



*President Sallie Bassham doing the honours
at the NMRS 50th Anniversary*

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our 50th Anniversary weekend such a success. On the Friday evening, I arrived from London to find everything organised and running smoothly, with the Memorial Hall at Reeth full of cheerful chatter and members drinking coffee and eating home-made cake. Robert White started the lectures with his key-note presentation on mining in the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) illustrated with slides of his fascinating aerial photographs: he was

followed by other interesting contributions on mining in Yorkshire and elsewhere. Thank you also to Robert for arranging YDNP sponsorship towards the costs of the weekend. Since the lectures are all reproduced in *British Mining*, I won't summarise the contents; but just say that the quality and variety were superb. The audience clearly found the talks interesting, and there were lively question and answer sessions. Thank you to all the speakers and to Alan Mills for organising the technical necessities and to Peter Pearson for doing the administration and registration on the weekend.

There was a separate room for trade stands and for refreshments – the fresh cream profiteroles were a special treat. We are grateful to the people of Reeth for an excellent lunch and for a birthday cake iced with the Society's logo. The Saturday sessions were followed by champagne and cake in the Reeth Museum. Thank you to Helen for her hospitality and for co-ordinating the arrangements locally. In the evening, we met at the Grinton Bridge Hotel for dinner – another fine example of Yorkshire hospitality and cooking. The after dinner speaker was John Hopkinson, a former President of the Society. He started with a serious reference to the Chilean miners, who at that time had not been brought safely to the surface following the rock fall in their mine. Then John spoke with humour and interest of his own involvement in mining and in the Society. He finished with a toast to all

Editor

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

9th January, 2011

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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volunteers.

On the Sunday, the fine weather deserted us; but the centre of Reeth was crowded with Society members in waterproofs and carrying umbrellas. Thank you to Tim Laurie, Ian Spencely and Helen Bainbridge for interesting walks.

All in all, it was a fitting celebration of the Society's first 50 years, and much enjoyed by those who attended. Especial thanks are due to Richard Smith who organised the lecture programme and to Barbara Sutcliffe for co-ordinating all the varied parts of the weekend.

Sallie Bassham

New Members



The Society extends a warm welcome to the following who have joined our ranks since August:-

J. Lawson	Tyne and Wear
A. Benfield	Leeds
B. Gibson & Family	Pontefract
D. Sables	Lampeter

Library Report

Thank you to those who have donated a range of interesting items recently. Ivor Brown has given the library recent copies of "Mining Magazine" and other current publications including "Oil-Shale" from the Oil Shale Information Centre. He has also given two reports on mining in New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century; these provide insights into the New Zealand ore fields, but also the techniques that miners took with them from their experience in Britain.

Derrick Emptage has given several Subterranea Britannica publications, three recent PDMHS Journals, copies of "Climb" and "Speleology" and five copies of "Descent". Ron Callendar has given "Opencast Coal Mining in Great Britain", associated leaflets and a copy of Ros Todhunter's "Geology of Natural Disasters".

We are very grateful to you all.

Sallie Bassham

Boundary Stone

I walked recently around part of the Wear watershed in the northern Pennines, and at Scaith Head (NY791369), below Burnhope Seat, came across a restored boundary stone. Dated 1880, it is inscribed EC, DC and GH. I presume EC is for Ecclesiastical Commissioners and GH Greenwich Hospital but I wonder if any member knows what DC stands for?

Also when was the stone put back together? It had been on the ground in two pieces on previous visits.

Phil Clayton

Subscriptions for 2011

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.

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! Those of you who already pay by STO need take no action this year.

David R Neal

Membership Secretary

Publication News

Many thanks to the following members who have donated either books or newsletters to us -Bernie Bond, Len Cook, Neil Dyson, Doug Grant, John Hopkinson, Dr S. Moreton, and Graeme Wilcox. All donations are greatly appreciated. Also thanks to our members who sent in their "wants" lists some of which I have been able to fulfil. Keep them coming.

It is appreciated when contributions to postage are received as these costs continue to escalate. There has been an interest in our early Newsletters so if any of you have any you wish to donate to us please do so. It is a shame when they are just disposed of after reading. Also if you are interested in any of these please let me know. If I can't help you at the moment I may be able to in the future.

Our publications had a presence at our special 50th Conference up at Reeth, along with Mike Moore Books who put on a good display which was appreciated by our Conference delegates. We also took a good selection of our BMs to the Bakewell Mineral and Fossil Show, along with some membership flyers, all of which were taken so here's hoping! Once people see our publications it makes them realize what good value our membership is.

I have continued to take good second-hand copies to our General Meetings so look out for these bargains and if you are coming to a meeting and want a second copy of anything just let me know and I will see what I can do.

Special Christmas Offer

Until the end of the year any member ordering a new publication off me will receive a copy of BM 54 Lead Mine Waggon free.

Barbara Sutcliffe

2011 AGM

Next year's AGM will be held on Saturday, 19th March at Coldstones Quarry, Pateley Bridge. The meeting start at 11am followed by free buffet lunch (pre-booking essential) and an afternoon looking round the quarry.

Meets for 2011

Thank you to everyone who has agreed to lead a meet next year. There is an excellent variety of surface and underground, with some familiar favourites and some new venues. Please check the Newsletter for further details.

Saturday 9 April

Surface walk of Bordley lead mines. Meet near the Angel Inn in Hetton at 10.30am.
Leader Janis Heward, 01423 564197.

Saturday 14 May

Surface walk at Malham.
Leader Tom Knapp.

Saturday 4 June

Underground meet at Goldscope mine. Meet at Little Town Bridge car park, Newlands Valley (NY 2345 1950). Harness or web belt and cows tail needed. Insurance essential.
Leader Derrick Emptage 07812 835038

Saturday 25 June

Surface walk of coal mines at Bacup.
Leader Clive Seal.

Saturday 16 July (or 23 July)

Underground meet at Rogerley Mine, Weardale. Maximum 12 people.
Leader David Neal, 01974 821213

Saturday 6 August

Underground meet at Force Crag Mine, near Braithwaite. Meet in the car park at the start of the mine road (NY 2260 2390) at 10am. Harness or web belt and cows tail needed. Insurance essential. Leader Derrick Emptage 07812 835038

Saturday 20 August

Surface walk of Bollington, Rainow and Pott Shrigley coal mines, East Cheshire. Meet at 10.30am at the start of the bridleway off Bakestonedale Road grid ref SJ95535 79560. (head uphill from Pott Shrigley Church towards Kettleshulme, pass through the old brickworks and the pull in is about ¼ mile up on the left).

Booking essential - maximum number of walkers is 20

Leader David Kitching 01625 423249
email: davidk@broccross.co.uk

Saturday 10 September

Underground meet at Brownley Hill mine, Nenthead. Easy dryish mine. Meet at 11am in the Nenthead Heritage Centre car park (free) NY 781435. Nenthead is on the A688 Alston/Weardale road.
Leader Paul Dollery, 01937 580 579.

Saturday 22 October

Autumn Meeting, starting with a buffet lunch at 12 noon. Gisburn Village Institute (to be confirmed). Volunteers who can give presentations, or show photographs of meets, would be very welcome.

Sallie Bassham

Grant to save lead mine remains

English Heritage has pledged £50,000 to help safe-guard one of the nation's most important historic lead mining ruins in the Yorkshire Dales. Baroness Andrews, chairman, announced the award during a visit to Grassington Moor, near Skipton.

A major had working centre from the 17th to the 19th centuries, it is now a scheduled ancient monument. The 2.5 sq km site is rare in ranging from small-scale workings to a major industrial landscape. The spoil heaps were also re-worked in the 20th century for important minerals such as barites, which is used in the production of paints, barium meals and a heavy mud for oil wells.

However, the site is on English Heritage's at-risk register partly because of serious water erosion, exacerbated by heavy rainfall. The grant will allow the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to draw up a management plan and carry out emergency repairs to the most vulnerable areas.

The surviving remains include a network of shafts, waste mounds, dressing floors, a smelting mill with a vertical chimney, 1.7km of ground-level flues, water management features and interconnecting mine roads.

Neil Redfern, English Heritage's North Yorkshire team leader, said: "This is a very special place. You can actually stand in exactly the same spot as 17th century men, women and children who toiled amidst a horseshoe of rubble, sorting and breaking lead ore out of stone. Lead mining was a tough way to make a living and conditions were often appalling."

Mike Bridgen
Darlington & Stockton Times
13th August, 2010

Rampgill Meet

Saturday 14th August, 2010

My Dad and I arrived in Nenthead well over an hour early. We were greeted with the typical British weather; heavy rain! After a quick moan about the weather, Paul arrived in his Kia. After waving and exchanging humorous 'hand signals' Paul invited me to join him in his car while my dad had breakfast.

Opening my car door to go and see him, was like having a Special Boat Service style North sea swim! After joining Paul in his car, and exchanging pleasantries, we went to see if we could see any sign of the rest of the group. After a few minutes chat about him, Wayne arrived in his usual style (stopping his car hastily and running into the public toilets)! After pulling up with us and having a brief chat, Wayne and I decided to try and get an early start ahead of the main group.

After hastily changing, I grabbed a couple of bottles of water and set off with Wayne. The entrance is a horizontal pivot gate that leads straight into a heavily supported tunnel through the limestone. After several hundred yards the support suddenly stops, and the gated opening into the centre of Brewery shaft became affixed to the beam of my cap-light. Beyond this point there is no new roof support (except the digs through collapses in Rampgill vein). After Brewery shaft, the tunnel turns left and the water begins to get deeper. Now the roof is arched, but strangely it starts with the Belgian style slab arching, which is made out of the cinders from the smelt mills.

Wayne and I now becoming ever more aware of the unusually high water levels, especially when the icy water spills into your wellington boots for the first time! Now daylight is long gone, the passage becomes wider and flatter as it meanders for the next 350yds toward High Fairhill Cross Vein Junction.

Upon first sight the Y junction is fairly bland with no archway features. We decided to tackle the left-hand passage first, the passage is half arched (left side).



Now the water level was mercifully lower, as we pressed into Scaleburn vein, the passage twists and turns for 50 – 100yds before straightening out once again. About 400yds into the passage we came across some Edwardian style carved steps, leading steeply up and left into an over head side passage. The passage only lasting 20 footsteps or so and only 4 feet high; opens up into a small flat, dug into semi shale with only a cavity to our right and a passage leading off to the left (described later). Marked upon the wall in this flat was a clue to the age of the tunnel, as inscribed: **CB - JP 1795!**

Within this Flat there was a small passage leading North East. Wayne decided to lead me in to see, as he described, "a Sir Francis style feature". The passage continued into a small cavity with a very high roof. As I was gazing up Wayne said "how about that then". There was a flooded sump, partially masked with the mud we had entered into the water from walking. Upon closer inspection we revealed it must have been over five Fathoms deep! Not easy to float in, if you don't know it's there, especially when wearing a 4kg helmet and battery, cotton overalls and 2kg boots filled with several litres of water, in addition to your clothing underneath! It is things like that, that make you one of these:



Now we had explored this little area, we headed back to the main passage, and continued deeper into Scaleburn vein. The passage then continues for 50yds or so until you reach a T junction. We continued on and took the next left several hundred yards later. This passage led into a chamber containing something I've never seen before, a pony winder... UNDERGROUND! I later learned that this is called a Horse Gin.



After a quick photo shoot, we retreated back to the first Y junction; where we followed the High Fairhill vein to the famous whiskey junction.



Whiskey junction offers 4 ways; we took the North West bound one (Left). We decided to press through into Northumbria, well past the county gate and explore everything on the way back. On the way up however there was just too much to see.

Firstly an engine shaft where compressed air was fed into the mine. Secondly a passage off to the right, which looped back into the main passage about ½ mile later. I said to Wayne; "I wonder if it is still open" to which he replied with famous last words – "There's only one way to find out"!

The passage turned out to be a dead end after a thigh deep wade through ¼ mile of water. Upon our return to the main passage we came across another

flat, fully equipped with toilet box (proven last use August 1929) and 2 ton Kibble. The last major icon was a fully equipped workshop, a line up of old boots next to a shaft that apparently had a full engine room above! Although it is possible to access the engine room, we opted not to because it meant crossing a several hundred foot deep shaft, on two cracked cast iron rails balanced across.

After a brief walk the crawling starts, and to kick it all off, a 12 x 18 inch 20yds crawl, through 3 inches of freezing water!



Beyond this there is only the county gate between North Yorkshire & Northumbria. This is followed by a few roof falls; eventually opening up into what looks like a series of rail sidings, better known to us as the lunch hall!

After a gentle stroll out into the open earth, we got changed and had a cup of tea before driving home for a cold drink and a curry! Not a bad day really! A pleasure once again to explore with such an experienced and fun guy, Cheers Wayne! And of course Paul Dollery for organising this brilliant 'Lads day out'.

Andy Richards



Underground Access at Nenthead

Access arrangements for Independent Mine Explorers and for Independent Groups

These arrangements have been reviewed by the North Pennine Heritage Trust and have now been amended to assist us in complying with the maintenance responsibilities we have for the Ancient Monument site and the Smallcleugh SSSI site and to ensure that we and other users of the Scheduled Monument comply with statutory Health and Safety obligations and the Mines Inspectorate.

Additionally it will help us maintain access in the car park and pathway areas and to maintain the mine adits, gates and entrances. Further, it will allow us to record more accurately the number of people using and accessing the site. This information will help us with our fundraising and any grant applications

We intend to log and disseminate information on any changes in the underground environment and help to maintain and improve our links with underground explorers.

Finally, it will help us with the costs of all these obligations and to that end a more detailed document is available from the following link:-

<http://www.npht.com/nentheadmines/news>

Newsletter Production

Ahh Barbara... you only know part of it... Harry and Sue Houghton produced the newsletter for many years, can't remember how long. In those days the newsletter was duplicated, a process that some, nowadays won't know about. Basically it was a machine, either turned by hand or if you were lucky by an electric motor. You placed a stencil on the drum and as it turned ink was forced through it on your paper which was more absorbent than modern papers. The stencil was cut by hand using a typewriter with the ribbon removed so that the characters would punch through a sheet of waxed paper, and so allow the ink to flow. Imagine typing the stencil – it was hard to see what you had been typing – try turning the brightness right down on your monitor and then write a 10 page article!

The idiosyncrasies of typewriters! The “t” used to drop half a line, sometimes the “p” would be missing. In the late 80's Harry found that the Amstrad PCW dot matrix printer would cut a good stencil – time saving modern technology! Still he would have to run the duplicator 10 times, once for each page.

Now, this is where our unfortunate members who happened to live in Leeds came in. The phone would ring, “Hello, it's Harry – would you like to come across for a bite to eat and a bottle of beer next week?” PANIC! The last 3 months had gone very

quickly!

This was the process. Everything was on the table, we walked round – pick up sheet 1, sheet 2, 3, 4, 5, staple them, put on the pile and repeat. If there were 4 of us, with over 400 members at the time, you would walk round that table over 100 times. Next fold and place in the envelope.

With me so far? Easy isn't it?

Now for the hard part, and this is where the bottle of beer came in. In those days self adhesive stamps and envelopes did not exist. Everything was lick and stick, lick and stick, lick and... eeeeeeeughh! Stamps were bad enough but the 6 inches of glue on each envelope... the beer was certainly earned! Getting home, a packet Extra Strong Mints later, the taste was still with you.

So now David, when you move your blocks of text around on your word processor, pasting in text that others have written (like this article), getting a stack of ready collated and stapled newsletters and put them into your self adhesive envelopes and fix your self adhesive stamps; think of people like Harry & Sue and the other unfortunate members who happened to be in when the phone rang.

Printing didn't start until about 1990 when Damian McCurdy took over as newsletter editor and decided to streamline and speed up the process. I went across and picked up the duplicator and the darned thing lived in my attic for 10 years – I couldn't even give it away.

Malcolm Street

Editor Replies

If it so easy nowadays why is there not a queue to take over as Editor?

Like all my predecessors, we start with blank pages a month before publication. What we really want is to build up a reservoir of material so that the bulk of the current and next issues are in place, well in advance. Then we need only to add the latest news (meets, events etc).

If you would like to help and write some pieces for the Newsletter then perhaps the following will stimulate some thoughts.

1. Field trips not organised by NMRS
2. Mining related projects
3. Related specialist subjects, eg mining lamps
4. Internet documents about mining activities
5. Reminiscences

As always items preferred as Word docs with pictures being separate jpegs. Emailed or posted as a CD. Typed or hand-written articles are also welcomed.

David R Neal

A biography of Captain William Henry Paull*The honest miner*

The story so far ...

In an earlier newsletter, I claimed that a mine-captain at Wanlockhead, was "Captain Paul". Not only was my spelling deficient of a second 'l', the real Captain Paull's granddaughter suggested that the man featured in an accompanying photograph of the miners grouped outside the Lochnell Mine was NOT Mr Paull at all. By combining my local knowledge of Wanlockhead and a comprehensive set of research notes generously provided by NMRS member Shelagh Bridges of Northumberland, the following narrative emerged.

... now read on



A family group (c1903) taken in Belton House at Wanlockhead, which features WHP's family following his second marriage. The boy in the sailor suit (William) was the father of Shelagh Bridges, who supplied the photograph.

William Henry Paull (known as WHP) was born into a mining family at the Daren Mines, in mid-Wales, in 1843. At the age of 16, WHP joined his father as a miner, who was then working at the mines

in Goginan, about seven miles from Aberystwyth. Four years later, WHP contributed to a report on the condition of these mines and in 1869, aged 26, he married Sarah in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. Their first child, Wallace Henry, was born the following year when WHP became mine agent at Goginan, and lived nearby at Capel Bangor. Three more children followed over the next six years, but by 1881, he was widowed and had to take care of two very young daughters. (His two sons were at a boarding school in Wiltshire).

WHP's 22 years of employment for John Taylor & Sons ended in 1882 when the principles decided not to renew their lease. He successfully applied for the job of agent to a mining company operating in a remote part of Columbia, South America, and retained this job for at least three years, before returning to Wales. His elder brother, John had also made a career in mining and, as a consultant, he presented a report to the Silver-lead Mining & Smelting Company in Leadhills in 1893. In it, he recommended William for the post of mine manager and when his advice was accepted, WHP moved to Leadhills. He was now 51 years of age and along with his brother John, he reported on the mines the following year and subsequently made his own reports as mine captain. In 1896, he married again and following a small service at All Saints church in Liverpool, WHP and Ada returned to the mine manager's house in Leadhills. (Originally called "the Mansion House" when it was built in 1741, the listed building is known as The Scots Mining Company House nowadays.)



A view of the adit of Loch Nell mine, which the museum at Wanlockhead now includes as part of its visitor trail



The clock that was "presented to Mr W H Paull, Manager by the mines officials with best wishes on his marriage, Leadhills, November 1896" marriage, Leadhills, November 1896."
(From a photograph provided by Shelagh Bridges)

His wife Ada delivered a daughter, Nancy, in 1898, whilst staying with her parents in Liverpool, but sadly the girl died the following year. However, that year, a second child was born to Ada and christened William Rowland Paull. (Note that this boy was the father of Shelagh Bridges). The family was reunited with father in Leadhills but soon the mining company began to encounter difficulties and was eventually wound up in August 1903. By then, however, WHP had obtained a position at Wanlockhead where he managed the Queensberry Silver-Lead Mines of the Duke of Buccleuch.

At Wanlockhead, the Paull family lived in Belton House, and in 1900, his wife gave birth to the twins, Ada and Henry. For six more years, WHP fulfilled his commitments as the Duke's agent and participated in the life of the village, where he was known for his "kind and open manner". When the company gave up its mining lease in 1906, WHP decided to retire and return to Wales. He and his wife took up residence near Aberystwyth, where WHP set up as a consulting mining engineer.

He prepared a report on the Bronfloyd Mines, near Goginan, which led to an invitation to join a group of men who were planning to work the mines. He accepted the offer and on account of his "most exceptional experience in lead mining", he took on the role of supervising the operations.

Another report, prepared in 1918, observed, "he has recently been very seriously ill", and at some stage between 1932 and 1936, WHP and his wife moved to Lower Bebington on the Wirral.

Aged 93, he died and was buried in Bebington churchyard. *The Welsh Gazette* deserves the last word; its obituary described WHP as "the honest miner".

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to Shelagh Bridges (Nee S J R Paull) who has carried out meticulous research in *The Mining Journal*, and at The British Geological Survey for more than a decade. In turn, she gives credit to the *British Mining* monograph No 35 and a 1987 memoir, both carefully written by Simon Hughes. My grateful thanks also to Shelagh for providing the two photographs

Ron Callender

Tyddyn Gwladys

The continuing story

When I made a general enquiry about the purpose of the rather unusual building which had been part of the 19th century mining activities at Tyddyn Gwladys in the Dolgellau gold belt, it did not take long to secure a definitive answer. Dave Linton directed me to the website containing the scripts of the commentaries that are used in the visitor headsets available from the Forestry Commission.



There are eight scripts in all, but Track 5 provides good technical detail on "the long building" called the incorporating mill. It was here that a mixture being converted into gunpowder "was further moistened and ground between large iron wheels, called edge runners, to create a 'mill cake'". The process was very dangerous and the makers were limited to manufacturing batches of 42 lbs at a time.

In the mill's heyday, there were six square rooms above a vaulted tunnel. A shaft, powered by the waterwheel, drove the edge runners that formed the mill cake. Explosion was an ever-present concern and for this reason, the roof was deliberately constructed from lightweight timber, so that in the event of a blast, the walls would survive. There was a serious explosion in July 1891, but an imaginative safety system worked when a set of carefully balanced water tanks drenched the operating machinery.

The Commission's commentary is comprehensive and guides visitors from the car park to the Gwynfynydd gold mine; with justification, it describes the remaining evidence of the manufacture of gunpowder as a jigsaw of stages.

Ron Callender

Schneeberg Silver Mine

Four days before our walking holiday to the Oetz Valley in Austria, snow levels in the area reached 30 to 60 cms. On our arrival temperatures had 18C, by midweek walking was then restricted with levels reaching 30C.

Obergurgl village stands at a height of 1930 mts an ideal walking area offering all grades of walks; 3000 mts can be reached. The village provides a walking guide and so with Michael we grabbed the offer to see "What had been the highest working silver mine in Europe". The Schneeberg Mine worked at 2000-2500 mts, our guide provided transport into bordering Italy via the Timmesljoch. With a further one and half hour walk the group entered the site. First reference to mining here began in 1237.



*Schneeberg Silver Mine
Wagon standing to Middle section of gradient
June 2010*

By 1486, miners on site reached 1000, it also became the highest permanent mining settlement at 2355 mts and so later provided a school and hospital for the families. Production was to come to an end by 1967 leaving behind 150 Kms of levels and shafts and the longest quarrying conveyor belt system in the world at 27Kms.

With the newly built Schneeberg Hutte in 1995, an exhibition room was constructed later. Information sheets from our visit show that underground trips can be made.

Bernie Bond

Early graffiti at Cwm Mawr

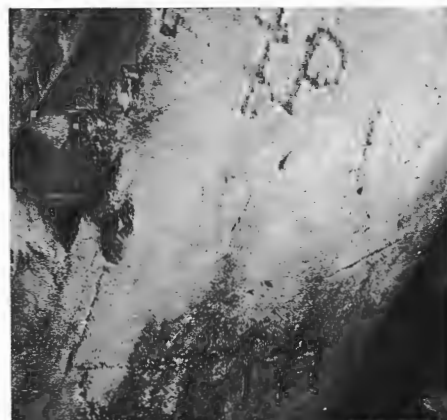
On May 28, in glorious weather, a party organised by John Webb visited Cwm Mawr and Abbey Consols to review the field evidence for site interpretation that will feature in John's paper for the WMS 2010 Conference. We are grateful for access permission from the landowners at both sites.

At Cwm Mawr, our main survey was complete a little early for our pub lunch so we decided to dig out a small 'suspicious' recess in the rock face in the stream dingle SE of the engine shaft in case it might be the buried portal of an adit shown on the 1917 plan to link to the shaft. Entry proved easy and two 'moles' were sent down to investigate; however rather than an adit the entry opened out into only a small chamber ca 2 m in diameter, the purpose of which is puzzling. The eastern wall of the entry utilised a smooth sub-vertical joint and on this are chiseled the initials IP and RT and the date 1771; two years after Probert took over the lease in 1769. The graffiti were photographed and the entry was re-sealed before we left for liquid refreshment.

We have learned since then that George Hall, as a schoolboy, had found the chamber (and engine shaft) open during WWII!

Plotting our survey it seems that the true adit may lie under scree only 10-15 m to the W; an objective for the future.

John Webb,
Graham Levins, Roger Bird,
David Neal and David James



Opposite is the wall with all the chiselling shown.

Below the entrance before digging

Below left the initials "RT"

Below right are the initials "IP"



Loch Fitty

Scottish Coal could create more than 50 jobs if plans to extend a huge opencast site near Kelty are given the go-ahead.

"The company wants to extract 3.5 million tonnes of coal from beneath Loch Fitty, by draining the former fishery. Surrounding communities would lose the loch for several years while mining is carried out. Scottish Coal has now submitted a formal planning application to Fife Council seeking consent for the development. Objections have been lodged by three neighbours who say draining the loch would devastate its fragile ecology and destroy views from the village of Kingseat.

One resident, June Simpson, said, "Scottish Coal told us that it has not tried to drain any loch for coal before. In fact, we were led to believe it has never been tried in the UK before. We do not know what expertise they have and whom they have contacted to ensure grave errors are not made."

A Scottish Coal spokesman said, "Following the completion of mining operations, the loch will be restored to its full extent, and the water quality and ecological conditions will be significantly improved."

Courier, 08/10/10

Dorothea pumping engine, house and associated structures.

Dyffryn Nantlle, Gwynedd, North Wales

The Dorothea Quarry pumping engine is situated three kilometres east of Penygroes at NGR H497531, between the Dorothea and South Dorothea or Cornwall pits. It is a single cylinder beam pumping engine, 68 inch cylinder, made by Holman of Camborne, erected in 1904 and worked until the 1950s. The engine, along with two Lancashire boilers, survives virtually intact in its engine house and has had scheduled ancient monument status since the 1960s.



A recent break-in at the engine house and the attempted removal of engine components was reported to the author on 15 October 2009. The site was visited on 2 November to assess the damage and the future prospects for continued preservation of the engine, its house and the associated structures. Gwynfor Pierce-Jones provided a briefing on the current state of the engine house (attached), and John Williams, the farmer with grazing rights on the site, gave the author access and explained the background to the break-in.

Access to the site

There is currently no right of way providing access to the site. The public do, however, walk freely through the area, and the surrounding tracks and spoil heaps are frequently used by trail bikes.

Ownership of the site

Ownership of the engine, its house and the quarry on which it stands, is currently unclear to the author. There have been some well publicised attempts to develop the Dorothea quarry pit as a dive centre, along with the publicity associated with the all too frequent deaths of divers in the quarry. Glyn Small, of Capital Landfill Restoration, had been linked to the proposed dive centre and was variously described as lessee or owner of the site but there are references to frequent changes of ownership (Note 2). Apparently Capital Landfill is still the nominal owner, Small has left the company and was replaced by new investors, but real ownership may lie with a third un-named party. A number of individuals, living locally and having an interest in the preservation of the engine, have secured the engine house itself but do not appear to have any formal tenure of the site. A charitable trust, Tirwedd, was set up a number of years ago with a view to establishing an interpretation centre based on the nearby Pen-yr-Orsedd Quarry but is currently moribund (Note 3). It is understood that there are moves locally to re-form the trust with preservation

of the Dorothea engine in mind.

Current condition of the site

Structures -

The engine house structure is evidently sound, although there is advancing ivy cover on the southern corner, with a slate roof which was refurbished by Cadw in 1979. A replacement steel door was fitted on the south-eastern side after the original was badly damaged by a fire lit against its outside some years ago. The external woodwork is in need of maintenance and the window on the upper floor, north-east side, requires repair to rectify damage caused in the recent break-in. On the eastern corner of the engine house is a small structure housing the steam capstan winch.

The author did not access the winch but it is understood that some components are missing, stolen some decades ago. The boiler house is currently roofless and has been since the 1960s, although the walls appear to be in reasonable condition. To the rear, south-east, of the boiler house is a stone-built coal hopper in good condition and to the south of that are the truncated remains of the boiler chimney and associated flue. The engine, boilers and the pit-work - The engine itself is virtually intact although rusting and in desperate need of a cleaning, painting and greasing. Some of the non-ferrous fittings have been removed and are believed to be in safe-keeping with Cadw, although the three double beat valves from the Middle Floor were stolen in 1973 after being removed in 1969 as part of a partial strip-down. The wooden cladding around the cylinder remains in place although in appears to be held there with baler twine. The asbestos lagging was removed several years ago but the brass strips retaining the cladding were stolen about ten years ago. In the boiler house are two Lancashire boilers, exposed to the elements and covered in foliage from trees and ivy. Most of the pit-work, the pump-rod, rising main and the pumps, remain in the shaft on the north-west side of the engine house. They are, however, largely inaccessible due to large amounts of debris in the shaft and the flooding of the quarry pit. The pump-rod broke in the late 1970s when the shear-legs collapsed. It was subsequently cut and a section removed a few years ago to prevent its use by children swinging over the shaft and that allowed the beam to settle in the indoor position.⁴ In its current position, although the piston rod is concealed within the cylinder, rainwater runs down the beam onto the engine cylinder, creating further corrosion problems. The shear-legs have collapsed onto the shaft but the spring beams remain in place, although it is not possible to determine their condition.

Discussion

Although the use of beam pumping engines in the
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Welsh quarry industry was typical, this surviving example is of universal value at a national level both for Wales and for the United Kingdom as a whole. Its continued preservation is essential from the perspective of its value for quarrying archaeology and the interpretation of the history of technology in general. The proximity of the Dorothea engine to large former quarrying settlements at Talysarn and Penygroes and the ease of access, albeit unauthorised access, makes it vulnerable to vandalism.

There is a small group of local people with an interest in the preservation of the engine but they are not in a position to monitor its security continually although the grazier, John Williams, does check it on a regular, if not daily, basis. In addition to the threat of vandalism there is the real threat to the engine's integrity as the condition of the engine itself, its house, the boilers and associated pit-work deteriorates with time. One has only to compare the photograph on page 64 of Gwyn's *Gwynedd* (Note 1) with that at on the previous page of this newsletter, to see the deterioration in recent years.

Since the author visited the site there has been a meeting of Tirwedd with a view to taking an active interest in Dorothea but no decision has yet been made on what action they should take. In the meantime I understand there has been a meeting between officials from Gwynedd County Council and the owners of the site at which the requirements for conservation of scheduled ancient monuments was stressed.

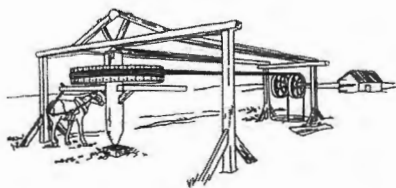
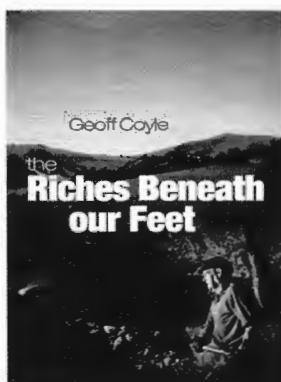
Peter Cloughton, Conservation Officer

Notes

- 1 Gwyn, D. *Gwynedd: Inheriting a Revolution*, (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), pp. 49 and 64-65
- 2 'Quarry's rising death toll fails to deter divers', The Times 17 March 2007, [web document] <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1527802.ece> [accessed 4 Nov 2009]; 'Diving ban at death quarry', BBC News 25 February 2002, [web document] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/1840398.stm> [accessed 4 Nov 2009]
- 3 Tirwedd Trust Ltd - web site [web document] <http://www.tirwedd.co.uk/index.html> [accessed 6 Nov 2009]



Reproduced, with kind permission, from the NAHMO Newsletter (June 2010) with additional pictures by David R Neal.



In reviewing a book, first impressions are important and I admired the cover featuring a photomontage of a miner working underground and the landscape above. The subtitle - How mining shaped Britain - intrigued and the back cover, also in colour, showed "a lonely chimney rising above the Cornish cliffs". Inside, however, the appearance of the pages was a disappointment. The layout looks like the efforts of an early computer programme; one that was knocked together just prior to being "typeset in Pondicherry, India", before being rushed to St Ives for printing on "acid free paper".

Overcoming my artistic prejudice, I read on. The preface told me the book was a historical outline - showing how mining people and their industries shaped Britain. Professor Coyle says he was "almost overwhelmed by the sheer volume of existing literature" and accepted a challenge to "bring out their main themes in a few hundred words". He had little choice but to shape his contents along the lines of tin & copper, coal, lead & zinc, granite, stone & slate, gold silver & precious stones, interspersed with chapters on geology, power & machinery, accidents, the owners and the mining communities.

The chapters read easily and are loaded with facts, and facts, and facts ... and very often with facts that are out of place in the narrative. For example, is it necessary to explain that "the deep mines of Cheshire are, though, a pale shadow of those in Poland, where huge caverns have been mined out, complete with chapels and other votive carvings" when dealing with an exposition on salt in Britain? Or to relate that "... a man was decapitated when a haulage chain snapped and flew down the coal face with vicious force." Or interject with, "In fishing villages on the Dutch coast, one can still see old ladies, clad in black, with elaborate silver pins in their head-dresses. The pins showed the love and success of their fishermen husbands ..." which occurs in a treatise on Britain's gold, silver and precious stones." ... Britain has none of these [*precious stones, that is*]. Britain does, though, have three semi-precious stones, Cairngorm, jet, and rock crystal ". The pedant in me needs to contradict two points. (i) The Romans did not use

convict labour to mine for gold in South Wales; slaves, who were free of criminal conviction, made up the work-force. (ii) a coal company did not build "slums" ... it created a village near Doncaster. (In time, of course, the village may have deteriorated into a slum.)

Geoff Coyle has assembled two sections of photographs. Some are familiar and some are new but, by necessity of the design, they are remote from the relevant chapter and deserve better explanatory captioning. The text reads as if the author had dictated it into a machine and then transcribed. If so, at this stage, a neutral party ought to have edited it - ruthlessly!

Nothing is lost by taking a blue crayon and eliminating one word in three. The list of "The main British minerals" is of dubious value and the index is unhelpful when looking for, say, "Strontian". [It is on page 77!]

In spite of any early misgivings, I liked the book once I realised it was not a text-book, but a *vade mecum* packed with everything the author had unearthed on geology, minerals, mining, history and society.

Oxford University Press, (2010) 16cm x 24cm : 267 pages £20 and \$35 USA

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