



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

Society News

May 2006

From the President

I am pleased to be able to inform our members that the Society currently has an adequate number of committee members to enable 'normal service', or something close to it, to be resumed – for the present time. Although no additional nominations for officers to serve on the committee were proposed at the AGM in March, nor were there any further volunteers, a subsequent 'reshuffle' has resulted in the following committee structure:

President: John Hunter
Treasurer: Alan Mills
Editor: Richard Smith
Librarian: Sallie Bassham
Newsletter Editor: Alison Hunter
Recorder: Mike Gill

From the above, it is evident that the committee lacks a secretary and two vice presidents. Furthermore, Mike Gill will be ending his tenure on the committee as Society recorder at the AGM in March 2007 and will need to be replaced. The committee is only able to function for the time being, therefore, with generous help

from a number of assistants. I would like to welcome the new committee members and assistants and also thank the existing officers who have agreed to continue to serve on the committee. I would also like to repeat the appeal I made in the February 2006 newsletter for more volunteers to help fill the current vacant positions on the committee, to help with publications sales and to replace Mike Gill as recorder next year. If any member is considering joining the committee and would like more information about the various vacant positions, please contact me by email at the following address: miner@aditlevel.co.uk

The shortage of committee members in recent months has already had an impact on Society affairs because it has not been possible to prepare the first of this year's publications in time for distribution with the May newsletter. Membership cards are being distributed instead, rather late, with this newsletter, and it is expected that a publication will be ready for posting in August or September. Hopefully, members will be patient and understand the reason for the delays.

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Finally, I would like to thank the 20 members who came along to the AGM at the Miners Arms to show their support. There was some serious discussion about the future of the Society, but with more than 350 members having already renewed their subscription for 2006, we need to find the means to provide the service that is expected. In the coming months, the new committee will be giving some thought to how this can best be achieved with the available number of officers.

John Hunter

Society Committee Presentations



Sallie Bassham presenting flowers to
Hazel Martell

(Photo by John Hunter)

Presentations were made at the AGM to three committee members who are stepping down from their committee positions.

Steve Mitchell (Secretary for 8 years) and Bob Burns who has held many posts over the years were presented with engraved glass tankards, and Hazel Martell who also has served in many different society roles over a few decades has decided to call it a day. She was presented with a bowl of flowers. Our thanks for their long and loyal service to the Society.



Hazel Martell with Steve Mitchell and Bob Burns
holding their presentation tankards

(Photo by John Hunter)

Treasurer's Report

Membership matters

If you have not renewed your membership for 2006 then this Newsletter is the last publication you will receive from the Society. To renew please send your blue renewal form and cheque for £15 (£18 for overseas members) plus 50p per family member to Alan Mills, Sorrel Sykes, Sunnybrow, Reeth, DL11 6TJ. If you have misplaced the form simply send me your cheque made out to NMRS with a note of your name and address.

All members who have renewed, other than in the last few days, should have received their membership card for 2006 enclosed with this Newsletter. If you believe that you have renewed but have not received your membership card then please contact me, preferably by email on alanfmills@lineone.net or by post as above.

My apologies to

Mr W. Allison

Dr J. Almond

Mr M. Anderson

Mr P. Appleton

who were all incorrectly shown as having recently joined the Society. All have been members for some time!

In fact we have 11 new members so far this year and I am pleased to welcome

Mr A. Nixon
Mr D. Priestley
Mr G. Dennis
Mr J. Leake
Mr J. Reddaway
Mrs L. Johnson
Mr M. Bailey
Mr M. Kelly
Mr P. Dollery
Mr R. Stokoe
Mr S. Miles

Alan Mills

Librarian's Report

LIBRARY

Boxes and envelopes full of fascinating material have been arriving for the library. My grateful thanks to all concerned, but particularly to Barry Job who sent two boxes full of reports and offprints. There is material on quarrying (including several copies of Quarry Fact File), there are offprints by famous names (like Kingsley Dunham), there are reports on coal mining sites from all over Britain and various serendipities such as "Oil Quest Cornwall" and "The Stone Industry of Portland". This material has not yet been shelved, so if you are researching the geology of coal fields, and would like to look through these reports, please get in touch fairly soon.

I have also received the latest copies of BGS's "Earthwise", British Industrial and Transport History's "Archive", PDMHS's Newsletter, Yorkshire Dales "Management Plan" and English Heritage's "Using Historical Landscape Characterisation".

Thanks are also due to Ian Tyler who has donated a copy of his new book "Goldscope and The Mines of Derwent Fells" (see Richard Smith's review).

Many thanks to Rob Vernon for several boxes of journals - Mining Survey, The Mining Engineer, Colliery Engineering and Proceedings of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

Sallie Bassham (sbassham@nildram.co.uk)

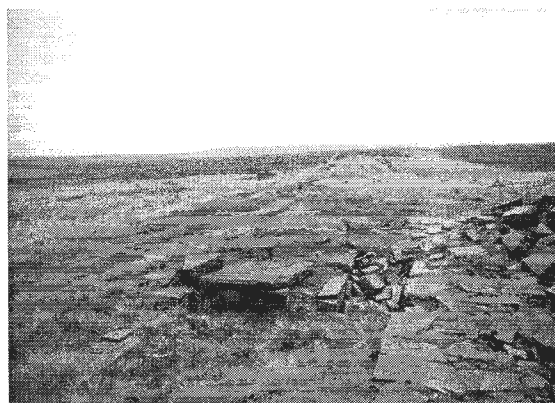
Future Field Meets

Please remember that if you have any ideas for future meets, just contact the Meets List Co-ordinator, Steve Mitchell on 0153 565 7090.

A taster for the proposed Rossendale Meet in July

The moors of Rossendale are covered with the remains of stone quarries and moorland tramways. This tramway is on Rooley Moor, but is similar to ones that will be seen on the walk. They were designed to transport coal between collieries.

Earth embankments, cuttings and trellis bridge-works were required to keep the path straight and to create an evenly graded track.



Rooley Moor Tramway

Society Meets List for 2006

- Saturday March 25th **AGM/Annual Dinner**
Miners Arms, Greenhow Hill
- Saturday April 22nd **Ingleton Coalfield/Granite quarries**
Leader: Bernard Bond (015242 41857) surface only.
Meet at 10.30 am at 1, Beech Terrace, Ingleton.
NGR SD688722
- Friday June 9th to
Sunday June 11th **NAMHO Conference**
Held at The Royal Pavilion, Llangollen.
See NAMHO Section of this newsletter for details.
- Saturday 22nd July **Lee Quarry/Greens Moor, Rossendale**
Leader: Arthur Baldwin (01706 214219) surface only
to large flagstone quarries and moorland tramways
6 mile walk with a unique twist at the end!
Meet at 10.30 am car park at Stacksteads opposite
Rose & Bowl public house. NGR SD854217
- Saturday 19th August **Whiteaside Lead Mine, Swaledale**
Leader: Richard Platt (01204 362892) underground/
surface later. Meet at 10.30 am on the Askrigg to
Grinton road. NGR SD982964
- Saturday 2nd September **Coldstones Quarry, Greenhow**
Leader: Shirley Everret (01756 792120)
Working limestone quarry/relationship with mineral
veins/ lead workings.
Meet 9.30 am at the quarry entrance
(more details via the next newsletter).
- Saturday 7th October **Faggergill Lead Mine, Arkengarthdale**
Leader Dave Carlisle (contact secretary)
Strenuous underground trip for the fit/committed.
INSURANCE required.
Meet 10.30 am at the CB Inn NGR SD999031

Please remember to contact the Meet Leader before attending an event

An old pit boiler – May 1st 1865

Haswell Colliery, in East Durham, is a generation old, the first to introduce cages instead of the corfs or baskets which used to be the only means of going up and down in pits. The Engine house, some 90 yards from the bottom of the 960ft. shaft, is about 20ft. high and 50 yards square, built of brick with doorways leading to the workings, and lit by gas. Five boilers generate steam for the machinery.

Eight men and two boys are in or about the place at this moment. All the boilers are in use except No.4, under which a mason is working, William Hall. If we squeeze in with him we can escape what is about to happen – a hazard not normally thought of when a pit explosion is mentioned. The noise sounds no louder than that of a gun. Mr Hall thinks a steam pipe has burst. But when he crawls out he finds no light, boiling water everywhere, and suffocating steam and coal dust. The next boiler has exploded.

Scalded men are crying out. He tries to do what little he can for them, and somehow (we cannot tell in the darkness) word is sent to the hundred men or so in the workings. Soon Davy lamps are glimmering on the scene. Three are dead – young Thomas Whittingham, who was 15; Thomas Armstrong, a mason, 20 and a bachelor; and George Tate, the boiler minder, 30, who leaves a wife and four bairns. William Davidson, the brakesman, is badly hurt; he is 28, with a wife and three children. Alexander Short is seriously scalded, and others are John Taylor (fireman), Thomas Hood (another mason), James Tully, and the lad Bainbridge. The engine is little damaged, and the other boilers appear unmoved, but the brickwork is badly torn. Half of the burst boiler has been thrown several yards on to the tramway, and the other part back against the flue. They rake out the fires, and to draw men from the pit use the crab, a revolving drum from which a rope reaches the shaft bottom, for attachment to the corf that brings up coal, in which men sometimes come to bank. The crab is moved by horse, making it a slow journey to the surface, where an agitated crowd quickly gathers, and where

three new boilers are lying. They, are waiting to be fixed next Monday, above ground, as a better power system.

Mr Davidson will die on Friday. At the inquest on the four victims a week tomorrow, Thomas Storey, the engine-wright will say that he found nothing wrong with the boiler when it was laid off last week, except for some repairs in the joints and the pipes. He has never seen a pressure greater than 40lb., and the safety valve has appeared to work well. The boilers are fed with hot water; the cold feed may have been used, but the practise was supposed to stop four years ago.

Cuthbert Ould, the brakesman in charge of the engines, says he fed the boilers with hot and cold water before handing over to Mr Davidson. It has been the custom to use the cold water feed when the engine is standing, although it causes more repairs and general orders forbid it. Thomas Alderson, the foreman smith, recalls finding a small crack yesterday, but the leakage was trivial.

The boiler was 27 years old, says the man who put it in. Other witnesses claim that the plates were stout, and blame a probable failure in a seam, through over-pressure, perhaps no more than 50lb. The mines inspector, however, finds the iron plates brittle, and will recommend that boilers should be scrapped after 20 years. The verdict is “Accidentally killed by a boiler explosion”.

D. F. King

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act.

The much publicised “Right to Roam” legislation has now come into force across the country. Large tracts of land previously out of bounds are now accessible. This includes many mine sites which are located on land designated “Access land” under this act. This raises the question, “What are we allowed to do at mine sites on access land?” The act is geared towards “open air recreation”, so wandering around on surface is OK, but what about going underground?

Unfortunately there is nothing in the act to say whether one can or cannot go down a hole. There is a list of restricted activities in Schedule 2 of the act. These include things like shooting, fishing, metal detecting and putting up advertisements, but say nothing about going underground. Is a mine working deep under a hill still considered "open air"? Does the absence of a specific restriction for this activity mean that it is allowed?

I am sure this will be of interest to many mine explorers considering visits to sites that are on access land. I know of one case already where a hostile landowner is attempting to bar underground access to a mine on access land. If any members are versed in the law and are able to comment on how the CROW Act affects us, and whether underground exploration is allowed on access land, their opinions would be of great interest.

Stephen Moreton

**Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society
(M.O.L.E.S)**

**A.G.M & Social and Annual Open Day &
Book Launch
at the Keswick Mining Museum.**

The two day event took place on Saturday the 4th and Sunday the 5th of March, an occasion which, in the mining calendars, is now in its nineteenth year and it has become an ever more important event. This year, happily, it was blessed with Lake District weather at its very best!

The Saturday event commenced with MOLES being allowed access by the Forestry Commission to visit the Rachel Mine near Thornthwaite. This entailed a detailed description of the site by the society's chairman and local historian Ian Tyler. A thorough study of the underground workings was made by the group, all of whom are experienced, and properly equipped and insured. Because access is strictly controlled and the mine is securely gated, members took the opportunity of exercising their photographic skills while they could. The mine worked for many years producing lead and zinc ores and its main production period was after

1905 when the mine came under Thornthwaite Mines Ltd. It was run by Anthony Wilson, a local mining engineer and businessman. The group then returned to the Thornthwaite Mine, the largest in the sett, its old, grey stone building now part of a garage beside the A66 road. Here the lead and zinc ore was raised via the engine shaft hundreds of feet below the level of Bassenthwaite Lake.

It was then decided to visit the old Ladstock lead mine which was worked by the ancients possibly as early as 1600. The veins of lead here were discovered in the bed of Comb Beck by the early prospectors, and although these workings are small in comparison to Rachel Wood and Thornthwaite, they have their place in our mining history. On the return journey, the party tried to assess which of the old houses could have been the lead smelter which worked the valley in about 1780. Back at the vehicles, wet and muddy clothing was removed in preparation for returning to the Middle Ruddings Hotel where the rest of the day's programme was to continue.

The AGM commenced at 7.30pm when the formalities of balance sheets, tackle and newsletters were soon dispensed with, and the awards for "Dead MOLE", "Meritous MOLE" and "Super MOLE" were presented to the various recipients. The final words came from the Chairman, Ian Tyler who was delighted to be able to inform the assembled sixty or so members that the National Trust Management has given formal permission for the society to open up and explore the Yewthwaite Mine beneath Catbells. This news was greeted with great enthusiasm and high expectations for this new and exciting project. The meeting was followed by an excellent buffet, slide show of MOLES at play, and various serious videos of MOLES underground exploration. The festivities ended with a night-cap at around midnight.

The blue skies and crisp temperature of Sunday morning were ideal weather for a guided walk and the Keswick Mining Museum "Open Day". The museum has now been established for nearly twenty years and houses the finest mining collections in the country. The day commenced

with a guided walk, led by Ian Tyler, to Goldscope Mine in the Newlands Valley, and by 10.30am, over 50 cars and around 80 plus people had turned out. The party set off from Littleton and Ian explained how the German miners, under the stewardship of Daniel Hechstetter, had come to Keswick in 1564 and how these incredible engineers and miners had taken the heart of copper out of Scope End, thus creating a lasting mining and quarrying heritage of which Cumbria should be proud. It is a heritage that should not be ignored or overshadowed by less important issues. Ian Tyler's passion for the subject has seen him along with his wife Jean create the first mining museum in Cumbria and to form MOLES, and today was to see the launch of the tenth book in his Lake District series, "Goldscope and the Mines of Derwent Fells". This has been his biggest book to date running to 300 pages with over 150 photographs, plans, and drawings. The walk was a huge success and was enjoyed by academics, geologists, historians, mine explorers and people simply enjoying the views. Returning to the museum for 12.30pm, the buffet was ready, the initial guests had already arrived, and after a few brief words of appreciation from Ian, the book was well and truly launched and the Open Day proceeded with lunch, free access to the museum and the opportunity for people to enjoy the subject and view the new acquisitions. The weekend was a great success and by 3.15pm around 250 had enjoyed a brilliant time, topped off by the wonderful weather.

Ian & Jean Tyler

Inquiry launched on Lanarkshire Open mines

This extract taken from the Big Issue in Scotland – February 2006

For more than 20 years the people of Douglas Valley have fought in vain against the damage done to their environment by open cast mining, drilling as a public inquiry is launched into new Scottish Coal plans to extract a further four

million tonnes from the South Lanarkshire countryside.

Scottish coal wants to extend one of its open mines at Broken Cross. If the plans gets the go-ahead from South Lanarkshire council more than 140 hectares of land would be lost and opencast mining would go on for at least eight years longer than the community had previously expected.

The area is already home to three operating open cast mines, a sand extraction facility and a yet-to-be-restored former open cast mine that was once the biggest in Europe.

Alastair Lings

More Snippets from Bolton

Shaft collapse in Darcy Lever – 2nd instalment

On the 24th March I went back to the old Croft Side Colliery site after being informed that the air shaft had started to collapse in again! I only visited the area 3 weeks ago and was impressed at the work carried out. The site had been cleared, levelled, capped and the safety barriers removed. The only physical sign was a short piece of 2ft diameter plastic pipe coming out to the surface, presumably for ventilation purposes. The housing estate is now only a few yards away from the newly erected safety barriers placed around the shaft area.



Croft Side Colliery Air shaft collapses for the second time in 3 months.

I went there to take photographs, and to speak to Mr Michael Lomax, the landowner. He told me that the coal authority had pumped down the shaft 400 tons of liquid cement brought to the

site in 52 lorry loads. They also deposited 200 tons of stone to the outside area of the shaft to prevent the road at the side of the shaft from collapsing. He further told me that the coal authority are coming back to do some more drilling to find the bottom of the shaft and to put in place a 50 yard perimeter of steel piles to prevent more land falling in. Mr Lomax thinks that it will be a long time before the area is made safe.

Richard Platt

Plaque Tribute to Fred

(Bolton Journal 30th March 2005)

The name of Bolton's famous son Fred Dibnah will live on - on a blue plaque.

Family, friends and Fred's fans gathered outside his home in Radcliffe Road, The Haulgh, to watch the blue plaque detailing his life and times unveiled by the Mayor of Bolton, Cllr Frank White. He told the crowds, "I hope this is the start of the recognition of Fred Dibnah. He took the name of Bolton across the world, so it is only right that we have a plaque to him in Bolton".

The plaque was paid for by the Bolton and District Civic Trust, its chairman, Brian Tetlow, said "We are paying tribute to Dr Fred Dibnah - honoured for his unique service to our industrial heritage".



Home of the Late
DR. FRED DIBNAH M.B.E.
STEEPLEJACK

Honorary Doctorate: Aberdeen & Birmingham Universities,
Artist, Draughtsman, Carpenter, Stonemason,
Demolition Expert,
Intuitive Engineer, Steam Enthusiast, Devotee of our
Industrial Heritage, Raconteur & Television Celebrity
Revered Son of Bolton
1938 - 2004

NAMHO NEWS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Dragline open days in 2006 - Friends of St Aidan's BE1159 Dragline

17 June and 9-10 September - 2-4pm For more details contact Paul Thompson on 07889 286634

3-13 May 2006 - Exhibition - Carn Brea Mining Society and King Edward Mine at the Cornwall Centre, in Alma Place, Redruth.

During this period it is intended to launch the 'Friends of King Edward Mine'.

20-21 May 2006 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 held in the Town Hall, St. John's Chapel, Weardale. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, please contact Ian Forbes at the Killhope Lead Mining Museum, telephone: 01388-537505, e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

9-11 June - NAMHO 2006 conference
- see next page and in the last newsletter.

30 September 2006 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, telephone: 01388-537505, or e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

9-17 October 2006 - IMHC 2006

The International Mining History Congress in Belgium, **9-17 October 2006** - there has been some delay in making the details of the Congress available please keep checking at - <http://www.miningheritage.org>

or
<http://www.patrimoineminier.org>
<http://www.bergbau.org>
<http://www.mijnerfgoed.org>

where the Congress web site should be in place in the near future.

NAMHO CONFERENCE 2006

Mining in the Landscape

Llangollen, 9-11 June 2006

The conference booking forms will be available online 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.

The organisers are looking at the possibilities for further events at sites in the north-east Wales / border area during the week following the conference.

Quite a few persons have already expressed interest in participating in trips during the week after the main NAMHO 2006 Conference. From your booking form you have indicated interest in one or more of these trips being organised for the week after the main conference. These trips have been revised and there is potential for further revision depending upon interest.

Please review the trip list shown on this page. If you want to leave the trip(s) as already booked you do not need to do anything but feel free to contact Andy Wood or myself to confirm or revise your trip selection. Also feel free to contact me with other suggestions.

Monday 13th June

Williamsons Tunnels Liverpool.
Minera/Bersham etc (repeat of Sunday trip).

Underground trip - possibly Cwmorthin/Wrysgan (Bleanau Ffestiniog).

Tuesday 14th June

Snailbeach - surface & simple underground.
Snailbeach - underground SRT - including alternative route to Forty Yard Level and option of descent to 90 and 112 Yard Levels.

Wednesday 15th June

Northwich Salt - limited to 12 persons - surface only.
Underground or surface trips up for discussion - possibly Llangynog & Tannant Valley.

Thursday 16th June

Parys Mountain - range of trips organised by PUGS - camping on Anglesey will be available. Trip(s) more local to Llangollen can be organised for those who do not want to travel to Anglesey.

Friday 17th June

Great Orme - 'tourist trip' & fee paying.
Minera/Bersham walk.

From: Steve Holding
steve_holding@blueyonder.co.uk
Mobile: 07850 492036

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

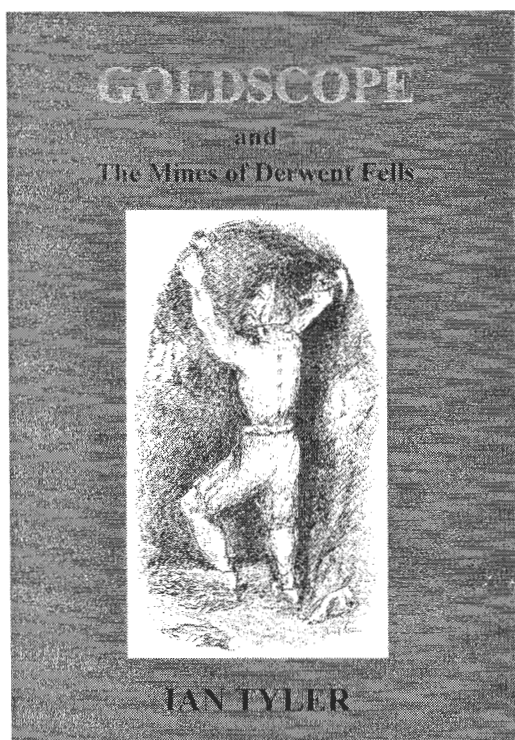
On 9 June there will be presentations on gold mining in Poland, Liverpool's Williamson's tunnels and a video about many of the North Wales mining sites.

The Saturday and Sunday lecture programme includes mining in Linares, Minera, Halkyn, Shropshire, Parys Mountain, Great Orme, Telford and Cheshire (salt mining). There are also sessions on underground photography and on access issues. Many underground and surface trips to slate, lead and copper mines are planned.

BOOK REVIEWS

Goldscope and the Mines of the Derwent Fells

By Ian Tyler



This is another volume on Lake District Mining from the prolific pen of Ian Tyler. It combines a considerable amount of archival research from the Leconfield archives at Cockermouth Castle with Ian's detailed knowledge of the surface and underground features of this historically important mining field. In addition, Ian has included photographs from private collections and has supplemented the work with sketch plans. A pleasing feature is the juxtaposition of sketch plans with photographs on adjacent pages, making the tracing of surface features very easy to follow.

The book is divided into sections dealing with the historical background of the area, the small mines of the Newlands Valley, Goldscope, Yewthwaite, Barrow, Ladstock, Rachel Wood, Thornthwaite, the Barf mines, Beckstones and

the Wythop silica mine. There is a listing of the names of mining personnel, a glossary of terms, production figures for many of the mines and a bibliography. Force Crag mine is within the area of interest but is the subject of an earlier book by Ian.

Perhaps the two main features of the book are its completeness and the new material which has come to light as a result of Ian (and Jean's) fieldwork. There is a vast amount of material in the Leconfield archives, much of it in bundles and difficult to connect with specific mines. This is now well ordered and coherent production figures have been extracted from what have been fragmentary sources. The roles of individuals, particular after the closure of the Keswick operations, have been put into perspective and a good job has been done in sorting out some very detailed but confusing archival evidence.

Many of us have doubted the existence of the Newlands smelt mill, suggested by Postlethwaite but with little evidence for it other than a report of a ruined batch of copper ore. Well Ian has found it, there is a sketch map and I for one will be rushing to see it, once I have bought my copy of the book. There are other gems such as the note about the Hechstetter private chapel uncovered during alterations to a house and references to hallucinogenic fungus.

As always, Ian tries to make the dull facts come to life and you will either love or hate him for this. His dramatised description of the death of the government inspector, Robert Bowes in Goldscope in 1599 is a case in point. The official account gets it over in only a few lines but here it is expanded to a full page and it loses nothing in the telling. Another example is Thomas Robinson's epic journey in March 1698 from Newlands to Carlisle when sustained bad weather brought a halt to operations. Ian does play fair however, the historical facts are kept quite separate from the drama and he does not develop 'facts' which are likely to mislead others at a later date.

Because there is so much material and because so much of it is new, I personally would have liked to see a better job of referencing some of the statements. Lakeland's mining history is full

of assertions for which there are no obvious substantiation. Historians are still going through a process of trying to sort out the issues of hearsay, supposition and lost evidence. It would have been helpful to give the sources for some of the statements made here, particularly for the period between 1630 and 1730, for which the records are fairly sparse and are held in dispersed locations.

This is a fairly priced, authoritative and readable book which will be a valuable addition to the collections of anyone interested in Lakeland mining.

Goldscope and the Mines of the Derwent Fells by Ian Tyler, Blue Rock Publications, Keswick, 2005, 300pp., illus. ISBN 0 9548631 3 5, price £18.99 is obtainable from mining booksellers and Keswick Mining Museum, Otley House, Otley Road, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 5LE.

Richard Smith

Coal: A human story by Barbara Freese – Arrow Books, £7.99
Extract from the Sunday Express 12th February 2006. by David Connett

Barbara Freese is a brave woman. She has beautifully written a breezy history of one of the most unglamorous commodities on Earth. Coal has an image to drive even the most ingenious PR guru to seek refuge in padded rooms. Coal is dirty, mining it is dangerous and burning it is messy. Compared to oil, coal's sexier; wealthier cousin, it is the embarrassing, smelly relative locked away in the cellar.

She entertainingly charts its rise from its original association with "death disease and the Devil" to its crowning moment as King Coal, fuel of the Industrial Revolution and symbol of man's triumph over nature.

The book also describes its downward spiral, oil and gas usurped its position after the Second World War as a fuel of choice for most of the world.

The economic and social consequences of that dramatic change (the miner's strike in Britain and the impact on traditional mining communities) is dispassionately but sensitively handled. The loss of coal-mining jobs isn't unique to Britain; even in booming China, where coal production is rocketing, more than a million miners have lost their jobs.

Freese, a US lawyer became engrossed with the black stuff in all its guises when she was given responsibility for making air cleaner and witnessed in a courtroom the full might of the US coal industry, anxious to avoid being blamed for climate change. Complaints about air pollution were being made as early as the 14th Century.

She never flinches from reminding the reader of the wider cost of this fossil fuel and a history of air pollution and environmental controls travels comfortably in her narrative.

Its publication is also timely. There are growing arguments about energy supplies and climate control and Britain is attempting to lead the world with even more radical reductions in greenhouse emissions than those agreed at Kyoto.

Sent in by Richard Shaw

NMRS Library List

Sallie Bassham is preparing an updated list of books, journals and miscellaneous literature held at the NMRS library. A copy of the list will be provided to every member and will be enclosed with the next newsletter.

Thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter. Please continue to send material for the Newsletter. Contributions can be sent by email to me. Alternatively, you can post any contributions either as text, or on disk, 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.

Richard Platt, 40 Solent Drive, Darcy Lever, Bolton. BL3 1RN

Email to : richardp.darcy@tiscali.co.uk

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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.

Visit our Website www.nmrs.co.uk

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is a Registered Charity.
Its number is 326704