



Interim Newsletter Dec-Jan 2005/6

Chairman / Editor's letter

I'll be brief as there is plenty of material below to fill the pages we have available. Keep the information coming in for future issues. Best wishes for the New Year.

The forthcoming Mining Heritage Guide

In December of last year a letter and questionnaire were sent to all NAMHO constituent groups / museums asking for up-to-date details for the new Mining Heritage Guide. Twelve months down the road, the Guide is close to publication and still a number of members have not responded. Rob Vernon has chased up the offenders and I'm currently repeating that exercise. Below is a list of those groups still outstanding. If you are on the list and have not yet sent in your questionnaire then please do so immediately. Copies of the covering letter and questionnaire forms should be enclosed with this newsletter.

Peter Cloughton

Grosvenor Caving Club
Plymouth Minerals and Mining Club

South Derbyshire Mining Preservation Group

Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Ltd.

National Coal Mining Museum for England
National Stone Centre
North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers

NAMHO "Underground Group"

Earlier in 2005, there was a meeting initiated by the National Trust regarding updating their guidelines for underground access – this meeting was attended by various

officers from the British Caving Association as well as myself and other representing NAMHO. Following on from this there was discussion at the last NAMHO Council meeting.

It has been agreed that NAMHO should be in a better position to get involved in discussion with outside groups regarding access to mines and it was agreed to set up a 'contact group'. This group should ideally include representatives from all mining areas and would be a mechanism for information about (potential) access problems and potentially bring a national perspective to local discussions. The intention is to support rather than displace local clubs/groups in access discussions but hopefully it can also help to achieve a unified approach if one does not already exist locally.

Areas of caving activity are usually covered by Regional Caving Councils, who are constituent bodies of the British Caving Association. These Regional Caving Councils were generally created to assist clubs within an area with obtaining collective access agreements. Some mining areas are within areas covered by Regional Caving Councils and in some of these the Regional Councils do a good job for the mine exploration interests, however, most UK mines are either outside of caving areas or are peripheral to their interests. The proposed NAMHO "Underground Contact Group" may well act in a similar manner to these Regional Caving Councils.

I have agreed to try and co-ordinate the establishment of this Underground Contact Group. I anticipate normally operating by e-mail/phone and would like to identify individuals from the different mining areas who would like to participate. There are already some communications from external groups (e.g. Wildlife Trusts) who I am seeking to put in contact with appropriate local groups.

Let me know if you are interested – contact me by e-mail (steve_holding@blueyonder.co.uk); by telephone (07850 492036) or by post (Steve Holding, 55 Briarwood, Brookside, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 1TR).

Steve Holding

NAMHO research seminars

The next in the seminar series will be topic based -

Working with Coal; its History and Archives - at the Coal Authority HQ in Mansfield, 21 January 2006 starting at 10:30.

There will be no charge for the seminar but I would appreciate notification if you are attending just to gauge the level of interest. Lunch can be obtained at a local pub.

The Coal Authority HQ are in Lichfield Lane, Berry Hill, just to the east of the A60 immediately south of Mansfield. A map is available on the Internet at -

<http://www.coal.gov.uk/contact/>

Programme and abstracts

Morning -

Peter Claughton - Introduction

Ivor Brown - Using the Library at the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Caphouse, near Wakefield.

Ivor has been involved in the collection of coal mining books and papers since the 1950s; his own collection, that of several mining colleges, Ironbridge Gorge Museum since 1968 and the Caphouse collection since 1984. He has also been a regular library researcher and user. This paper will describe how the collections have developed, problems encountered and give some indications of their strengths and weaknesses. It will also indicate how the collections have been catalogued, how the books and papers have been shelved and how they can be accessed. Some examples of queries researched and answered will be given.

It is also hoped to introduce the new, recently appointed, fulltime Librarian at Caphouse who will give a brief description of the use of the computer catalogue, the system 'Alice' run by Softlink Europe and likely future extensions.

John Goodchild -Local preservation of coal mining archive material, its collection and study. Sources for such material in printed, manuscript, map, illustrative and memory form; its study and making it publicly available: a personal testimony.

The talk will be illustrated with material from medieval times onwards from the John Goodchild Collection at Wakefield.

Mike Gill - Towards a Chronology for Coal.

There have been many academic studies of coal mining, but descriptive monographs, of the type which have evolved for metal mining, are sadly lacking. This is because mining historians have, by and large, ignored the coal industry until recently, leaving it to inexperienced authors who lack the rigour which a systematic approach to data gathering, editing and production gives. Printed secondary sources can, therefore, be frustrating and unreliable because, for example, many fail to differentiate between the dates for 'sinking', 'opened', 'disused', 'closed' and 'abandoned', which may be spread over many years. As Recorder for the Northern Mine Research Society, I have designed a database which gives a useful product reasonably quickly, but may be enhanced by adding separate layers of research, as described.

Staff member, Coal Authority Record Office - An introduction to the records

Afternoon

Conducted visits to the Coal Authority mining archives

Intended finish by 17:00

SILVER IN THE NORTHERN PENNINES

Northern Pennine Silver: Where and How?

A seminar to be held at the North Pennines Heritage Trust Centre, Nenthead, Saturday 8 April 2006

The evidence for silver production from the northern Pennine orefield in the late medieval period has been addressed by both historians and geologists in recent years. Whilst there is strong documentary and statistical support for the position that the Northern Pennines were the major source of newly mined English silver in the late medieval period, that is not backed up by the geological evidence. The majority of the ores mined in the modern period were low in silver and there is, as yet, no evidence for significant quantities of silver-rich minerals at the shallow depths accessible to the medieval miner.

Although the quantity of silver produced during the 12th century can be estimated with some confidence we do not know the precise location of the workings. Neither can we be certain as to the nature of the ores worked, where they were processed, nor the quantity of lead which might have been produced as a by-product. Information is available on the organisational structure under which mining was carried out but there is currently little to indicate how it fitted into the social framework and upland agricultural practice.

This seminar is being held to consider the evidence for silver production and discuss how our understanding of mining in the area during the late medieval period might be advanced. The intention is to hear presentations from all those with an interest in the area - geologists, historians, archaeologists and mine exploration.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dr Peter Claughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA66 7RE; tel. 01437 532578; e-mail P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk

There will be no charge for the seminar itself - lunch will be available in the Centre café.

To book, please contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, ALSTON, Cumbria CA9 3DB; e-mail sheila.barker@cybermoor.org.uk

NAMHO Conference 2006

Mining in the Landscape

Llangollen, 9-11 June 2006

The conference booking forms will be available on the Internet at <http://www.namhoconference.org.uk>

If you don't have Internet access, telephone Andy Wood 01743 718668 and ask for the forms to be sent by post. Early booking is advisable as this should be a popular conference and the Saturday night dinner will be restricted in numbers.

The organisers are looking at the possibilities for further events at sites in the north-east Wales / border area during the week following the conference.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

21 January 2006 Working with Coal; its History and Archives - at the Coal Authority HQ in Mansfield (see full details above)

5 March 2006 - Keswick Mining Museum Open Day - see below.

8 April 2006 - Nenthead - Seminar on North Pennine Silver - see above

Dragline open days in 2006 - Friends of St Aidan's BE1159 Dragline

18th April, 17 June and 9-10 September - 2-4pm For more details contact Paul Thompson 07889 286634

30 April 2006 - Open Day, King Edward Mine - see below.

3-13 May 2006 - Exhibition - Carn Brea Mining Society and King Edward Mine at the Cornwall Centre, in Alma Place, Redruth - see below.

20-21 May 2006 The Friends of Killhope are having a Mineral Exhibition weekend as part of the Northern Rocks North Pennine Festival of Geology and Landscape. This will be held in the Town Hall, St. John's Chapel, Weardale. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, please contact Ian Forbes at the Killhope Lead Mining Museum, telephone: 01388-537505, e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

9-11 June - NAMHO 2006 conference
- see above and in the last newsletter.

30 September 2006 Advance notice is given of a Day School to be held on Saturday, 30 September 2006 in the Town Hall, St. John's Chapel, Weardale. This will be a joint venture between the North Pennine Heritage Trust and the Friends of Killhope. The topic will be "Recent Industrial Archaeology in the North Pennines". It is hoped to produce a publication in due course. For more information, please contact Ian Forbes at the Killhope Lead Mining Museum, telephone: 01388-537505, or e-mail: Ian.forbes@Durham.gov.uk

9-17 October 2006 - IMHC 2006

The International Mining History Congress in Belgium, 9-17 October 2006 - there has been some delay in making the details of the Congress available please keep checking at -

<http://www.miningheritage.org>

or

<http://www.patrimoineminier.org>

<http://www.bergbau.org>

<http://www.mijnerfgoed.org>

where the Congress web site should be in place in the near future.

Red tape stymies £300m Nenthead mine bid.

That was the headline in the Hexham Courant 11 Nov. 2005. Apparently a Canadian company was considering investing in exploratory work with a view to opening up a new zinc mine but has been deterred by the area's designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the planning restrictions that entails.

Auditing and digital capture of non-coal mine plans

NAMHO officers are considering a proposal for co-operation with the British Geological Survey (BGS) on a bid for funding for the indexing and digitisation of non-coal mine plans

The following is the project outline provided by the BGS -

Non-coal mining records refers to those plans and related documents generated for mining resources other than coal, such as metals, ironstone, rock and evaporites. Mine plans record the extent of the underground workings for economic and safety reasons. They show the extent and method of mining, the depths and thickness of seams worked and the position of mine shafts and adits. Plans also give details of surface buildings and mine tramways.

Currently, non-coal mining plans are widely dispersed, and their existence is not well recorded and is often difficult to access.

The aims of this project are a) To create a register of the non-coal mine plans, and related information, such that interested parties can locate the plans and get an understanding of the information those records contain; and b) To create a digital data set of scanned and geographically registered documents to ease wide access to these important data.

If you have any comments on the proposal please contact Mike Worsfold <mike.worsfold@tiscali.co.uk> or myself.

Peter Cloughton

News from Carn Brea

An open day is going to be held at King Edward Mine, Troon, Camborne on Sunday 30th April 2006. This is the day after the Trevithick Day celebrations in Camborne.

The Mine Museum will be open and there is every chance that the stamps will be run sometime during the morning.

If last year's day was anything to go by there will be something for everyone. There should be a display of static engines and old cars. The Great Flat Lode Pasty race is not for the faint hearted. It will be a chance to meet old friends & possibly listen to a local male voice choir.

From Wednesday 3rd May to Saturday 13th May 2006, we will be staging an exhibition about both Carn Brea Mining Society and King Edward Mine at the Cornwall Centre, in Alma Place, Redruth. During this period it is intended to launch 'Friends of King Edward Mine'.

PENDEEN COMMUNITY HERITAGE

News about Geevor.

"Our current lottery bid is being assessed and we will know the result by the new year. This will cover building restoration and a new museum. We have now got the County Council committed to the next phase - visitor access to the modern Geevor workings, which the Lottery won't fund. This will be funded by various schemes. The idea is that the underground will generate sufficient revenue to make the site self-sufficient."

KESWICK MINING MUSEUM

The Keswick Mining Museum - Open Day Sunday 5th March 2006

Ian and Jean Tyler would like to invite any NAMHO group members to their annual open day. This has been a successful event in Cumbrian Mining for 19 years.

They say that "the Museum at Keswick has gone from strength to strength. The shop is larger in areas, as is the Museum by nearly 50% over our previous location. Consequently, our book stock, both new and second-hand, on the subjects of mining geology and minerals is, perhaps, the finest in the north of England."

The programme for the day is:

10.30am Guided Walk to Goldscope Mine - Meet at Littleton, near Keswick

12.30pm Museum Open To Our Guests

12.45pm Ian Tyler's latest book "Goldscope and the Mines of the Newlands Valley"

13.00pm Free Buffet

Other museum walks -

19 March Force Crag Mine (Meet Whinlatter Road, Braithwaite) 6 miles

23 April Coniston Slate Mines (Meet Walna Scar Road - Boo Tarn) 6 miles

All walks start at 10.30am. Boots or strong shoes must be worn; waterproofs and spare clothing should be carried, also packed lunch. Most walks take a minimum of 5 hours. Not suitable for unfit persons and children under 16 years. Charge £5.00 per person. Tel 017687 80055 or 01228 561883 (evenings) email: coppermaid@aol.com Website: keswickminingmuseum.co.uk

AGM and Council meeting

The Annual General Meeting is at 11am on Saturday 18 March, to be followed by a Council Meeting, and will be held at The New Inn, Cononley (direct trains from Bradford and Leeds, travellers using the Carlisle or Lancaster lines need to change at Skipton). Observers are always welcome at the AGM and at Council meetings

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter should appear in the Spring, after the AGM and Council meeting. If you or your group/society has information, queries or anything of interest to the wider mining history community, then please send it to me; preferably in a common digital format.

Peter Cloughton <P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk>