in landscape terms.

Another shortcoming is the disproportionate lengths of chapters 2 & 3 in relation to the number of mines in each area. Surely the north-east Wales chapter should have been longer with its greater number and variety of sites?

This book adds little to our understanding of mining landscapes, but it could have been improved with a concluding chapter pulling landscape aspects together. Better referencing, and a final scrutiny by a mining historian familiar with the area would also have greatly improved it.

Extracted from a review by Rob Vernon

Earby Museum Reopening

The Museum of Yorkshire Dales Lead Mining at Earby will reopen to the public on March 25th (11am to 5.0pm) after a long closure for refurbishment. The opportunity has also been taken to add a second floor and redesign the displays. The Official opening ceremony will be in the summer, but on the 25th admission will be free for the day.

The museum has two major static displays based on a horse level and a stope. There are also display boards and cabinets of artefacts and minerals.

Besides the Tea Room, attractions include: 'Foxhunter', the museum horse; Abu Hanza's spare hook (recent accession); Eric Olthwaite's shovel collection; Buckden Bill; The Memorial Garden - to fallen meerstones; A few hand-made nails.

Open Weds, Sats & Suns 11am to 5.0pm.
Admission: Adults £4.00, OAP's £3.50, Children £3.00, Family ticket £12.00

NMRS - Newsletter February 2006

Potholer's Corner

The Truth about the removal of the NORPEX doors in Rampgill Mine.

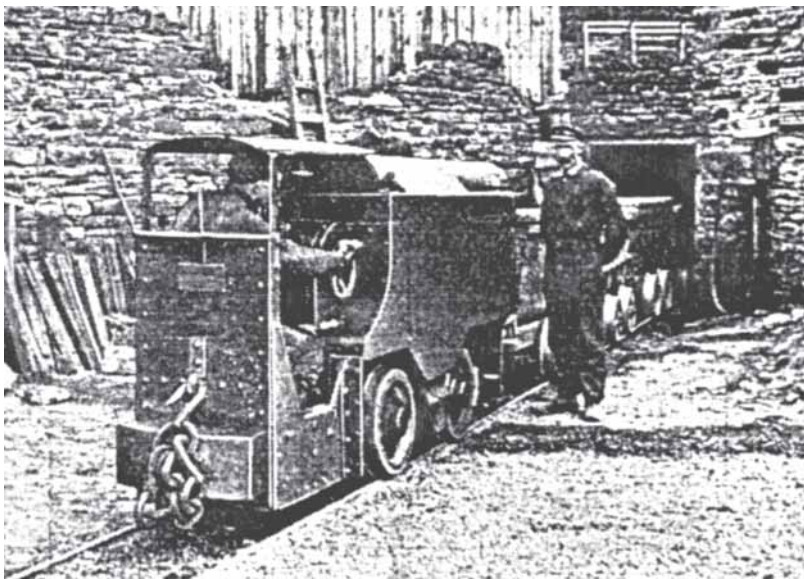
Richard Platt received an anonymous letter on the 21st December 2005 regarding the above subject. It is reproduced here in its entirety.

"I would like to clarify the situation regarding the NORPEX doors. I was part of the team that cut the doors off. This was accomplished after several trips attempting to activate the hydraulic ram on the first door.

We subsequently found it was rusted (despite a considerable amount of very well thought out design work and material selection) to such an extent that the mechanism was pretty well seized. The other doors were far less challenging. Although the design was excellent. Simply

happening. Lost keys, rifts in the group, seemed to be the main problems. We then concluded it was time to force an entry. Obviously we belong to the "don't lock it" side of the "lock it or not" debate, I accept others have their views. Lock it by all means but do allow competent responsible people entry. We considered re-securing afterwards but it was not practical after we had opened the first door. The section is so far inside the mine I did not see any additional safety issues.

Please feel free to disagree, but I do not regret having done it and in similar circumstances I will do it again. I would heartily congratulate NORPEX for an absolutely fantastic job; just pulling in the raw material was a feat in itself, let alone the amount of sheer effort and ingenuity of the engineering. Sharing the triumph would have been a popular move.



'New Century' loco outside Rampgill Level, Nenthead

Without open access and repair work these old mines will just fall in and be lost totally to future explorers. Let everyone help, SOME groups are for clique'e and unwelcoming, seemingly they only want your subs to fund their private enterprises. At least NORPEX were honest, their money, their efforts, their hole in the ground.

Name and address withheld

Mail to PME@hotmail.co.uk

cutting a hole at the appropriate point behind the hasp. All this was completed from the Nenthead end. I am not sure why it was suggested otherwise. Does someone know different. We had spent a lot of time looking for the far end access.

I feel it is relevant at this point to say why we did it. After spending several years trying to find the group, we subsequently identified a couple of people who had been part of the original team and a number of people who said that they knew of others. We were told on numerous occasions that a trip could be arranged, but various reasons then resulted in nothing

Underground collapses in Nenthead

Richard has also had a letter from one of our members, informing him of the following collapses in the Rampgill and Brownley Hill Mines. This information came from the Nenthead Heritage Centre Café.

The small shaft, which drops back into the Scaleburn Vein in Rampgill, has collapsed. This means that at the moment, there is no access to the horse gin.

Also, there has been a collapse on the Gudhamgill Burn Cross Vein, thus blocking the Rampgill to Brownley Hill connection.

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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