

Jim H
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS

NEWSLETTER No.18

NOVEMBER 1990

NEW ADDRESS FOR EDITOR

Please note that Adrian Pearce has moved to Shropshire and his new address is

72, Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford, Shropshire TF5 0LZ
T. 0952-53310.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

There have been several changes to the membership list and a revised list is enclosed with this Newsletter.

LEVANT ENGINE APPEAL

The Levant Mine Engine House near St Just is familiar to many mining historians who have visited the area. It is the oldest steam engine in Cornwall and was saved by the Trevithick Society in 1935, later handed over to the National Trust. There are now plans to build a boiler house so that the engine can be put into working order. The work will cost £75,000 and the Trevithick Society has launched an appeal to raise the funds. Any contributions should be sent to the Trevithick Society, c/o Mr S. Thomas, 2, Trevannan Close, Connor Downs, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 5DJ (cheques payable to the society).

THE WELSHMAN APPEAL

The "Welshman" is a colliery locomotive which was acquired by Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum in 1989 as part of the National Mining Museum collection. It was built in 1890 and it spent its working life in the South Wales Coalfield. The museum intend to restore it to working condition and to operate it on their colliery railway system which is also in the process of restoration. They have launched an appeal fund to raise £50,000 towards the restoration of the locomotive and would appreciate any donations towards this. For every £1 donated, a certificate is issued which can be used to obtain a £1 reduction on normal admission charges at the museum. Donations can be sent to Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum, Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST6 8UN.

PRESERVATION SCHEME FOR CONONLEY MINE

The engine house and chimney of this mine near Keighley (NGR SD 979461) was previously preserved by Earby Mines Research Group in the 1970s. An application to remove the dumps was refused in 1986 and a meeting between Chatsworth Estates, local councils and mining historians led to the formation of the 'Friends of Cononley Mine'. A 10 year lease is being agreed and it is intended to preserve the site and open it to the public. The two shafts will be capped and much work still remains to be done. Any visitors should park on the road verges and walk up the track. This is private but the owner has agreed to allow foot traffic only. The outfall of the mine reservoir provides a habitat for various wildlife and the Friends are cooperating

with naturalists to preserve this. Any volunteers willing to assist should contact Mike Gill (T.0535-635388).

UNIT 2 WIN CONSERVATION AWARD

Unit 2 Cave Research & Exploration has won first prize in a new annual competition for the best conservation project in Sussex. They beat 22 other entries for their Baron's Cave scheme in Reigate, which is a tunnel complex beneath the castle. After a great deal of clearance, they plan to open the system up to the public on selected weekends between Easter and October (other times by prior arrangement).

LIME CENTRE

One problem with restoring old buildings is that they were usually built with lime mortar and the inside was often rendered with lime plaster and limewashed. Several attempts at regrouting brick or stonework have ruined the original look since modern cements and mortars do not blend in. The Lime Centre has now been set up to advise on the necessary techniques to reproduce the original mixtures and apply them. One day courses (costing around £100) are run on such topics as slaking burnt lime, preparing lime putty, analysing old mortar for matching, laying bricks and flints, preparing chalk cob mix, building cob walling and preparing render and limewash. Details from Bob Bennett, The Lime Centre, Long Barn, Morestead, Hants SO21 1LZ (T. 0962-713636). (AIA)

FRENCH LAY CLAIM TO MINING HISTORY

A recent article in "Future for our Past", published by the Council of Europe, proposed a 'European' tourist mine in the Vosges area of France. The author, Pierre Fluck, claims that the area has unequalled remains and is the only site suitable to represent the whole of European mining. It further goes on to state that it was in this area that 'mining speleology' first developed in the 1950s and 'mining archaeology' in the 1980s. This resulted in 12 clubs joining together in 1986 to form the Mining Heritage Federation. I'm sure that UK societies and NAMHO itself would argue with this claim to precedence!

A POLICY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Accompanying this Newsletter is a policy statement drawn up by the Association of Industrial Archaeology. It is intended to form the official approach to industrial archaeology in the UK and the AIA would appreciate comments.

HISTORICAL DATA ARCHIVE

With the common usage of computers for word processing and data storage, it is perhaps inevitable that they will be used by historians on an increasing basis. Many historians currently use them in their research but the type of system and software varies greatly. In 1986, the Association for History and Computing was formed with the aim of promoting and developing the use of computers in all types of historical study, at every level, in both teaching and research. It is an international organisation and it publishes a journal "History & Computing"

three times per year. Details can be obtained from Dr Veronica Lawrence, 3, Crown Terrace, Stadhampton, Oxfordshire OX9 7TY.

The problem remains, however, that most users of computers act in relative isolation and are unaware of what others are doing, let alone whether it might benefit their own work. Much valuable data has probably been lost through being erased after research has finished or abandoned in some obscure archive. There is a proposal that historical data should be stored in a central archive where it can not only be preserved, but also documented, catalogued and disseminated to other researchers. In this way, it can be used to prevent duplication of effort while acting as a common resource for research and teaching purposes.

Following a grant from the British Academy, a historical data archive project has been set up by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. This project is headed by Dr Kevin Schurer and co-ordinated by Ms Sheila Anderson. They intend to investigate the current extent of historical data files in the UK, with some indication of their nature, content, structure and potential for secondary analyses. A questionnaire has been devised for this (copies available from the address below) and the team would appreciate a reply from any group or individual who hold historical data files in machine readable form. They would also like to hear from any potential user of such an archive (even if they hold no data files themselves) with suggestions as to what type of service would be useful. At the end of the project, a bibliography will be compiled of historical data files and there will be a search facility for those with access to the Joint Academic Network (JANET). Further details and questionnaires can be obtained from Sheila Anderson, Historical Archive Project, Cambridge Group for the History of Population & Social Structure, 27, Trumpington St, Cambridge CB2 1QA (T. 0223-333194).

SUBTERRANEAN REGISTRATION SYSTEM

This is a scheme by a Dutch group which is intended to record all underground sites on an international basis. The database they wish to adopt is extensive and the questionnaire for individual sites extends to no less than 10 sheets. Although the theory is good, the scheme is totally impracticable considering the thousands of sites in the UK alone. The computer memory required for such an undertaking is mind blowing! Should anyone wish to find out more, however, details can be obtained from Joep Orbons, Pius XII Straat 14, NL-6247 AW Gronsveid, Netherlands.

FOREIGN MINING HISTORY GROUPS

There are a number of mining history groups in Europe and several of these are formed into associations who hold conferences. In addition, a recent conference was held in USA to propose the setting up of a World Mining History Association (Roger Burt and Mike Gill attended this and details should be available in the next Newsletter). Paul Sowan has been nominated to act as the NAMHO liaison officer for foreign groups and he is in the process of preparing a list and brief description of those currently in existence. It is hoped to circulate this to members as a contact list.

IA RECORDINGS

This is the name of an organisation founded to record past and present British industrial activity using modern techniques, especially video. They have a number of videos for sale on IA subjects and ones with a mining interest are

"A Tour of Clive Copper Mine" (33 mins) £10.70

"Clive Rescue Practice" (22 mins) £6.20

"Muxton Bridge Colliery Site"

"Sygun Copper Mine" (7 mins) £9.95

They also offer their services for hire in making specific video recordings and are experienced in underground exploration. A leaflet and further details can be obtained from IA Recordings, PO Box 476, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7RH.

AROUND THE REGIONS

Cheshire

The Lion Salt Works near Northwich was the last working site to make block salt from brine wells but recently closed. There is now a plan to form a trust that will supervise the reopening of the works to the public. (AIA)

Cumbria

Members of CATMHS have carried out a rescue operation to save an old iron furnace at Newlands Village. It is hoped to get the village designated as a Conservation Area and this may result in funds to permanently preserve the furnace. (CATMHS)

British Coal have applied for planning permission to scrap the steam engines and demolish the engine house at Haig Pit, Whitehaven. Attempts are being made to save them. (CATMHS)

Derbyshire

Access permission for Holmebank Chert Mine can be obtained from Mr L. Moseley, 1, New Lumford, Bakewell who holds the key.

The owner of Oxlow Mine closed his land to all explorers due to damage to walls, etc. Access has now been re-negotiated by DCA but there will be a future charge of £1 per head to the farmer who will use it to maintain access and repair damage.

Devon

Drilling is being carried out near Chudleigh to try to gain access to the old Frank Mills Mine. This was the UK's largest silver mine and has been closed for over 100 years. Lord Exmouth hopes to open it up to the public as a show mine. (PDMHS)

Kent

Kent Underground Research Group assisted in a project to rescue a Whitaker tunnel boring machine from a hillside near Folkestone. It was abandoned in the tunnel portal after the abortive 1920s attempt. After restoration, it will go on display at the Eurotunnel Interpretation Centre, between the two landward TBMs from the current project. (KURG)

Northumberland

The smelt mill chimney standing to the west of Allendale was hit

by lightning in June. It has lost the top half and has a blackened gash down one side. Stones were scattered for hundreds of feet around the area. (NMRS)

Scotland

A 1910 electric disc coal cutter has been unearthed in opencast workings at Dalquhandy. It is being restored at the works of Anderson Longwall, where it was originally built, and will be placed on display at the Scottish Mining Museum. (AIA)

Shropshire

The April earthquake, measuring 5.4 on the Richter Scale, appears to have caused some minor damage in local mines. (SCMC)

Exploratory drilling has been carried out at Oakengates, Snailbeach and Lilleshall to discover old mine workings. (SCMC)

Shropshire County Council, Wrekin District Council and Telford Development Corporation have each produced booklets describing mine reclamation projects being undertaken. TDC claim to have reclaimed 3450 acres of land previously covered by mine spoil, etc. Also to have treated 1600 mine shafts of the 2957 recorded before and during operations. (SCMC)

Surrey

Unit 2 Cave Research have won £500 as 1st prize in a local conservation award scheme. This was for their work on Baron's Cave at Reigate (a system of artificial tunnels which they are opening to the public). (Unit 2)

Wales

The new owners of the Clogau Mine intend to start mining operations instead of previous plans to turn it into a show mine. It seems that they intend to extract gold for their jewellery business. (SCMC)

Grosvenor Caving Club have gained access to the Bog Mine on the Westminster Vein at Eryrys. This mine was quite extensive and 1 mile of workings has already been explored, with another 2 miles still to be found. The club will welcome visitors as soon as initial work has been completed. (GCC)

GCC have also opened up the 130ft Reid Shaft at Minera and this leads to a series of levels and internal shafts. Some natural passages were intersected by the miners and there are tales of a 'big one'. Visitors are welcome. (GCC)

The old workings on the Great Orme have been dated with Radio Carbon techniques as follows

LOCATION	DEPTH	MATERIAL	DATE
Roman Shaft	90ft	Charcoal	c. 1165 BC
Vivians Shaft	Surface	Bone	c. 1590 BC
" "	6ft	Charcoal	c. 1690 BC
" "	70ft	Charcoal	c. 1240 BC
" "	70ft	Bronze	c. 1300 BC

Extraction of the copper veins was by firesetting, bone chisels and stone hammers. (GOES)

The remains of Cwmystwyth mill have now been removed to Mid Wales Mining Museum. Excavations on the old site have revealed some features not visible before. (NMRS)

West Midlands

More than 50 old coal and fireclay mineshafts are being capped as part of a £5M reclamation project at Dudley. (P.Sowan)

Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Mining Heritage Trail starts at the Yorkshire Mining Museum and takes in over 20 other sites. A free leaflet about the trail can be obtained from the Tourist Information Office in Wakefield (T. 0924-290900).

English Heritage is helping to fund £8600 worth of repairs to the Old Gang and Surrender Mines in Swaledale. Included in the programme are the peat store and flues at Old Gang. (AIA)

As part of a conservation project, North Yorks Moors National Park are to preserve the remains of the iron mining industry of Rosedale. About 200 individual sites have been identified and 3 of these are already scheduled. (P.Sowan)

The Langbaugh-on-Tees Borough Council is intending to level the iron mining spoil tip at Kilton. This is the last example in the area and local groups are fighting to preserve it. (TLMM)

BOX MINE SURVEY

A survey of over 11kms of these stone mines near Bath is available on A3 laminated sheet with a route description on the back. Cost is £2.50 from Mr N.Reaich, 46, Marshfield Way, Fairfield Park, Bath, Avon BA1 6HQ.

UNDERGROUND SPACE IN ISLE OF MAN

The Isle of Man Government's Department of Industry has recently claimed ownership of ALL underground cubic space in mine shafts and abandoned workings. As a result, prior permission must now be obtained from the Department to explore an abandoned mine on the island. This is only given on a disclaimer basis and where, in the Department's opinion, a request for entry to a mine is a genuine and acceptable one by responsible people.

This has caused obvious difficulties to the two mining history groups operating on the island, Laxey Mines Research Group and Manx Mines Research Group. They have had to submit written details to the Department with reasons for going underground, a list of names, addresses, sample signatures of those concerned, a copy of the safety policy to be operated, a copy of the insurance policy and details of mines to be visited. It is hoped that the Department will accept a comprehensive list rather than requiring this each time a visit is made, otherwise it will become a daunting task. This will obviously affect visitors to the island and anyone proposing to visit Isle of Man mines should contact the local groups for advice. (MMRG)

SCOTTISH GOLD MINING

The June issue of "Land & Minerals Surveying" supplied further

details on the gold and silver deposits that Ennex International intend to mine in Scotland. It will be called the Cononish Gold Mine and is situated near Tyndrum. Following 55 boreholes and extensive trenching, a trial adit was driven for 690m, encountering an auriferous vein. A further 420m of adit was driven along the vein and two raises totalling 175m were excavated to prove the deposits. The vein dips steeply at 70 degrees and varies from 1.5m to 9m in thickness. The gold and silver have an average grade of 0.31 ounces and 1.56 ounces respectively per short ton and the veinstuff is quartz. Extraction is estimated at 140,000 short tons per annum by means of shrinkage stoping, with blast-hole open stoping used in the wider areas.

ROCK CORING

Indiscriminate use of small-diameter coring techniques has ruined several important geological sites in recent years. A code of conduct for rock coring has now been produced and can be obtained from The Geological Association, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9AG. (PDMHS N/L)

HSE LEGISLATION

The Health & Safety Executive has recently issued consultation documents in respect of two proposed sets of Regulations for mines. For the first time, these include activities in abandoned mines and may impact on the activities of mining historians. The first, "Shafts & Winding in Mines", includes criteria for the construction of winches. The second, "Management of Mines", includes first aid and surveying practice.

The closing date for comments was 31/10/90 but NAMHO has written to ask for an extension and for a copy of the consultation documents to be issued to each member organisation. Any queries should be directed to Ivor Brown, to whom comments should be sent for assimilation into a combined response.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Exploration for Metalliferous & Related Minerals in Britain"
T.B.Colman, 1990, £15.00. Published by British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham.

This is a glossy A4 paperback with 52 pages. Although expensive at first glance, it gathers together a significant amount of widely dispersed material, viz. colour maps, tables of exploration programme reports, project data and minerals sought under the Government Grant Scheme. It deals only with recent history but the sites are often in old mining fields. The main chapters gloss over their subject, e.g. geology, recent exploration, public sector role, future prospects, exploration techniques and legislation. The chapters on mineralisation and sources of information, however, are of great value. It might be a money saver if you live some distance from a library and it would certainly be of use to a professional or specialist historian in minerals history or exploration. (I.J.Brown)

"Workers, Owners & Politics in Coal Mining" Edited by G.Feldman & K.Tenfelde, 1990. 450pp, ISBN 0 85496 603 X, £45.00. Berg Publishers Ltd, 150,Cowley Rd, Oxford OX4 1JJ.

The idea behind this book is very laudable in that it presents an international comparison of industrial relations in coal mining. For some, this may be a specialist subject but it does tackle social conditions which tend to be ignored in a great deal of research. What was immediately apparent was how problems we tend to regard as unique to us are in fact common throughout the world. The difference lays in how they were treated and much of this is dependant on national characteristics. The general theme of this book is on the industrial relationship between owners and workers and the extent of government control and intervention. Following a general introduction, separate chapters are devoted to Britain, USA, Germany, Belgium, France and Austria, with a general summary at the end. Each chapter is written by an author from the appropriate country (ours was by Roy Church). Due to limited space, the subject cannot be covered in depth but it does at least give a resume.

Editing such a work would normally be difficult due to the different writing styles adopted, this is obviously multiplied by the problem of translation. I feel that the editors should have been stricter in attempting to standardise the style adopted, since I found it awkward adapting to different styles for each chapter. In addition, I found that the communication skills of the authors varied tremendously. The chapter on USA, for instance, was extremely entertaining as well as informative. Others I found very hard going. This book is written by academics for other academics and I feel that it has wasted a great opportunity. With the exception of the USA section, it seems to have been pitched at PhD level and it lacks the human interest of what mining was all about. It may be aquired by university libraries but I cannot see this book being of interest to mining historians generally. It is certainly overpriced for what it contains. (A.J.Pearce)

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY

AIA Bulletin Vol.17, No.4 1990
Assembly & Association June/July 1990
" " Sept 1990
Batchat No.14, June 1990
Cave Science Vol.17, No.1
Caves & Caving No.49, Autumn 1990
Cumbria Amenity Trust MHS Newsletter No.26, April 1990
Early Mining in the British Isles (extracts)
- Firesetting experiments on the Great Orme
- Underground exploration of the Great Orme copper mines
Fundraising Magazine July 1990
" " Sept 1990
Great Orme Exploration Society Journal Vol.2 Spring 1990
Grosvenor Caving Club Journal No.3
Historical Metallurgy Society Journal Vol.24, No.1
Historical Metallurgy Society Newsletter No.16, Summer 1990
Northern Mine Research Society Newsletter Aug 1990
Peak District Mines Historical Society Newsletter Oct 1990
Shropshire Caving & Mining Club Journal Summer 1990

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

Any information about Norwegian miners who came to Scapa Flow in 1940 to excavate an underground military complex. Write to Bill Harvey, 86, Beechwood Drive, Broomhill, Glasgow G11 7HQ.

COURSES

"Industrial Heritage Law and its Limitations"

Venue: Ironbridge Gorge Museum.

19th October 1990

Details from Janet Markland, Ironbridge Institute, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7AW.

"The Ultimate Museum Experience"

Venue: Ironbridge Gorge Museum

13th November 1990

Details as above.

MINERAL STATISTICS

The latest in the series of books on the non-ferrous mineral statistics of the UK has been published by Exeter University. It is called "The Mines of Shropshire & Montgomeryshire with Cheshire & Staffordshire" and it is ISBN 0 85989 343 X. The price is £7.95 (including p & p) and orders should be sent to Dr R.Burt, Dept of Economic History, Amory Building, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QR. Cheques should be made payable to Dr R.Burt.

FUTURE STRUCTURE OF NAMHO

10am Saturday 9th March 1991.

Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath.

*** IMPORTANT - CIRCULATE YOUR MEMBERS ***

A meeting will be held as above that will be open to all UK mining historians. From the discussions, a set of proposals will be drawn up on the structure and future of NAMHO and these will be presented at a subsequent Extraordinary General Meeting. The latter will take place at the 1991 Mining Conference where any necessary constitutional changes will be voted on.

Members will be aware of the discussions that have taken place on the setting up of a special interest group for research and publication. This group, provisionally known as the Institute of Mining History, had originally planned to become a separate organisation that would join NAMHO. Subsequent views were that such a course would be divisive and that there might not be enough members to make it a viable proposition. It would therefore be preferable if some way could be found to incorporate it into the NAMHO structure.

Following on from this, other suggestions have been made on how the structure of NAMHO itself needs to be changed with the possibility of introducing some form of individual participation rather than representation at organisation level. The last NAMHO Council Meeting therefore agreed to organise a general meeting to discuss all these proposals and to take the opportunity to review its whole structure and activities. A resume of several possibilities appears below.

- 1) Make no change to NAMHO and allow any special interest group to set up independantly. This could cause division and confusion amongst outside bodies who are now aware of NAMHO.
- 2) Introduce some form of individual membership of NAMHO. This leads to the problem of representation and the size of decision-making meetings. Would we have to elect an executive committee at an AGM? Would this weaken NAMHO's standing as an association of organisations? Would member organisations have more votes than individuals? Would such a structure threaten the existence of smaller societies?
- 3) Introduce 'special interest groups' within the present NAMHO structure. This happens with the National Caving Association and British Cave Research Association. Each group could elect its own sub-committee and be semi-autonomous, leaving the NAMHO Council to oversee national problems. NAMHO Council Meetings could consist of meetings of the special interest groups in the morning and the Council proper in the afternoon. This could save time in discussing specialist topics at the Council meeting, with only a resume given of the morning's deliberations. Would there be enough interest to make sub-groups viable? Would a representative from each sub-group be elected to the NAMHO Council? What types of special interest group could there be? How would they be financed?
- 4) If the IMH became a special interest group, could it form an 'Institute' structure on the lines of its original idea? Would NAMHO allow what could amount to an elitist position of Members or Fellows? Who would choose them? How would it feel about the possible commercial nature of some of its activities? Who would have an 'audit' function in controlling the operation of criteria for membership?
- 5) Should NAMHO consider a national publication for individual mining historians rather than the Newsletter presently aimed at member organisations? Would it be in the format of the present Newsletter, an annual Bulletin, or both? Could it join forces with the larger publishing societies to produce a joint Bulletin?

These are several possibilities and there are pros and cons for them all. There must be other suggestions and it is hoped that the meeting will act as a forum to decide on a compromise solution.

Would representatives please advertise the meeting to their membership and discuss at their own committee meetings. It would be useful to have feedback from individuals as well as organisations, even if you cannot attend the meeting itself. If the latter applies, you can send your comments, etc. to Adrian Pearce before the meeting.

NEXT ISSUE

The next Newsletter will be issued in April 1991 to accompany the minutes of the AGM. Contributions by mid-March please to Adrian Pearce: 72, Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford TF5 0LZ.
T. 0952-53310.