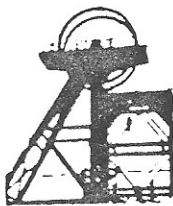


NAMHO

National Association of Mining History Organisations



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NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL - It has been a long time since the last edition of the NAMHO Newsletter has been published. This gap between publications has been due to one factor, namely virtually no copy has been supplied by the NAMHO member organisations for inclusion in the Newsletter.

The source of copy is limited to a very small number of individuals and an even smaller number of member organisations who have submitted copies of their own Newsletters etc from which topics of interest can be "cribbed". Unless further copy is made available it will be impossible for the Newsletter to continue to be published. I believe that the Newsletter is a useful forum for communication between member organisation and it would be a retrograde step if publication was to cease.

The ball is now in your court. To continue publication it is necessary to have copy to print so please send me copies of your Newsletters, press cuttings or other tidbits that are suitable for publication. The Newsletter is not a technical publication so long technical verbose articles are not required, just a precis to stimulate interest.

CHANGED REPRESENTATIVE

Wealden Cave and Mine Society, Representative: Peter Burgess, 5 Oakwood Close, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 4BE. Tel: Redhill (0737) 769015.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Icehouses" by K Buxbaum, published by Shire Publications Ltd as Shire Album No 278. Soft covers, A5, 32 pages, 25 photos and 22 diagrams. Cost £1.95.

It is not often realised that icehouses and mines have so much in common. Many icehouses are at least part buried in living rock and most have controlled ventilation and drainage. Some can be mistaken for mines since they have adit entrances, (entrances up to 30 yards are known), and many have more than one adit entrance. Usually there is a walk-in entrance and a drainage level but there can be as many as four adits as at Mossey Green in Shropshire. A few even have a narrow gauge railway for transporting the ice from the ice house to the "Great Hall", as at Hawkstone in Shropshire.

The descriptions and diagrams in this book are very clear and should help every visitor to identify mysterious workings where a short adit leads to a large chamber. Such workings can easily be mistaken for a mine trial.

There are other non-expensive books in the Shire Album Series which can help in the identification of other non-mining adit uses, Examples include "Limekilns and Limeburning" by R Williams (Album No 236) which shows the alternative uses for both "adits" and "shafts". "Charcoal and Charcoal Burning" by D W Kelley (Album No 159) can provide an alternative explanation for hillocking ground and round platform areas that look like gin

circles.

The books in this series continue to be of a high standard and are good value for money.

I J Brown

"United Kingdom minerals yearbook 1991. Statistical data to 1990" edited by G J Lofty & D E Highley. British Geological Survey vii+12+12+34+6+22pp, ISBN 0 852722028. Cost £27.50.

This book contains statistical data and commentaries on British mineral industries, exports and imports. In addition to comment on the declining coal mining operations, there are paragraphs devoted to "minor" minerals as well as the major working of aggregates and limestone.

It is noted that since the start of production at Clophil in 1987 Bedfordshire has become the major source of Fullers Earth in the UK. Also noted are the changes in the Fluorspar mining industry and the plans for the underground mining of Barytes in the Farragon Hills, west of Pitlochry. The production of crude celestite from Yate, in Avon, ended in 1991 due to "exhaustion of reserves".

The Capper Pass smelter in Humberside, operated by RTZ, closed and 1991 saw "almost the end" of tin mining in Cornwall. At the end of the year there were six Mines Royal leases for gold, together with 32 exploration licences. On Anglesey Parys Mountain will be the largest base metal mine ever to operate in the UK if, and when, it is brought into successful production.

Amongst the statistical tables can be found such fascinating figures as UK tungsten production (56 tonnes), bismuth imports (449 tonnes), sand & gravel exports (2.317,000 tonnes, and many more!

Paul W Sowen.

FOR SALE

1. Dr Trevor Ford has the following publications for sale.

a. "DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL", Volumes 1 - 100 (1879 - 198). The set is complete except for Volumes 37 (1915) and 38 (1916). There is an Index to volumes 1-2. Volumes 1-36 are leather bound in pairs or trios.

b. "DERBYSHIRE LIFE" magazine from 1970 to the present day. The portfolio is complete except for two issues. Also included are a few additional pre-1970 issues.

All offers to T D Ford. Tel:- Leicester (0533) 715265. It may be possible for the publications to be delivered to the purchaser.

2. The Underground Quarry at Corsham has a large lamp charger for sale. The equipment is an Oldham 415V, 3 phase, charger for a 102 lamp system that was obtained from Penallta Colliery in 1991. This equipment has now become surplus to the quarry requirements and is available to a good home at a reasonable price.

All offers to The Underground Quarry, Park Lane, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 0QR. Tel:- (0249) 716288.

3. The Shropshire Caving and Mining Club have a number of videos and publications relating to Snailbeach and other mines in Shropshire. The videos have been produced by IA Recordings, in association with SCMC, and the publications have been written, edited and/or updated by SCMC members.

A price list and order form is available from:- Mike Moore, 14 Greenvale, Church Aston, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9JD. Tel: Newport (0952) 812252.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1. A 2-day meeting to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the birth of Georg Agricola (of DE RE METALLICA fame) is to be held on 25th -26th March 1994 at Chemnitz (formerly Karl Marx Stadt).

Full details are available from Technische Universitat, Chemnitz-Zwickau, Agricola - Ehrung, Postfach 964, 0-9010, Chemnitz, Germany.

2. A conference on Extractive Industry Geology will be held by the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy at Sheffield University on 17th-20th April 1994.

Details are available from the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Conference Office, 44 Portland Place, London, W1N 4BR.

3. A conference on Mining in Latin America (Mineria Latinamericana) will be held at Santiago, Chile on the 10th-14th May 1994.

Details are available from the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Conference Office, 44 Portland Place, London, W1N 4BR.

COTHERCOTT MINE, SHROPSHIRE

Baker Sullivan Ltd have applied to Shropshire County Council for planning permission to carry out trenching work to establish the continuity and width of Barytes mineralisation at Cothercott Hill, near Church Pulverbatch, Shropshire. (SCMC Newsletter)

PLEASE HELP IN THE NORTH PENNINES

The North Pennines Heritage Trust is working to identify, conserve, restore and interpret sites that are important in the mining and agricultural history of the North Pennines. Present projects cover bingsteads, chimneys, flues, limekilns and fords.

A major task which was started at the end of December 1992 is the conservation and restoration of the Rampgill buildings at Nenthead. These buildings will house an exhibition area, audiovisual presentation and Trust offices. This, phase 1 of the conservation of the whole of the Rampgill site, will require several thousand man-hours of volunteer labour, ranging from heavy demolition work to light tasks, such as re-pointing walls.

The Trust will be extremely grateful for any help offered, either at their own work parties or in your own groups when visiting the area. Further information is available from Tom Barkas, tel:- (0434) 683576.

PUTTING THE SHINE ONTO BLUE JOHN

A Gallenkamp Vacuum Oven is being used at Speedwell Cavern to reduce the process which allows Blue John to be worked into jewellery from several days to about 24 hours.

John Harrison, whose family purchased the Speedwell cavern in 1943, is the present General Manager of the Company which manufactures the jewellery. He says, "Being crystalline, Fluorspar is extremely brittle and difficult to work. In order to bind the crystals together it is impregnated with resin. This impregnation used to involve dipping the Blue John into a pan of pine resin, curing it in an oven, cutting it into 1/2" or 3/4" slabs. The process was repeated until the piece of stone was the correct size for the piece of jewellery which was being made. The whole process took several days.

This process has now been reduced to 24 hours. The stone is dipped in resin and then put into the vacuum oven. The vacuum pulls the resin through the crystals holding them together better than ever before. It is now possible for us to cut far thinner sections than previously and this allows us to highlight the darker colours."

Extract from "Inspirations", Newsletter of Sanyo Gallenkamp PLC

CWMYSTWYTH LEVEL FAWR PLAQUE

Until the 1970's a fine slate plaque adorned the entrance of the Level Fawr at Cwmystwyth. Erected by the Cwmystwyth Mining Co Ltd in 1898 when the mine re-opened it named Henry Gammon as Managing Director; the names of two co-directors had been obliterated and infilled with lead when Henry Gammon assumed sole ownership in 1905. A glass fibre replica was later erected by the North Cardiganshire Mining Club. This also disappeared but it was returned in 1978 only to vanish completely.

The fate of both plaques was unknown until shortly before Christmas 1992 when the original plate was anonymously donated to the Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum. The plaque had been well looked after; it is pleasing that its future is now assured as such plaques are now rare. To my knowledge, only two entrance inscriptions survive in situ in mid Wales - the 1785 Keystone to Level Fawr at Pontrhydygroes and an 1870 Keystone to the Brommwy Deep Adit. Preserved plaques include one at Treddol Chapel Museum and two or three at Llyweog Mining Museum. The Welsh Industrial & Maritime Museum has two other plaques in its collections - the small 1842 tablet from Taylors Incline at Goginan, and the huge ornate plaque from the Van Mine.

The possibility of unauthorised removal led to a replica, rather than the original Goginan tablet being emplaced during restoration work in 1991. With reclamation work being mooted for Cwmystwyth it would be pleasing if a similar replica could be funded for installation at the Level Fawr as part of the reclamation works.

Robert Protheroe-Jones
National Museum of Wales

MINING AND MINERAL COLLECTIONS

The following are small private museums that may be of interest to members.

1. John King's Workshop Museum, Victoria Rd Pinxton

Exhibits and photographs of industry and life of years gone by. Open Saturday and Sunday, 2.00pm - 4.30pm mid March to mid October. Admission free but donations appreciated.

2. Wm Creighton Mineral Museum, 2 Crown St, Cockermouth, Cumbria.

A private collection of mainly Northern England minerals, incorporating the late William Shaw collection. Display of miner's lamps, tools, original artifacts and photographs. Closed on Sundays, admission charge 50p, children 25p.

CAVERS RISK CANCER FROM UNDERGROUND RADON

A recent article in New Scientist has highlighted the dangers of radon in caves and potholes.

It is stated that Giants Hole in Derbyshire has the highest recorded radon level in a UK cave. The levels recorded in the summer are such that a caver would accumulate the maximum recommended dose for employees covered by the 1985 Ionisation Radiation Regulations in 13 hours underground.

The message to cavers is "beware". There is no need to stop caving, just restrict your activities in areas of known high levels of radiation.

RADON IN SOME EAST MIDLANDS SEDIMENTARY ROCKS

Dr D S Sutherland recently presented the above paper to the Leicester Literary & Philosophical Society and the Geology Section. A summary of the paper states that:-

Radon has made the headline news in parts of the Midlands. What is it, and where does it come from? Radon is a naturally occurring, chemically inert but radioactive gas which comes up from the ground, normally in very small quantities, and disperses into the atmosphere. In recent years it has been recognised as a health hazard in some areas where it collects in buildings. In Devon and Cornwall (where the granites and associated veins contain uranium) the incidence of radon is high and an estimated 60,000 houses, as well as buildings such as schools, require remedial work to reduce the level of radon found.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE DOWN UNDER

Not a reference to Australia but to the cyclists who race in disused Cornish mines.

An article in the European describes how the cyclists climb down the Cornish cliffs to reach the adits of the disused mines. Once inside the mine they race along the passages, dodging the obstructions in the quest for excitement. The "sport" took off about two years ago and the only worry that the participants appear to have is in getting lost underground. I wonder what their reaction will be when they race off the end of a level and into a stope.

GWYNFYNYDD GOLD MINE

The former manager of Gwynfynydd Gold Mine, Nick Warrell, has bought the mine and has started working the mine again. The first major task is to pump out the old workings and then to install new equipment. For security reasons all of the processing plant is based underground.

The mine was first worked in 1863 by William Pritchard Morgan who discovered the Chidlaw lode in 1887 from which some 12,000 ounces of gold was produced. A second bonanza yielded another 10,000 ounces.

The mine closed in 1916 after failing to locate any fresh reserves. Apart from recent small scale working at Clogau St David's and exploration at Gwynfynydd during the 1980's, there has been no substantial gold mining in Wales since 1914.

Mr Warrell believes that there are reserves at Gwynfynydd which could bring in £31m, and he could strike another bonanza at any time.
(SCMC Newsletter)

CAVE LEADER PROSECUTED

The Forestry Commission has warned that the prosecution of Steve Boydon by Llanrwst magistrates for taking a 16 strong party into Rhiw Bach mine near Cwm Penmachno could be the first of many. The magistrates did not consider that ignorance of land ownership and the absence of any signs denying access to be an adequate defence to the charge. Mr Boydon was fined £90 plus £20 costs.

The illegal visit into the mine was highlighted after a member of the party was injured and had to be rescued, eventually being flown to hospital by RAF helicopter. The Forestry Commission District Manager has stated that the Commission was determined to close off ALL the old Gwydir Forest mines and will prosecute anyone found entering any mine.

The case was brought to court under Forestry Commission by-laws which say that nobody can enter a mine on their land unless there IS a sign "permitting or implying access".
(SCMC Newsletter)

PULVERISED FLY ASH (PFA) CEMENT

It has now been decided to fill sections of Snailbeach Mine, Shropshire. The fill that is most likely to be used is PFA and cement. It is stated that when mixed with water the "grout" can be injected or pumped underground to fill cavities and when it hardens it consolidates the ground. This fill then, in theory, prevents any further migration of underground voids to the surface.

Recent research by Subterranea Britannica suggests that PFA is not the universal "void removal" panacea that it may seem to be. Subterranea Britannica have been watching the erosion of such grouting underground over the last 20 years. There is clear photographic evidence of the deterioration, but nobody seems to be bothered. It is a case of "once the hole has been filled and is out of sight, it is also out of mind"!

Subterranea Britannica makes the point that while they have been monitoring the deterioration of PFA grouting over the last 20 years, the engineers who placed the grout have not monitored the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the process.
(SCMC Newsletter)

BALL EYE MINE, BONSALL

Members are advised that there is no longer any access to Ball Eye Mine. This is due to the extension of surface mining for fluorspar in the Ball Eye Quarry and the proposal for underground working in the future.

The proposed workings will not directly effect Ball Eye Mine, other than it will be used as a source of water for the processing plant at Dunsley Mill. The water will be extracted from the Founterabbey Sough.

CAVERS FAIR - 10\11th JULY 1993

This event will be held in the Derbyshire Peak District and there will be numerous social and technical activities. It is sponsored by BCRA and NCA. Further information from Fair Manager, 1 Wyelands Court, St Johns Rd, Buxton, Derbys, SK17 6XA.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE COAL INDUSTRY

As part of its continuing programme of recording the monuments of industry, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England has embarked on a principally photographic survey of the surface structures associated with coal mining in the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, many of the historically interesting buildings have already been destroyed in the rush to annihilate colliery surface remains when the pit is closed. Let us hope that there are sufficient remains to enable a constructive record to be produced.

It is proposed that the Commission will shortly publish a book on the buildings of the coal industry.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS Registered Charity No 504662

Registered Office, c/o Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, South Parade,
Matlock Bath, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR. Tel:- Matlock (0629) 583834.