



The Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter

Society News

May 2008

AGM

It was wonderful to see so many members at the AGM on 8th March - more than 40 people came to Reeth Museum. It is marvellous to see how much work has been done to make it a welcoming place with so many interesting exhibits well displayed. It is no wonder that it is valued by local people as a repository for their stories; as a resource for researchers; by children interested in learning about the old days and by tourists wanting to improve their understanding of the Dales and their history. The Curator, Helen Clifford, is to be congratulated on all that has been achieved. Do go and visit when you are in Reeth. NMRS has provided funding for interpretative panels on mining in Arkengarthdale and Swaledale, and Helen told us that mining is the main interest of visitors to the museum.

Helen made everyone welcome and provided a superb buffet. (*I wonder if the high turn-out was because people had heard about Helens culinary skills?*)

The AGM went smoothly. There were reports, questions and discussion; but business matters were concluded in half an hour and we were able to enjoy three excellent presentations. Helen talked about the museum and showed us some of the exhibits. Yvonne Luke showed us pictures of Wharfedale sites she had researched. She had found different types of slag some in unexpected places and left us with a number of questions. If she can get landowner permission, Yvonne is willing to lead a meet to some of her sites next year. Mike Gill had slides of Cornish mining sites from a number of years ago. Some places such as Gwennap Pit have not changed, but South Crofty and Wheal Jane are much altered.

If you could not come to the AGM and would like copies of the reports, please contact Sallie (sbassham@nildram.co.uk or 015242 1851).

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Publications

We are delighted to welcome Barbara Sutcliffe as our new Manager of Publications. Very soon after you receive this Newsletter, most of the publication stock will be moved from the lock-up store in Sheffield to Barbaras home and you will be able to order books from her. Barbara lives at The Old Manse, 93 Halifax Road, Nelson, Lancs, BB9 0EQ and may be contacted at mansemins@btopenworld.com or 01282 614615. Barbara was elected Vice-President of the Society at the March AGM.

Events in 2008

Saturday 14 June Wharfedale kilns meet. Leader Janis Heward. 10.30am start. Parking for 6 cars on west side of B6160 at NGR SD 978 646. (Please arrange to share cars if possible.) Maximum number 12 people. Rough walking on uneven terrain and an initial steep climb. Walking boots, waterproofs and lunch needed. Contact Sallie Bassham (sbassham@nildram.co.uk or 015 2424 1851)

11 to 12 July NAMHO Conference in Scotland. See <http://namhoconference.org.uk>.

Saturday 9 August Nenthead meet. Due to a recent operation, what was planned to be a trip into Capelcleugh Level will now probably not now take place. An alternative trip will be provided. Please note this will not be a trip for novices and the meet leader reserves the right to turn away the poorly equipped or inexperienced and will require those attending to show proof of BCA insurance. Contact meet leader Martin Roe 01422 251237 or email roe_martin@hotmail.co.uk.

Saturday 6 September Yorkshire Dales meet. Leader Miles Johnson. Sleil Gill/Booze Moor. A surface walk and discussion of grouse moor management and mining remains. Meet at the Langthwaite car park (NZ 005 023) at 10.30am. Maximum of 12 people. This will be a strenuous walk on rough terrain, please bring packed lunch, suitable footwear and clothing. Contact, miles.johnson@yorkshiredales.org.uk or 01969 652361

Saturday 11 October Hude valley, Teesdale. Surface walk. Meet at 10am at the commemorative pump in Middleton in Teesdale for details of the start point for the walk. Contact sbassham@nildram.co.uk or 015242 51851. Tony Fretwell is now not able to lead this walk, but it will take place and Tony has kindly made notes and maps available.

Saturday 25 October Autumn Meeting. This will be at Gayle Mill, near Hawes, with a buffet from 1am; followed by a Business Meeting and members presentations. Mike Gill is willing to put material into PowerPoint for anyone wishing to give a presentation (oldgang@tiscali.co.uk). There will be a booking form with the August Newsletter.

Peter Pearson suggested Gayle Mill, near Hawes, as an interesting venue for the Autumn Meeting and has kindly made all the arrangements. Many thanks Peter. Gayle Mill was a finalist on the television programme Restoration and after a lot of work is open to the public this year. Well worth a visit!

There have been two offers of meets for 2009 (one surface and one underground) and more will be welcome.

Ive been asked why there is a limit on numbers for some meets. This may be a condition set by the land-owner; or, it may be set by the meet leader from their

knowledge of the site. There is no wish to exclude anyone from meets all are welcome but we do need to know in advance who is coming.

Sallie Bassham

Library News

I staggered away from the March AGM laden with bags of books for the library. Many thanks to many generous givers. Thank you to Adrian Middleton for the Aberfan Disaster Report (harrowing reading), Lofthouse Inrush Report (with plans and section), Shaft Story from NCB (lovely Heath Robinson cartoons) and three weighty tomes on coal mining. Thank you to Rex Cook for Cave Science 1966 (including a detailed classic by Nellie Kirkham on Longstone Edge), copies of The Amateur Geologist and Proceedings of the Geologists Association and the Yorkshire Geological Society, government reports from 1938 and 1949 and several books on geology and mineralogy.

Thank you to Mike Gill for a copy of West Yorkshires Geodiversity Action Plan and to Lynne Johnson for Records of Metal Processing and Engineering 1760 to 1914. Since the AGM, Ray Fairbairn has given me five offprints of interesting articles from The Friends of Killhope Newsletter and Lynne Mayers has donated a copy of her excellent new book A Dangerous Place to Work! Women and Children of the Devon and Cornwall Mining Industries 1300 to 1970.

Ivor Brown has sent me two more bags of papers and journals (Ivor has been a frequent and generous donor to the library for many years). The latest material includes coal mining material, including several issues of Coal Age and Mining Magazine and more issues of IMM North of England Newsletter and the Lion Salt Works Trust Newsletter. Since it was

requested for loan, I have bought a copy of Ian Tylers latest book The Lakes and Cumbria Mines Guide.

All are being added to the Library List. If you would like me to email you an up-to-date copy, please ask: if you want a paper copy, please will you contribute towards the cost of postage and of printing over 40 pages.

Sallie Bassham

sbassham@nildram.co.uk or 015 2424 1851

Message from the Newsletter Editor

Unfortunately it has come to my attention that the lead mining remains at Grassington Moor have been subject to recent damage. Not only are these remains significant in their sheer size and continuity of use from the seventeenth century onwards, but they are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Please could I ask if any members notice any damage to the remains, could they record where and when they saw it, and if possible take photographs. Then could they forward the information on to Lynne Johnson my address is at the back of the newsletter.

Photograph below shows spoil heap stratigraphy after damage.



Meet Report

Claughton Manor Brickworks - 19th April

Firstly I would like to give our thanks to the Manager and his staff for the time they gave and for a splendid, informative tour of the UK's only working aerial quarry ropeway. I would also like to thank them for providing our members with 4x4 transport from the Manor brickworks to the Claughton Moor working quarry. The NMRS group of 16 was given an in-depth explanation of the production of shale and its journey down to the brick works. Quarry shale is manually extracted by three operatives – the work area being known locally as the 'Shiver Hole'. From the quarry face, the shale is driven to the present day Crusher House. (Photo 1, below, shows a group of NMRS members at the Crusher House.)



Photo 1 (B. Bond)

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Photo 2 (below) shows the late 1920's building, which was called the 'old electric and crusher house', and served both ropeways, i.e. Manor and West End brickworks. The roadway buildings for the West End works on the A683 were demolished on 16th June 2007. (An event which I photographed – see NMRS February 2006 newsletter.) From Manor brickworks the working 40/46 buckets,

each containing 290kg of shale, travel at 5mph passing over 26 gantries. Photo 3 (see overleaf) shows the 1 inch steel cable for the buckets at Manor brickworks, which requires changing on a 5 to 7 year period. From the now demolished West End works, there were 64 buckets, containing 193kg, travelling over the gantries at a much faster speed. Opened around 1887, the West End ropeway continued in use until the 1990's. A small number of the West End gantries still stand on the moor and were photographed on our visit.



Photo 2 (R. Platt)

Along with the first Lunesdale Brick and Tube Company, all three brickworks have been served with railway sidings from the nearby Wennington to Lancaster railway line, built by the North Western Railway Company. Many quality building bricks have been produced over the years. One month after the meet, it was confirmed that Claughton Manor bricks were used in the making of the eighty foot high New Ingleton Colliery chimney, and also the Weigh Bridge office, which was demolished in April 2008.



Photo 3 (N. and B. Dray)

Also present was a short wheel base vehicle in the storage area. This was used to convey the new steel cable on to the moor and to each stanchion. In the mid 1960's, thanks to B. Huck at the Ingleton scrapyard, Claughton fitters were able to find replacement parts for this vehicle. By no means an easy task, as this is a Guy World War II gun tractor. The armoury had been taken off at the Brick Works, and alterations had taken place, so the rear cab area, formerly for carrying shells, was then used to carry the 1 inch steel cable for the ropeways.

During the visit, there were many cameras clicking, and I have and still am receiving CDs of all the various photographs taken. These are being copied and will be given to the Brick Works management as a record of our visit.

Many thanks for these and also the enclosed letters of appreciation. In addition, a 1990 video of the West End working has been found and copied. My appreciation goes to all those who attended, and for their help and humour at my attempts to measure the stanchion bases - well done!

Many motorists have for years enjoyed seeing the aerial ropeway and its buckets passing over the busy Hornby to Lancaster A683 road - long may this continue! (Photo 4 is of the brickworks entry on the A683.)

Photo 5 is self-explanatory!

Bernie Bond



Photo 4 (D. Kitching)

Preserved for Posterity - the Society helps the North Yorkshire County Records Office purchase a map.

The oldest known map of Swaledale has been saved for posterity by North Yorkshire County Council. The Records Office bought the map in February for £1,000. Of this, £500 was provided through the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund; £100 from the Northern Mines Research Society and £100 from Judith Mills of Reeth.

The map was drawn in about 1707 to help settle a court case against the Wharton family initiated by Reginald Marriott and others in 1705. This was about the ownership of lead mining rights on Grinton How in Swaledale.

(c.f. Barker, J.L. (1967), Document relating to dispute over ownership of Grinton Manor, *Memoirs of the NCMRS* pp. 26-30 and L.O. Tyson, & I.M. Spensley, (1995) *The Grinton Mines, British Mining* no.51 pp 17-20.)

The map is on vellum and measures 87cm by 66.5cm (35in by 27in) with much use of full, bright colour. The surveyor is not named on the map, but

Photo 5 (P. Bone)



Photo 5 (P. Bone)

court papers show that two surveyors, John Hutchinson and Leonard Brackenbury, were ordered to 'make a map of the whole estate in question' dated 1707. It was presented to a jury at a viewing day on April 22, 1708, when six or more jurors were to be moderately entertained at the Queens Arms in Richmond [North Yorkshire].

On Tuesday 22nd April an exact copy of the map was presented to the Swaledale Museum & on the three hundredth anniversary of its first appearance before the jurors at Richmond. The original will be preserved for posterity in the County Records Office.

Photo 1 The Swaledale Map





Photo 2 Cllr John Blackie presenting a copy of the map to Helen Bainbridge, Curator of the Swaledale Museum and Society member

In addition to providing evidence of ownership of mineral rights, the map also reveals previously unavailable detail about the size and location of settlements and the access to rights on the moor, including the right to graze stock and gather heather (ling), which was used for thatch, and to dig peat, which was used as fuel.

Alan Mills

Other news

Conference dates for your diary

NAMHO 2009 will be hosted by the Peak District Mines Historical Society, from the 19th to the 21st of June, in the Matlock area of Derbyshire.

The 8th International Mining History Congress is to be held at the Penventon Park Hotel, Redruth in Cornwall, from the 12th to the 14th of June, 2009.

Further details of both will appear in later Newsletters.

News from Cornwall

The Heartlands Project has been awarded £22.3 million from the Big Lottery Funds Living Landmarks programme to transform the Pool area, near Camborne, into a world heritage site. The projects website (<http://www.theheartlandsproject.org.uk/index.htm>) shows that the Robinsons Shaft area is to be kept as the centre point of the redeveloped area. Unfortunately, however, no mention is made of what will happen to the engine.

J.R. Foster-Smith

The Society regrets to announce the death, in January, of Jim Foster-Smith, who had been an honorary member for many years. Jim, who was believed to be aged 90, was a mining engineer, but it was his pioneering, county-based gazetteers of metal mining in Wales and South West Scotland for which most people will know him. These were offered to the Society for publication in the late 1960s, but the Society was not as wealthy in those days and, although South West Scotland was published in 1967, as the second in the Northern Cavern & Mine Research Society's Individual Survey Series, sadly it could not afford to start publishing Jim's seven Welsh volumes until 1972, with the last one appearing in 1981.

In more recent years Jim, who lived in Middleton in Teesdale, was a supporter of the Friends of Killhope and, as well as being a Life Member of the Ffestiniog Railway Society, was also Vice-President of the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society.

Thanks are due to Don Borthwick for passing on this sad news.

Rombalds Moor Forum

Since the February Newsletter, a meeting of landowners and user groups agreed to set up a steering group, with the intention of establishing a forum to advise on managing the moor and resolving tensions between their various needs. Because there are coal mining remains on Baildon and Riddlesden Moors, plus sandstone quarrying, the Society is likely to be involved in one of the proposed technical groups, which will advise the forum on specialist topics.

The Watershed Landscape

Further to the February Newsletter, Pennine Prospects has now submitted a bid for £2m of Heritage Lottery Funding. The decision is expected in the autumn.

West Yorkshire Geodiversity Action Plan

The launch of this important document, at the Quarry Inn, Horbury, was attended by Mike Gill on the Society's behalf. The concept of biodiversity is well understood, but the related one of geodiversity has only been developed over the last decade. As a result, conservation of geodiversity is increasingly seen as important, not just in its own right but also as an essential support to biodiversity and cultural conservation programmes.

To see the document, go to:-

<http://www.wyorksgeologytrust.org/newsletters/wygap.pdf>

Mike Gill

Middleton Park, Leeds

For two winters a community archaeology project has been investigating the remains of coal mining in Middleton Park. The park contains over 270 mine shafts, with at least six different styles of mining present dating from the 17th to the 20th century. A number of shafts were worked using cog and rung horse gins and evidence has been recorded of a steam engine from 1814. The park also contains significant sections of a waggonway system developed from 1758.

As part of National Archaeology Week a series of guided walks will be led by the project archaeologist on July 20th. There will also be an exhibition of the project's results in the Lakeside Centre, Middleton Park. Further details on the Friends of Middleton Park website @www.fomp.co.uk

Martin Roe

Mine Heritage Walks in the Lake District

Ian Tyler, Curator of the Keswick Mining Museum and author of eleven books on Lake District mining, is leading mine heritage walks this summer. If you need more details, please contact Ian at the museum (Otley Road Keswick, CA12 5LE or 017687 80055).

Sunday 1 June Tilberthwaite mines.
Park Tilberthwaite (7 miles)

Sunday 22 June Eagle Crag.
Park Patterdale church (7 miles, hard)

Sunday 6 July Greenside mine.
Park Glenridding LDNP (7 miles)

Sunday 3 August Dufton mines.
Park Dufton village (7 miles, hard)

Sunday 7 September Sandbeds mine.
Park Calebrake (6 miles)

Sunday 5 October Rigghead slate.
Park Grange village (6 miles)

Sunday 19 October Goldscope mine.
Park Littleton Bridge (6 miles)

All walks start at 10.30am, will take a minimum of 5 hours and are not suitable for unfit persons or children under 16 years. Boots or strong shoes must be worn. Waterproofs, spare clothing and packed lunch should be carried. Charge £6 per person.

Parys Mountain

According to the Anglesey Mining website, an agreement has been entered which could result in the mine being sold to Australian company Western Metals Ltd. This must mean that all the current potential new metal mine projects in the UK are either Australian owned or have Australian backing.

This must be better than a few years ago when there weren't any potential new metal mine projects in the UK!

Hopefully the current access to the above adit workings will remain.

Alasdair Neill.

Dragline Open Day

(Friends of the St Aidans BE 1150 Walking Dragline)

Come and see the largest preserved walking dragline excavator in Western Europe. You can; sit in the driver's seat, have a look around inside, see the 25 cubic yard bucket plus working models and displays.

All this for free, at St Aidans Opencast Coal Site, Swillington, Leeds, on

Saturday 14th June 2008

Saturday 13th September 2008

Sunday 14th September 2008

2.00pm 4.00pm

For more details, contact Paul Thompson on 07889 286634 (St Aidans Trust, Leeds City Council).

Books

Minerals of Northern England

Minerals of Northern England examines the geology, mining, collecting and collectors of minerals throughout Cumbria (formerly Cumberland and Westmorland), Co. Durham, Yorkshire, Cleveland and Northumberland. Minerals of Northern England contains an extensive gallery of full and half page photographs of individual specimens held in the collections of the Natural History Museum and National Museums Scotland. Each specimen has been selected for their aesthetic appeal or for their scientific, historical or other interest, and each photograph is accompanied by a brief mineralogical or historical explanation. A must for all mineralogists, professional and amateur mineral collectors and geologists.

Authors: R.F. Symes and B. Young "Paperback: c228 pages colour and b/w illustrations throughout "Co-published with: The Natural History Museum, London "Publication date: 20 March 2008 "ISBN 10: 1905267019 ISBN 13: 9781905267019 "Dimensions: 275 x 215mm

Price £30

<http://www.nms.ac.uk/mineralsofnorthernengland.aspx>

Don Borthwick

Gold Miner's Diary

Twelve years ago, the curator of Wanlockhead Museum Trust pressed me to prepare a reprint of *Gold in Britain*, but at the time, I had other projects in the pipeline. However, he did persuade me there was a need for a popular book on gold prospecting ... one which was economical and would appeal to the layman. I made a start, and then a familiar disaster struck the Museum - its future funding was in peril.

I shelved the partially-completed manuscript and turned my attention to other things, but always remembered that there was scope for a popular account of gold prospecting in Scotland. I looked out my first draft and found that it took six pages to announce the discovery of gold in Sutherland. Because it took three more pages before starting to recover gold, I scrapped the idea and started again. This time it worked.

Searches of the nineteenth century regional newspapers had provided eyewitness accounts of life on the Kildonan goldfield in 1869. When I augmented these reports with information from the Sutherland Estates' papers in the National Library of Scotland, I knew I had specific details relating to the adventurers who had taken part in the gold rush. Best of all were the records of William Murray, who came from Aberdeen and had worked as a gold miner from March until the end of November 1869.

The outcome is *Gold Miner's Diary : A year in the life of Mr William Murray* which has 24 pages, an attractive cover and includes more than 25 illustrations. By using one of the "printing on demand" services, I am now able to sell copies for £4.50, which includes postage.

Readers who wish to purchase a copy are invited to contact me by e-mail or post.

Ron Callender
36 Broadlake, Willaston, NESTON,
Cheshire CH64 2XB
finlaggan@tesco.net

Book Review

A Dangerous Place to Work! Women and Children of the Devon & Cornwall Mining Industries 1300 to 1970 by Lynne Mayers

Mining historians familiar with Lynne Mayers award-winning *Balmaidens* will find her latest book just as interesting and useful. This slimmer volume (108 pages) concentrates on the hazards associated with the extraction and processing of metals, clay and slate. There is also a chapter on gunpowder mills and the associated safety fuse manufacture: included are modern photographs of women working at Tuckingmill Fuse Factory.

The book contains a glossary, indexes, a bibliography and appendices with interview summaries for the 1842 Royal Commission Report on employment of women and children at mines. In addition to nineteenth and twentieth century photographs there are reproductions of nineteenth century engravings of copper, tin and arsenic processing.

Lynne has established a reputation for painstaking, well-documented research, but she also makes her subjects interesting. Particularly fascinating to me is her description of a woman assayer, dressed in black dress, white apron and

bonnet using a hares foot to **carefully** brush crushed samples. I **also enjoyed** picturing chemist Elizabeth Ashton **buying** and working a mine and then, **when tired** of all the effort, pulling down **the props** and putting an end to the mining **and the** processing.

A Dangerous Place to Work! **Women and Children of the Devon & Cornwall Mining Industries 1300 to 1970** is **published by** Blaize Bailey Books, available **from Lulu** or from Amazon, price £7.95. **ISBN 978-0-9556896-0-4.**

Sallie Bassham

And finally...

Forget the Taj Mahal and pyramids: Blaenavon is the place to visit

So said the newspaper headline **above a** half page photograph of the **headgear** and a miners statue at Blaenavon's **Big Pit**. Blaenavon's World Heritage **Site** status had obviously **intrigued the** journalist of The Guardian's **broadsheet** section of 26 March 2008.

Politicians and academics were **declaring** that South Wales Blaenavon **is more** important than Greece's **Acropolis**, France's Palace of Versailles and **India's** Taj Mahal. A five-year old girl, **visiting** Big Pit, said 'Its cool!'

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Apologies if your material was not included this time due to space restrictions.

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.

Lynne Johnson, The Croft, Hardraw, Hawes, DL8 3LZ.

lynne.johnson99@googlemail.com

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Visit our Website www.nmrs.co.uk

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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Its number is 326704