



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

Society News

August 2007

Administration Matters

Thank you to David Johnson for mailing out this newsletter.

We are delighted to have two more volunteers for committee work. Thank you to David Neal and Tim Cook who offered to help and gave some background information about themselves and their experience. This coincides with Alan Mills' wish to retire from the post of Treasurer and Membership Secretary in 2008 and it has been decided to split the two jobs. Because the year end comes before the AGM, however, the committee has agreed to phase in the handover. The Treasurer is elected each year, and Tim will be nominated at the AGM in March 2008, where members will vote on all the Committee positions. The Membership Secretary is not a Committee post and the Committee may co-opt someone to do this work. We have, therefore, accepted David's offer to take on this work from late 2007, so that he can deal with membership renewals. Thank you also to Alan Mills for his sterling work as Treasurer, for setting up transparent, transferable systems which have helped the whole committee with its work, for setting up the complementary roles of

Treasurer and Membership Secretary and for his willingness to work with the new Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

Having non-committee members helping with the Society's administrative work is a growing trend – like dealing with publication orders, Newsletter mailing and membership matters. The Constitution was written in 1984 and mirrors well the way the Society worked then. It may be that we should consider some small changes to the Constitution so that it better fits the current work of NMRS. Any proposed changes will, of course, be brought to an AGM and clearly announced before hand.

We are still without a Secretary and committee members are dealing with the various secretarial duties; but a volunteer would be very welcome. The main need is for someone to take minutes of meetings.

Editor's report July 2007

Memorial Hall, Reeth, Sat 21st July 2007

The **Van Mines** (Nigel Chapman) and **Mashamshire Collieries** (Les Tyson) monographs were published distributed together in April 2007.

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The **Baile an' Or** (Scottish Gold Rush) monograph (Ron Callender) is now in preparation and publication will be delayed until 2008, unless another monograph appears before then.

Les Tyson has also indicated that he has a monograph on **Swaledale Coal** in preparation (title not settled but presumably Tan Hill, Kettlepot, William Gill etc). There is no more news on this since the last report.

A short monograph on **Middridge Drift Coal Mine**, Durham (Norman Turner) was received from Tony Fretwell at the Autumn Meeting. The monograph is a personal account by the proprietor/miner and has 61 pp of fairly well spaced text including 72 figures. It would benefit by additions of key facts such as dates. It would probably work out at less than 60 pages of A5 as it stands. An electronic version has been requested from the author with a view to publishing as a long Memoir. There is no more news on this since the last report.

Papers (J. Barnatt, Firesetting; B. Job, Moorcroft Colliery flooding; John Bennett, Mawddach gold; Mike Gill, Coal Chronology, Ron Callender, Exhibition skills and possibly Rob Vernon, geophys topic and RS, Ellerbeck Smelting Mill) have been received for the 2007 Memoirs. The editor hopes to produce a paper on Ellerbeck Lead Smelting Mill and a short paper on a bale site in West Allendale is expected from Ray Fairbairn.

The monograph on the **Grassington Mines** has sold out; it was agreed that we will reprint 500 copies when Mike Gill sends in improved maps.

Ray Fairbairn's **Teesdale** has sold out and the MS is ready for a further 300 copy print run to be carried out. Minor corrections to the original MS have been made. Your opinion sought as reprints are not normally cost-effective and £800-1,000 for short run of around 50-200.

Alston Moor – a revised MS was available from R. Fairbairn. Much of the MS has been corrected but Ray is sending modified sections. Possibly 240 pp. as against 160 pp. originally. The MS is very much the old monograph but with considerable additions, views of members are sought on the attractiveness of the revised edition. The editor is concerned that the selling costs of such a large volume will be over £25. If this is published it will not be until 2008.

Library News

Gifts to the library continue to be eclectic and wide-ranging. Thank you to everyone for their contributions. Richard Smith has donated

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a copy of Les Turnbull's 2006 update of "The History of Lead Mining in the North East of England" and reprints of his Historical Metallurgy paper. "A typology of lead-bale slags based on their physico-chemical properties". Rob Vernon has donated several copies of "The Mining Engineer" and a fascinating variety of papers - LPG Storage, Concrete, China Clay, Wilfley tables, Aluminium in the Highlands and Irish Mining Review 1977 (which forecasts a bright future for mining at Avocafiles. The one I read first was "Folk Life" Volume 44 of the Journal of Ethnological Studies. I find it interesting to follow-up brief references to metal-working in "folk literature" and attempting to work out what technology was available when and where: "Folk Life" includes an article on Daniel in the lions' den which discusses metal artefacts and the weapons they portray.

Jim Kirby has donated "Brandes en Oisans: Un Village Minier de Haute Montagne au Moyen Age", "Der Harz - Land der Reze und Metalle" by Herbert Lommatzsch and a copy of his dissertation "A History of the Strontian Lead Mines: The Murray of Stanhope Years, 1722-1767. Jim has also sent two reviews of Stephen Moreton's "Bonanzas and jacobites" and donated a copy of the book itself.

Many thanks to all, and apologies to anyone I've missed - let me know and I will include details next time.

Sallie Bassham

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MEETS

Thank you very much to everyone who volunteered to lead meets this year, especially to those who stepped in at short notice. The Programme and Membership Card suggested that there might be August and September meets to Durham and Greenhow; but these will not take place this year; and an attempt to arrange a substitute did not work out because of personal circumstances. We apologise to those who are disappointed by this.

The committee is starting to put together a meets programme for 2008 and would very much like to hear from any volunteers. Surface walks are welcome, as well as underground trips. It is several years since we had a meet in the Nenthead area - would anyone like to organise this?

All volunteers please contact one of the committee, or talk to us at the Autumn General Meeting on 20 October.

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Members Contributions

Yorkshire's Roman Pig of Lead

In February 1734, Henry Smart Stevens sent a drawing of two ingots of lead to the Royal Society. They had been found, buried two feet deep, on the side of a track at Hayshaw Bank near Dacre, and were inscribed *Imp. Caes. Domitiano. Aug. Cos. VII*

(cast in the seventh year of Domitian's consulate, of c.81 AD). One of them eventually ended up in the British Museum and the other was kept at Ripley Castle, near Harrogate, until a few years ago when it was sold to a private buyer. On Friday, March 13th the *Yorkshire Post* reported that the latter pig was to be sold at a Bonham's auction in London on April 26th, where it was estimated it would sell for between £8,000 and £12,000.

Contacts with the Nidderdale Museum, at Pateley Bridge, quickly revealed that it was discussing ways of raising the funds and bidding for the pig. This would get it back into Nidderdale, which has very few Roman artefacts. Given the lack of time, it is to the museum trust's credit that it quickly decided to go ahead. Pledges of generous financial support came from a number of individuals, and the committee of the NMRS also agreed to pledge £1000 towards the cost of the pig. In the event, however, the pig was sold for £30,000 to an anonymous telephone bidder.

Mike Gill

2007 NAMHO Conference – Lecture Programme, 16 and 17 June

This year's NAMHO conference was based at Morwellham Quay in Devon. Saturday and Sunday saw an interesting lecture programme on the theme "From Pennies to Pesticides" – intended to show the local mining variety from silver to arsenic. Inevitably, Devon Great Consols featured and John Goodridge put the famous copper mines in the context of rapid population growth and the stresses between shareholders and local landowner, the Duke of Bedford. Robert Waterhouse, the archaeologist at Morwellham spoke about the Tavistock Canal, the first major engineering project of the renowned mining engineer John Taylor. The canal ends high above Morwellham and was connected to the quay by an inclined plane. Richard de Nul described the history of arsenic working in the Gunnislake region and spoke of the effects of the still-existent residues. Lynne Mayers gave a lecture on women in the Tamar mining industries and the

different mining work they did from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Lynne kindly donated a copy of her prize-winning book "Balm maidens" to NMRS Library – so members can borrow this to read about her early researches on the subject.

Catherine Mills spoke about the Kinnaird Commission and miners' phthisis: she is a research fellow at the Centre for Medical History at the University of Exeter and has a special interest in unhealthy working environments. Peter Churcher has researched one of the mine owners of Bere Ferrers. Christopher Gullett was an "improver" of Dartmoor and struggled with conservation issues as well as with the need to make a living from his mines and decisions about water power versus steam engines. Peter Cloughton and Chris Smart talked on their researches on Bere Ferrers. There is documentary evidence on the operation of the mines, first under direct Crown management and later let to entrepreneurial interests, and this is now being linked with landscape studies to learn more about mine development, relationship with settlement patterns and evidence for technological changes. Phil Newman lectured on mining archaeology of Dartmoor. Phil is an experienced field archaeologist who has worked for RCHM and English Heritage. He has recently extended his work from the Dartmoor uplands to the less accessible peripheral areas of the park and spoke about copper, tin and silver-lead mining from medieval times to the twentieth century. Colin Buck is a Senior Archaeologist with Cornwall County Council and has produced over 80 archaeological assessments and watching brief reports; being particularly concerned with engine houses and other mining buildings. His lecture looked at the distribution of mine working and their effect on the landscape. Tony Brooks spoke about King Edward Mine and the lectures finished with a presentation by Fiona O'Connor and the Bere Alston Mining Group on the prospects for mining heritage in the South-West from the Bronze Age to the present day, including comments on the area's World Heritage Status.

2007 NAMHO Conference – 15 to 17 June

As usual, the 2007 NAMHO Conference had a wide variety of surface and underground trips. The surface walks started on the Friday afternoon with Peter Cloughton leading a group round the Bere Peninsula and Robert Waterhouse showing some of the features at Morwellham Quay itself. Unfortunately, many would-be attenders at these two events were

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unable to reach Morwellham in time to participate. They blamed the wheelie bins. Drivers from the north and east made good time on their journeys to Devon until after Bristol when traffic mysteriously slowed. In a field on the left of the motorway were several wheelie bins painted in the distinctive and unmistakable black-and-white patterns of Friesian cows. Delayed by modern art, conference participants had to explore Morwellham later in the weekend.

The Quay is well worth a visit of several hours. Those busy with conference events were unable to visit the museum during its opening hours, but there was still much to see. Driving down into Morwellham, the view is dominated by the Tamar ketch Garlandstone which is moored in the Devon Great Consols Great Dock. The tiled dock has been restored and tramways with trucks give an idea of how the once-busy dock looked. A large water-wheel turns beside the former manganese store and there are assayer's and miners' cottages, a cooper and a smithy near the quay. A trail leads past tramways and inclines to a millpond and on to the Tavistock canal tunnel. In his Saturday lecture, Robert Waterhouse (the Morwellham archaeologist) talked about recent discoveries of early 19th century plate-ways and early railway turn-tables. There are several lime-kilns in the Morwellham area, including a large complex from which the vegetation has recently been cut back. Those who visit during museum opening hours can travel by train into George and Charlotte copper mine.

The underground trips were mostly grades 4 and 5, and those who went spoke appreciatively of these and made envious those of us too old to descend Devon Great Consols. On the Friday evening, there was a video showing how the local groups had worked hard to make the underground trips possible. The Saturday surface trip to Eylesborough mine was superb. The advantages of going with Phil Newman were that we were given a copy of his survey of the area and also had the benefit of his knowledge of each square inch of a large area, so that we were shown features that we would never otherwise have found in the lush vegetation of the south west. Shafts, whims, wheelpits, streamworks, modern boundary stones, an old mortar stone, flat-rod supports, count house, 19th century dwelling house with garden, fields and a boating lake – all were explained with knowledgeable enthusiasm and then much photographed by the rest of us. We also saw stamping mills and smelt mills

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and their chronology and development were related to the documentary evidence. Finally, we turned to the pre-historic remains in the area and were fortunate to have in the group someone who had earned his PhD surveying these. John Barnatt had spent months camping wild on Dartmoor studying settlements, cairns, cists, stone-rows and menhirs. Not only could he discourse knowledgeably about them all, but also had a host of amusing anecdotes about his surveying experiences. A fascinating day out with superb guides.

The weekend events were followed by coach trips to South Crofty and to Levant on the Monday. The staff at Geevor and Levant took a lot of effort to show us as much as possible in a short time and even got the steam engine going so we could see it in action. Sincere thanks to them and to all involved in the organisation of the Conference. Each year, the new conference organisers say that they feel that the previous group has set them an impossibly high standard to follow; and each year the conference offers an excellent variety of lectures, underground trips and surface trips which are enjoyed and appreciated by those who attend. Thank you!

Sallie Bassham

SECONDHAND BOOK FAIR

Ingleton Community Centre

16th September 2007 – 10am to 4pm

A NMRS Society display table has been booked for this local and popular Secondhand Book Fair.

A selection of Society Publications will be on sale, including the "Ingleton Coalfields" now on its second print; Membership forms will also be available. Encouraged by the Book Sale of 2006, there will be a display board showing Ingleton's industrial past, the Granite Quarry, railways and the Gas Works. This display has taken me over the last twenty years to research and put together!

Help on the day would be gratefully accepted – Call in! Take a turn by the display!

Janet & Bernard Bond – 015242 41857 (Answer phone)

MEET REPORT

Meet at Surrender Smelt Mill

On a damp Saturday afternoon in July, a group of NMRS members met at Surrender Bridge near Swaledale. Five hours later they left somewhat damper, and with even more questions, than when they started; but having had an interesting time considering how lead might have been mined, processed and smelted in the area.

The possible positions of smelt mills near Surrender Bridge were considered by examining slag remains and Richard Smith explained the different slag types produced by different processes. The internal remains of the last mill were considered with the help of explanatory plaques put up by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Some members of the group remembered the roasting furnace before, and just after, its archaeological excavation and explained its structure and method of working. It was good to have Lawrence Barker with us and to hear about his seminal work in the area and his researches on his family's long involvement with mining. Having looked at the peat store and a possible reservoir which might have been constructed for a condenser, the group turned its attention to the main reason for the meet – the flue. All had opinions on the likely site of the first chimney, the possible uses of the remaining stone structure on the flue line – and why the flue curves round it, the age and function of flue cross-walls and why the cross-sectional area is larger higher up the flue. Later, the clear drain down the centre of the flue, the flue's sudden yard-high height change and why a shallow section should be mined rather than built by cut-and-cover created animated discussion. By contrast, the sight of the twelve metre shaft (safely covered) in the flue produced an impressed silence – briefly. Eventually the terminal chimney remains were viewed and the group moved across the moor to look at shaft mounds and hear about Martin Roe's surveys and ways of diagnosing different methods of raising material to the surface. During the afternoon, many bale sites were examined. A particularly large one west of Surrender chimney delayed the walk for some time. Recent rabbit activity had brought a piece of brown glass bottle to the surface. Martin has dated this to 1680-1730 and wonders if its presence is associated with workers taking slag from a bale site for re-smelting. However, there was even more interest in much older sites between the two smelt mill chimneys – we would have welcomed

a researcher into Iron Age and earlier structures.

The carved initials with nineteenth century dates on the rock near the Old Gang flue meant that everyone on the walk saw things they had never noticed before in the area. Without the rain, it would have been possible to spend a couple of hours walking the 500 metres from Old Gang chimney down to the magnificent peat store and looking at mining features on the way – but a heavy drizzle hastened footsteps. With the help of Mike Gill's book on Swaledale; it was possible to work out some of the history of the Old Gang mills; but there were still a number of alternative views and unanswered questions. No-one in the group could remember having read an interpretation of the small 'flues' in the corners of the four latest furnace positions. Majority opinion in the group was that they may have drained water from above, rather than carried fume from below, or carried the air pipes to the tuyeres – but readers' opinions would be very welcome on this. Completing the walk back along Barney Beck, Martin talked about his survey work in this area and possible sites of early smelt mills.

My grateful thanks to all who came and contributed to an interesting afternoon with their questions about, and analysis of the various features we saw. I am particularly grateful to Lawrence, Richard and Martin for sharing their results of their researches so generously.

Sallie Bassham

BOOK REVIEWS

Lead Mining in Derbyshire

History, Development & Drainage

Book 1: Castleton to the River Wye

By JH Rieuwerts

The most comprehensive account ever written on the history of lead mining in Derbyshire. The author has examined over 1,500 manuscripts from the National Archive written prior to 1750, and many more than that, post 1750.

The manuscript amounts to some 300,000 words and will run to some 600 pages, the work will be produced in three volumes and will be published six months apart starting in October 2007.

Volume 1 includes details of over 140 mines and rakes, which will be supported by illustrations of mine sections, contemporary and modern surface photographs, plus some spectacular underground photography by the

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renowned mining photographer, Paul Deakin; some of which will be in colour. Lead Mining in Derbyshire: History & Drainage is the result of a 30-year study and will be of interest to mines experts and archaeologists alike.

Dr. J.H. (Jim) Rieuwerts is recognised as 'the' authority on the subject. He has had several books and numerous papers published over the years. A member of the Gt. Barmote Court for the Soke and Wapentake of Wirksworth for 40 years, he is the Jury Foreman and has never missed a meeting. He co-founded the Park District Mining Historical Society in 1959.

All three volumes will be restricted to 500 copies each and will not be released into the trade until December 2007.

Volume 1

Specification: c. 192pp; 246mm x 174mm; hardback with jacket; well illustrated, included 16pp of colour

ISBN: 978 1 84306 343 8

Price: £25.00

Publication Date: October 2007

Volume 2: The River Wye to Matlock

ISBN: 978 1 84306 344 5

Publication Date: tbc

Volume 3: Matlock to Bradbourne & Tissington

ISBN: 978 1 84306 345 2

Publication Date: tbc

The specification for volumes 2 & 3 is expected to be the same as volume 1.

PRINCES OF THE WORKING VALLEY: The day and night book of two Dolcoath mine captains 1822-23.

Allen Buckley

The fortuitous survival of the 'day and night book', written by Captains James Thomas and William Petherick, provides us with a brief, but fascinating, insight of life around Dolcoath, the queen of Cornish mines. The book, in which the two senior captains left each other notes about events in the mine and instructions about what was needed for the following shift, also has revealing comments on people around the mine.

The humanity of these individuals is made clear in their earthy humour and pithy remarks. A devout Wesleyan preacher, Thomas was far from the dour figure one might expect him to be. He enjoyed strong liquor and had a wicked sense of humour, especially when plotting to embarrass fellow agents. In times when one had to be more robust to survive in the workplace, we learn of the problems managing tributers who sought to defraud the owners by moving ore from richer stopes to poorer ones, where they got a better price. Similarly,

we learn that not all bal-maidens were subservient cap-doffers. Some had an independent spirit and were not against a little brazen behaviour, including theft from the mines.

The author also lists the men and bal maidens who are mentioned and gives biographical notes on them.

Princes of the Working Valley is published by Truran, ISBN-13 978 185022 209 5. It has 136 pages, 16 illustrations and costs £9.99 and may be ordered on line from www.trurobookshop.co.uk - plus £1.50 p&p.

PAINTING A MINE WITH LIGHT (A pictorial history of Wheal Jane a Cornish Mine) by John Peck

There are many books of photographs of old mines, but ones showing a modern mine are rarer, which makes this book of photographs, taken by Wheal Jane's official photographer over the twenty years preceding the mine's closure in 1991, all the more fascinating. The excellent pictures were taken in the hostile environment of a working mine - noisy, dusty, hot and humid - to show mining operations including mucking out, shaft sinking, raise boring, surveying, milling, drilling and blasting. The text gives easy to read explanations of what the pictures depict and the difficulties encountered in taking them.

To order *Painting a Mine with Light* email john@johnpeckandson.co.uk ISBN 0 9552557 0 8 64, 64 pp, 86 illustrations, paper back £6.95 plus £2.00 postage within the EU.

Mike Gill

Robbing the Sparry garniture; A 200 year History of British Mineral Dealers, by Michael P Cooper

Despite the off-putting title (in my opinion) this is an excellent book thoroughly researched over a period exceeding fifteen years and is, so far, the best-detailed volume of British mineralogical history published. Anyone interested in the history of British mineralogy would find it very readable, detailed and fascinating.

The book starts with a short account of the author's fascination with minerals, and a description of the sources used to complete the book. Three sections follow entitled "Friend or Foe?" The Dealer's Role: "The Market" - an account of collecting minerals in Britain from the 17th century to 1950: "Distribution"

describes where the dealers were located. The main body of the book is an alphabetical listing, giving biographical notes on persons and firms that sold mineral specimens in Britain during the period covered.

The only person listed, still alive when the book was started, was Bill Davidson of Penrith whom some of you would have known. Sadly he died before publication. There is much information about each dealer from their labels, advertisements, documents, portraits etc. Finally at the end of the book is a very detailed bibliography of references

"Robbing the Sparry Garniture," published 2007 by Mineralogical Record, Tucson, Arizona P/b has 358pp (a very heavy book!) over 250 illustrations (portraits, labels, adverts, documents, and mineral specimens).

The book is available from www.MineralRecord.com/book.asp at a cost of \$49 plus postage or alternatively in the GB from Barbara Sutcliffe at mansemins@btopenworld.com <<mailto:mansemins@btopenworld.com> where the book will cost £28 plus 6.00 postage.

Autumn Meeting - 20 October 2007

The Autumn Meeting will be held at the Cross Keys Inn, Otley Road, Skipton on 20 October 2007 starting at 2pm. Please use the enclosed blue insert to book a free buffet and/or to let us know you would like to give a presentation. Completed forms to Sallie Bassham by 12 October please at Winshaw Barn, Chapel-le-Dale, Ingleton, Yorkshire, LA6 3AT or (015242 41851) or (sbassham@nildram.co.uk)

Thank you to Mike Gill who has volunteered to convert any presentation slides and photographs to PowerPoint format. Please contact Mike before 30 September at 38 Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven, Keighley, BD20 7HD or 01535 635388 or martgill@legend.co.uk.

Minutes of the 17 March AGM and written reports from Officers will be available at the meeting. If anyone is unable to attend and would like copies of these, please contact Sallie (address above) after 20 October.

The programme for the afternoon is

2pm **Free buffet**

2.30pm **General meeting**

Minutes of the AGM on 17 March 2007 Matters arising from the minutes Reports (Treasurer, Editor, Recorder, Librarian, NAMHO, Newsletter, Website, Committee) Meets.

Any other business

3pm **Presentations**

Goodluck Mine Open Day

Goodluck Mine will be opening its gates for visitors on **Sunday 9th September** from 10.30am and all are welcome. This 1830s lead mine has a wealth of surface and underground features making it unique in the Peak District. There is a powder house, coe and underground stone stampling in abundance. For a taste of the mine visit www.goodluckmine.org Guides will be on duty during the day to make sure visitors get the best out of their trip.

There is no entrance fee, but donations are welcome (£5 suggested). The mine is run by The Goodluck Mine Preservation Club - a group of committed volunteers.

The mine is near Middleton (not far from Cromford (SK26975 56528) off the Via Gellia Road.

Further details - please contact D.Barrie Secretary on 07808326469 or email davylamp@hotmail.com



Much of the mine has superb herring bone arching to support the roof. It is probably the finest example in Derbyshire.



The miner's coe - inside there is a small blacksmith's hearth

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please continue to send material for the newsletter. Contributions can be sent by email to me. Please limit these files to not more than 2 Mb because I am not currently on Broadband. 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.

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

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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.

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