



Newsletter February 2007

Chairman / Editor's letter

This last year as chairman began with a well attended seminar at Nenthead on north Pennine silver. The fourth issue of the Mining Heritage Guide was published in time for the annual conference thanks to the hard work of Rob Vernon and Ivor Brown, and will provide an effective key to the work of the Association and our members. Our annual conference is always the highlight of the year's activities and the Llangollen conference, hosted by the Shropshire groups with support from a number of groups in north-east Wales, attracted praise from every quarter. The editor of Descent was certainly impressed, as were our foreign delegates.

Over the last year a number of issues have come to our attention and most have potential benefits for mining history and archaeology. We are continuing to consider the proposal from the British Geological Survey (BGS) that we support a bid for Heritage Lottery funding for the digital cataloguing of mine plans held in local record repositories around the UK. English Heritage has asked us to submit a bid for funding to prepare a proposal to carry out an archaeological research strategy assessment for the extractive industries. Our conservation officer, Martin Roe, is preparing the bid which, if successful, will allow us to develop a plan for carrying out the assessment which will also be funded by English Heritage. Co-operation at this level is important if we are to provide informed input into the future direction of archaeological research into the mining and quarrying industries. It is hoped to extend the assessment to Wales and Scotland if suitable supporting funding can be identified.

Underground access to mine workings continues to be an issue in some areas; for example, at Cwmystwyth in mid Wales which will be discussed at the next Council meeting. It is essential to maintain access and to do this does involve some tricky negotiation. The access agreements that are already in place with a number of our constituent groups, and the, so far, productive discussion with the National Trust in England and Wales, show that it can be effective. A major problem, as appears to be the case at Cwmystwyth, is the actions of groups or individuals outside NAMHO who aggravate the situation. By forceably removing the closures on mine entrances to effect entry they have delayed the chance of negotiations on an agreement.

We are looking forward to another excellent conference at Morewellham in the Tamar Valley in June. One of the features of NAMHO conferences is the range of events going on over the weekend - lectures; workshops; field trips, surface and underground - and choices have to be made as you just cannot take in everything. Consequently it is difficult to find a point when all the delegates, whatever their interests, are gathered in one place. At Morewellham camping is on site, the lecture programme is on site,

the Saturday evening event will be on site and quite informal, there is beer and cider on site, and the site itself has a real connections with the mining history of the area - so there is every chance I will see you at some point over the weekend if you're coming.

All this could not happen without the commitment of a large number of people. I would particularly like to thank Sallie Bassham, our secretary, Steve Holding, George Price, Steve Henley, Martin Roe and all those representatives who have taken time to attend council meeting; also, my thanks go to Kevin Baker for work towards a Scottish conference, Mike Worsfold for representing NAMHO in meetings with the BGS, and, not least, to Don Borthwick for his major contribution to this newsletter and its contents. It is never easy to choose a location for meetings in an association covering the whole of Britain and Ireland when delegates can spend more time travelling than they do in the meetings. People do come regularly from the far corners of these islands, showing real commitment to the future of mining history - thank you to all.

Peter Claughton

BCA REPORT

BCA Council Meeting 13 January 2007

There were a number of issues that might be of interest to NAMHO member clubs:

1. Under 18 year olds – in discussion it was confirmed that all members (i.e. including those under 18 years of age) should have BCA membership and insurance, however, the meeting agreed that the ‘Student’ category of membership should be extended to apply to all members under 18 years of age (this is £8.00 for the full cover insurance element of ‘Club Individual Members’) – this applies to membership for 2007 and will be retrospective for anybody who has already paid for 2007. It was recommended that clubs with under 18 year old members adopt an appropriate (club worded) version of the BCA Child Protection Policy.

Note that this was only agreed on January 13th and there will inevitably be a delay before this is publicised – contact myself if you need clarification but I can only provide my understanding about what has been agreed.

2. Membership drive – clubs might like to be aware of two aspects of membership drive. The first is the web-site www.trycaving.co.uk – if you are keen to get new members, signing up to this web site may help individuals to find out about your club. This might be particularly important as BCA intends to have a presence this year at the National Outdoor Show – there will be an artificial cave (used by YHA last year) that is expected to attract a lot of visitors – anybody expressing interest in joining a caving (or mine exploration) club will be directed to those clubs signed up to the ‘trycaving’ web site – should we look for a ‘mine exploration’ category on this web site – if you think that we should, let me know and I will contact the organiser if there is sufficient interest. Some NAMHO member clubs are already on the site but generally appear under the ‘other’ category (rather than under a caving region).

Incidentally, BCA members are entitled to discounted entry to the National Outdoor Show - £20 for two tickets (rather than £14 each).

3. Eco-Hangers – The BCA Equipment Committee is looking to source a free supply of Eco-Hangers ('P' hangers) to use for approved installation in caves. As this will inevitably be a new type of hanger it will need to be 'Type Tested' for use in caves (limestone) – the Equipment Committee is aware of interest for use in mines (rock other than limestone) but will concentrate on the Type-Testing for limestone first. There is a discussion document on the BCA web-site (www.british-caving.org.uk/?page=129) please contribute but I would also be keen to be copied in to any comments specific to mines.

The next BCA Council meeting is immediately after its AGM on 24th March – please bring to my attention any items that you think of wide interest to NAMHO members that should be raised.

Steve Holding
<steve_holding@blueyonder.co.uk>

GREEN LIGHT FOR ALLEN MILL HERITAGE PROJECT

A multi-million pound; business development in the Allen Valleys is set to go ahead, after organisers received a crucial Government grant. Last month the team behind the redevelopment of the Allen Smelt Mill, on the banks of the Allen near Thornley Gate, got the news that their application for a £172,000 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) grant had been approved.

The project is being pushed forward by Charlotte Bacon, whose father Christopher Bacon - a local craft printer - bought, the derelict former mill site in 2005, with the aim of developing it as a retail business complex and heritage visitor attraction. When completed, in five years time, the site will feature craft workshops, a restaurant, heritage attractions – including the organisers hope, a working waterwheel – several independent retailers and an eco-spa.

Excerpt from the Hexham Courant Friday, October 20, 2006

NORTH PENNINE HERITAGE TRUST FORUM

There will be a forum held on Saturday 31st March 2007 with the following topics included for discussion;

- ÿ Underground exploration at Nenthead,
- ÿ The North Pennines Geopark,
- ÿ Mineral Collecting,
- ÿ Underground archaeology,
- ÿ Trust policies and responsibilities underground.

For further details please contact Paul Mercer (Education Officer) 01434 382037
Excerpt from NPHT December Newsletter

RESEARCH IN CUMBRIA

A Guide to Cumbrian Historical Sources
By Michael Winstanley and Rob David
Centre for North-West Regional Studies
ISBN No. 1-86220-177-3

Cumbria is fortunate to have a wide and varied range of archives available to the historian. This book introduces the new (and not so new) researcher to the extensive range of archive sources relating to Cumbria and, for the first time, brings them together in a directory of the main publicly accessible collections held in record offices, libraries, museums and other organisations. It also includes descriptions of those sources to be found in neighbouring counties and an introductory guide to online resources and catalogues.

Cost £8.95 plus £1.00 p+p

Send cheque (made out to Lancaster University) to:

Centre for North-West Regional Studies

Fylde College

Lancaster University

LA1 4YF

Web site: www.lancs.ac.uk/users/cnwrs/

e-mail contact: christine.wilkinson@lancaster.ac.uk

An omission to the guide is the archives of the Alston Moor Historical Society, see their web site at: www.alstonhistory.org.uk

SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND

Quite the most significant event of recent months has been the designation of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Area as a UNESCO World Heritage site, as briefly reported in IA News 138 (and in our October newsletter - ed.).

Shortly before this, June 2006 saw the announcement that Geevor tin mine had received £3.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Objective One. The grants are for conservation of the listed buildings on site, a new museum and improved visitor access. A previous application, which included the reopening of modern underground workings, was rejected. The project must be completed by September 2008 and contractors were swiftly appointed. This summer also saw the relocation and restoration of the water-driven Locke's stamps from Nancledra, which were erected at the entrance to Geevor in 1983. Water will be provided so that they can be demonstrated to visitors.

At King Edward Mine, near Camborne, volunteers have completed restoration of a Holman Bros horizontal twin drum steam hoist. Dating from 1907 it came new to King Edward, but in 1942 went to the Castle-an-Dinas wolfram mine in central Cornwall. It remained there when the mine closed in 1957 and was put on show at Poldark Mine near Helston in the 1970s. From there it was bought by the Trevithick Society in 2001 and returned to King Edward Mine where it now sits on its original

loadings and runs on compressed air. The 50-inch Harvey's pumping engine of 1863 at Goonvean clay pit near St. Austell, which last worked in 1956, remains threatened by a partially collapsed shaft and future clay workings. Built for a mine at St. Agnes and brought to Goonvean in 1910, there have been a number of proposals to secure the future of this Grade 11* engine and house on a new site but so far all have come to naught.

Still with mining, work began in the summer at Wheal Peevor near Redruth to conserve this important site and provide public access. Wheal Peevor is unique in that all three engine houses, for pumping, winding and stamping, survive and thus demonstrate the classic layout of a Cornish mine. Some £800,000 is being spent here. Not everyone shares such regard for the remains of the mining industry. The government's regeneration agency in Camborne and Redruth has long been ambivalent about attempts to restart South Crofty mine. In March 2006 it was reported that they had capped a shaft at Pool which Crofty's owners claimed was essential to their future plans. In June came news from abroad that arsonists had destroyed a 9 metre high statue of a Cornish miner at Kapunda, South Australia. On a happier note the unpaid custodian of the famous Cornish miners' cemetery at Real del Monte, Mexico, Don Chenche, was awarded an honorary OBE in the last Honours List. He has tended the cemetery for over 50 years.

Kerrier District Council has been awarded £250,000 to develop its 'Heartlands at Pool' project. This £33 million scheme would include a World Heritage Site Gateway Centre based at the old Robinson's Shaft of South Crofty Mine. Robinson's Shaft is no longer an active part of the mine and the buildings, which have suffered vandalism and arson, now belong to the Council. Also on the site is the famous 80-inch pumping engine, owned by the National Trust, preserved in grease and inaccessible for many years. The submission for the project has to be submitted by May 2007. Even allowing for the benefits and interest generated by World Heritage status, the projected centre is less than a mile from the existing Cornish Mines and Engines site at East Pool, developed by the Trevithick Trust and run by the National Trust. One has to ask whether there will be sufficient numbers to support both sites as well as nearby King Edward Mine and Tolgus Tin, or Geevor and Levant further afield.

In August work began on the £6 million Tamar Valley Heritage Project designed to open up more of the valley to the public. The first phase based around Morwellham includes a network of paths between Morwellham and its sister port of Newquay, restoration of part of the mineral tramway serving the port and, later on, circular trails through Blanchdown Wood, Gulworthy to open up the site of the Devon Great Consols Mine.

G.Thorne, Industrial Archaeology News, November 2006
By kind permission of the AIA

RETURN OF A YORKSHIRE COLLIERY

A huge investment is planned to reopen Hatfield Colliery in South Yorkshire, which was closed in 2004. There are now only seven large deep mines left in Britain, in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, the West Midlands and South Wales.

Note in the AIA Industrial Archaeology News 139 Winter 2006

BBC News 21 Aug 2006 added: Producing 10 million tonnes of coal annually, £37 million of modern machinery, "As a standalone company Hatfield Colliery has a good future; it has good reserves, and is in an area with several coal power stations nearby."

NORTH PENNINE HERITAGE TRUST

Photographic Exhibition

The North Pennines Heritage Trust is creating a new exhibition for 2007 which will celebrate and inform visitors of the underground mine workings that exist here, but that very few people get to see and experience for themselves.

The Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre site contains many mine adits leading to many miles of underground workings. These are visited by several thousand people each year – enthusiasts, mine explorers, mineral collectors, educational groups etc.

We are asking these individuals and groups to provide photographs of their underground visits. The Trust will print and mount selected photographs in order to create this exhibition. Copyright for each photograph will remain the property of the individual photographers, with the Trust agreeing a licence for its use of photographs during 2007.

If you have photographs that you would be willing to submit for this exhibition please contact

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North Pennines Heritage Trust
Nenthead Mines
Alston
Cumbria CA9 3PD
Tel: 01434 382037 Email: education@npht.com*

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Life as a Lead Smelter

The Life and Times of Thomas Dixon 1805 – 1871 Lead Ore Smelter, Early Railwayman, and much more besides

by Stafford M. Linsley

Wagtail Press November 2006

ISBN 0-9538443-6-6 £17.50 P&P £2.50 from the publisher.

During the early 19th century Thomas Dixon, of Dukesfield Hall near Hexham, in Northumberland, recorded his family life, working days and leisure time in his diaries. His words give us a fascinating insight into his world; his life as a family man, lead ore smelter early railway enthusiast, church and chapel goer, gardener, singer, musician and later as Station Master at Hexham Railway Station, Stafford Linsley's extensive research gives us an in depth background to Thomas Dixon's life and times.

Publisher Wagtail Press, Gairsheild, Steel, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 0HS
www.wagtailpress.co.uk

East Surrey Underground

Delegates to the 2005 NAMHO Conference will have been made aware of this book but for those not fortunate enough to have been able to attend, here is the notice of a new publication from Peter Burgess.

“I have recently completed a book on the underground sites of East Surrey. Concentrated into a small area of South East England in East Surrey, there exists a great variety of underground features. Some are natural, but most are man-made. There are mines for building stone, hearthstone, sand, fullers earth and chalk. Wartime tunnels, cellars, and underground follies add to the variety. The swallow holes of the River Mole are also covered. This book describes these fascinating sites, and explains how they were created, how they have since been used for other purposes, and why they are still important places that should not be forgotten and neglected.

Inspired by the Kent Underground Research Group who in 1994 published a similar book - ‘Kent and East Sussex Underground’ - I have brought together into a single volume an illustrated guide to East Surrey's curious variety of mines, caves, tunnels and other underground features. The book contains the following chapters:

Safety/Introduction/Sand Cave and Mines/Firestone Quarries/Hearthstone Mines/Mushroom Farms/

At Times of War/Deneholes/Fullers Earth Mines/That Sinking Feeling/The River Mole/Early Explorers/

Rumours and Myths/Conservation

The book is softback, 9" x 6", 121 pages, well illustrated with photographs (B+W), and location maps.

£9.00 + £1.00 p+p

The book is currently only available through me.

Please email me if you are interested in buying a copy, and I will provide further contact details.

Rather than reply to this email, please contact me at peter.burgess@wcms.org.uk”

Since the original notification in November 2006, the ‘only available’ comment above is no long true as it is listed on the Moore Books catalogue at www.moorebooks.co.uk. Other books listed in this Newsletter may be available from this source and other booksellers.

Mining history from Ireland’s Copper Coast

THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF A MINING COMMUNITY: The Copper Coast, Co. Waterford 1825-1875+

by Des Cowman

(Published 2006 by the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland)

ISBN 0-9534538-3-9 (9 780953 453832) Price is £17 including P&P

Available directly from:

Dr D. Cowman

"Knockane"

*Annestown,
Co. Waterford
Ireland*

“As the title suggests this is nearly 200 pages of mainly social history, technical details being in appendices and genealogical lists searchable on Copper Coast website. It is lavishly illustrated, with historical contexts in adjoining boxes and, while fully referenced, it is intended for a general readership. For further details check www.coppercoastgeopark.com (click Heritage if necessary)”.

Railways and Iron Mining in Cumbria

Dalton-in-Furness: Mediaeval Capital to Mining Community by Rock Battye
Published by The Cumbrian Railways Association
Price £8.45 ISBN 0-9540232-4-2

Further information at: www.cumbrianrailwaysassociation.org.uk
Available from bookshops or direct from:

CRA

19 Windsor Drive

Miskin

Pontyclun

CF72 8SH

P&P is £1.50 and cheques should be made payable to Cumbrian Railways Association
Thanks to the CIHS Newsletter for news of this book.

New publications from Northern Mines Research Society

Cornwall

BRITISH MINING No. 79

CAPE CORNWALL MINE

By Peter Joseph

ISBN 0-901450-60-X Price £8.95

Something for everyone

Memoirs 2006

BRITISH MINING No. 80

- Further aspects of Old Flockton Collieries, near Wakefield by John Goodchild
- A Yorkshire colliery at work: the North Gawber and Woolley collieries, 1896 to 1915 by John Goodchild
- Tapping drowned workings: Thornley and Wheatley Hill Collieries by Nigel A. Chapman
- The Cwmystwyth Mines, Ceredigion, Wales, UK: a revision of lode geometry from new surface geological mapping by David M.D. James
- Lode geometry in the Plynlimon and Van Domes, Central Wales, UK: the relative importance of strike swing and relay linkage by David M.D. James
- The Louisa Mine Revisited by Ron M. Callender
- Radiocarbon dating of early lead smelting sites by Richard Smith
- Foredale Quarry, Helwith Bridge, a historical and archaeological survey by David S. Johnson

ISSN 0308-2199 Price £9.50 + £1 P&P

RIOS DE OURO - GOLD RIVERS

The Municipality of Vila de Rei in Portugal are seeking partners for a European Union Culture 2000 funded project to promote the geology and archaeology of gold mining. For more details contact Peter Claughton

<*P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk*>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 31 March 2007 North Pennine Heritage Trust Forum - see separate announcement above.

The **2007 NAMHO Conference** is being hosted by Tamar Mining Group in association with Plymouth Caving Group and other local NAMHO member organisations and will take place at Morewellham, on the Tamar north of Plymouth, over the weekend of **15th - 17th June 2007**.

For more information and the booking form you can go to -
<http://namhoconference.org.uk/> or contact the organisers by post or e-mail

*Patchway Cottage
Calstock
Cornwall
PL18 9QB
(01822) 832 748
E-Mail : rick@tamarmininggroup.co.uk*

The Bickfest.

In celebration of the late David Bick's distinguished, highly individual, and influential contribution to British mining history, the Welsh Mines Society is arranging a two-day meeting on **29 and 30 September 2007**.

On the Saturday there will be a one-day indoor conference at the Mellington Hall Hotel, Church Stoke, Powys, SY15 6HX, on the border of South Shropshire and Montgomeryshire (Powys).

On the Sunday there will be a walk, led by members of the Society, to the Bryntail and Pen-y-clun mines, near Llanidloes

The title of the conference will be:

'The Lode of History'.

Comprehensive details are given on the Welsh Mines web site at www.welshmines.org

Further enquiries may be made to:

*G.W.Hall, 'Abilene', Sheet Road, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1LR
Telephone (day or evening) and fax (no e-mail): 01584 877 521.*

The **7th International Mining History Congress (IMHC)** will be held in Bhubanewar, in Orissa province, India (to the south-west of Calcutta) in December 2007 and planning is well advanced. Once the final arrangements are in place a further announcement will be made. In the meantime, Mel Davies, of the IMHC secretariat, has reported -

“I'm pleased to announce that the Bhubaneswar committee have confirmed the dates for the 7th International Congress as **13-16th December 2007**. I spent some time with Dr Sarangi, and Samantha Ram who will be heading the committee and also addressed a 20-strong meeting of the committee of the Society of Geoscientists and Allied Technologists last week while in Bhubaneswar. They are very enthusiastic and promise a full and exciting cultural programme around the proceedings of the conference. The venue for the proceedings will be the Mayfair Lagoon Hotel. All I will say about the venue is that it is magnificent and that the venue alone will be well worth the journey to India. We have drawn up a first announcement that contains details of registration fees, a preliminary programme, etc. and awaiting some minor information this should be up on the web in a couple of weeks. They will also receive sponsorship from the mining community and the Ministry for Mines”.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

This year's conference is in the Tamar Valley (see above) and we are still looking at the options for a conference and/or field meet in Scotland for next year. We have offers for future conferences from South Gloucestershire and the Peak District. A decision will be made, as to when and where they are held, at the council meeting on 10 March.

BOOK HOUSE - CHANGE IN OPENING HOURS

As from the beginning of February they will be changing their opening days - Tuesday to Saturday from 10-4.30 and closed Sundays and Mondays.

Main Street, Brough, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4AY. Tel: 017683-42748.

www.thebookhouse.co.uk

Council meetings

The AGM and council meeting are at Threlkeld on 10 March. There is the opportunity for a council meeting at the Tamar Valley conference in June, if required. The next planned meeting is for 17 November at Ecton.

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

The plan is to distribute the next issue in the spring - copy to Don Borthwick or myself by the end of April please.

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

Don Borthwick c/o <sheila.barker@cybermoor.org.uk>