

Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter



nmrs.org.uk

November 2009

nmrs.org.uk

2010 – Celebrating 50 years of NMRS

As you know 2010 will be our 50th anniversary. This is a great achievement and proud moment in our illustrious history. To commemorate this “golden” event we have commissioned some souvenir badges to be sent out with the first newsletter of 2010 to all our paid up members. We are also offering them to family members. We realize many of you do not have the opportunity to attend field trips or our meetings and the badges are a “thank you” for your support over the years and we hope you enjoy wearing them.

They will, at the same time, hopefully, advertise our society. We appreciate it that some people may not want a badge and to that end, on the membership form enclosed with this newsletter, is a tick box for those NOT wanting to receive one.

Barbara Sutcliffe

*Celebrate our 50th Anniversary
throughout 2010*

nmrs.org.uk

Call for Papers

The NMRS will celebrate its 50-year Anniversary in 2010 and will be holding a Jubilee Conference at Reeth on 1-3rd October 2010; this will also include field trips.

Papers for the conference are being sought on any aspect of mining, quarrying or associated processes (as covered by the scope of the Society). The normal length of papers will be 30 minutes but there will be an opportunity for shorter contributions of 15 minutes describing current work.

It is intended to publish the papers as a special edition of British Mining and contributors will be expected to provide full manuscripts during September 2010.

If you think you may wish to present a paper, short contribution or poster display please send a title and summary of about 200 words to:

Dr Richard Smith,
New House, Spring Lane,
Cold Ash, Thatcham,
Berkshire. RG18 9PL

or preferably: rsmith6@btinternet.com

Acting Editor

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Would you please note that the deadline for inclusion with the February Newsletter is the

7th January, 2010

Submissions are welcomed that would be of interest to members of the NMRS. These can be forwarded to me as text/disc by post or you can email or telephone. If you require anything returning, please ask. Photographs, plans and drawings are acceptable as long as they can be reproduced in black and white.

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*Season Greetings and Good Health
throughout 2010*

Greenside Meet (Led by David Young)

25th July, 2009

After a week of rain, there was glorious sunshine for the Greenside meet. As we walked past miners' cottages to the main processing and smelting site; whenever we looked up to Striding Edge and Helvellyn, they were covered in the ant-like forms of walkers following each other closely along the edges and then standing in crowds near the summit cairn. There were fewer walkers interested in the mining remains.

As we ascended, we discussed the quarry, which we could see clearly on the north side of Birkhouse Moor, and the leat encircling the hill's eastern end. There was also a leat beside our path above Glenridding Beck; it is still stone-lined and in good condition. Higher up, pillars for the pipeline from Red Tarn line up with the concrete base of the 1891 power house. There is still a small, heavily silted reservoir behind the high dam under Catstycam; but Keppel Cove dam (which was replaced after a disastrous break in 1927) has been deliberately breached, so there is no reservoir there. Drill bits protrude from the concrete of the dam wall, and it still stands tall despite its walls being unbattered and distinctly sinuous. It was clear that the concrete had been poured in small sections and we wondered whether the waves in the dam wall were a result of it having moved since it was built, or whether the sequential shuttering had not been exactly lined up. Aiming away from the path and straight up hill, we passed more leats taking water round Raise towards the former reservoirs.

After a few yards on the Helvellyn ridge path (which is starting to resemble a motorway in width and the number of people on it), we aimed east, past the ski lift, for the old smelt mill chimney. Heavy-metal tolerant plants were noted and then we turned to discussing the structure and use of the flue. The lowest part of the flue ran up steep ground and very little remains; but higher up the flue is so damaged that it is difficult to tell whether it was arched or capped with large lintel stones. In the mid-section, the flue is built into the hillside and has a stone wall on only one side; the width varies, but is so wide in some places that lintel capping would have been difficult. At a couple of points there are bricks, as well as stones, and we wondered if there had been condensers here. At a couple of points, water seems to have been led away from the flue towards a reservoir, and a stone-lined leat crosses the flue. Having seen some wood in the ruined flue, we hypothesised a wooden top and; finally, David found a complete section of flue under an old path – it was indeed roofed in wood.

Near former levels, high above the beck, the land had been terraced by the miners and David identified a wheel pit, leats, various buildings and processing floors. We crossed by a modern bridge to look at the revegetation on the slime tips. The main site, near the Youth Hostel, has been so thoroughly cleared that it is difficult to interpret, even when contrasting it with old photographs. I chickened out of the underground trip – sorry David – but it was extremely wet after a week's rain!

It was a very enjoyable day out and the leats have been added to my lists of places to which I would like to take a GPS – especially the one crossing the flue. These are sites I have walked several times, yet I saw new things and learned much. Thank you to David for a fascinating trip, for his research into the area and for stimulating ideas about how things used to look and the ways they worked.

Sallie Bassham

NMRS & PDMHS meet on Grassington Moor

It started in March of last year. Attending the AGM at Reeth had impressed me so much, my wife and I returned for the week between Christmas and New Year. We had glorious weather of sun, mist, snow and frost, and managed to traverse a clutch of dales. By this time, the society's committee members were agonising about Grassington Moor and, suitably motivated, Margaret and I paid a one-day visit, tackling some very serious photography in the process. Of course, the moor is vast and we later digested that very authoritative work on the subject, *British Mining No 46* by Mike Gill. Now we were ready for the joint meet.



Assembly at the 12th century church of St Michael and all Angels in Linton

The church at Linton was the muster point. We cheated by staying the night before and managed to capture some lovely landscapes and waterfalls lit by the setting sun. At 10am on Saturday, the place was

transformed - parked cars, colourful anoraks, discussion groups of hosts and guests, cups of coffee, delicious chunks of cake, our first printed handout and informed commentary from Mike Gill on the graves of miners. By eleven, this assembly had transferred to Yarnbury for a briefing before a big group of people walked off in an easterly direction. Margaret and I followed.



Tutorial on the significance of the meerstones of Grassington Moor

Sallie was now delivering the commentary and we looked at whim sites, at shafts, at ponds, walked along a dam and paused at the first meer stone for an interpretation. We moved onto a location, which was probably known as "Beever's" ... and then we were rumbled.

Unknown to me, I was supposed to be leading walk No S4 and our sojourn came to an abrupt end. We were despatched back to Yarnbury. A roll call of me, Margaret and Janis confirmed we were all present and correct, and in persistent, driving rain, we exercised our prerogative to detour for an inspection of Davis' shaft. We gazed at the evidence of 18th and 19th century activity and then pushed on. When I realized Janis knew more than I did, I appointed her leader and the outing improved at this point. We entered the next field, intending to search for the "henge" but Janis was already explaining its layout and configuration.



A welcome sight - shelter and refreshments, and a chance to compare notes.

As we each attempted plausible explanations for the adjacent stones, Peter's campervan materialised. The choice was easy - a wet field containing an ancient ditch, or shelter from the rain and a drink of hot chocolate, or coffee, or tea, and more chunks of cake? Refreshed, but still standing in damp clothes, we claimed our packed lunches from a relieved Barbara; "I wondered who was missing," she said, doling out our quota of rolls, flapjack, and a box of apple juice.

Sallie had instructed, "Bring a change of socks," and we were now on our third pair. When I changed into dry trousers, a party of twenty people passed the car, waving to us. It was Peter's party. "Let's follow them," I suggested to Margaret, and fifteen minutes later, we began to overhaul small, moving dots on the skyline. We toiled up Old Moor Lane, then down Old Moor Lane and rounded a bend. When we reached the Out Moor, there was much to see and photograph; leats, dams and beautifully constructed portals provided evidence of activity in a bygone age.



Some of the moor's features are so extensive that two exposures are stitched together to make one decent photograph. (see the end of this report for the full image)

The small dots had vanished but as we continued upwards, small dots reappeared on the horizon. The dots clumped around "the condenser" and then shot away to the west, before returning to the High Grinding Mill. At this point, we tagged along, listened to the commentary, and realised we were back with Sallie's all day tour, from which we had been ejected some hours earlier.



Close to the paths, ample evidence remains of the industrious skills of the miners.

We enjoyed the commentaries at the High Grinding Mill and gazed at the remains of a huge waterwheel. As if by magic, the sun burst out, like a stage set, illuminating the far distance as a backdrop to the huge chimney, which dominates the moor.



The chimney that dominates Grassington Moor, taken against a back drop of the late afternoon sunshine.

Sallie's plan was to continue further out onto the Out Moor, so Margaret and I took our leave. Soon the small dots on the skyline disappeared altogether as we concentrated on serious photography of Grassington Moor bathed in sunshine. It was time for tea back at Yarnbury, and we took the chance to return by the Duke's New Road. As a result, we saw many new features to photograph and within forty minutes, we were supping tea, awaiting the return of Peter's party.

At this stage, I did not know who represented Northern Mine and who had come from the Peak District. It did not matter. It had been a well-organised day and we had "all mucked in". In spite of the weather, everyone was in good spirits and, under the canopy of Peter's campervan, the chatter demonstrated the wealth of experience in mining history that had made our joint meet a success.

I had to face the journey back to Cheshire, but I hope someone acknowledged Sallie's efforts and hard work in making sure the day was a success - rain or no rain. Before I departed, and thanks to Sallie, I was able to pull on my fourth pair of warm, dry socks and experience that feeling of sheer luxury.

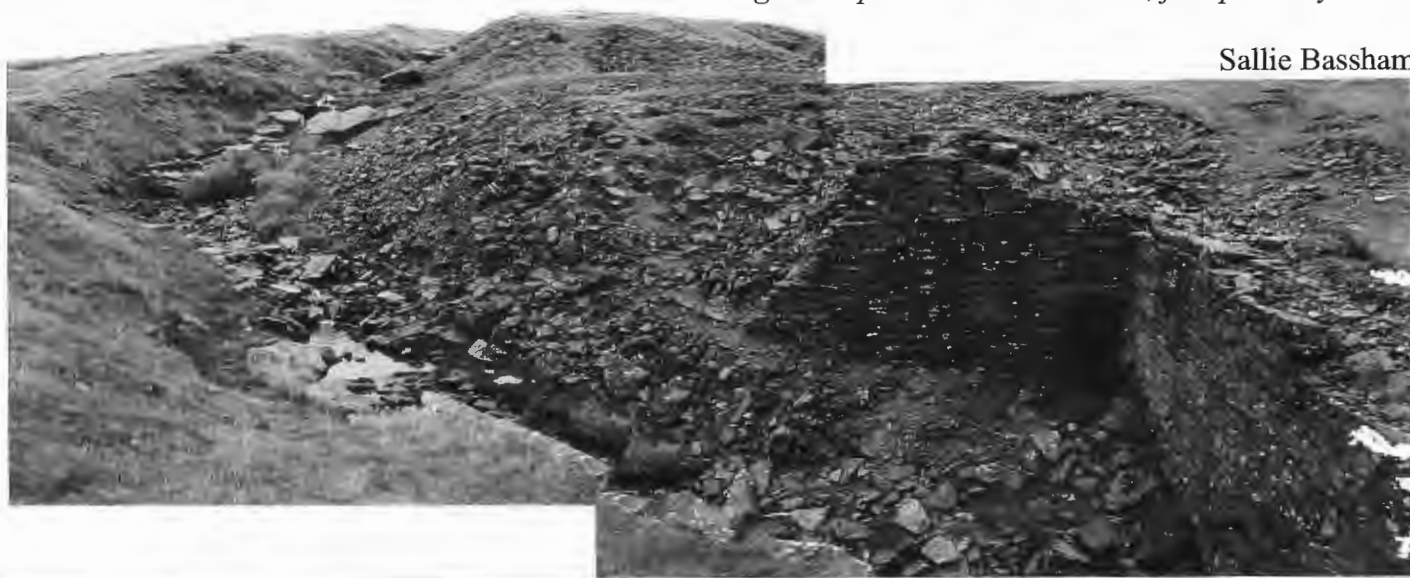
Ron Callender

Footnote

"The meet was mentioned in *The Yorkshire Post* in which Sue Woodcock writes a column every week. Sue farms at Mire House, which is by the road from Grassington to Yarnbury. and is also a member of St Michael's Church at Linton. When she knew we were coming, volunteered to help with teas and coffees at the church and also with anything we needed at Yarnbury. Sue mentions particularly her pleasure at meeting Mike Gill, because she has read some of his books."

Mike says of "..... her pleasure at meeting me - well it takes all types! She, at least, got the Society's name right and provided us with extra, free publicity"

Sallie Bassham



The Autumn Meeting ...

... has a nice ring to it, especially if you are meeting in the Yorkshire Dales, but this year the weather was miserable. It did not affect the turnout and many members from near (15 minutes) and far (five hours) received a good welcome at the Dales Countryside Museum. It was a posh building, and the receptionists gave me a pass for the car-park, so my arrival started on a good note.

Better was to follow because Sallie Bassham was hosting a buffet, which had been prepared by the lady who served the comestibles at Linton Church and on Grassington Moor. Once more, we had her selection of decent sandwiches, a range of drinks and the chance to gorge on the delicious sponge slices, with a refill if necessary.

Sallie made a brief announcement at 12.45pm, "The Honorary Treasurer is on his way; we will start with television !"

There was no dissent and we enjoyed exploring a mine in Teesdale, which Tony Fretwell had completed 22 years ago ... but you would not have known. It was done well, with careful and adequate illumination, and the commentary was unpretentious, but provided good explanations as and when required. As the credits rolled, Tim Cook arrived from Banbury (South of England !) and our President took the chair for the formal part of the meeting.

We approved the minutes of the AGM, we tussled with the matters arising, we heard about the website, the Treasurer broke the bad news with warm humour and cold facts and we agreed to increase the subscriptions. Publications in the editor's pipeline and books in Barbara's sales window are doing well, and in a touching ceremony (unrecorded by camera), David Neal presented the President with "passwords" in two sealed envelopes. Some of us debated the merits of digitising valuable material, and with justification, David asked for volunteers to relieve him of two jobs, "Take your pick," he said, "Newsletter ? Web-site ? Membership ?"

Sallie praised her colleagues and summarised a new code for reporting malpractices on Grassington Moor. We all clapped our hands to show approval ... and blue skies and sunshine replaced the rain as we treated ourselves to a tea break and another chunk of cake.

But there was more. Malcolm Street presented new and original research on Greenhow Hill - where did the miners come from and why? With confidence, he presented his research by projecting family trees of specific miners and extrapolating their relationships, but he could only speculate on why they had travelled great distances to work in the mine. "Would you like to see some pictures," he asked, explaining he had adopted a new approach with a digital camera. The plan was so simple it was inspired; he took an image every fifty to seventy metres in a tour throughout the workings. His lighting requirements were modest and he was able to check the pre-view screen before moving to his next shot. "Better than waiting ten days for duff results," said Malcolm.

The session ended. The President thanked everyone for the success of our Autumn meeting ... and Tim Cook faced another five hours of driving through a clogged-up M6 motorway.

Ron Callender
(three hours of clogged up motorway)

Library News

Thank you to Alan Hawkins for a copy of "Electric Winders: A Manual on the Design, Construction, Application and Operations of Winding Engines and Mine Hoists (now I understand better how the conical drum at Ecton worked); to Ray Fairbairn for a copy of "Lead Mines in the Manor of Kinniside" by T.M. Banks, C. Nichol and D.G. Bridge, from the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society XCIV, 1994; to Mike Gill for the Colliery Guardian's "Guide to the Coalfields" for 1964 and 1967 and to Barbara Sutcliffe for "Down to Earth" Issue 68. Finally, to David Neal for two large volumes of American Institute of Mining Engineers papers and Dennis' Metallurgy of the Non-ferrous Metals.

I bought a copy of CATMHS The Mine Explorer Volume 6; it is an excellent read - See Mike Gill's review in the August Newsletter. So I have ordered a copy for the library and taken the opportunity to buy the back copies missing from the library. We now have all six volumes of *The Mine Explorer*.

Sallie Bassham

Subscriptions for 2010

These become due from the 1st January and enclosed is your Renewal Form. This only needs checking for your name and address details together with an email address if you wish to be included with occasional mail outs from the Society.

The case for a subscription increase of £2.00, the first for 15 years, was made by Tim Cook our Treasurer in the August Newsletter. At the Annual General Meeting the Treasurer's proposal was accepted by a majority vote, there being no dissenters.

You will also find a Bank *Standing Order Form* for those of you who wish to pay their subs this way. Just complete your name and address details, the date of the first payment and the amount to pay. Hand or send this part to your bank ensuring **they include the reference shown**. The same applies if you manage your account on line - please include your reference otherwise we will not know who has paid!

Once this has been done you will never have to remember to pay your subs, write a cheque or buy a stamp again. Those of you who currently pay by STO will need to give your bank new instructions because of the increase. Please use the new form to include the reference. Thank you.

David R Neal
Membership Secretary

2010 AGM

Next year's AGM will be held on Saturday 6 March at the Village Institute in Gisburn. There will be more details in the next Newsletter and a booking form.

Gisburn has been chosen in response to requests to "Go West". It is situated at the junction of the A59 (Skipton/Clitheroe) and A682 (Burnley/Long Preston) roads. Coming along the A59, turn south at the west end of Gisburn, drive along the A682 for a few yards and turn left into a car park. Coming north from Burnley, the Village Institute is on your right before you get to the T-junction.

As well as the road-side car park, there is also space for a few cars at the back of the Institute where the main door is.

Sallie Bassham

Proposed change to the Constitution

At present, the first sentence of paragraph 13 of the Constitution reads "The Society Officers shall be a President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, Recorder, Librarian and Public Relations Officer." I propose that this be changed to:-

*"The Society Officers shall be a President,
two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer,
Editor, Recorder, Librarian,
Public Relations Officer
and up to three other Committee members."*

I hope that this extra flexibility will encourage people to join the Committee without having to commit themselves to a specific post.

Sallie Bassham

Committee Nominations for 2010

Please find attached, amongst everything else, the form for Committee Nominations 2010 that needs to be sent to the Honorary Secretary at least 28 days before the AGM which is on the 6th March, 2010.

This is the current Committee:-

President Sallie Bassham
Vice President Barbara Sutcliffe
Junior Vice President Vacant
Treasurer Tim Cook
Secretary Ron Callender
Editor Richard Smith
Recorder Mike Gill
Librarian Sallie Bassham
PRO (Newsletter Editor) Lynne Johnson

Co-opted (Non Committee)
Membership Secretary David Neal
Website Administrator David Neal

Meets for 2010

Thank you to everyone who has agreed to lead a meet next year. There will be details of times and meeting venues on the Meets/Membership Card and in next year's Newsletters.

Saturday, 10 April Beldi Hill.

If we can get permission, we will visit Plate level and the dressing floors; otherwise we will visit Landy level and New level (if people want to go underground) or the smelt mill and the workings behind Crackpot Hall (if people prefer a surface walk). This will be similar to the 2000 meet at Beldi Hill

Wednesday, 12 May Boulby Potash Mine.

Thank you to Neil Rowley for offering the chance to go down this working mine. There is a upper limit of 8 people; but a reserve list will be held and a second date booked if there is enough demand. Please let Sallie know soon if you want to come, so that the necessary details can be arranged with Boulby mine. sbassham@nildram.co.uk or 015 2424 1851

Saturday, 22 May Skelton Park Pit.

Thank you to Chris Twigg and Simon Chapman for organising this. We will see a combined winding/pumping house which had a twin cylinder horizontal winder, a Schiel fan house, an 1880s engine house which is still roofed, workshops, provender house for horse feed and much more – see the next Newsletter for a more detailed description. Please let Chris Twigg (chris.twigg@ntlworld.com) or 01642 408640 know if you are coming.

Saturday 12 June Coniston Copper Mines.

Thank you to Peter Fleming for agreeing to lead a combined underground and surface meet at Coniston.

A harness or web belt and cow tails will be needed; so please let Peter know well in advance if you don't have these, as he has some spares. He can also lend a hard hat and light to anyone who doesn't have these.

Underground insurance is essential; but Peter can arrange for day membership of CATMHS if you don't have it.

Please give Peter plenty of notice if you want to come, so he can make all the arrangements

July Gambleside and other East Lancs Coal Mines.

Thank you to Clive Seal for agreeing to lead this. The date and more details will be in a future Newsletter.

August Rampgill Level, Nenthead.

Thank you to Paul Dollery for volunteering to lead this meet. A famous level – if you are new to the Society, this is an easy underground trip with many fascinating features and not to be missed.

The date and more details will be in a future issue of the Newsletter.

NMRS Publication News

Thank you to Lynne Mayers and Dr Stephen Moreton who have donated previous NMRS publications back to us for recycling to our members. These have now been re-sold and the money added to our coffers. This gesture is much appreciated and anyone else prepared to offer their old publications back to us, either now, or in the future please get in touch with me. We are prepared to help with carriage costs if necessary.

At the moment I have the following good second-hand copies available with normal member's discounts available but please either telephone first on 01282 614615 or better still you can e-mail me on mansemins@btopenworld.com to ascertain availability before sending on any cheque made payable to NMRS. Thank you.

- BM35 Goginan Mines £5
- BM38 History of the Manor & Lead Mines of Marrick, Swaledale o.o.p. £9
- BM43 Memoirs now o.o.p. £10
- BM50 Memoirs now o.o.p. £10
- BM51 The Grinton Mines £5
- BM52 Great Orme Mines o.o.p. new copy £12
- BM53 The Arkengarthdale Mines £6
- BM54 Lead Mine Waggons £4
- BM58 Coal Mines of East Lancs £6
- BM57 Memoirs now o.o.p. £10
- BM59 Memoirs £5
- BM61 Memoirs now o.o.p. £10

I also have some NEW signed copies of Mashamshire Collieries available at £12.00 each

Barbara Sutcliffe
NMRS Publications
The Old Manse, 93 Halifax Rd.,
Nelson, Lancs.
BB9 0EQ

NAMHO News

Following interviews in October, NAMHO is delighted to announce that Phil Newman has accepted the post of Project Officer to work on the Research Framework for the Archaeology of English Extractive Industries – see previous Newsletters for details about the work. Phil comes with excellent qualifications and wide, relevant experience; he will start work in November. Part of his job is organising regional seminars in 2010, so that local mining history groups and individuals will have the opportunity to make an input to the Research Framework. Seminar details will be published as soon as they are known.

This year was the thirtieth anniversary of the

formation of NAMHO (NMRS was a founder member). There was a special colour edition of the NAMHO Newsletter. Most of its news is from South West England, but there is information about new mining archives for the North East – mostly coal mines. The Durham Mining Museum is at www.dmm.org.uk and the North East England Mining Archive and Research Centre is at www.neemarc.com and has a physical presence at the University of Sunderland's Murray Library.

Sallie Bassham

Friends of Killhope

The Friends of Killhope have just produced their seventy-fourth Newsletter. Its interesting articles include one by Angus Oliver on Water Engines: early examples were used at Allenheads and at Allendale.

There is also an interesting article by Ray Fairbairn on Wolsey and lead smelting and on Thomas Cromwell and the decline of the lead industry. Standard history texts seem to have missed these links.

Wolsey, as Bishop of Durham, wanted to increase his income from lead by reducing the smelting costs. He and Cromwell initiated smelting using coal instead of timber. Much money was spent on building and developing a furnace house at Gateshead. Sufficient lead ore was provided to make forty fotheres of lead; but the whole scheme was an expensive failure. One problem was that the furnace would not hold the metal which ran out on every side.

Before monastery buildings were destroyed, the amount of lead was estimated. So much lead was gained that the market was flooded, the price of lead dropped and it became uneconomical to mine lead ore.

Perhaps some mines that were reported to be nearly exhausted, simply could not operate at a profit at this time.

Sallie Bassham

Bill's a guiding light when it comes to passing on history of the mines

When visiting Cornwall we always purchase a copy of "The Cornishman" and in September were pleased to see the above headlines. The Bill referred to is Bill Lakin, one of our members. In 1994 after retiring from teaching he and his wife moved to Pendeen. There he became involved with Geevor Mine, working as a guide showing visitors round. In 2000 Bill became a trustee and chair of the registered charity Pendeen Community Heritage. Since 2001 he has been working full-time in a voluntary capacity both as chair and chief executive. The article went on to say that in November Bill will be 65 when he will relinquish his day to day work on the site, now much improved, though he hopes to remain as trustee. His wife, too, has been involved in a voluntary capacity.

It is so good to hear of people giving so much to others

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and perhaps Bill's example could inspire some more of our members to help our society in whatever way they think possible. Some quotes from Bill from the article,

"Volunteering has given me a second career which I could construct as I wanted"

"It has probably given me more personal satisfaction than anything else in my working life"

"I have made more good friends than in any other period of my life"

Thank you, Bill.

Barbara Sutcliffe

From the Archives

George Harvey writes:-

The August 2009 issue of the NMRS newsletter included an article about the recovery of a waterwheel and pump from the Barjarg limestone mine in 1974 and asked what happened to it.

I can confirm that it did eventually find a good home, it has been restored and is now on display in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh (or at least, it was on display a few years ago when my father and I went to see it).

My father, Bill Harvey, was one of the group involved in extracting the waterwheel and you can see a picture of the restored wheel at:-

http://futuremuseum.co.uk/Collection.aspx/quarrying/object/water_wheel_and_pump_from_dumfries

In a similar vein John Compton, formerly the Curator of Engineering & Industry National Museums of Scotland, writes:-

There's no mystery about the Barjarg waterwheel - it's on display in the Museum of Scotland, in Edinburgh, on the 3rd floor not far from the Caprington atmospheric engine. In 1996 I had the pleasure (?) of designing a wooden support for it, based on photographs of the underground wheel in Ystrad Einion lead mine in Artist's Valley near Machynlleth.

When SIHS was formed by a merger of the Scottish IA Society and the Scottish Society for the Preservation of Historic Machinery (SSPHM), there was no way the new society could take responsibility for the latter's huge collections. They were divided between Glasgow Museums, Summerlee Industrial Heritage Park and the National Museums of Scotland

I wasn't in the post when the division was done, but I took over responsibility for SSPHM's files and notes. The wheel was chosen to represent water power in the story of Scotland's developing industry, mainly because it was small enough to be fitted in. Such are the limitations of museum displays!

I hope this solves what appears to have become a mystery

Mike Gill also made these comments:-

D.P. was indeed the late Derrick Platt. He was then working on the proto-type RB211 Rolls-Royce aero engine. Derrick might have been looking forward to the 3 day week, I was in the middle of the coal strike - working all hours on essential safety work - at Frickley colliery. Still, it was better than the 1972 strike, when we fired a set of Lancashire boilers for seven or eight weeks.

Around that time (the late) Mike Dickinson and myself produced a Newsletter to help DP out. They were duplicated and so prone to lots of waste - with ink smudges etc. We compiled a 'special' grotty edition from the wastage for Derrick and proudly sent it off to him as an example of what we had achieved. Result - one panicky phone call!

Not sure about the "Magnificent Seven", but prime movers in the removal of the waterwheel project would probably have Bill Harvey and Geoff Downs-Rose - now both dead.

A Report from the NC&MRS Newsletters Volume 1 1963

Swaledale Mines

A report by A.E.Cannell

Brandy Bottle Mine

The main incline was descended to the half way take-off level and an exploration was carried out. The forward level enters extremely unstable ground at about 150 yards from the junction and the south branch, some 80 yards long, fares no better. The main incline continues down from the haulage shaft at a slightly steeper angle for another 100 fathoms before ending at a deep pool. To the left the water quickly meets the roof. Forward, it gives access to the vein in about 12 yards. Unfortunately, progress is stopped at 5 yards by a roof fall. Before returning up the incline, an estimate of the depth was made, this, in the absence of instrumentation, was made out to be approximately 250 feet.

On the way out, two rather complex roof systems were investigated. The larger of the two eventually communicated with the rise above the main haulage shaft and the other, in addition to being parallel to the main incline, also communicated with the second incline. The way through, however, is now blocked by a roof fall. The second incline can be descended from daylight for 46 yards to the other side of this roof fall"

This event occurred 46 years ago and if you turn to Page 11 you can read about one of our members who, this year with others, was still shoring up roof falls in Brandy Bottle Mine.

I wonder how different the incline looks today compared to 1963. Do you have any stories or memories of this mine? If so, please contact the Editor.

David R Neal

A look at some Mining Tokens

When your editor asked me to do an article on mining tokens I was at a bit of a loss for although I have a good working knowledge of the token world, specialising in Essex, I did not have an extensive knowledge of the mining scene. I did realise however that I could in fact impart some knowledge which may be of interest the reader.

So this is a guide with a few examples. The term "Token" refers to any disc like object either metallic or other material that is not regal coinage. Sometimes they carry a denomination. Their functions are multi-purpose, and have, particularly since early Victorian times, been used for box deposit receipts, co-op dividends, games, transport tickets and communion tokens. In the mining industry the tokens acted as records of attendance, pay and lamp usage.

The British mining tokens more often than not were used in the coal industry and their use is variable. The most common function is a simple system of checking that miners had returned from their shift. Each miner was issued two tokens (or tallies) each bearing the owners number. One was hung on a board as you went to work and one when you returned. A similar system was used for lamps. Interestingly they were always made of spark proof material such as brass thus reducing the chance of igniting methane if the tally was dropped.

By way of the nature of coal mining, washing is essential after work and the token illustrated below is for the pit head baths at Gresford Colliery, Denbighshire.

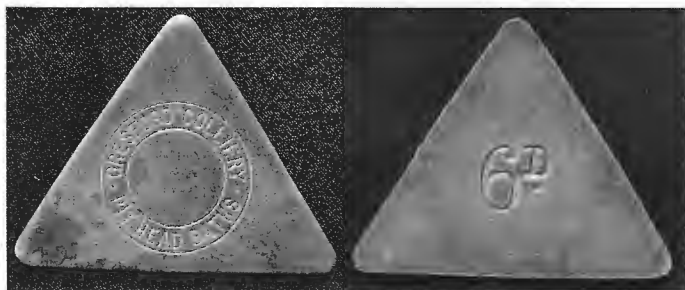


Figure 1

Pit head bath token issued by the Gresford Colliery. It is made of brass and measures 40.0 mm along the base and bears a value of 6d (2.5p).

(c1920s From the Bob Williams Collection)

There is an excellent work describing earlier mining tokens by Michael Finlay titled "The mining and related tokens of West Cumbria". These date from around the early 18th C (published by Plain Books 2006, ISBN 187247701-1, Limited edition of 500).

It might come as a surprise but Essex does actually have some mining tokens. In the early 1700s the copperas (iron pyrite) trade existed. The copperas weathers out of the London Clay which is exposed at



Figure 2

Token used at the Lowther Colliery, Whitehaven, Cumbria. Copper, 23.1 mm. Early 18th C.

Walton on the Naze. It became an important mineral resource producing the oxidation products sulphuric acid and black iron oxides. The former was used to help produce superphosphates from phosphatic nodules found in Hertfordshire. The latter was the only source of a black dye used in the cloth industry.

The monograph published privately by W.H. George, titled *Copperas and Copperas tokens of Essex and Kent*, describes in detail the trade. Some of the tokens are counter stamped 1736 and were issued by John Kidby, earlier examples of the same token but not dated were issued around 1700.



Figure 3

Token issued to pay pickers who retrieved pyrite from the foreshore at Walton on the Naze. Copper, 23.1 mm.

If you want to stretch you collecting area to South America then the Chile nitrate industry have some interesting examples. These appear at irregular time intervals on Ebay (go to 'Tokens USA exnumia' and then go to 'Tokens other').

If you have or know of anything relating to Essex I would be pleased to hear from you. If you have any general token enquiries, I will do my best to answer them.

Stuart Adams

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Roughton Gill & The Mines of the Caldbeck Fells by Ian Tyler

I had eagerly awaited this latest book from Ian, one of our members, as I had spent a great deal of time in my youth in this area, weekends and holidays, camping up Roughton Gill. I was not disappointed and found the book very readable and informative.

The mining history of the Caldbeck Fells is traced from the coming of the German miners in the 1500s right through to the baryte miners of Potts Gill Mine which closed in 1966. All the mines of the Northern Fells, such as Driggieth, Sandbeds, Silver Gill, Mexico, Ruthwaite, Longlands and Red Gill plus many others are explained in detail. A number of anecdotes are included adding more social and local history interest, and all very readable.

Also included in the 320pp are over 160 b/w photographs and plans. Perhaps the quality of some are disappointing but many have not been seen before in print. There is also some original artwork from the author. This book, very wisely, is in hard back and has been dedicated to the late Jean Tyler and it is in her honour Ian completed the project initiated before her untimely death in 2007. She would have been proud of her husband.

To help the reader there are four pages of a glossary of terms and the bibliography is extensive. There are listings (although not complete) of the mines and workers of the Caldbeck Fells, arranged under the mines mentioned, along with dates. It is obvious to the reader that the book has been written by an enthusiast with a wealth of experience and knowledge now recorded for posterity.

The book is available at the Keswick Museum shop or by mail order priced at £20 plus part postage £2.50. If asked Ian will sign copies before mailing. Cheques to be made out to Keswick Mining Museum

Barbara Sutcliffe

Old Alston by Peter Wilkinson

The first paragraph of the Foreword gives a good overview of the book:

Most of the material selected for this book relates directly to the town of Alston, the most important settlement on Alston Moor and originally a major service centre for the lead industry of the North Pennine orefield.

The research has examined the structure and composition of the town, looking at its houses, shops and community buildings. While including much historical background information, most of the detail covers the 100 year period 1830-1930. More recent data has been included if relevant and when available.

Although a location, date and streets, brief description are always given, and some text relates only to the accompanying photograph, in other cases it is expanded to include matters not connected to the image shown. Details are sometimes provided of features which can be seen in much enlarged scanned digital images, but are not obvious at lower magnifications.

Where no reliable dates are available for photos, approximations are given based on factors such as dress style, street scenery and business ownership. Generally the text is presented in a shortened form to give as much information possible in the limited space available.

As you would expect it follows Peter's usual high standard of scholarship and attention to detail.

96pp 210 x 277mm

Stenlake Publishing Ltd £13.95

Don Borthwick

Mining in a Medieval Landscape:- The Royal Silver Mines of the Tamar Valley

With this Newsletter you will receive a flier from the University of Exeter Press regarding this book they have recently published. Written by Stephen Rippon, Peter Claughton and Chris Smart. NMRS Members can receive a discount of £5 using the form if it is received by the University of Exeter Press before 31st March 2010. Why not treat yourself to an early Christmas present?

Barbara Sutcliffe

Morley's Heritage Weekend

As part of this celebration, Hazel and I did a display on local coal mining in Morley Town Hall. We developed aspects of Jim Thorp's work to emphasise the importance of coal mining to the town and important developments which were made there. I had also redrawn the plan from the Mines Inspector's Report on the 1872 explosion, and superimposed it on a modern map of the town. This caught people's attention because the seat of the explosion, on Andrews haulage roads, was under Morrison's car park, immediately behind the town hall.

As well as listing the horses that were killed, we also showed that, because the growing town was sucking in people, only one of the 34 men killed was a local. People seemed interested in what we were showing, and Jim sold five of his copies of **BM87 - Coal Mining in Morley**. I would like to thank Hazel and her mum, as well as Jim, for overseeing the display.

Mike Gill

LED

Like David Neal (Newsletter, August 2009) I too have recently ditched a geriatric Oldham battery and moved to LED lighting in my headset. My new setup comes as a package from Roy Fellows (Lighting) and conjoins an Oldham headset containing two LEDs with a small lightweight Li-ion battery giving the option of light outputs at several levels from 75 to 500 lumen (sic).

I have no connection whatsoever with this product and equally I think it fantastic. Details at ledcaplamps.com

David James

Glebe Mines Ltd

A mineral processor has received almost £40,000 in fines and costs for causing a thick wave of mud to flow through a small village, leading to the devastating pollution of Peak District waters.

Glebe Mines Limited, which operates Cavendish Mill at Stoney Middleton, pleaded guilty on the 12 March 2009, to two charges of polluting the Stoke Brook and River Derwent, both an important source of drinking water supply. The charges related to two separate incidents in January and August 2007.

The first incident caused a river of water and mud to surge through the Peak District village of Stoney Middleton and seriously affected the aquatic life in and around the Stoke Brook, the River Derwent, the River Trent and a local nature reserve, which is home to a number of protected species. The second polluted the Stoke Brook, the River Derwent and the Hawkenedge Sough.

At Chesterfield Magistrates, the company was fined £22,000 and ordered to pay £16,397.16 in costs. The charges were brought by the Environment Agency under the Water Resources Act 1991.

A full report can be found on www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news/105312.aspx

Mining in Northumberland

According to the Hexham Courant of 4 September 2009, UK Coal intends to submit a planning application for surface coal mining at Hoodsclose near Whittonstall in Tynedale. The National Coal Board carried out a drilling programme in the 1970s and plans for extraction were submitted in 1978 and in 1984.

The present proposal would create at least 50 jobs for around seven years. As part of an environmental assessment, archaeologists from Durham University have started digging a series of shallow trenches to determine whether evidence exists of "culturally important history".

Sallie Bassham

Brandy Bottle Incline

To settle the rumours flying around the Internet about Brandy Bottle Incline. Is it blocked? Is it open? Well, I can tell you it was blocked but it is now open!

It was 14th March this year that two members of our mining group heard the rumour that Brandy Bottle was blocked. What a blow after all that work we had put in rebuilding the twin adits over the winter of 2006/2007 – See Newsletter August 2008 – the through trip was lost!



Archie Meadowcroft inspecting the work

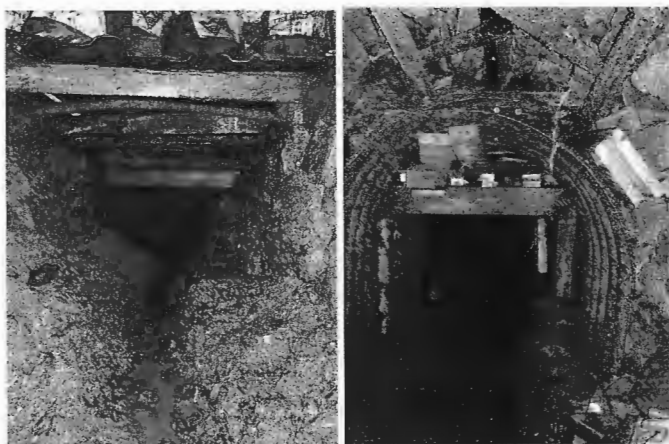
Thursday March 19th found ten members at Brandy Bottle and they discovered that the rumour was true, blocked about 42 yards down. Nothing was done that night except to take a look at the fall and discuss the situation. The general consensus was that the fall was in the area of the "Bad" where it was necessary to crawl under and over rails and hoops in a previously collapsed area, through a shale dome, before dropping down into the Incline again.



Access to the top of the Dig

The thought was that another lump of shale had peeled off the "outby" end of the chamber. This was confirmed the following week when two brave, na, foolhardy members went up the Hard level, along the Black Cross Cut and finally up the Brandy Bottle Incline to view the "back" of the fall.

Contact was soon made as they were about 18" above the roof of the Incline and a hole was made through through the top of the fall, much to the relief of the two inside. At least they would not have to make the return trip. It turned out the fall was not a big one but the main concern was to prevent it happening again. The shale chamber above the fall made it easy to work. It was decided not only to clear the muck from the latest fall but to tidy up from the previous ones.



Looking "Inby" down the Incline

"Outby" end of Dig with old metal bracing c1960s

Work started from both ends and at the same time, the side walls were cleared back to sound walling and then rebuilt to springing height with stout lengths of Larch, 4 feet long and 8" square. These were laid across on top of the new walls with lengths of sheet piling on top of them, muck from the fall/incline was bagged up in plastic bags and piled up on top of the

"new roof" of the incline. The bulk of these bags were stacked against the shale at either end of the chamber, as buttresses, to try and stabilise them.



The "Trap Door" Frame

The work continued over the next eight weeks working towards the middle, when the gap between the two ends was down to three feet a heavy duty frame with a trap door in it, was put in place. This allowed more muck to be placed above leaving only a small 18" hole for the last person to get out. We did not want to leave anybody up there!! The hole was covered with stout 3 x 2 inch batons laid on edge, filling the hole completely.

With a bit of luck the "Through Trip" will be possible for some time to come.

Mason Scarr

Recorder for the Yordale Mine and Cave Group

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