

NAMHO

**National Association
of Mining History
Organisations**



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1999

SPECIAL FOREST OF DEAN CONFERENCE EDITION

24 - 26 September 1999

WELCOME TO NAMHO'99

The organisers of the NAMHO'99 Conference extend a warm welcome to you. It is now 20 years since the formation of NAMHO and this, the tenth biennial conference, is being held in the well known and picturesque mining district of the Royal Forest of Dean. An exciting programme of speakers, underground visits and surface walks has been arranged to cater for all interests, abilities and ages.

Based at the Civil Service Motoring Association (CSMA) site at Parkend, the Conference looks set to be another success. The organisers are fortunate to have found such a convenient and attractive centre for the main events and a marquee has been arranged for the evening meal and entertainment on Saturday night. Camping, chalets and caravan pitches are available on site, as well as an adventure playground for children and an indoor swimming pool.

The Conference theme is mainly based upon British mining customs but it also includes speakers describing mining around the Forest of Dean and contributions from the Mines Inspectorate and Mines Rescue Service. Simon Timberlake, a mining archaeologist, will raise an awareness of mining features which may be more important than is normally assumed. The talks will end with reminiscences from a well known NAMHO member who actually worked in coal and iron ore mines in the Forest of Dean during the Second World War.

On Saturday evening, Mr Watts will show his excellent film on Free Mining in the Forest of Dean. The evening will also include a chance to

see Dave Carlisle's very entertaining recreation of a nineteenth century mining agent.

The underground trips and surface walks have been categorised to emphasise suitable abilities and range from the very easy to the very ambitious. The organisers hope that member's families will make the most of the venue and location.

NAMHO events are an opportunity for member organisations and their members to meet like-minded people, to exchange information, to provide the mining history community with an annual point of contact and an opportunity to get out of their own environment. We hope you will enjoy this year's event.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Some of the delegates at this Conference will remember the "Mining Conference at Beamish on 23-24 June 1979 when the final session (5.00-5.30pm) was a discussion on "The Future". My notes of this meeting say that it was resolved to:-

- a. to set up a Standing Council of Club Representatives
- b. for these Representatives to meet at Matlock Bath in September 1979
- c. to arrange a biennial conference and for the first conference to be held in Shropshire in June 1981.
- d. admission charge to Conference to be no more than £5 and for there to be trips on the Friday and Monday before and after the Conference.

The first Council Meeting was held in Matlock Bath on 16 September 1979 and the "launching contributors"

(at £5 each) were Alston Moor MRS, Beamish Museum, Cambrian AT, Carn Brea MS, Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum, Clearwell Caves, Earby MRS, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, North Cardigan MC, North Wales CC, NMRS, PDMHS, Plymouth MMC and Shropshire CMC.

Earlier NAMHO Conferences were held at Ironbridge (1981), Leeds (1983), Matlock Bath (1985), Cornwall (1987), Ambleside (1989), Llechwedd (1991), Isle of Man (1993), Lilleshall (1995) and Darley Dale (1997).

So it is that in 1999 we are now holding our 10th Conference. The format seems to have changed little but the cost has gone up a bit!

I would like to welcome all who attend this Conference and I am sure that there will be plenty to interest everyone. The four local NAMHO member organisations have been working hard for the last two years to organise this Conference and I am confident that we shall enjoy the fruits of their labours. I am most grateful for all they have done.

NAMHO has not completed its work. At this conference we hope to launch our revised "Access Code" that has been produced with the co-operation of the Mines Inspectorate (note also their contribution to this Newsletter) and to launch a new series of books that have been published in association with Tempus Publishing Ltd. We are also collecting information for a revised Mining Heritage Guide next year.

Next year NAMHO breaks with tradition when we have a special International Millennium Conference which is to be held in Cornwall. A lot

of work has already been done on the organisation of the Conference and provisional programmes and accommodation details are available at this Conference.

I hope that you enjoy this weekend and, as this is the 10th Conference, I shall give a prize to the first person who proves to me that they have attended all previous NAMHO Conferences.

*Dr Ivor J Brown
NAMHO Chairman*

SAFETY ALERT

The death of a man who fell down a shaft while excavating at a disused lead-silver mine at Combe Martin in Devon on 27 June 1999 attracted much media attention, some of it critical of the way those involved had concealed their activities from the authorities and responsible voluntary sector associations. HM Inspectorate of Mines assisted the police with investigations and have provided the following information in the hope that members of NAMHO will learn from this tragic incident.

"The dead man was the owner of a farm and the shafts of the mine, which was last abandoned in 1881, lay within his property. He and three friends, none with any previous mining experience but sharing an interest in mining archaeology, had been excavating the two shafts for more than ten years. At the time of the incident they had reached a depth of 40m in the second shaft, clearing debris in a small skip wound by a diesel winch to a landing incorporated in a headgear improvised from scaffolding tubes. The man appears to have fallen to his death in the shaft as he attempted to land a skip of debris by leaning out to pull the skip to the shaft side. The shaft top was not fitted with safety trap doors; the landing had no handrails or toeboards and the dead man had not been wearing a safety harness. If any members of NAMHO are undertaking shaft clearing operations without using these well recognised safety features, they are urged to do so."

NAMHO wishes to it make clear that no members were involved in the activities at Combe Martin. Advice on safety in shaft work is readily available to members from the professional mining engineers within NAMHO. If you are in any doubt, then contact W J Taylor, Hon Secretary, and he will arrange for you to get advice from a professional mining engineer who is a

member of one of the NAMHO organisations.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CARN BREA MINING SOCIETY

Carn Brea Mining Society celebrated its 25th Anniversary this year. To commemorate this achievement, the Society held a "Vanning Contest" which was held on a damp Sunday in June. A good time was had by all with the competition being won by ex Geevor Geologist Charles Smith.

STABILISING UNSTABLE MINING LAND

A new initiative to tackle unsafe mines, the Land Stabilisation Programme, has been launched.

It will be administered by English Partnerships and funding will be made available to local authorities and National Parks Authorities to stabilise areas of abandoned non-coal mining areas which have been left in a hazardous condition. The programme will fund the stabilisation costs including investigations, surveys and pre and post treatment monitoring.

All very nice if you get a slice of the action but what will be the effect on the classic mining sites around the country?

OPEN DOOR AT THE COAL AUTHORITY

The Coal Authority of GB has now adapted an "open door policy". Its first public meeting was attended by four outsiders (including two miners and a solicitor). Its second meeting is to be held in Leeds on 14 September and, according to a note in "Newscene", (formerly Coal News), the house-journal of RJB Mining, further information can be obtained from the website: www.coal.gov.uk

This presupposes that all persons who may be interested in attending have a computer connected to the Internet. However, all attempts by the writer to gain access to this website have failed.

A telephone call to 01623 427162 (a number obtained from other sources) provided the information that the meeting would be held at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds, LS10 1LT at 11.00am on 14 September 1999. Presumably the entry charge of £8.00 and car parking fee of £3.00 will apply. "Interested"

CONTRACTORS FINED AFTER TUNNEL COLLAPSE

Balfour Beatty has been fined £1.2m, plus £100,000 costs, following the collapse of the Heathrow Express tunnel at Heathrow Airport in 1994. The Company, which was the main contractor for the project, admitted failing to protect workers and the public from "very serious risks".

This fine is said to be the highest for a single Company under the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act.

Geoconsult, tunnelling experts from Austria, was found guilty of two similar offences and was fined £500,000, plus £100,000 costs. *Daily Telegraph*

MINING JOURNAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The winner of the Underground Section of the 1998 Competition was Paul Deakin with a photograph taken in East Foss Barytes Mine, Scotland. Second place went to C McCombe with a photograph of a miner lying on his side shovelling coal in Ayle Colliery, Northumberland.

RJB MINING INVESTMENT

RJB is to invest £20m in a 295yd long state-of-the-art longwall face at Daw Mill Colliery, Warwickshire. The face will have a life of 15 months and 2.5m tons of coal will be produced, extracting a 5m slice from the top of the 10m thick Warwickshire Thick Coal seam.

Most of the equipment will be supplied from factories in Wigan, Worcester, the Midlands and Yorkshire. Daw Mill is one of the fifteen collieries operated by RJB Mining *Eng & Min Journal*

LADY VICTORIA WASHER WORKING AGAIN

The Old Coal Washer at the Lady Victoria Colliery, Midlothian, Scotland has been restored. This is the latest phase of the conservation of the surface structures at the colliery which has been ongoing since 1985.

The Old Washer was built around 1911 and consisted of bash tanks for cleaning raw coal. The feed elevator has been refurbished and visitors can see the jigs which were in common use until the closure of the mine in the early 1980's.

Mines & Quarry

METAL MINING IN THE UK

With the closure of the Cornish South Crofty tin mine in 1997, the Florence Mine in Cumbria is the only UK mine raising a metalliferous mineral as its main product. Haematite is mined at Florence for use in pigments and in foundry annealing processes.
Mining Journal

SOUTH CROFTY UPDATE

There has not been any progress on the proposed sale of South Crofty mine to Welsh businessman Wilf Hughes.

Kerrier councillors are refusing to accept that South Crofty mine is dead and are continuing to back the reopening of the mine. Recently there has been a proposal to build a University of Cornwall campus on the site.

As it now looks doubtful that South Crofty will reopen, suggestions are being made to safeguard the headframe as a lasting memorial to many years of mineral mining in Cornwall.

MONUMENTS PROTECTION PROGRAMME

It is known that some members have been consulted and have commented on Step 1 reports for Lead, Iron and Steel and quarrying (stone extraction). A copy of Step 3 (Coal) has also been seen. Step 1 of Alum, Tin, Arsenic and Gunpowder may have been seen by non-council representatives. Bloomeries, Salt, Oil, Gas and Water Power, which are also of interest to members of NAMHO have, apparently, not yet been started.

The writer, I J Brown, has only seen one Step 3 report and none of the Step 4 reports although eight have been completed. The position of these is being investigated.

I J Brown

SECOND SELBY PIT TO CLOSE

RJB is to close the North Selby Mine next year with the loss of about 300 jobs. RJB has already closed Whitemoor Mine and merged North Selby with Stillingfleet. The Company has been frustrated by geological problems and poor productivity at the mine. The output from the Selby complex will be less than 6m tons per year, a figure that is less than half the original planned output.

A RJB spokesman has said that by concentrating production in areas with lower geological risk will provide the

more secure and stable operations required in the current economic climate.

Daily Telegraph

OLDHAM CAPLAMP BATTERIES

I recently discovered that my Oldham Caplamp Battery was not holding its charge. Fortunately I made this discovery as I was setting out to open Scott's Grotto¹ to the public for a couple of hours rather than during a more extended underground expedition and so I was able to take alternative lighting.

I tried, unsuccessfully, to contact the chap who had sold me my old battery so I set out to discover current suppliers, prices *et hoc genus omne*. A few minutes² on the world wide web provided a list of suppliers of caving equipment. These were then invited to send price lists and catalogues.

This research told me that the technology had moved on and that there were many more modern caplamp models but, reasoning that I already had the headset and battery cover and more than enough Oldham spares to last out my lifetime, I decided that a replacement battery was the best choice.

The best price by far was offered by Stuart Kirby - Purveyor of Illuminating Experiences - who carries on his business in a small village in Gloucestershire. As I was visiting Gloucester in connexion with another society's activities, I was able to collect the battery and avoid the cost of postage (not inconsiderable - the battery is mostly lead, after all).

If other members find themselves in a similar position, I would strongly suggest that they contact Mr Kirby. His telephone number is 01531 650226 and facsimile number 01531 650012.

Being a very cautious person, I am not in the habit of giving unsolicited testimonials but I felt that others might be interested. Mr Kirby agreed that I could offer his name and contact details to the Editor for publication.

1 Scott's Grotto is in Scotts Road, Ware, Hertfordshire and is open on Summer Saturday and Bank Holiday afternoons from 2:00pm to 4:30pm. Admission is free (donations invited) and a visit is very worthwhile if you are in the area.

2 This does not include the time wasted when the system crashed or hung or while it downloaded totally

useless large graphics images. Why can't web site designers realise that graphics just irritate some users who would much prefer a plain text site?
M C Black

MINE HERITAGE AND TOURISM - A HIDDEN TREASURE

An international conference is being organised by the Geological Survey of Ireland, Shannon Development and the Mining Heritage Society of Ireland on behalf of the MINET project. MINET is an EU funded project established to develop a pilot network of European Mine Heritage Centres. The project involves partners from France, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the UK. A two day conference is planned for 4 - 5 November 1999 and it will be based in Nenagh, Co Tipperary. There will be pre and post-conference field trips (Bunmahon and the Irish National Mine Heritage Centre at Shallee, (Silvermines). The topic of the conference is "Mine Heritage as a Tourism Resource".

Further details can be obtained from: Mr Eamonn de Stafort, Shannon Development, Connolly Street, Co Tipperary, Ireland.
Tel: + 353 - 67 - 32100.
Fax: + 353 - 67 - 33418. E-mail: DESTAFORTE@shannon-dev.ie

INTERNATIONAL MINING CONGRESS

The next International Mining Congress will be held on 13 - 16 September 2000 at Milos, Greece. Preliminary information is available from the following web site:
<http://heliotopos.net/conf/immhc>

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"We are involved in a Leader funded transnational project with mine heritage groups from Parys Mountain in Wales and West Cornwall. In order to further the mining migration aspect of the project we are attempting to identify the origin of names in the Avoca valley in Co Wicklow. We are trying to trace mine directors at the Cronebane Mine in East Avoca who met at Cronebane on 7th November 1798.

They were:- Edward Hawkins, Macclesfield; Bryan Hodgson, Craigmarsch; John Jefferies, Gloucester; Robert Hodgson, Congleton and Thomas Weaver, Gloucester.

We are also looking for a Henry Hodgson who developed the mine at West Avoca and our mineral tramway, ~~the Arklow Harbour and a chemical and manure works at Arklow.~~ We believe he came to Avoca around 1820 but this is not definite. He was born on 6th January 1796 and we are trying to trace his place of birth and wonder if he is related to the above mentioned Hodgsons.

We also understand that approximately fifty miners emigrated from Avoca to Clithermoor (this spelling may not be correct) in Cumbria circa 1860 and would appreciate confirmation/further information of this migration.

Have any NAMHO members any information/advice on the above subject or who could advise us on how to research the above mentioned miners. I can be contacted at:- Ballymoneen, Avoca, Co Wicklow, Ireland”
Marie Merrigan

CORNISH MINERS GALA

The Cornish Miner's Association held a gala on a very wet day last May to celebrate hundreds of years of copper and tin mining in Cornwall. The march started at the gates of South Crofty and the banners of many Cornish mines were paraded by former miners through Camborne town centre. It is hoped that the Gala will become an annual event.

CORNISH MINERS LEAD THE WAY

Five former South Crofty miners have once again proved the old maxim about a Cornishman being found at the bottom of every mine in the world is true.

The Cornishmen were recruited to manage the development of a new nickel mine in Brazil and to train a workforce of twelve young Brazilians. The new mine was at a former open pit operation and is owned by RTZ Brazil at Fortaleza de Mines near Passos.

The first blast for the 5m x 5m access ramp took place on 27 July 1998. The first blast in the ore body was in mid May 1999, some two months ahead of schedule. A witness to the first nickel ore reaching the surface said "the Cornish miners have certainly used their experience and knowledge well in training the young Brazilian workforce".

DIAMONDS IN IRELAND

Cambridge Mineral Resources believes it is one step further in its quest to locate diamonds in Ireland. The secret location is in the Inishowen, Donegal, area.

An aerial survey of the area has been commissioned and, hopefully, the geological map produced will indicate the locations at which to bore test holes.

The company also holds a licence to prospect for gemstones in the Falkland Islands. Preliminary investigation have suggested that there are reserves of gold and diamonds on the Islands

MEMBER ORGANISATION PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BCRC:- Newsletter No10 June 1999
Cambrian Caving Council:-
Newsletter June 1999
Newsletter July 1999
Newsletter August 1999
Newsletter Sept 1999
Annual Journal No 26 1999/00
Carn Brea Mining Society:-
Newsletter No 42 June 1999
Botallack Counthouse
More Dartmoor Stuff
A Day at the Colliery
DCA:- Derbyshire Caver No 102
Summer 1999
Friends of St Aidan's BE1150 Dragline
Newsletter No 10 June 1999
Newsletter No 11 July 1999
Newsletter No12 August 1999
Grosvenor Caving Club:-
Newsletter July 1999
History Corner - Boyd
Dawkins
Caving Access - Ogof Pool
Park
Bidston's Air Raid Shelter
Survey Corner
New Discovery - Silica
Workings
Newsletter August 1999
Survey Corner
Twenty men in the
underworld help feed rayon plants
Early prints from
Underground Worlds - Knox 1882
PDMHS:- Newsletter No 91 July 1999
Subterranea Britannica:-
Newsletter No 21 1999
Trevithick Society:-
Newsletter No 17 April 1999
Welsh Mines Preservation Trust:-
Newsletter June 1999
Review of the last year
Welsh Mines Society:-
Newsletter No 40 June 1999

PROFESSOR BARRI JONES

The obituaries in the national broad sheet press that followed the recent sudden death of Prof Barri Jones all made reference to his study of the archaeology of Roman Britain and Roman mining.

His work on the Roman gold mining centre at Dolaucothi led him to investigate the ancient mines of Rio Tinto and Las Medulas in Spain. He also organised countless excavations at Llanymynech where a perfectly preserved Roman lead mine was exposed.

BOOK FOR SALE!!!!

A translation of the first Latin edition (1556) of "Agricola Georgius de re Metallica", published in London in 1912 and containing 640 pages, is offered for sale at a cost of £475 + p&p. If anyone is interested then the editor can put you in touch with the vendor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgement is made to the following who have submitted copy for this Newsletter but who have not been credited against individual articles. They are I J Brown, M Holmes, J Wright, HM Mines Inspectorate, R Gosling, P Sowan, L Willies and other anonymous subscribers.

Hon Secretary & Editor

Wes Taylor, 18 Station Lane,
Walton on Trent, Swadlincote, Derbys,
DE12 8NA
Tel:- 01283 713315

Every endeavour is made to publish the NAMHO Newsletter twice a year. Publication is, however, controlled by the availability of copy.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS

Registered Charity No 297301
Registered Office, c/o Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR.
Tel:- Matlock (01629) 583834.

The contents of this publication are in the public domain. There is no restriction on the publication of articles from this Newsletter provided acknowledgement of the source is made in any subsequent publication. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the National Association of Mining History Organisations. Copy submitted for publication is not checked by the Editor for accuracy.