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NAMHO

National Association of Mining History Organisations

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE No 22 AUGUST 1992

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NAMHO FIELD MEET, 26-29th JUNE 1992

The Field Meet was hosted by Shropshire Caving & Mining Club and was based on the Telford area of Shropshire. The weather was glorious and there were 90 persons who paid to attend. It had been decided to advertise the event to cavers as well as mining historians and the eventual split was about 50:50. This was very encouraging since many of the cavers had never been in a mine before and they expressed interest in learning more.

The Field Meet pioneered a new approach whereby a greater range of activities were offered. These were:-

1. Seminars on the theme of mine site preservation
2. Surface walks
3. Underground trips
4. SRT training on a climbing wall
5. Underground surveying workshop
6. Underground video recording workshop

The central campsite was very popular and many new friendships were made, including offers of return trips to other areas. There was a social on the Saturday night with a folk group, the only complaint being that the chilli was a "bit fierce"!

Brian Pearce

MINING HISTORY SEMINARS AT THE NAMHO FIELD MEET, JUNE 1992

A series of well attended seminars on the general theme of site preservation and interpretation were held in the Long Warehouse of the Ironbridge Museum through Saturday and Sunday morning. The lectures provided a good review of work taking place in several mining districts of England and Wales and served to illustrate the common problems encountered by those wishing to take initiatives with particular sites.

Geof Cox started the proceedings with a review of the long standing education centre that he has run at his Ecton Mine in Staffordshire and drew particular attention to the financial problems resulting from the current economic depression in the British Mining industry, together with the difficulties and hazards of trying to arrange for adequate insurance cover for visitors to the mine.

Mike Gill continued with a detailed review of the problems and successes that the Friends of Cononley Mine had confronted and enjoyed in leasing, securing, stabilising and interpreting that site in Yorkshire and highlighted the source of finance for such projects.

Rob Vernon reviewed the considerable progress made in the Gwydyr Forest of North Wales

with the restoration and interpretation of mine sites through the combined efforts of central and local government bodies.

Alan Buckley and Bryan Earl talked about the ongoing efforts to prevent the distribution of mining and drainage machinery at the recently closed Geevor Mine in West Cornwall.

Alan Hill concluded the Saturday's proceedings by describing the the disastrous loss of important relics of the coal mining industry as a result of the over-hasty clearance of sites and the failure to develop a coherent conservation policy.

On Sunday morning the proceedings resumed with an introductory lecture on the proposed plans developed by Shropshire County Council and Wardell Armstrong for the development of the Snailbeach Mine site in the south of the county. In the following discussion it became clear that, if the attention of local authorities can be engaged in such projects, there are large derelict grants available for such purposes.

The conclusion of the lecture series seemed to be that there is no particular shortage of funds of funds for securing our mining heritage but the problem lies in initiating the projects and retaining sensible control, or influence, over how they proceed, how the sites are interpreted and made available to the public. In the 1990's there will, no doubt, be an increasing trend towards "managing" all major mining districts and all NAMHO Societies should take immediate steps to ensure that they are involved with local schemes from when the initial proposals are made. Failure to become involved may result in the loss of control of these developments

Roger Burt

NOTES FROM THE LAKELAND MINES AND QUARRIES TRUST

Work is progressing on the museum site at Threlkeld but delays with DoE grant application has delayed the work such that the site will not be open to the paying public until 1993. The basis of the display is equipment that has been removed from the Force Crag Mine.

As a result of an initiative by the National Parks Planning Authority, the Mines and Quarries Committee has been formed. The committee consists of representatives from English Heritage, NPA, LMQT, CAT and MOLES and the objective is to develop a scheme of access and control for mining sites in Lakeland and to make comments on planning applications which involve a mine or quarry site in the area.

A proposal has been made to by CAT and MOLES to re-open the Lucy Level at Greenside Mine.

CAVE & MINE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Guidelines have been agreed between NAMHO/NCA and the Mines Inspectorate to introduce a Mine Leadership Assessment for leaders of novices from Outdoor Pursuit Centres, schools etc. This does **NOT** apply to clubs within NAMHO/NCA either for their own exploration or the training of their own novices. Currently, NCA offers Cave Instructor's Certificate (CIC) and a Local Cave Leadership Assessment (LCLA).

The Training Committee of the NCA now intends to replace the LCLA with a new scheme, the Local Cave & Mine Leadership Assessment, (LCMLA). It is hoped to introduce the scheme by the end of 1993.

"KINGSLEY EVICTIONS 1905"

This book by Pat and Rennie Pickles is available from the Wakefield Art Gallery, Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield, WF1 3QW and costs £4.95 plus £1.30 p&p.

In 1905 the whole of Great Britain was made aware of the conditions of miners and their families living in colliery-owned housing. In the village of Kingsley, near Hemsworth in Yorkshire, over a hundred families were evicted from their homes in a dispute between the miners and the coal owners.

This exceptional collection of photographs documents the events as they happened - families turned into the streets, furniture piled high in storage, life in the tented village set up in the fields, the support of Keir Hardie and the early labour movement. Poignant images are combined with contemporary newspaper reports to give a fascinating account of a landmark in labour history.

I J Brown

CONONLEY MINE - HOW THE SITE WAS SAVED

Cononley Mine, two miles south of Skipton in Yorkshire, is part of the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth Estate. Work in the area of the Engine Shaft began around 1840 and the buildings date from the early 1840's. The small totally enclosed beam engine (of which nothing else is known) was used for pumping, winding and crushing, and it worked until the mine closed in 1881. A barytes dressing plane was built in the engine house in the 1950's and by 1960 the building was in a poor state of repair.

In the late 1960's the Earby Mines Research Group were granted permission by the Estate to consolidate the Engine House. In 1985, however, a planning application was made to remove the dumps for the extraction of any remaining barytes. Although it was proposed to leave the the buildings untouched, they would be left out of context and the North Yorkshire County Archaeology Department had them Listed. The planning application was refused and the County Archaeologist arranged a meeting between representatives of local government, mining historians and the owners to discus the future of the site. The outcome was that the owner's agent was prepared to let the site on a very favourable lease to a group formed for the purpose of making the site safe and presenting it to the public. The County and District Council's were unable to participate directly but undertook an enabling role by providing contacts with fund giving bodies and other help.

As with all embryonic projects, one is faced with the problem of how soon to go public, especially where any proposals could affect the owners of neighbouring land and property. At Cononley, however, this decision was taken for us by the local press who reported on the discussions at a Council meeting. Fortunately, our immediate neighbours were also keen to see the site preserved in the low key manner that had been proposed and the plans were amended to accommodate their thoughts on the subject. The owners of the adjacent land had no major objections and have been very helpful whenever there has been a requirement to cross their land. On reflection, it is probably best to involve neighbours as soon as possible.

As an aid to fund raising a report was prepared which gave details of the mine's history, geology, hydrology, archaeology and botany. It also set out the aims of the project, detailed the work needed and the costs involved to achieve these aims.

The aim of the project is to interpret the site and to make it available to the public as an educational and recreational facility. The work that was necessary to achieve this aim included fencing the site to prevent fly tipping and illegal entry by travellers, capping two shafts, making the inclined shaft secure, repairing the breach in the mine reservoir and clearing the collapsed culvert that passed under the dumps. In addition roads had to be repaired, buildings made safe and signs erected.

There are two basic types of grant. There are those which are paid "up front" and those that are paid in arrears. The former are necessary to unlock the latter. The first cash came from the Rural Development Commission, the Northern Mine Research Society and the Derbyshire Caving Club. This funding covered the organisational expenses and the cost of fencing the southern boundary of the site, the other boundaries being walled. The fencing was done by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. A group of local men then

became involved in the project and have since done much of the work. The District Council and the Standing Conference of South Pennine Authorities gave grants towards a display board, signs and a leaflet. Assistance with the clearing of the culvert and the repair work on the reservoir came from the Shell Better Britain Campaign. The County Council also made a general grant towards the project. The largest tranche of money came from the Department of Environment's Derelict Land Grant. This paid for 50% of the cost of shaft capping, repairing the roads and safety work to the buildings and dam. The manager of the local branch of the Yorkshire Bank provided the Friends with a high interest account. A total funding of £14,253 has been raised towards the cost of the project.

There are many points to bear in mind when taking on the responsibility for a site, especially if the holding is to be on a lease, and anyone considering taking such a lease must, therefore, get legal advice. As an example of the responsibilities, the members may take on liability for public safety and unforeseen repairs. In addition some organisations have had difficulties obtaining adequate insurance cover, the Friends having recently been quoted £370 per year for public liability cover which also includes employers liability towards members.

Mike Gill

BALES AND SMELT MILLS - LOW ROW, 15th-17th MAY 1992

The principal aim of this conference, sponsored by the Historical Metallurgy Society, was to assess our knowledge of all aspects of the early lead smelting industry in Great Britain. Apart from some historical detail, mainly for bole smelting in Derbyshire, the answer is plainly "very little". That lack of knowledge was clearly seen in the attempts to force evidence from Derbyshire to fit what appears to be a typical Yorkshire bale. Lawrence Barker's survey of bales in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale (NMRS BM8 1978) remains the foremost piece of fieldwork on the subject and has produced the only Carbon 14 date for a bale site of 1464 +/- 25 years.

The principal conclusion of the conference was that much more work should be done on bales and earlier or alternative smelting sites, but the writer was not alone in his disappointment that the early modern and more recant periods were dismissed. There is much more work to be done on smelt mills, which have only ever been really examined in Yorkshire and Scotland. There was also some reticence about the early need for a precise chronology, through C14 dating, because of the desirability for getting samples of charcoal out of known contexts. Does that mean we are only going to get dates from the two or three bales which are excavated? If so, that is of little use to those of us to whom the precise working and layout of a bale is important but nonetheless of secondary interest to the wider concept of interpreting the lead industry.

Nevertheless, the conference was very useful and the speakers dealt with a broad range of topics and, if it stimulates the promised level of research, there is room for optimism that progress will be made. For example, the University of Bradford has begun a non-destructive survey of the Grinton smeltings. With the aid of information from this, and other surveys, it is intended to design the criteria for excavating a selected sample of bales. There are also projects looking at areas of woodland, to detect signs of management such as coppicing for a fuel supply, and the flora associated with smelting sites as an aid to their detection.

The conference papers have been edited by Dr L Willies and D Cranstone and they are are being published by the Historical Metallurgy Society. The illustrated publication is in the form of a 50-60pp A4 paperbound booklet and the cost is £10.00 plus p&p. It is available from HMS SAles, c/o Peak District Mining Museum, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Derbys, DE4 3PS.

Mike Gill

FOR SALE:- ECONOMIC GEOLOGY - TWO SETS OF BOUND VOLUMES

i) Economic Geology Volumes 49 (1954) to 57 (1962) inclusive. These nine bound volumes, each with +1500 pages each, contains papers mainly on North America, Non - European and East European minerals.

ii) Annotated Bibliography of Economic Geology Volumes 26 (1953 to 38 (1965) inclusive. These thirteen bound volumes, of about 350 pages each, have a similar subject - matter coverage to the the previous set.

Offers, to Paul Sowan, c/o CNHSS Ltd, 96a Brighton Rd, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6AD, are invited and the rescuer would would accept, say, £3 per volume. To minimise the potential expensive postal charge Paul could deliver the volumes in instalments via IMHA or NAMHO meetings.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS OF CORNWALL

A series of 26 photographic prints of the main mining districts in Cornwall (dated 1819 - 1871) are available from the Cornwall Record Office. These prints vary in size from 21" x 20" to 60" x 42" and the cost varies from £7.50 to £20.00 each plus p&p and VAT.

For full details please contact Cornwall Record Office, County Hall, Truro, TR1 3AY.

UNDERGROUND WINE BAR TO CLOSE

Batchelors Wine Bar, situated in the sand mines under London Road, Reigate, is soon to close. A compulsory purchase order has been placed by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council who wish to fill it in as a safety precaution because it runs under the road. This is yet another Reigate site that is to be lost.
WCMS

THREAT TO DINAS MINES, SOUTH WALES

There is a proposal to seal Dinas Silica Mines "for public safety". If this involves blasting in the entrance and entry subsequently regained by unauthorised tunnelling, just how safe will it be? When will these short-sighted do-gooders understand the potential problems they may be creating rather then solving problems that really do not exist?

These mines are, by and large, some of the safest workings known and the recent death of an explorer, from heart failure, was unlikely to have been caused by any hazard within the mine.

It is hoped that a gate will be fitted to keep members of the public out of the mines and that the keys would be available to genuine mine historians.
WCMS

ANOTHER NAMHO MEMBER ACHIEVES CHARITABLE STATUS

It has been announced that the Wealden Cave and Mine Society has is now a Registered Charity.
WCMS

MONUMENTS PROTECTION PROGRAMME

English Heritage is undertaking a review of the criteria which it uses to assess the suitability of a monument for scheduling. This is being done under a new system, called the Monument Protection Programme, which is intended to ensue that there will be a

reasonable representation of all types of site scheduled. This programme is taking a long time to establish because it involves producing Assessment Criteria for each industry's monuments. English Heritage is, nowadays, reluctant to Schedule new sites until that site has been assessed.

If a site is threatened, however, detailed written submissions may be made to English Heritage or the appropriate District Council which has responsibility for Listing Sites. For convenience, District Councils often pass this task to the County Archaeology Unit which is responsible for maintaining the Sites and Monuments Register. The latter is a list of sites, which may, or may not, be Listed or Scheduled, which is consulted as part of the Planning Procedure. The Register is the lowest level of protection but it ensures that the existence of a historical site is not overlooked.

English Heritage has invited NAMHO to submit detailed proposals relating to the Criteria for Scheduling underground sites associated with Non-Ferrous Metal Mines. These proposals have been submitted to English Heritage, together with a report on the surface features which has been prepared by David Cranstone, but an adequate overview of the industry has not yet been completed.

NAMHO has also prepared draft reports on coal, fireclay, ironstone, and miscellaneous (stone, sand, gangue materials etc) mines ready for future submission.

Mike Gill

ADOPT A MONUMENT

The condition of most archaeological sites and monuments in the Yorkshire Dales is not systematically monitored. In Scotland and parts of Devon, however, "adopt a monument" schemes have been introduced whereby volunteers undertake to visit a particular site on a regular basis and report on it's condition and any potential threats or management proposals. These visits are made in liaison with the landowner/farmer on whose land the site is situated. In some cases the volunteers undertake some limited maintenance of the site, eg scrub clearance.

The Devon scheme has now been running for over a year and there are now some 45 volunteers involved with the project. The scheme has been successful and their is obvious scope for such a scheme to be considered for the Yorkshire Dales. The National Park is considering the matter and will shortly be submitting it's own proposals to local Societies.

Mike Gill

EQUIPMENT WANTED

The Eastwood Mine and Caving Club are wanting to purchase some 100ft of electron ladder, made up of four lengths. The ladder must be in good condition.

They are also in the market for a winch drum, complete with brake, to enable them to complete the building of a mobile winch.

Any offers to Mr L Ufton, 81 Queens Road North, Eastwood, Notts, NG16 3JL