

Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter



Society established 1960

www.nmrs.org.uk

August 2014

www.nmrs.org.uk

Presidents Jottings

After a busy few months for our Society we are now planning our **Autumn meeting** which is scheduled for Saturday 25th October. Both the venue and caterers have been booked and now we need your contributions! It is to be held at Gisburn Festival Hall, 5 Burnley Road, Gisburn, Lancs, BB7 4T, NGR SD 828 487. **Book sales** are at 11.30 followed by a **buffet lunch** at 12.00. At approx 12.45 we will have our business meeting followed by member's **Presentations**. **Pre-booking is essential for lunch** and please let us know if a vegetarian option is required. It would help our caterer if bookings are made by 11th October. These can be made by e-mailing me at mansemmins@btopenworld.com or phoning 01282 614615 (before 9pm please) where a message can be left if we are out. If you have any books for our books sales please let me know so we can arrange space. All books need to be marked with a price in pencil or sticky note. All we ask is for a 10% donation to your Society at the end of the meeting. Our presentations are an integral part of our Autumn meeting so please let me know if you are prepared to offer one. Remember they should be no more than 15 minutes long. We will have a computer and projector available for use. We have also booked our **2015 AGM** for Saturday 11th April so please make a note of that.

Some excellent news since the last newsletter and AGM is that we have had a **volunteer** to carry on the excellent work of Ron Callender as **Secretary**. Mick Cooke has kindly offered his services and has already starting producing the monthly summaries for our Committee matters. Those of you who have been to our meetings will already have met him. On behalf of our Committee I would like to convey our grateful thanks to him.



At the Yorkshire Geology Day in May our Publications made an eye-catching display at the National Coal Mining Museum, at Wakefield. Sales and interest were steady and the Malham board was admired. The day consisted of morning short informative talks, a guided geology walk and three

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Would you please note that the deadline for inclusion with the November 2014 Newsletter is the 26th October 2014.

Submissions are welcome 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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separate underground walks into the drift mine. The afternoon sessions was made up of more in depth talks and all activities were free to the public. If the event is held again next year it will certainly be worth a visit.

Our latest BM "**The Malham Mines**" has been very well received helped by Mike Gill who circulated Societies and Clubs in advance. Many thanks for that. With pre-orders flowing in it was a busy time once the books arrived here. Their destinations were not just in the Malham area but as far afield as South Africa – how word spreads. The arrival of the books coincided with a Book Fair at Pendle Heritage Centre so courtesy of North West Books Fairs, who organised the event, we were able to have a small free table to promote it. The photo shows my young helper of the day!

Sallie is already receiving offers of **meet leaders** for next year which is greatly appreciated. It is lovely when people come forward of their own accord. Reports of some of our meets this year are in this newsletter and we are grateful to the authors of these. Please contact Sallie if you wish to offer a meet.

Our web content continues to expand and all the out of print memoir articles and monographs have the written permission of the author before we digitalise them our website. This complies with **copyright law**. Since the last Newsletter it was brought to our attention that another website had available one of our publications without the author's or our permission. This contravention of copyright laws has been sorted out but if any members do spot anything out there on the internet please let us know so we can contact the miscreants who sometimes do not realize they are breaking laws which are there to protect both writers and publishers.

We are pleased to hear that one of our members, Steve Grudgings is actively involved with the **Friends of Hemingfield Colliery**. More details of this exciting project can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. I am told there is a Facebook page devoted to the project.

We would like to welcome the following **new members**

Kelvin McKivitt	-Consett
Adrian Gott	-Cadiz, Spain
Mark Cooper	-Richmond
Graham Cass	-Liversedge
Peter Shaw & Frances MacDonald	-Newcastle

We are also sorry to report the death of two of our members David Hutchings (Reading) and Mr O'Donoghue.

Barbara Sutcliffe

LIBRARY NEWS

Thank you to all those who have given books and journals to the library recently. Vin Davis has giv-

en several bagsful, including Geological Society Reports on Iron Ores of Scotland, Arsenic & Antimony, Barytes & Witherite, and Lead in the South-West; five catalogues of Abandoned Mines' Plans; booklets on Forest of Dean, Coalpits near Bristol, South Wales Coalfield and Exmoor Mining; Dunn's "Indian Mining"; Macfarlane's "Iron and Steel Manufacture"; Low's "Technical Methods of Ore Analysis" Downey's "Timbering of Metalliferous Mines"; other standard mining textbooks on surveying, extracting and processing; and a "Survey of Iron Resources of West Cumberland" with Pumping Survey Plans and details of which mines were accessible in 1939. (Thank you to Mike Gill for transporting these.) Barbara Sutcliffe has given several books on mineralogy and crystals; Glasscock's "The War of the Copper Kings" – in Montana; Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland Journal 5; Cowman & Reilly's "The Abandoned Mines of West Carbery" and many booklets and books on Cornwall including Earl's "The Cornish Arsenic Industry", Rowe's "Drawings of the Levant Whim", and Pascoe's "Slate Caverns of Carnglaze". Tom Elliott has given 1987 and 1994 Reports on Cheshire Salt which have already been useful. Ron Callendar has donated a new copy of Clark's "Scottish Gold", which was reviewed in the May Newsletter. There are also more donations from Tom Elliott and John Seal on their way to me – thank you to those willing to pick up books and journals and save postage/courier costs. A pleasant surprise at the AGM was to be given a file of early NCMRS documents including a 1961 Members Handbook, and some early Bulletins which I had not seen before. The file is labelled ULSA. If anyone can help me to understand the initials; or, even better, give me contact details, then I can thank ULSA properly.

Sallie Bassham (sbassham@chipmail.co.uk or 015 2424 1851)

MEETS

Saturday 9 August

Rampgill Mine. Moderate underground.

11am at Nenthead Heritage Centre car park NY 781 435

Leader: Paul Dollery (01937 580 579 or paul.dollery56@ntlworld.com)

Saturday 13 September

Brownley Hill Mine. Moderate underground.

11am at Nenthead Heritage Centre car park NY 781 435

Leader David Young (01833 631 609 or dave.young@homecall.co.uk)

Visit Reports

Coate Moor Ironstone Mine

Saturday 3rd May

We met on a sunny morning off the lane above Kildale and entered the mine through the recently excavated East Entrance. The mine was only worked for a short period during the 1870's and closed on account of thinning seams and the fall in iron prices. Two short climbs and "windows" led us through the pectern seams with its fossil shells and into the main haulage level. We explored the many offshoots and working areas to the SW and crossed a floor of white kaolinite. Interesting artifacts included a gunpowder flask (powder was decanted from the barrels for carrying to the working areas), shovels and a hat! After visiting the "Sunflower passage" (the sunflowers being the rotting remains of powder barrels) we saw a flooded area and the blocked level leading to the underground furnaces. Unlike the nearby Monument Mine which the Society visited in 2012 the air was good. After about 2 hours we exited into the woodland and sunshine for lunch.

In the afternoon David led four of us on a tour of the older workings well decorated with straw stalactites and flowstone. It was here we came across a well preserved pair of clogs. We crawled out through the "rabbit hole" South Entrance amid leaves and twigs. A brief visit was then made to the Furnace Shaft (dug out by local enthusiasts) and the portal of the level which led to the foot of the shaft. Our thanks to our Teesside hosts for guiding us on a very interesting and enjoyable visit. They even provided garden chairs for us to soak up the sunshine afterwards.

Keith Turner

Hard Level to Brandy Bottle through trip 17th May

We were exceedingly lucky, Saturday 17th May was a glorious day, the being sun high in the sky which was blue with only a few clouds and the lightest of winds.

The car park where we assembled at Surrender Bridge was overflowing with excited participants leaving nowhere to park. One of the Landover's had decided to park "off road" to make room for others, Paul Dollery then arrived in his brand new car accompanied by Chas Roberts and Richard Darcey and decided to also park "off road". This proved to be not such a good idea as one of his front wheels went straight down in the mud rendering him well and truly stuck. Luckily many hands soon pushed him straight out and back onto the road.

Andy was in charge of the indemnity sheets and also collected £1 from everyone as we had bought the Head Gamekeeper 3 boxes of beer and lager as a thank you for his efforts that enabled us to park outside the mine entrance.

At 10am everyone proceeded down the track to the Old Gang and the entrance of Hard Level. Mike and Andy had to hastily go looking for a lost participant – luckily the mobile phones were working. We arrived with our lost member about 15 mins later by which point most members were about ready, dressed in their wetsuits and caving suits.

After hastily eating a couple of sausage rolls and half a flask of coffee at the same time as changing we were ready to. There were 32 attendees in total, 22 were going to make the underground trip whereas 11 were staying with Malcolm Street for his walk over the top and some more gentle exploration.

Upon entering Hard Level we were immediately up to our waists in cold water, the sudden shock disappearing after a few minutes as the water warmed up inside our wetsuits. A couple of hundred yards in we arrived at the fall which we had to crawl through with the cold stream of the stream flowing into our faces.

Eventually we all arrived at the four way junction by which time we were out of the water. We re-grouped for a quick drink and the odd nibble of chocolate – well I did anyway. Turning left we continued past the old ore hopper which extends upwards for about 40 feet, it is a bit of a waterfall these days but still climbable with the help of a rope and thinking that you are a fish not needing much breathing air!

Turning right into the Black Cross Cut the party had separated into smaller groups, each interested in various aspects. Shortly we arrived at North Rake Whim, the majority of the party climbing upwards about 30 or 40 feet up a ladder. The top of this came into another level which again after another climb using a rope headed to an incline which headed up to the surface. This being route eventually being blocked by a fall.

Returning back down to the Black Cross Cut we continued to another bad fall which necessitated climbing up through a small hole to circumvent the fall. We were met with a number of passages but continued towards Brandy Bottle. After crawling for a considerable distance through some bad shale falls we came to knee depth water which again went on for a considerable distance.

Eventually we came out of the water to what looked like a dead end, however you could see a very small water filled entrance which was the way out via Brandy Bottle. Going feet first through this hole resulted in being in a passage which was full to the roof of water with about 6 or 8 inches of air. Standing upright with my helmet top on the roof of the passage the water was just over my nose – not much of a gap. It was at the highest level I have ever seen it – this could be fun!

Tipping one's head back and on a side it was possible to stay with your mouth and nose in the small air pocket that was available. We slowly proceeded forward being very careful not to trip up over the debris on the tunnel floor and not to get a bad

mouthful of water. I went completely under water on a couple of occasions to miss rocks sticking down and upon opening my eyes was met with zero visibility as the water was full of tiny particles of sediment that had been dislodged by the process of walking along the bottom.

After what seemed like a very long time the roof lifted to give us at least 12 to 15 inches of clearance and we emerged to see the rusted crashed mining tubs at the bottom of Brandy Bottle incline. Jubilation occurred at this point and I started to film other coming out of the deep water.

After a long hard climb up Brandy Bottle incline which was exasperated by the wet suit we emerged into the sunshine at Brandy Bottle entrance. About half of the crew has already made it through and had started to walk down to the cars, the rest of us posed for a small photo shoot!



The trip lasted between four and five hours from memory. Thanks to everyone who joined us to make a fabulous day.

Mike and Andy Richards.

Carrock Fell

21st June

A little over a year ago I'd been up in the Lake District and had a walk round the Carrock Fell mine site. Reading up on the mine afterwards*, I discovered that a lot of the later underground workings were still accessible so I added it to my to-do list of places I'd like to visit sometime. The opportunity came sooner than expected when I spotted the Carrock Fell trip on the NMRS programme for this year. So on a warm sunny Saturday in June, I met up with the rest of the group at the mine site and prepared to go underground.

Carrock Fell is a tungsten mine, the principal ores are wolfram and scheelite but other minerals are present as well. Small scale workings, mainly looking for lead and copper, took place in the 19th century but only yielded a few tons of galena.

Tungsten mining was begun in earnest in the early 20th century and continued sporadically up until 1981. The veins cross the steep-sided valley at almost a right angle making it easy to work the mine via a series of adit levels driven into both sides of the valley. The last, and deepest, level is known as the Canadian level because it was driven by Canadian servicemen in 1942.

They drove extensive development levels along the principal veins but didn't actually mine any ore and the operation finished in 1943. Nothing much happened for a few decades until a new company took the lease in 1971 and built a new mill. A slump in ore prices delayed production but in 1977 they finally got going and continued until 1981 when falling prices again forced a shut-down. At its peak, production reached 16,000 tons of ore a year but the low grade meant that most of that was waste, the saleable product being 200 tons of 65% concentrates. The mill, and other buildings, were cleared in 1986 and the mill site landscaped. The building remains that are still visible today belong to an earlier phase of mining in 1913.

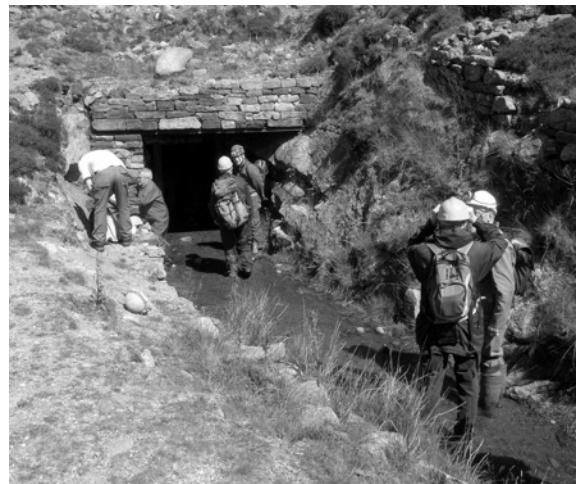


Photo:-Re-built entrance to the Canadian level

The entrance to the Canadian level had been deliberately blocked when the mine closed but has recently been re-opened and re-built by members of CATMHS. Photographs exist of the entrance as it used to be so CATMHS have rebuilt it to match the original appearance, and I have to say they have done an excellent job. Our leader had a key for the gate so we were soon inside and walking along the cross-cut to the Harding vein. Restrictions on surface ponds meant that the mine had to find an alternative way to get rid of the slurry from the mill so they dammed off the workings on the southern end of the Harding vein and pumped the slurry into the old stopes. Our first stop was to have a look at the dam, supported by a very large steel girder.

Continuing on, we reached the Smith vein and met our first line of wooden ore hoppers. The large number of hoppers is a feature of this mine, there are more of them, more closely spaced, than I've seen anywhere else. Also scattered about were a few electrical switchboards, looking surprisingly modern, but that

was to be expected since they probably dated from the late 1970s. Other fittings, such as track and cabling, had largely been stripped out when the mine closed but odd remnants remained such as large diameter flexible pipes which would have been used for ventilation.



Photo:- Electrical switchgear

The entrance cross-cut is quite short so having toured the workings on the Smith vein we returned to surface for a lunch break and to enjoy the sunshine. Suitably refreshed, we went back underground and turned north along the Harding vein, which was the most productive vein on the sett.



Photo:-Explosive store

The first stop here was the explosives store, then more ore hoppers but here they were numbered so I can say that there were 39 of them in a row. The Canadian level was the main haulage level during the final stage of working, there are no workings below it so all the stopes and older workings were above our heads. I was curious to see what the stopes looked like so when we reached a ladder, myself and a couple of others, climbed up to take a look. The large voids gave a good indication of the quantity of ore extracted but were otherwise rather featureless. However, where pillars had been left in,

the quartz veins stood out very clearly against the dark host rock.

A feature I hadn't seen before was a part of the vein where development had begun but had not been completed. A series of rises had been put up into the roof connected by a level running above and parallel to the haulage level. Work had stopped at that point but you could see how the rises would have been fitted with wooden hoppers and the level above would then have formed the base from which a stope would have been driven upwards.

The final vein we visited was the Emerson vein, here there was a long development drive but the ore can't have been very good as there were no hoppers and no stopes. It was also a lot wetter and had a small patch of stalactites, something we hadn't seen anywhere else.

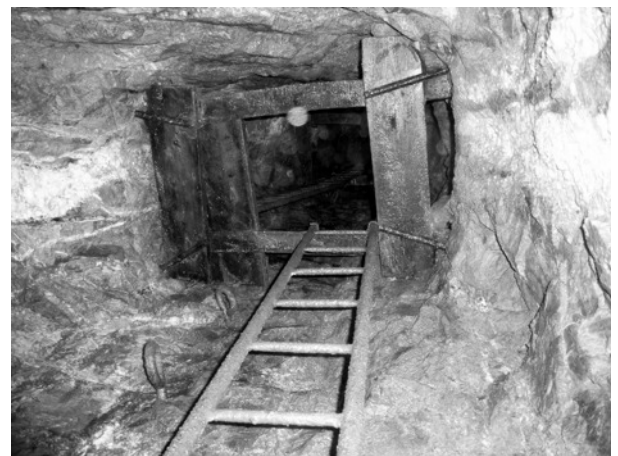


Photo:- Ladderway to upper levels

Returning to the surface again, most of the party felt they had had a good trip and seen enough but a few of us were game for a bit more so we headed up the hill to the No. 3 level.



Photo:- Entrance to the No. 3 level

The entrance is blocked by steel bars bolted to the rock but fortunately our leader had the appropriate spanner and quickly unbolted one of the bars to enable us to get in. The No.3 level runs along the top of some deep stopes so it was important to watch your footing. It's a fairly short level but includes some good exposure of the vein which shows that the vein structure is a bit more complex than it appears on the plans.

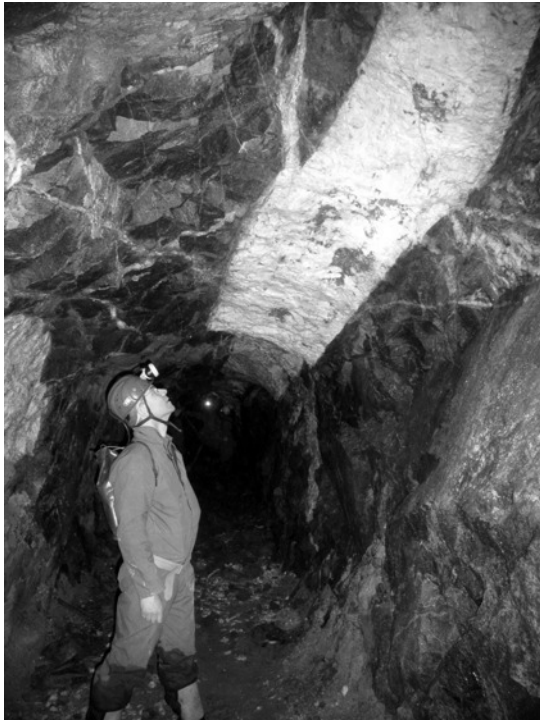


Photo:- Vein roof

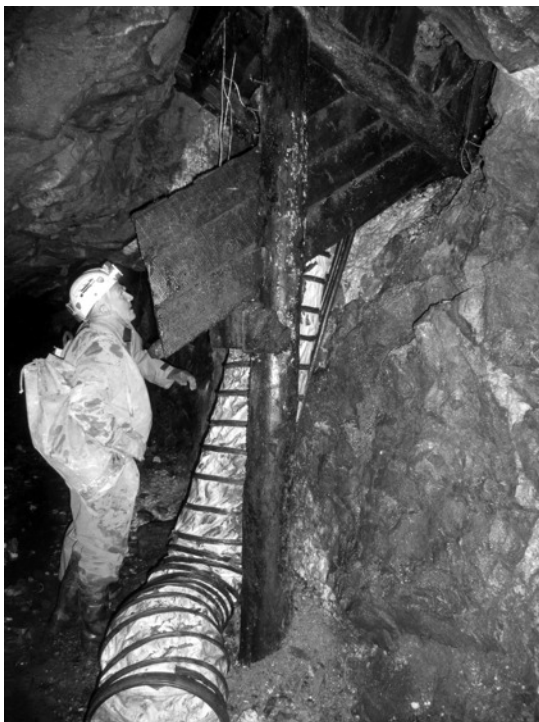


Photo:-Wooden hopper with ventilation pipe

Back on the surface again, the bar was replaced and the trip was over. However, before returning to the car I took a detour to the 1913 mill site to see the

work CATMHS have been doing to consolidate the stonework. It's good to see that both surface and underground remains are being preserved.

Altogether an excellent trip, thanks go to our leader, David Young.

**Beneath the Lakeland Fells by the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, Red Earth Publications*

George Harvey

NMRS visits Rogerley : 26th July 2014

Our leader for the day, Barbara Sutcliffe had ticked twelve names by 11am as we mustered in the car park of the Durham Dales Visitor Centre. "Let's go," said Rex Cook and in convoy, we drove through the busy town of Stanhope, intending to turn left. A barred gate blocked progress and our convoy came to a standstill. Rex applied ingenuity to the catch and soon we were negotiating a steep track upwards and the Rogerley mine came into view.



Photo:-Our host Cal displays two pieces of the amazing fluorite harvested from his Rogerley mine to Barbara Sutcliffe and Rex Cook

First impressions were good. A generator was working hard and, on a platform high above a wooden stairway, our host gave a wave. The mine was in full production, and the miners were bringing out a wagon of material, which was tipped overboard, to be hosed down the steep heap of stones, boulders and spoil.



Photo:- Under careful scrutiny from above, a powerful stream of water cleanses the material just tipped from the wagon

This mining activity delayed our promised tour by an hour, but it did not take long for the members to put the time to good use. Some went for a walk, others grubbed in a ditch for specimens of fluorite that had been discarded some years ago and Gordon Hudson demonstrated how to cut the host rock with a battery-powered circular saw. The time soon passed and we were free to search the spoil heap or opt for a tour of the mine, guided by the American lessee.



Photo:- In the mine interior, the group gather round as Cal illuminates a good specimen of fluorite in the host rock

Out of the fierce sun, we entered the cool, dark interior and splashed our way along the main adit. There was a brief stop for a summary of the geology, then a pause to view an offshoot that produced good specimens of the mine's fluorite. The short adit that provided the air to ventilate the adits and chambers; a turn and our host is illuminating some lovely specimens above our heads, and finally, he draws attention to two massive pillars with crystals sparkling in the light. In the distance, we see daylight and emerge much the wiser. "Stand back!" is the cry and we have a bonus as the engine brings out a wagon of spoil, which is tipped over for hosing down.



Photo:-Tour over, the mine resumes its business and a wagon arrives for the contents to be handled over the slope

Close by, Cal Graeber displays a few high quality specimens and it becomes obvious why he enjoys the hard work of running a mining operation from California. Batteries recharged, we offer thanks and hurry to the spoil heap to see what is on offer. All in all, it was a successful encounter and a rare

experience to have the chance to photograph the undertaking without any restrictions. Barbara deserves thanks for her meticulous arrangements and an enjoyable day in and out of the sunshine.

Ron Callender

Note: UK Mining Adventures' website provides a good history and is worth a visit.

An apology from the Editor

In the May newsletter I incorrectly attributed the Middleton visit report to Mick Cooke. It was in fact produced by Gordon Hudson. My apologies to both for my mistake.

Rob Needham

Requests for Information

What is it?



It is cast, decorated, two small letter box opening's but too small for a collection of say envelopes to go inside, it is circular and nine and half inches wide, three inches deep and with lugs on as if to fit onto a wall. Uncovered at the site of the Wilson Wood Colliery, just 3 meters from the pump house, dating back probably to when the colliery was working in the late 1870s or 1880s. Can any member suggest what it is?

Bernard Bond

Kelly Mine wagon

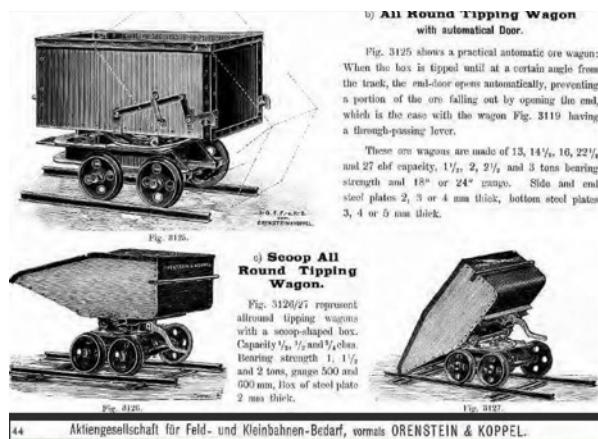
Following David Allen's request for help in identifying the origin of the wagons at the Kelly Mine in Devon, he was contacted by Ray Fairbairn who raised concerns about the design of the steel-bodied tipper

wagon. He pointed out that the pivot point of the tipper body was so far forward that when the tipper was filled it would be too heavy for a miner to lift the rear to tip. However, a photograph on page 61 of Tom Greeves book 'Tin Mines and Miners of Dartmoor' appears to confirm the accuracy of the wagon re-construction at Kelly Mine.

I was so intrigued by the apparent contradiction of an accurate re-construction of a wagon that would be impossible to do the task for which it was designed that I decided to go and see the wagon for myself. I chose a Wednesday when members of the Kelly Mine Preservation Society would be present. There I met Brian Brett, the site supervisor, who gave me a guided tour of the impressive site.



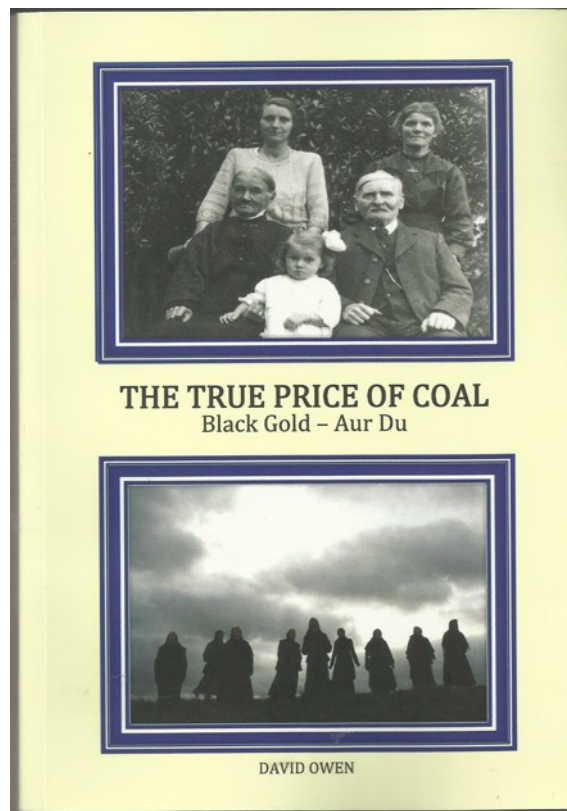
With the help of a colleague, I saw how easy it was to operate the wagon, pushing it along, then tipping ahead, and rotating the tipper to tip off to the side. However, we did not put anything in the body to tip so could not say how hard it would be to tip when loaded. But, talking with Brian, he showed me an illustration he had found of a similar wagon.



Subsequently I found that the illustration came from export catalogue number 600 (English language) produced by the German light railway manufacturer Orenstein & Koppel some time between 1899 and 1910. So far this is the only example found to show a wagon with a turntable similar to that on the Kelly Mine wagon. I'm now hoping that someone in the Industrial Railway Society might be able to help.

Rob Needham

Book Reviews



THE TRUE PRICE OF COAL / In memory of those who gave their lives in the quest for coal in the South Wales Coalfield by David Owen [2014] 80 pp, 20 photos, SB Published by the author. No ISBN number.

David Owen is a prolific writer this being his fifteenth book. David left school to train as a coal miner at Aberaman Colliery in the Cynon Valley. He spent all his working life underground finally ending up at the Mardy No 3 and 4 Colliery. The South Wales Coal field is the most extensive in the British Isles. However, is also the most difficult and dangerous to work with its narrow seams and gassy atmosphere. Every few years explosions occurred bring great loss of life and hardship to families as they lost one or more bread winners.

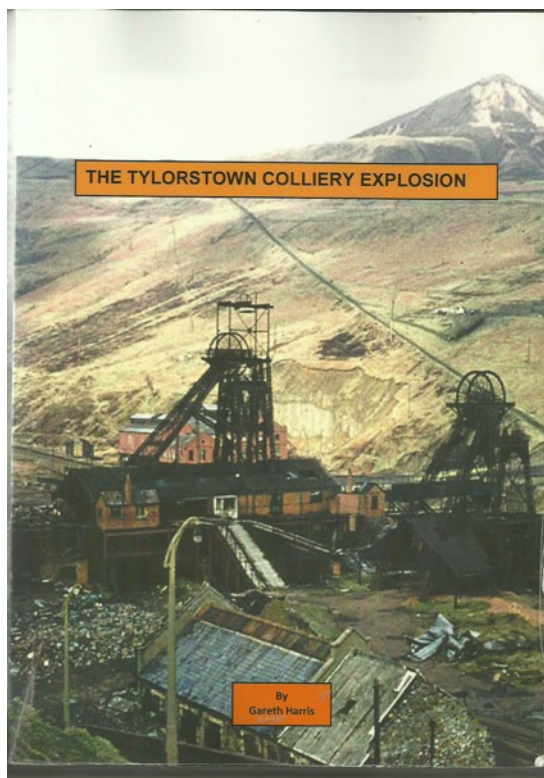
The worse disaster was at the Universal Colliery at Senghydd on Tuesday 14th October 1901 when an explosion killed 440 men and boys including three rescuers. On Friday 21st October 1966 occurred another accident that should never have happened. A coal tip collapsed and demolished a school killing a total of 144 including school teachers and children. The book has been brought up to date with an account of the disaster at Gleision Colliery, Thursday, 15th September 2011, where 4 miners were drowned when they broke into old flood working. Four weeks later there was an accident at Unity Colliery when a miner sustained back injuries. Unity closed because of financial problems but was due to reopen in January 2014.

Perhaps the most wretched accident occurred on Christmas Eve in 1885 at the Mardy No 1 and 2 Collieries when an explosion took the lives of 81 men and boys. Instead of enjoying Christmas together the impoverished families had the sadness of spending Christmas without a loved one.

The forgotten men of the industry are the miners struck down with pneumoconiosis. A survey in 1952 found that half the miners suffered from this disease. The symptoms are dyspnoea or shortness of breath. A cough is always present and black spit or phlegm is quite common. This is not something that has gone away as it still casts its spectre over the older miners still living.

The True Price of Coal is an everlasting tribute to the women, girls, men and boys who gave their lives for the Golden Nuggets of Coal.

Tony Oldham



THE TYLORSTOWN COLLIERY EXPLOSION by Gareth Harris 2013 290 pp, illus, SB £12.95 available from Pontypridd Museum.

This is the author's third book on colliery disasters in the Rhondda Fach, his others being 'The Ferndale Colliery Disaster' and 'The Mardy Colliery Explosion'.

The Tylorstown Colliery disaster of 1896 was another shock to a district that had unfortunately become accustomed to such terrible catastrophes. Indeed, the two explosions at the Ferndale Colliery in 1867 and 1869 when a total of 231 lives were

lost, and the Mardy Colliery explosion of December 23rd 1885 when 81 lives were lost, were still fresh in the minds of the local colliers.

The Tylorstown Colliery Explosion story is told, through the newspapers of the period and told in a way that is easy for the layman to understand.

Tylorstown is named after Alfred Tylor, a Londoner who purchased the mineral rights to Pendyrus farm in 1872 and sunk a colliery he aptly named Pendyrus.

The explosion occurred at 10.30 am on Monday, January 27, 1896 and took the lives of 57 miners. The disaster was probably caused by shot firing that ignited a mixture of carbon monoxide and coal dust. Most of the miners died from the effects of the gas. It was only by luck the day shift of 2000 men had not gone underground.

Graphic though the descriptions are, nothing can describe the terrible deprivation of the families robbed of their breadwinner a situation which is still reflected in the stoicism of the former miners in the Rhondda today who can look back with nostalgia on the old days, but be thankful that none of their families will ever need to go down the mine.

Tony Oldham



16 months at Lea Bailey



16 MONTHS AT LEA BAILEY by Rob Needham 2014 20 pp, un-numbered, 39 colour and one B&W photos, SB price £2.75

The Lea Bailey Light Railway Society is a small group of volunteers who are engaged in a project to build a 2 foot gauge railway at Lea Bailey using

largely ex-NCB underground locomotives and rolling stock collected by Ray and Jonathan Wright, Free Miners and operators of Clearwell Caves. Approximately 20 years ago a start was made on building a railway on the mine site associated with the Lea Bailey Level and the Euroclydon tunnel at Drybrook. After much effort the project was abandoned. Everything was rusting away until in May 2012 when two members of the Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club were investigating following discovery of a website that seemed to indicate that something was happening at the old gold mine site. They found that the door to the mine had been forced open, and saw the railway and rolling stock stored inside. Approaching the Wrights, they agreed to support the formation of a group of volunteers in their efforts to revive the project. This booklet is an attempt to show what has been achieved since then by the small team which has never numbered more than five working on the railway at any one time.

But NMRS members are probably more interested in the gold mine. Opened in 1906 as a gold mine! Only 6 grains of gold per ton were found, but this was enough to float a company of £49,000 [about £2.3M today] in £1 shares. Although it sounds like a scam the theory is impeccable. Gold is a ubiquitous element and had long been known in the area in small amounts. The pebbly conglomerates near Micheldean are said to resemble the Banket or gold bearing conglomerates of the Transvaal, Rhodesia and West Africa. There the similarity ends. In the Bailey Level the amount was a lot, lot smaller! In 1921 the level was extended to a total of 580 yards to the Wigpool Mines. Two headings, at a distance of 530 yards and 574 yards from the entrance of the adit were abandoned at 19 yards and 44 yards respectively. Work was suspended in 1924, in all only 3000 tons of iron were found. In 1996 speculation was rife that the mine was due to be re-worked for gold! Today the level is partially blocked with a roof fall after only 500 yards. This is backing up the water, but there are plans to open up the level into the Wigpool workings.*

A rather expensive book, but good value as it is in aid of fund-raising

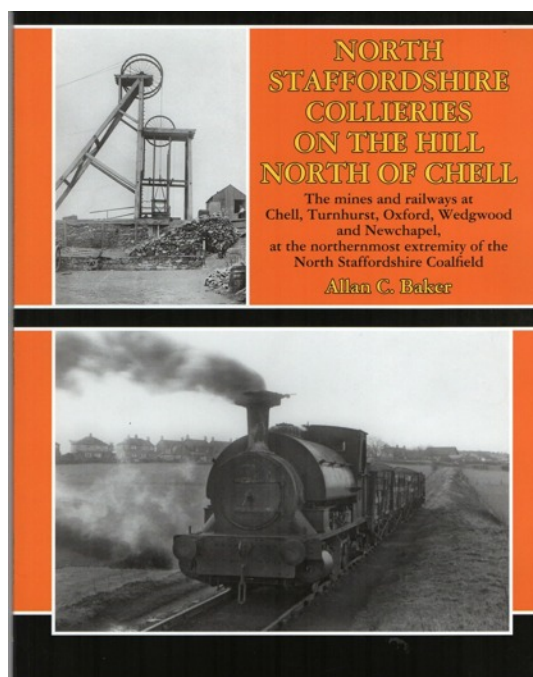
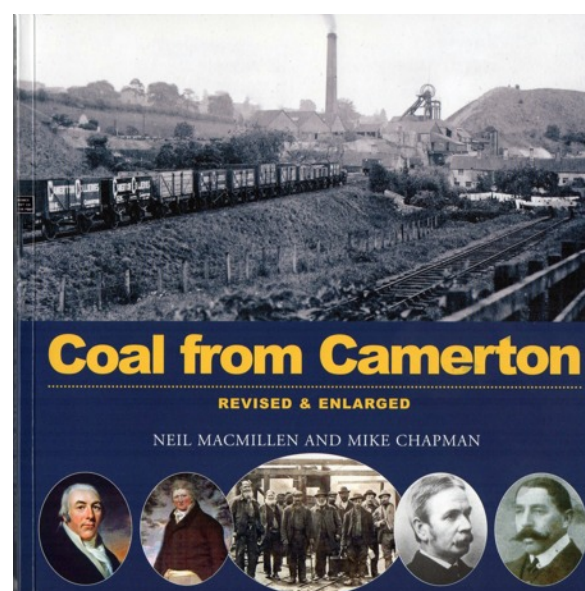
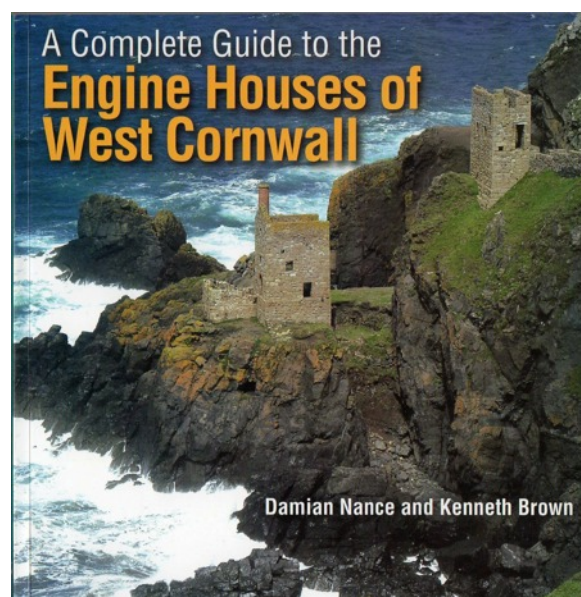
Tony Oldham

* **Editors note** - This might sound a good idea, but it will never be done by the railway volunteers. As the Lea Bailey Level is still classed as an active mine, any work in the mine has to be done under the supervision of the mine manager.

Recent publications

If anyone would like to supply a review of any of these publications, I will be pleased to include it in a future newsletter.

Three mining-related books from Lightmoor Press - visit their website www.lightmoor.co.uk for more information.



And one from the Welsh Mine Society

Metal Mining in Mid Wales 1822–1921

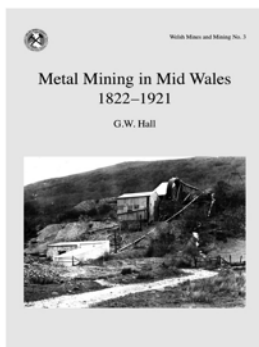
G.W. Hall

The late George Hall occupied a unique position in mining scholarship in Britain, not only from his seventy-year career in mine promotion, management and field-based research but from his possession of a near-complete run of the *Mining Journal* covering the greatest days of the Mid Wales orefield, an area very dear to his heart.

Lying between the expanded gazetteer approach of David Bick and the exhaustive monographic treatments of some individual mine sites by various authors, this publication commemorates George's encyclopaedic knowledge of the orefield and fills a major gap in its documentation. It draws on his intimate knowledge of the content of the *Mining Journal*, otherwise difficult of access, and not only charts the historical development of the mines but also gives a vivid picture of how they were worked, funded and managed and of some of the heroes and villains whose actions variously resulted in spectacular profits and financial seams of the worst kind.

The text comprises George's work in progress for submission for an M.Phil. degree, edited for continuity and augmented with introductory material and relevant illustrations by David James.

Metal Mining in Mid Wales, 1822–1921, G.W. Hall, ed. D.M.D. James, Welsh Mines and Mining 3, Welsh Mines Society 2014, PB, 130 pp, £12.00, ISBN 978-0-9561377-2-2



To: **Welsh Mines Society**
c/o D J Linton, Hendre Coed Uchaf, Llanaber, Barmouth LL42 1AJ
Please supply _____ copies of *Metal Mining in Mid-Wales, 1822–1921*
at £12.00 + £1.75 p&p each (cheques payable to Welsh Mines Society)

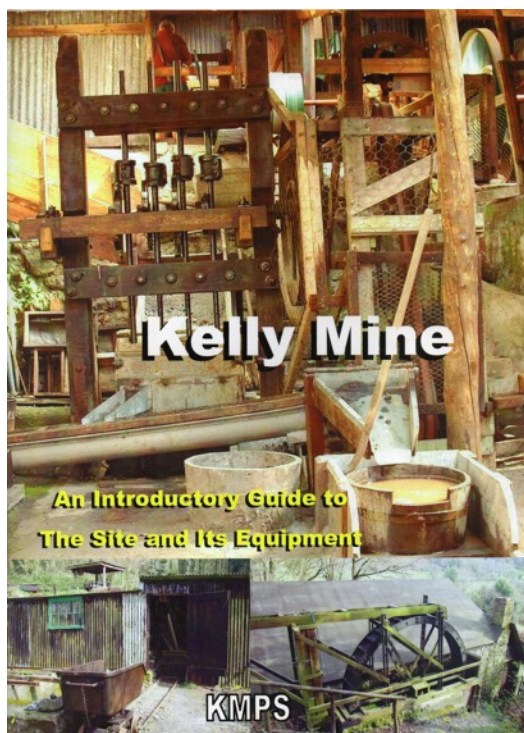
Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Enquiries to D J Linton, 01341 280901, editor@welshmines.org

And finally one that I found when I visited the Kelly Mine in Devon.



20pp, A4, colour guide to the mine, £5. I don't know if KMPS will supply by post but I suggest enquiring via their website.

For another new book see flyer with newsletter

Rob Needham

INTRODUCING THE FRIENDS OF HEMINGFIELD COLLIERY

Starting at Silverwood

It was Marshall Turton, Manager of Silverwood Colliery near Rotherham that alerted me to the existence of Hemingfield Pumping Station. Silverwood was one of the last of the major Yorkshire Pits to be closed in 1995 during the “Thatcher Era” and Marshall allowed us full photographic access to surface and underground (one day I will get round to publishing these!) I got to know Silverwood and Marshall quite well and I asked him if there were any other smaller satellite pits in his care. Given the speed of the colliery closure programmes in the 1980s and 1990s, there were often mothballed pits and those retained for pumping only that came under the management of working colliery.

The pumping stations

It turned out that Silverwood had a fascinating set of older pits in their care, the legacy of the slickly named “South Yorkshire Mines Drainage Committee” or Fitzwilliam scheme. Basically once the older shallower pits working the famous Barnsley seam were worked out, they were converted in the late 1920 and early 1930s to pumping stations to restrict flows of water from the Barnsley seam into the newer deeper pits. It was this initiative that prompted the scrapping of the last working Newcomen Engine at Westfield, Rawmarsh in 1934 (the Elsecar Engine having ceased regular working in the 1920s). In addition to Elsecar and Westfield the set of pumping stations included Carr House and Hemingfield.



With Marshalls permission, I was able to visit and photograph these locations, and whilst all were interesting in different ways, Hemingfield was definitely my favourite. The colliery was originally sunk by Earl Fitzwilliam to the Barnsley Bed in the 1840s and comprised a pumping shaft served by a Cornish Engine and a winding shaft (with passbye) served by what is thought to be a beam winder. The houses for both engines remain on site, albeit extensively modified. The coal left the pit initially by the Elsecar Branch of the Dearne and Dove Canal, most of the wharves and loading basin with their massive stone walls survive, adjacent to the pit. Hemingfield was also served by the Elsecar branch of what was later to

become the Great Central Railway (recently reopened as the Elsecar Steam Railway)

Hemingfield

Hemingfield ceased coaling around 1920 and from what can be deduced, most of the infrastructure other than the engines houses was removed and electric pumps installed. It survived in this form through nationalisation until closure of the adjacent Elsecar Main Colliery in 1985, when the shafts, which had been retained for emergency and inspection access were allowed to flood. Pumping probably ceased in the late 1990s and the NCBs and British Coals interest in (and visits to) Hemingfield decreased until only a monthly inspection by was required to check the water levels. The site eventually passed into the hands of UK Coal and following their bankruptcy in 2013 as a result of the underground fire at Daw Mill Colliery, became the responsibility of the receivers, BDO Stoy Hayward.

Saving Hemingfield Colliery



By an unusual combination of circumstances, by 2010 what remained of Hemingfield Colliery was quite unusual if not unique. The site contained:

- Two of only eleven surviving Colliery headgear in the whole, of Yorkshire
- The only colliery vertical winding engine house in Yorkshire
- One of only two intact Cornish Pumping Engine Houses in the whole of Yorkshire
- Two intact (mostly) winding engines
- A series of other related features

Over the years the site had become progressively overgrown and had suffered considerably from theft and vandalism culminating in the roof of one of the buildings being set on fire in 2010. This was probably the main spur for establishing Friends of Hemingfield Colliery (FOHC) and in December 2013, our offer to purchase the site was accepted by BDO. The legal shenanigans however meant that the transaction was not completed until 27th of June 2014.

FOHCs strategy for the site is to repair and refurbish the buildings and develop the site as a visitor centre with a strong (but not exclusive) mining theme and reuse at least some of the site for community and social enterprise initiatives to generate visitors and revenue.

Now of course all the exciting work starts and NMRS members are cordially invited to join us on some or all of the following:

- Researching the sites and areas mining history – some data already available, lots more to be done!
 - Site clearance and conservation
 - Archaeological investigations on site, Etc Etc
- Part of the attraction of the site is that it's that last "untouched" colliery site on the UK – there used to be so many of these "Marie Celeste" locations that they went largely unremarked. Initial investigations promise much including:
- Probable sub surface remains of the original Biram fan house
 - The complete settings for the 1850 beam winder
 - A complete set of "shaker" conveyors
 - A complete set of original "wet cell" batteries
- BUT Whilst you are all welcome, the site is "hazard rich" and subject to occasional unwelcome visits from thieves and vandals and so it is recommended that for this year at least, you visit on one of the days listed below.



Getting Involved

Our working party dates for this year are as follows:

- 23/24 August
- 6/7 September
- 4/5 October
- 18/19 October
- 8/9 November
- 29/30 November
- 20/21 December

Do turn up but it helps us if you let us know in advance@

Our Web Site:



<http://hemingfieldcolliery.wordpress.com/>

Our Face Book Page:

Friends of Hemingfield Colliery

Our Email Address:

Hemingfield.colliery@gmail.com

Steve Grudgings

Enough is as good as a feast

An account of two gold washing occasions

When I spoke at an international symposium on gold discovery in Northern Finland, I was easily persuaded to enter for the World Gold Panning Championships. There were two reasons. My age qualified me for the veterans' class and I knew many of the competitors. My second reason also related to my age; I knew this would probably be my last visit to Lapland because my Finnish colleague was poised to retire as Director of the Gold Museum. I put my name down for the competition, paid my fee and waited for the heats to be called.



Photo:-RMC acknowledges his reception at the world championships

The venue in Tankavaara has plenty of space and the stadium can accommodate up to thirty competitors in one heat. In the veterans' class, men and women compete together and there was some tough competition. When our names were announced, I

had a great reception from the crowd packing the stand. "Enjoy it," I reminded myself as we prepared to wash a huge bucket of gravel containing a specific number of gold particles, (but the number was unknown to the competitors). We had ten minutes but I knew the professional prospectors would complete within two or three minutes. To my relief I soon came on three grains I knew to be gold and transferred them to a phial provided for the purpose. I was aware that other competitors had finished and were queuing at the judges' table. I found two more pieces but nine minutes had elapsed. Time to call it a day. Five would not be a winning number but I had enjoyed the occasion, thinking it was a good way to end an interest in gold recovery.

When I re-joined my wife, Margaret, our Finnish host was waiting for me. "Your bus departs very, very soon," she said, "You must hurry to the restaurant," (which serves as a bus-stop, in these parts). The bus was waiting for us. After an hour's drive south, we stopped for an obligatory coffee-break. Another forty minutes brought us to Rovaniemi on the Arctic Circle. After an overnight train journey to Helsinki, recent events began to fade. By mid-afternoon, we are on an aeroplane to Manchester and the very thought of washing gold in the far north of Europe sounds absurd. I never knew the result and I did not wish to find out. It had been my last chance to compete at a high level, and I had enjoyed every moment.



Photo:-Suisgill Burn and Gold Burn tributary

It was my age which, once more, prompted me to look out my gold pan for recreation once more. The rules allowing access to the Suisgill Burn in the Strath of Kildonan, Sutherland, are very strict. Applications have to be made in advance in writing, and a named female companion of any age is another requisite. Margaret indulged my notion to apply and in June we again set off in a northerly direction ... an overnight in Ayrshire, accommodation in Aviemore and a two-hour drive to Helmsdale and its Strath. In previous years, we have both panned successfully in the Kildonan Burn but this year we were following protocol and parked close to the Suisgill Burn. We changed into rubber boots and, carrying our paperwork, we filled a rucksack with

the necessary gold pans, sieves, a pump, spare clothes and cameras.

We trudged along the bank of the burn. No one was on hand to tell us where to start and we it was easy to visualise gold lying in quantity under the rocks that we walked past. We reached a foot-bridge and noticed a change in the river's character. There were more bends ... in places the water ran slower ... huge rocks implied a disturbance to the natural flow during the winter. Identifying a potential "hot-spot", I made a start.



Photo :-Use of the pump on Suisgill Burn

Using a home-made pump, time and again, I brought up gravel from behind a boulder, and transferred it to the sieve balanced on the gold pan. This held back the stones but let the auriferous gravel run through into the pan. It was hard work. Once the pan was close to overflowing, I looked for a boulder to sit on, and in gentle water began the panning sequence. At the start, all the gravel is spun around the pan with plenty of water; the idea is to encourage all the grains of gold to make their way to the lower half of the pan. The next phase is obvious ... remove the gravel in the upper half with a generous swirl of water and start again. Soon it is best to rely on the riffles designed into the edge of the pan and, ever so gently, pass gravel over these 'traps' to the brink of the pan for washing away. After a few such movements, it is possible to view the gravel, which is now about one layer thick. Being heavy, the gold stays put and believe me, it is a great sight to expose and reveal the yellow metal with a gentle swirl of water.



Photo :-RMC reaches the final stage of panning

Margaret and I moved down the burn that day to explore more places. As a general rule, there was gold to be had at each of the spots we tried, but in a self-regulating way, tiredness took over. The thought of a cup of tea and our two-hour drive back to Aviemore reminded me of a saying often used by my mother, "Enough is as good as a feast". We had successfully exercised our right to "pan the Suisgill" and we had recovered gold by a mixture of good luck, experience, determination, guile and some physical effort. It was a good way to end a perfect day.

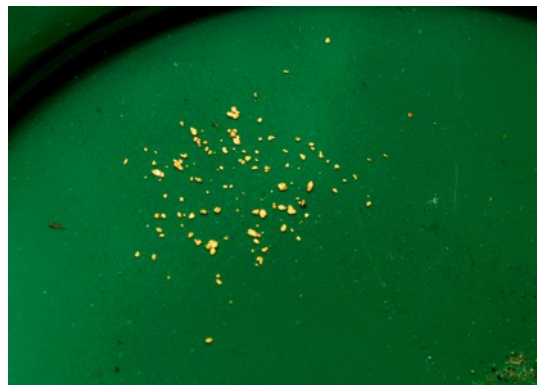


Photo :- The gold recovered from the Suisgill Burn

Ron Callender

Herodsfoot and North Herodsfoot mines

The name Herodsfoot has become synonymous through out the mineral collecting world for the occurrence of two minerals of exceptional quality - bournonite and tetrahedrite. These specimens were collected by the esteemed mineral dealer Richard Talling (1820 - 1883) and grace many fine collections. Galena and argentiferous galena were produced along with chalcopryite and according to Dines a small quantity of wolframite. The mine could have been at work as early as the 1600's



The mine in 1983 , photo Tony Clarke

The mine firstly worked the lode to the north, from the mid 1850's as the lode became poor a southern

drive was commenced, passing under the river it followed the lode along the valley. Eventually a shaft was dug from below upwards, the deads being left in the abandoned levels. This created a new mine that was furnished with a 60-inch engine and a whim. The old mine being abandoned but still having a connecting level at depth.

Geologically the country rock is slate (killas); the nearest granite for building purposes is the eastern edge of Bodmin moor, which in the 1800's would have been a torturous journey, meaning the building lintels were dressed with wood, most of which have now rotted out.



The mine June 2014, photo Richard Humphrey

The sheltered nature of the valley has been kind to the buildings allowing many of them to survive relatively unscathed.



Photo :- The engine house

The first engine house erected on the mine dates from the late 1700's of killas construction the infill is of soil and clay; it is now partially collapsed and

sadly in a poor state. The mine closed in the early 1820's.



Photo :- The boiler house

With rising demand for lead, the mine was reopened in the early 1840's. A new engine house was erected along with a large boiler house containing a horizontal boiler, a separate chimney a crusher house and a powder store all of which are standing today.



Photo :- The mine 2012

The old engine house was converted into a carpenter's workshop; there are other small buildings around this area, which we are at present not able to interpret. One water wheel emplacement is still visible; there was at least another. A very interesting feature is the encasement of the river in a killas tunnel of some 150 metres in length; the river emerges at the dressing floors. The tunnel is in remarkable condition, what we thought was a collapse is in fact the site of the old mine lavatory as marked on the mine abandonment plan. (Not much fun for those down stream).

The Count House became a dwelling in 1872 and generations of the same family remained until 1986.

The old mine buildings had various uses over the years, as cowsheds, hay storage etc.

A photograph taken by H.G. Ordish in 1954 shows a complete and roofed crusher house (this partially collapsed in 1968 whilst being used as a cowshed!) and a partly roofed engine house. Another taken in 1983 by Tony Clarke shows a fully roofed boiler

house. The tiles from this were taken to re-roof the Count House around 1996.

The tips have lain untouched for well over a century and are now covered with trees and leaf mould; they hold a fine array of minerals specimens.

We are currently engaged in stabilising the buildings and generally clearing the ivy and vegetation from the area.

On the mineral collecting side we have opened up an area on the dumps (which are extensive) close to engine shaft which has yielded specimens, of bournonite, tetrahedrite, cerrusite, galena, pyrrhotite, cubic pyrite, chalcopyrite, siderite, dolomite and good crystalline quartz.

Our aim is to locate the old workings that are said to be stoped up to near surface and gain entry into the mine.

You can follow our progress at www.northherodsfootmine.co.uk or get in touch at northherodsfootmine@yahoo.co.uk

Richard Humphrey

News Items

Ingleton Coal Mining Memorial 10 years old.



Constructed at the road junction of Laundry Lane, Ingleton and the passing A65 this small grass area is known as Fiddle Case Land, the memorial's official unveiling took place on the 14th June, 2004. On this day 10 years ago were gathered Parish Councillor Mr. Phil Walker, our three author's of the Ingleton Coalfield Book and a large gathering of enthusiastic locals. Many copies of BM 76 have been bought locally and it is still selling. The memorial in these ten years has stood the test of time, the stonework was supplied by the local quarry owner's Hansen's, the written information plaque is readable and the truck wheel's and

rails came from underground Ingleton. I felt it was now time for a little maintenance, I informed the local council that I would paint the ironwork with a suitable Metal Matt paint, they were pleased to receive the offer and accepted. We have now reached ten years and three day's with the memorial to Ingleton's Coal Mining looking good and again passers-by on this day are keen to know of the villages coal mining history.

Bernard Bond

Lynemouth Colliery Baths

An application for permission to demolish the former Lynemouth Colliery baths building has been refused by Northumberland County Council. The baths, a Modernist 1938 building by Twissel, have grade II* Listed status and are one of only four Listed pithead baths in England. Around forty years ago there were hundreds of these buildings, but recent work on a Research Agenda for the archaeology England's extractive industries showed that surviving features relating to twentieth century coal mining are very rare. The recent news of the intended closure of two of England's remaining three deep collieries will exacerbate that.

The Society objected to the closure, on the basis that the applicant had failed to make a case that there would be any significant public benefit from the loss of this structure. Also, the building's Modernist architecture merits its repair and adaptive reuse, in order to maintain the architectural diversity of the area.

Note. On a recent train journey to Newcastle, the writer spotted the former Tursdale Colliery pithead baths amongst modern tin sheds.

Mike Gill

Editors note:- The pithead baths at Northern United in the Forest of Dean are still standing, but probably because bats live in them rather than due to any attempt at preservation.

Geevor Tin Mine Exhibition

NMRS members may be interested in a new exhibition in the gallery at Geevor Tin Mine. This runs until Friday 26th September and showcases recent work by the St. Just Mines Research Society. Entitled 'The Mines of St. Just – Isolation, Innovation and Speculation', the exhibition aims to explore the unique characteristics of the St. Just Mining District.

Admission is free with site entry. Geevor is open every day except Saturday.

Bill Lakin

Claughton Brickworks



A visit to the brick works on the 7th July, photographing the enormous stacks of newly made bricks, in demand and being moved out, could only be described as a sheer delight.



The 44 newly-painted buckets have now been on the move to the quarry since the first week of March. The kiln roof areas have been replaced, staff increased, and full external building roofs replaced.

Bernard Bond

Anesco plans three new solar power facilities

June 30, 2014

By PennEnergy Editorial Staff

Anesco announced it's planning on developing 30 megawatts of solar energy facilities in numerous Harworth Estates' **former coal mining sites**, according to an official company statement.

Anesco will begin its solar project by developing sites in Mansfield, Lambley and Bilsthorpe. Construction will begin later this year. Once completed, the developments are anticipated to each have a 25-year life and combined will provide energy for 10,000 homes. All solar farms will be monitored by Anesco's maintenance system AnescoMeter.

The **Welbeck** Colliery in Mansfield will be the first development the company finishes. The solar application will cover **almost 32 acres of land** and use 44,160 solar panels to generate **11.2 MW** peak rated capacity.

The company is waiting for planning consent on a fourth development in South Yorkshire.

"Working with landowners to develop sites like these former collieries fits perfectly with government policy, with the Department of Energy and Climate Change **pushing the focus of growth in solar to be on brownfield sites and domestic and industrial roofs**," Anesco Chief Executive Officer Adrian Pike said.

<http://www.pennenergy.com/articles/pennenergy/2014/06/anesco-plans-three-new-solar-power-facilities.html?cmpid=EnlResearchJuly12014>

Underground photograph



Photo copyright Donald Elliott

The photograph shows John Angus Elliott operating a Siskell cutter underground at Brancepeth Colliery, County Durham, c1925. John was born at Willington, Co Durham. After working as a miner at Brancepeth Colliery he became a representative for Hardypick, a Sheffield Mining Machine company and he also lectured at the Mining and Technical College at Wigan. His son, Donald, was a miner from 1951 to 1960 at the School House Fireclay Mine, Skelmersdale, which had an 18" thick coal seam but the key extraction was of the 5ft thick clay seam.



Photo :- Donald at home in Ingleton on 23 April 2014 with his miners helmet and photo of his father

Bernard Bond.

Wilson Wood Colliery

On the 20th July 1872 the mining Royalty was sold to William Bracewell, owner of a foundry and mills at Burnley, Lancashire. Bracewell tackled the flooding problems with energy.

The Wilson Wood pit shaft, 180 yards deep, was full of water to within 35 yards of the surface. No one thought it would ever work again!

There was debris everywhere. Bracewell installed two horizontal engines, the larger for a set of 21 inch pumps, the smaller for a 16 inch set, the larger set below. It was accomplished without accident in spite of the water. Two sets of boilers were installed, another to be added, lifting 2000 gallons per minute. The colliery chimney was raised more than 200ft. Everything was substantial. 'There's no ginger work about it', said Bracewell. (Lancaster Guardian, 7th dec 1872)

The demand for coal was in excess of supply. Joseph Hunter had opened a pit at Newfield. One portable engine was pulling coal from a shaft to the 4ft bed. At a short distance away to the south another shaft 156ft deep reached the 6ft bed. A double-cylinder pulling engine was to be working there shortly. There was no trouble with water, the Wilson Wood pumps drawing it off. 'When fully operational, the pit would employ a large number and it will be a source of prosperity to the village', the correspondent wrote.

Prosperity Returns to Ingleton Collieries, but not without problems. There were a good many accidents at Wilson Wood but they were usually due to the breakdown of machinery or the carelessness of operatives. By October 1875 nearly 100 men were employed there. Moorgarth pit was closed for bad air but a drift was cut to make an airway. Mr John Allen was boring at two places for another seam. In January 1877 the large pumping engine broke down. It was no sooner repaired than a second breakage occurred but was again repaired. In 1875 Edmund Danson became colliery manager. Soon the 4ft seam was found. An old shaft used for ventilation caught fire. In March 1879 the shafting on the flywheel connected to the large pumping engine broke, water rose in the pit and work stopped for several days. On 4th October 1879 Bracewell brought a large boiler from his foundry at Burnley. It was pulled by the first traction engine ever seen in Ingleton. About 3 miles from Ingleton the road gave way. A hundred people went to look. It repeated the breakdown at the same spot on the return journey. In March 1881 a casting weighing 1½ tons was brought from Burnley to repair the broken beam on one of the pump engines. Bracewell was not one to be defeated by problems.

Adieu to Ingleton Colliery

Unfortunately for Ingleton, William Bracewell died in 1886. The Wilson Wood colliery, which employed 100 men and boys, contin-

ued to be worked by his Trustees. For the next 2 years things began to run down. Edmund Danson continued to run affairs. On 21st September cattle and horses on the Wilson Wood estate were sold. Coal was still on sale at 5d per cwt. But by April 1886 it was rumoured that stoppages were imminent. A deputation of 6 men met Danson at the Bridge Hotel, an agreement was reached and the men resumed work. James Barker, the deputy manager, had his leg broken by a roof fall. On Wednesday 20th July, at 3.30pm, Ingleton Colliery was to be sold at the County Hotel, Lancaster. It was not. By the 6th August 1887 it became known that the colliery was to be closed or sold though for the first 6 months it was still paying at 6%. A meeting was held at the Assembly Room, in Ingleton Hotel, with Joseph Carr in the chair, to consider the advisability of trying to purchase the colliery and carry on under a limited liability company. Two 'Gents' were appointed to visit Manchester to discover the lowest price fixed, but many miners had already gone elsewhere to work. They were unsuccessful.

On 27th August 1887 the colliery was to be closed and 150 employees made redundant. Workmen began removing the large pumps from the shafts but two small engines and several hundred yards of road rails had to remain, buried in the workings, probably submerged in water. The newspaper headline ran 'Adieu to Ingleton Colliery'. On 19th November it read 'Wreck of the Collieries'. The colliery and plant were sold by public auction but the Royalty was not sold. The local trustees hoped that after the sale the trustees would deal with them for the Royalty. So they bought a considerable amount of plant and made an offer. Negotiations continued for a month. The Trustees would not declare the reserve price and the Ingletonian offer was too small. After a month during which plant was sold piecemeal, a clearance sale followed.

Bernard Bond

West Cumbria Mining press release 9 June 2014 - www.westcumbriamining.com
Major Investment to bring coking coal project to West Cumbria

West Cumbria Mining has raised £14.7 million for the first stage of a project to open a new mine next to the former Haig Colliery in Whitehaven, West Cumbria.

The company aims to open the mine to extract coking coal which is used in the steel making industry.

Millions of tonnes of high quality coking coals were extracted from Haig Colliery from 1914 until it closed in 1986, much of it beneath the seabed, up to 5 miles offshore.

Based on existing data, West Cumbria Mining believes that there is over 750 million tonnes of coking coal resources across an area of some 200 square kilometres which it is investigating. This coal is located within three main seams, most of which are offshore and which were mined historically at Haig.

Mark Kirkbride, Chief Executive Officer of West Cumbria Mining said: 'The Company is delighted to announce the completion of financing for its Whitehaven Coking Coal Project. This is testament to the strong fundamentals of the project and the potential for this to become the next substantial, low cost, coking coal mining operation in the UK.

'The UK is currently a substantial net importer of coking coal for industrial use, the majority of which is sourced from Australia and the USA. It therefore makes economic sense to source available coking coal on our own shores if sufficient amounts can be accessed and mined economically. Europe is also a major net importer of coking coal which provides another attractive market on the project's doorstep. 'This is a new chapter in the story of the UK coal mining industry. The bulk of the industry has historically been focussed on thermal coal which is used in coal-fired power stations to generate electricity and is generally available in abundance around the world – as a result it commands a lower market price. Coking coal is different and offers significant scale for economic viability.

'We're looking forward to working with the local authorities and communities as the project develops. West Cumbria has a strong mining heritage. Whilst it's too early to talk about specific details, we believe that mining has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to the local area in the future, including high quality new jobs. We're committed to maximising local resources and skills and recruiting locally wherever possible.'

The financing has been secured to support the development of the company's Whitehaven Coking Coal Project. West Cumbria Mining will now start to discuss the project with the local authorities, other local organisations and residents to explain their plans and to get feedback as the work programme progresses. This will start with a limited programme of onshore drilling and data reprocessing to provide more details about the coal.

There will also be environmental and social studies as part of a Preliminary Feasibility Study.

In 2015 an offshore drilling programme will be undertaken to confirm the coking coal quality and the mineability of the seams in the areas where West Cumbria Mining has a licence and ultimately to define a large coal resource in accordance with industry reporting codes, as well as the completion of a Preliminary Feasibility Study.

West Cumbria Mining is ultimately aiming to develop a mine that would produce around three million tonnes of coking coal per year. The company

anticipates shipping the coal from the Whitehaven mining site to a local processing facility using existing transport infrastructure, and subsequently on to markets in the UK and Europe where there is a strong demand for high quality coking coal.

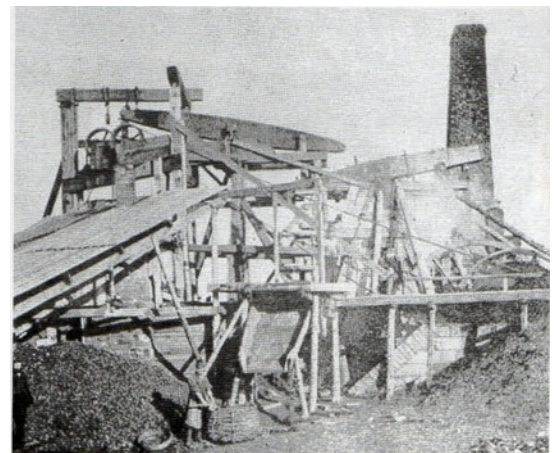
Ends

For further information please contact Paul Gardner at Osprey Communications on 015394-42436 or 07766-906561

Sent in by Garth Ziemba

18th century Lowca engine may come back to Cumbria

By Pamela Telford



Adam Heslop patented an engine on 17 July 1790 which was probably the forerunner of modern compound engines.

But the Heslop engine was not widely known, or used beyond what was then the Cumberland coal-field.

Heslop was the son of a Scots-born blacksmith who had settled in Workington, and his two brothers, Crosby and Thomas, worked at Seaton Ironworks (Barepot) in the same trade.

At some time he moved to the famous Coalbrookdale to gain experience and it was while living there, in Shropshire, that he patented his engine. Shortly afterwards he returned to Seaton and it is believed that his earliest engines were built there.

In 1798/9, in partnership with his brothers, William Stead of Bolton (Cumberland), Mr Johnson of Whitehaven, Mrs Ritson and Mr Milward he founded Lowca Ironworks (Heslops, Johnson, Milward and Company).

It has been confirmed that they made 15 Heslop engines and there were probably a few more of which no record exists.

Those known about are as follows. Old Dolly, used at Harris's Greysouthen Colliery. It is widely believed to be the original and scrapped about 1850. A pumping engine at Joseph Stead's Bolton Colliery (no further details).

A winding engine at Risehow, near Maryport, which was later moved to Greengill Colliery. A pumping and winding engine at Church Pit, Workington; a winding engine at Isabella Pit, Workington, later moved to Jane Pit and converted to an ordinary high-pressure engine; a winding engine at John Pit, Harrington, built 1810, 16hp raising coal from 95 fathoms. It was altered to a high-pressure engine by Daniel Hawthorn, manager of Lowca Ironworks under Tilk and Ley.

A winding engine at Henry Pit, 12hp; an 8hp (winding?) engine at Hodgson Pit, Harrington; a winding engine at Hodgson Pit, larger and more advanced than the previous one, which it replaced. It was scrapped about 1865 after being abandoned for some years; an engine used at Lowca Ironworks, erected about 1799/1800.

An engine at Mr Walker's Gigarran Colliery, no further details; a 10hp engine erected firstly at Boonwood and later at Dyon, Distington. Built in 1829 and was the last of the Heslop type; a winding engine at William Pit, Whitehaven, erected 1809. Raised coal from 106 fathoms for 40 yers and was scrapped in 1850. A winding engine at Lady Pit, later moved to Wilson Pit, supposedly built in 1795. Built around 1795 (the later addition of the air pump indicates original pre-1800 construction before Watt's patent terminated), this engine was at Kells Pit, Castlerigg Pit about 1819 (?) and Wreah Pit in 1837. This engine stopped work in June 1878, was dismantled and removed to the Patent Office Museum (now Science Museum) at South Kensington, London.

In recent years it has been disassembled and placed in storage. But there are indications from the Science Museum that, given a suitable housing, this engine could be returned.

From the Whitehaven Guide, June/July 2014 Sent in by Garth Ziemba

And that's almost it. Just room to mention another headline

'On the edge of Dartmoor history is being made. Australian mining firm Wolf Minerals is opening the first metal mine in the UK for 45 years.'

More details in the November newsletter.

But I couldn't resist the reports in the Daily Telegraph that

'The world's largest underground trampoline is opening on 4 July in Snowdonia's Llechwedd slate caverns, in a space twice the size of St Pauls cathedral.'

and on 20 June

'The South African makers of a drone that fires pepper spray bullets have received their first order for the device from a mining company. The drone is fitted with 4 paintball barrels capable of firing up to 20 bullets per second.'

Finally, has anyone got any information on the Eimco 12 B rocker shovel? I am trying to restore one at Clearwell Caves in the Forest of Dean to working order. Is there such a thing as a workshop manual?



Rob Needham

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