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## MINING MISCELLANY

R.H. Bird

The 1982 Memoirs contained two or three pages of photographs titled “Surviving Miscellany”. The pictures were an attempt to show interesting mining remains scattered throughout the country and to encourage others to forward pictures of similar content.

We live in an age when mining remains are fast disappearing, although it is true that there are now signs this heritage is at last being recognised as unique by those in power to act as its guardians.

Most mining affectionados nowadays have cameras, be they the humble plastic disposable variety through to the most expensive state-of-the-art electronic masterpieces. Further, the remarks prefacing the original article still hold true today, so that if you have a slide, print or even an old postcard of a mining related subject – more especially if relatively little known – then a future Memoir could be the ideal location for placing this on permanent record.

The fast changing condition of mining sites (notably, in many cases, obliteration) has necessitated a change of title for this current little article, since the original term “surviving” is regrettably, in a growing number of instances, an anachronism.

On the whole, *British Mining* is supported by a fairly small hard core of regular writers; if writing is not your forte, then perhaps photography could well be your method of supporting your publication and, hopefully, engendering more membership participation.

### The photographs.

#### Plate I.

*By virtue of its inherent danger, gunpowder was manufactured at sites well away from the beaten track. Kennall Vale gunpowder mills, Cornwall, closed in the 1890s but its substantial incorporating mill buildings (together with remains of waterwheel shrouds and gearing) can still be found adjacent to the stream in Roches Wood. N.G.R. SW 750375.*





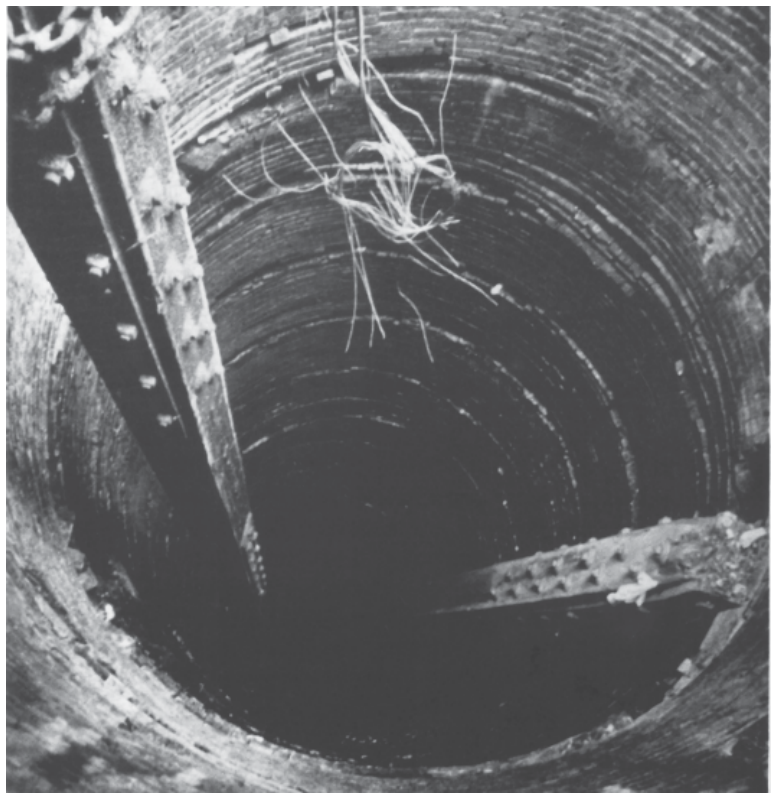
## **Plate II.**

*There are blowing houses, for the smelting of tin ore, scattered over a wide area of Dartmoor. Many still exhibit granite moulds, wheelpits and tumbled walls, to which leads an overgrown leat. Among the disturbed area that was once Gobbet Mine, can still be seen the remnants of a crazing mill, which was analogous to a corn mill, but for the fine crushing of cassiterite. N.G.R. SX 647728.*

## **Plate III & IV. (Overleaf)**

*The intensively mined district around Holywell and Halkyn (North Wales) will be familiar to most mining historians. Much of interest has vanished over the last decade or so, engine houses flattened, shafts capped and open works filled. Near the erstwhile Olwyn Goch shaft - once a familiar sight to travellers on the A541 near Rhydymwyn - was the less conspicuous brick-built engine house at Taylor's Shaft.*

*During the First World War, a scheme for pumping below the Halkyn Tunnel (which connects with Taylor's Shaft) was instigated, along with other local projects of similar nature. The object was the unwatering of deep lead and zinc deposits which were urgently required for war purposes. However, this scheme had almost been completed when the Armistice was declared and operations came to a halt. In 1977, the shaft was open, next to the shell of the engine house, revealing pitwork, capable of lifting some 2000 gallons of water a minute, descending into the fearsome depths. N.G.R. SJ 204677*





### Plate V.

*A little way upstream from the portal of Clogau gold mine's main Llechfraith adit lay, until a few years ago, an enigmatic masonry-lined pit. Bearing in mind the weird and wonderful dressing machinery for which this area was renowned, one can only speculate as to reason for the pit's existence. The most plausible and acceptable theory so far advanced was that this example of the mason's art was a form of crusher pit for the fine comminution of auriferous quartz, similar in action to the ancient arrastra. Such a device was known to have been in use in the 1860s at nearby Cefn Coch and Berthllwyd. The large boulder in the centre had flattened sides and may have provided the requisite crushing action; it may have been there quite by accident! Not very far away from here, a small jaw crusher and a couple of Britten pans still repose in woodland, and probably never saw service. N.G.R. SH 668194 approx.*



### Plate VI.

*A reminder of one of the huge waterwheels which once graced the mining scene in the Isle of Man. Located in the leafy Dhoon Glen, north north west of Laxey, Rhennie Laxey Mine's 50 ft. prime mover once revolved in this magnificent wheel case. The launder pier in the foreground gives some impression of scale and is again typical of many Manx mining layouts. N.G.R. SC 457864.*