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A GLIMPSE AT SNAEFELL MINE

by Rolf von Arx

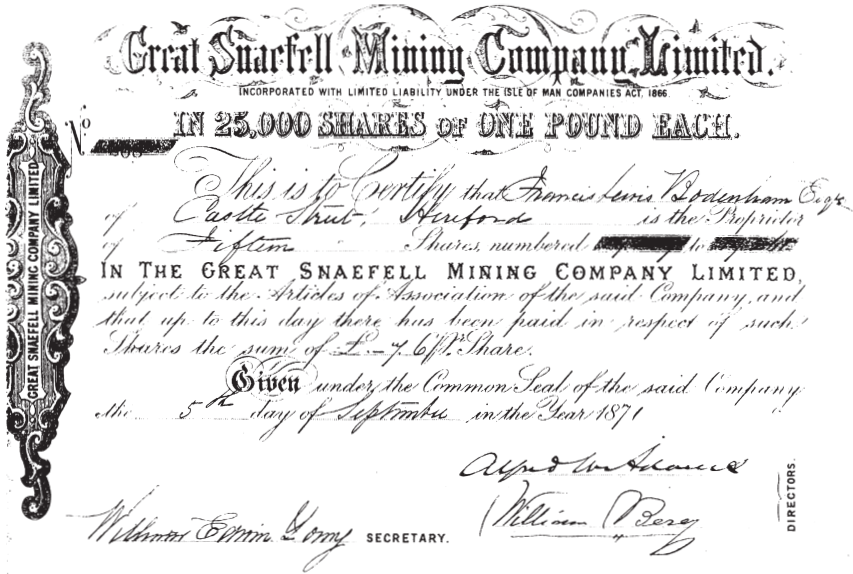
Nobody knows when the ore deposits at Snaefell Mine on the Isle of Man were discovered and first prospected. For an indeterminate period of time in the early part of the second half of last century the mine was under the control of the Great Laxey Mining Company. The noted geologist G.W. Lamplugh states that work was seriously commenced at Snaefell Mine in about 1856, whether as an independent operation or under the Great Laxey Mining Co. is not mentioned. The mine lies on Crown land and the original lease was granted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in 1861. Three years later Snaefell Mine was separated from "*its rich parent*" and worked by the Great Snaefell Mining Company Limited until 1871 in which year the Great Snaefell Mining Company Limited was formed (Mineral Statistics give SMCL until 1876).

The mine is situated at the eastern foot of Snaefell on the north branch of the headwaters of Laxey River, three miles NW of Laxey village (SC408875). Outcrops of the lead lode were discovered in a stream bed. The lode varied from six inches to 60 feet, but its limits were ill-defined. Lead (with 14 to 16 ounces of silver per ton) and zinc-blende were mainly produced, but many other minerals are present. The official Mineral Statistics for Snaefell Mine start in 1870, but show very small returns for the 1870s and there is a gap from 1877 to 1885.

It is in this '*poor*' period that we join the mine for a closer look. The financial situation at the end of the 1870s was becoming alarming and an Extraordinary General Meeting of the shareholders was convened for January 24th 1878 in St. James Hall, Douglas. To this end the Directors had a letter sent to all shareholders urging an increase of capital of £5000 in £1 shares over the registered capital of £25,000, with every subscriber being entitled - as an incentive - to four fully paid bonus shares per new '*preference*' share. This additional capital was thought to be absolutely necessary to bring the Mine in a "*paying condition*". The letter stressed that if the proposal was not accepted, the works would have to be immediately stopped and the Company wound up. Such a turn of events would be greatly deplored by the Directors who jointly held one third of the total capital. At the A.G.M. on November 28th 1877 it had been decided to have an inspection of the works made by a mine agent of considerable experience. This report was submitted on December 7th 1877. The further details of the Meeting January 24th are not available, but the shareholders' response seems to have been positive.

In order to confirm "*or otherwise*" the resolution passed on January 24th an Extraordinary General Meeting of the shareholders was called for February 12th 1878 at the same venue. It was chaired by Henry Bloom Noble of Villa Marina in Douglas, Gentleman, in the company of fellow directors Alfred W.

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Adams, Richard Roney of Douglas, Merchant, and Thomas Fisher of Balladoole/Arbory, Gentleman, as well as Secretary William Edwin Young, Agent, who had his office in Athol Street, Douglas. Noble and Adams were the largest shareholders of the company. Noble was also one of the bigger shareholders of Great Laxey Mining Co. while of the other attendees only one was a very minor owner of Great Laxey shares. There does seem to have been at least some personal connection between these two companies through the Chairman. Noble told the assembly that to bolster the Directors' proposal, and following the decision of the last A.G.M., the mine had been Inspected by a man of great repute. From several other names under consideration Captain William Kitto, Manager of Foxdale Mine, on the Isle of Man, had been chosen chiefly because he was quickly available and had formerly been manager at Snaefell (according to Mineral Statistics from 1865 to 1868 followed by Henry James from 1869 to 1876). The Directors emphasised that they had wanted a fair and impartial inspection and, as the Chairman had said no desire to have an embellished report simply for the purpose of inducing the shareholders to take up the new shares.

Copies of Kitto's report had been sent on January 4th 1878 to all shareholders preparatory to the Extraordinary General Meeting. Kitto stated that the Engine Shaft had been sunk on the mine of the vein to a depth of 130 fathoms from surface, chiefly through unproductive ground. When the shaft was first started it was understood that the ore ground, seen at the adit mouth and also in some shallow trials made by the side of the river northwards from the shaft, would be found to dip southwards and, therefore, meet the shaft in depth, but this was evidently not the case. Kitto had already reported on the mine in 1870 at the formation of the Company. When he compared his previous

findings to the work carried out in the meantime, he noticed that only the longest level (viz. the 60th) had since been extended some 18 fathoms further north than the 40th had been driven seven years before and on which so much stress had been laid as being the nearest to the Great East and West Lode so plainly seen in the brook to the north of the mine. For this reason, every level driven below the 40th had examined the same section of ground only. Kitto thought that while the continuous sinking of an engine shaft was to a very great extent the proper mode to speedily explore a mine, the stopping of the 40th North as well as the 60th had been a mistake. The northern part which might offer good ore should be explored to make Snaefell a paying mine. He then went on to describe the levels:-

- The 130th South had been driven 18 fathoms on a poor lode and suspended.
- The 130th North was 12 fathoms in disturbed ground.
- The 100th South had a length of 30 fathoms with similar results as in the 130th South, only small bunches of ore having been encountered in any south driving.
- The 100th North of 55 fathoms was leaving sterile ground and the end had a healthy appearance with a nice mixture of lead, blende and sulphur.
- The 85th North was 95 fathoms on the lode with a "*strong and kindly*" forebreast.
- The 74th North at 100 fathoms had similar appearance, with ore visible in several places but scarcely any attempt had been made to explore this hard and in all probability most productive part of Snaefell Lode.
- The 60th North, with 118 fathoms the longest below adit, showed bits of ore here and there, but until properly laid open it was impossible to say if in paying quantities or not.

At the 115th a lodge had been made, but no driveages of importance undertaken. Two or three pitches had been partially wrought which, with new machinery, might be worked at a small profit. Kitto strongly recommended cross-cutting the levels driven before he took charge and push levels north as quickly as possible. He had also noticed a large body of stuff at surface ready for washing as soon as the new machinery had been erected. In Kitto's opinion the prospects of the mine were still good and if the company abandoned the workings it would make any new owners very happy. He had not at any time felt to relinquish his personal financial interest in the mine.

Chairman Noble pointed out that two years ago (1876) the finances of the Company had began to fall and it was decided that the remaining capital

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should be spent in sinking the shaft rather than in exploring the levels, the produce not being sufficient to pay the cost of working the mine. At that time they were driving the 85th and 100th and the dip of the ore was towards the shaft. In the 74th level appearances were so satisfactory that it was considered that in depth the lode would form into a solid body of ore and that, therefore, sinking the shaft and driving lower levels at 115 and 130 fathoms would be the quickest way of getting to the desired points. That had been done and the capital was now about expended but the ore body had not yet been reached. Captain Kitto was recommending that levels should be driven to come to that vital point - the East and West Lode - which was a considerable distance ahead of the furthest level, the 60th. But this work could only be undertaken with increased capital.

The shaft sinking had been done in novel fashion: through public contract by issuing handbills and inviting tenders. The response, however, had not been favourable. The Company was prepared to paying the miners a "*fair day's wage for a fair day's work*", but the offers received were £10 per fathom more than estimated. It was then that their Underground Agent John Kewley offered to arrange for the sinking of the shaft of 15 fathoms at £30 per fathom. Later on the shaft was sunk another 15 fathoms by the same party at £25 bringing it to the 130th. These 30 fathoms were sunk in 12 months. While this was going on, the expenditure of the mine was only about £60 per month and the Directors did not consider it necessary to employ a mining agent at a cost of £30 a month. They were convinced that their Underground Manager John Kewley was quite capable of doing the work at hand, even though he was not designated "*Captain*". At this point Captain Kitto interjected that he himself during his tenure at the mine had selected Kewley as pitman and man in charge. A derogatory statement had apparently been made some time before that Snaefell was working without Mine Captain, the Chairman declining to name names. It turned out that this person had been James Spittal, the largest shareholder of Great Laxey Mining Company.

Kitto, after extolling Kewley's qualities, mentioned that there was not a waterwheel in the Isle of Man giving the same amount of power as the one at Snaefell. Kewley had sunk the best underlie shaft he knew and the amount of friction was so small that one could not hear the pump rods. Noble then took over by saying that Snaefell had the great advantage of having ample water in the summer season even to draw stuff and pump as well as bringing the water back on the wheel without the aid of a steam engine (a statement was to be sorely tested only a couple of years later).

The Chairman followed this up with a plea for the capital increase announcing that in the 74th West the lode was fully six feet wide and "*branded*" throughout with lead and blende. Immediately above this in a worked out stope a good lode had been discovered on the east side, about three feet wide intermixed with lead, blende and sulphur. Since the day before 20 waggons

of ore had been taken down and were ready to be brought to surface. New rock drills had been bought and some top-quality used ore-dressing machinery acquired at very low price. According to Kitto the new jiggers would do for five shillings as much work as the old ones for 25 shillings, and do it better. When shareholder J. Wilkins asked whether the rock drills would work well in hard rock, Kitto replied: "*They will knock down that stuff like fun. The hammer is now a thing of the past.*" Finally, the proposal was unanimously accepted and confirmed at a later meeting on March 14th 1878.

We have no information for 1879 and resume the story in 1880. The AGM took place at the same venue on November 24th. Apart from Chairman Noble the meeting was attended by Directors Roney and Fisher as well as George Maley and George Lay and 19 shareholders five of which were also share owners of Great Laxey. One of those present, John Quine, who had kept quiet at the 1878 meeting was going to be a pain in the neck for the Directors at many AGMs to come. The Chairman briefly touched on the activity of the previous year whose main object had been to drive on the 130th level north to intersect the East and West Lode at the junction of which with the main lode good results were expected. Progress had been excellent thanks to the new rock drills "*without which we could not have carried on the mine*". The weather had been very dry so that the scarcity of water had much retarded the operations underground. The men were occasionally on half-time. A far cry from Noble's statement in 1878 about the abundance of water at all times!

Underground Agent Kewley then reported on the state of the mine. Work had been solely confined to driving the 130th level where a progress of about 80 fathoms was achieved, with the end 112 fathoms from the shaft. The lode was variable and "*some good stones of ore*" had been encountered in the sole, which were thought to go below. It was estimated that the junction was some 60 fathoms ahead.

Cross-cuts had been put in on both sides of the level, but nothing of value was met with. During the summer two reservoirs had been built by cutting out ground on the side of the race leading from the water-wheel. This would enable work to be carried on above and below ground at the same time. Ore dressing had only just started a short time before due to scarcity of water. The dressing machinery was working efficiently so that the ores would be treated at the lowest possible cost. The total expenditure of £1132 included a balance from the previous year of £183, labour £572, merchants' bills £243, office £80 and royalty £47. The balance of assets over liabilities amounted to £276. In September 1880 Sir Warrington W. Smythe had visited the mine.

At question time John Quine asked for an explanation of the previous year. He thought it was a fixed amount. Quine also questioned the office expenses. As several other companies' had their offices on the premises and the Snaefell Mine had theirs first he considered that the company should sit rent-

free. In addition, he wanted to know why the half-yearly meetings had been abrogated as they were part of the Deed of Association. Chairman Noble replied that the royalty was a dead-rent of £31 per year until it exceeded the amount of the latter due to increased ore sales. As to the office charges these included the Secretary's salary as well as postage, auditors fee and journeys to the mine. Secretary Young's salary of £50 per year was very small and he had refused an increase until the mine could better afford it, which was acknowledged with "*Hear Hear*" by the audience. His duty was not just the paperwork but he also went down the mine every month to examine every part where work had been carried out. He was thus able, the Chairman explained, to check the reports of the Underground Manager. This was highly unusual for a Secretary yet Young was doing it. With all the expenses his salary did not leave him much for "*extravagant dinners at the mine*" as had been alleged. That Young was thought of a lot was proved by the fact that he was also the Secretary of three other companies. And who could complain about an office rent of £5 per year. As the shareholders had the opportunity to regularly look at the reports at the office, it was considered reasonable to cut down on the meetings to save money. Thus, for once John Quine had been put in place!

The discussion then touched on the back calls. Noble assured the audience that everything possible in this matter had been done but it would be unpleasant to resort to law, to which one shareholder remarked that to wind up the company would be equally unpleasant!

John Quine - in the name of 23 shareholders - had sent a "*requisition*" to the Chairman, which called for the immediate dressing of the "*metal*" on the floor of the mine and the removal and sale of the lead ore "*well known to be standing from the 60 fathom level down to the 85th*". This could be taken out at small cost as it was in "*virgin state*" near the floor of the 60th, two feet thick. In the 74th it was over seven feet with "*brangle*". About four fathoms north it was nine feet, also with "*brangle*" and south of "*this perpendicular there is a good bulk too*". The signers reckoned there would result from 1500 to 2000 tons of "*metal*" and felt there was considerable remissness on the part of the Directors as regards the general welfare of the shareholders. These "*facts of detail are a positive truth and cannot be gainsayed*". The proposed measure would also make the 6th call unnecessary.

Noble, being fully aware of the real facts, took the "*requisition*" in humorous vein. He assured those present once again that they knew him well enough to realize this could not possibly be the situation at the mine. Nobody could ever say they had been induced to put their money in the company by false representations. He then quoted the old saying: "*Give a lie an hour's start, and you will never catch it.*" To Noble's surprise the "*requisition*" had left the Island and found its way to the Office of Woods and Forests in London. On top of this, Quine had it published in The Isle of Man Times. Noble sarcastically observed that when he had read that statement he had immediately

begun to calculate his share of the bounty, which was greeted by laughter. One signer of the “*requisition*” had told him he had only put his signature to it “*to get done with John Quine*”. As the signers of the “*requisition*” did not represent 10 shareholders owning at least 1/10 of the mine, there was by law no need to call a special meeting. It also turned out that a number of signers had not even paid their calls! Not having paid call meant no vote.

Secretary Young had written to Underground Manager Kewley and asked for answers to specific questions regarding Quine’s “*requisition*”! Kewley replied that there was no ore in any part of the mine that would pay expenses and return a profit to shareholders and no ground could be set on tribute. After having read this, Noble also quoted from a letter from Captain J. Polglase of Penrith who had inspected the mine on May 5th 1879 and whom he had confronted with Quine’s “*requisition*”. Polglase had remarked that the mining had been in unproductive rock with occasional hopeful signs but no oreshoots continuous enough to make a paying mine. He stated further that many tons of ore could be raised from short bunches but it was absurd to think profits in the shape of dividends would result until something better was met with. Apparently John Quine had already looked at the mine two years ago and made similar remarks. The Directors had always been opposed to “*picking the eyes out*” of the mine and they were stoutly supported in this stand at a meeting with Sir Warrington Smythe of November 28th 1878 on which occasion the latter fully concurred with the decision adopted by the Directors in not dressing the stuff on hand with the prices for lead and blende so depressed. The ore bunches mentioned by Quine were well known to all concerned but this did not change the situation. Since Sir Warrington Smythe, the Government Inspector of Mines, completely agreed with their working of the mine, the Directors were in the clear with Woods and Forests, their landlords, which was officially confirmed by the Crown in a letter of November 19th 1880 from F.C. Skrimshire of Douglas in the name of the Hon. James K. Howard, Commissioner of her Majesty’s Woods, Forests and Land Revenues, who might otherwise have had reservations about the royalty. Therefore, Quine’s statement proved to be “*a dream - a baseless fabric which vanishes into thin air in the light of real facts and in the face of sterling truth.*”

But John Quine was far from satisfied and not about to give in. Secretary Young asked him to point out on the plan where blocks of ore “*fell from*”. Quine pointed to the 74th level. Young then pounced on him saying he had evidently no idea where this happened as it came from a stope in the 85th in which the men had been working in 1876. The place was later vacated and the men put to shaft sinking. Various circumstances had then contributed to some large pieces of ore falling into the stope. Since Captain Kitto had inspected the mine several cross-cuts had been put into the west side of the lode at the 85th and also one cross-cut on the east side but nothing of value had been found, nor did the ore seen in the 74th come down to the 85th. Another cross-cut was put in on the west side of the 74th where the lode was

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Snaefell Mining Company Limited
INCORPORATED WITH LIMITED LIABILITY UNDER THE ISLE OF MAN COMPANIES' ACT, 1865.
CAPITAL £80,000.
IN 15,000 ORDINARY SHARES OF £1 EACH,
 AND 15,000 TWENTY PER CENT PREFERENCE SHARES OF £1 EACH.

This is to Certify that *Edw. de la B. Robinson*
of Castle Street *is the Proprietor*
of *Shares numbered* *to*
 IN THE SNAEFELL MINING COMPANY LIMITED,
subject to the Articles of Association of the said Company and
that up to this day there had been paid in respect of such
Shares the sum of *£1.00* *Share.*
 Given under the Common Seal of the said Company
 the *30* *Day* of *May* in the Year *1884*

H. B. Noble
J. M. Malley
 DIRECTORS.

W. E. Young SECRETARY.

so large but it consisted mostly of debris and was getting narrower as it went north. Noble took over at this point and stated that it was “too terribly conclusive” that there was no body of ore as asserted by Quine. To this the latter retorted: “Seeing is believing and theory is the naked truth.” Secretary Young himself had shown him the place below the 74th where the lode was 7½ feet thick and further along nine feet. In reply to the question: “Of metal?”, from a shareholder, Quine remarked: “Yes; and brangle. The lode stuff is brangled. The ore is definitely, there and should be taken out at once to avoid another call.” Quine had asked Kewley whether he had shown the place to Sir Warrington and he had said: “No”. As to the why, Kewley replied: “Because he would have ordered us to take it out.” Young immediately interjected: “I don’t believe a word of it”, which enraged Quine who hissed at him: “You hold your noise. You are only a paid tool. I will show the ore to any shareholders who will go down with me. Saying this would be taking the eyes out of the mine is stuff and nonsense. The eyes would be a great help to the shareholders if they were worked.” Quine assured the audience that he had measured the lode and would not stand there and be told that he was stating a falsehood.

Thomas Fisher, one of the Directors, found it strange that no one else had ever seen this great ore body (later jokingly called “Quine’s Pocket”). When he had been down the mine recently and asked to be shown the most valuable place, Kewley showed him a shoot three inches thick. He had informed Quine of this but did not want to repeat what the latter had said because he did not wish to be a witness in a libel suit. Fisher assured the assembly that he had told Sir Warrington to make a close inspection of “Quine’s Pocket” but the

report was negative. After some further discussion Chairman Noble addressing John Quine said: "*Mr Quine may write as many letters as would fill the Isle of Man Times but if he says one word derogatory to my character or that of my fellow Directors he may look out. I merely throw this out as a warning to him.*" With this the matter was finally closed.

Here we skip another year and look at 1882. The AGM was held in the Commercial Room of the Villiers Hotel in Douglas on November 29th. The rumours of great discoveries in the mine had resulted in one of the largest gatherings of shareholders ever assembled at any meeting of a company in the Isle of Man. The Chairman and the Directors remained unchanged from the 1880 AGM and there were 27 shareholders present. The Chairman first announced the death of Alfred W. Adams, Clerk of the Rolls, one of the founder Directors of the Company. He then pointed to the "*most valuable discovery*" detailed in the Agent's Report to follow, which proved that the perseverance in the course pursued by the Directors was justified. Kewley's report was read by Young who stated that the 130th North had been extended a further 87 fathoms and was 257 fathoms from the shaft. In the last 50 fathoms the lode had been much improved in character. In May a nice rib of lead and blende had been cut on the lying cheek of the lode. In early October the lode in the forebreast had showed a rib of lead nearly two feet wide at the sole running up to a point at two feet above the sole and by the side of this there was a rib of lead, blende and copper about 18 inches wide and rising up towards the forebreast to 4½ feet. These two runs of ore had come together at the sole getting larger as they went down. Eventually they formed a solid rib of lead upwards of three feet wide at the sole and 21 inches wide at six feet up the forebreast with all the appearance of opening out wider below. Nothing in any way approaching this valuable discovery had ever been found before. However, cross-cuts on both sides had not met with anything worthwhile. The East and West Lode had not been intersected, but could not be far off. The cost of labour had amounted to an average of just under £50 per month.

The Chairman, given to old sayings, started his speech with: "*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*", but hastened to assure his listeners that "*I have never been sick nor without hope.*" He was pleased to say that only 160 original shares and 19 preference shares had been forfeited, some of them in consequence of the owners' deaths. All capital had by now been spent and the Company owed the bank £183. After a lengthy discourse the Chairman said he was aware that he could not ask the shareholders for more money when the lease for the mine had under five years to run. For this reason he had travelled to London in the company of Thomas Fisher, Director and largest shareholder, where they had met Sir Henry Brougham Loch, a Commissioner of Her Majesty's Woods, Forests and Land Revenues, who after careful examination of the plans had been very sympathetic to their cause. He was given a statement of all levels driven so far, as follows:

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Adit level	185 fathoms	N
8 fathom level	15	N
15	17	N
20	20	N
25	96	N
40	112	N
50	48	N
50	5	S
60	118	N
60	18	S
74	102	N
74	18	S
85	96	N
85	4	S
100	106	N
100	29	S
115	18	N
115	3	S
130	248	N
130	18	S
	1276 fathoms	

and was told in addition that the Main Engine had been sunk to a depth of 132 fathoms from surface with sumps and winzes worked for 180 fathoms. Noble felt that they would be able to obtain a new lease on favourable terms.

He went on to quote several reports on the mine by Captains Kitto, Henry James, William Barkell and Richard Rowe to document the importance of continuing the 130th. Rowe had been mine captain at Snaefell when it was in the property of the Great Laxey Mining Company. A certain amount of work had been done by that company but it later stopped the undertaking. The Crown, however, had insisted on Snaefell being worked whereupon Great Laxey sold it.

With the old hand drilling the air in the long levels (the 130th was 260 fathoms from the shaft) was so bad that the men refused to go down. This situation was remedied by the purchase of a second hand rock drill, an air compressor and a turbine at moderate cost from a mine at Baldwin. Kewley managed to set it up without any outside help. The washing machinery was complete but for an elevator and circular riddles.

A long and desultory conversation with regard to the capital increase ensued and the Chairman finally proposed to issue 5000 £1 shares called "*Preference Shares No.2*" or "*B Shares*". These would rank after the preference shares already on the market. This proposal found unanimous approval.

In the months following this meeting questions had arisen as to the validity of certain shares in the company. For this reason, the Directors decided to sell the property to W.E. Young as trustee for a new company reverting to the

name Snaefell Mining Company Limited for the consideration of 20,000 fully paid £1 shares, viz. 15,000 ordinary and 5000 preference shares. It was deemed necessary for the further development of the mine to raise £10,000 more capital for the new company and 10,000 preference shares were issued and offered to the present shareholders pro rata. A holder of 12 shares in the new Company was entitled to six of the new preference shares with five shillings payable with the order. If not at least 6000 of these 10,000 new preference shares were subscribed within 60 days, the new Company would go into liquidation. The agreement, dated November 1st 1883 and made between The Great Snaefell Mining Co. Ltd. of the first and Noble, Fisher and Roney of the second and Young of the third part, states that The Great Snaefell Mining Co. had been constituted in 1871. It also reveals that the new lease was granted on January 20th 1883 for a term of 21 years from 10th October 1882 (expiry date of previous the lease).

It is to be assumed that the rumoured bonanza did not materialize or at least not to the anticipated extent, or perhaps it took a long time to get the ore out. Be that as it may, the Mineral Statistics only mention fair-sized returns from 1888 onwards, i.e. six years later.

Our sources are silent for the next ten years. We continue the story with the Extraordinary General Meeting held in the Villiers Hotel in Douglas on October 8th 1894 chaired by Managing Director Thomas Fisher, the new secretary being R.M Warhurst. The topic of the meeting was once again “*to consider the present of the company*”. Fisher commenced by saying that “*your Directors are engaged in driving up their deepest level (the 171th North) towards the ore-ground in which their main deposit of ore has been obtained.*” Now, while Directors were hardly doing this themselves (!), they nevertheless required “*a small amount of additional capital*”. Even though the ore returns had been fairly good, averaging 11 to 12 tons of lead and 24 tons of blende per week for the preceding 27 weeks, they were insufficient owing to the extremely low prices obtainable in the market. The Directors considered the development work listed below as absolutely essential if the mine was to be kept going. After completion they expected 30 fathoms in height of ore ground to be stoped at small cost, a job which would require many years. The work under consideration, which had been in progress for nearly three years, was estimated to cost £5500 and consisted in:

- a) Sinking the Engine Shaft 30 fathoms.
- b) Sinking a sump for ventilation, and accelerating the work 30 fathoms
- c) Driving the lowest level, the 171th North, 245 fathoms to connect a) and b).

All other work at the mine to be discontinued until this was done.

Of this work the following had already been accomplished at an outlay of more than £2000:

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- 1) Sinking of the Shaft 30 fathoms from the 141th to the 171th
- 2) Driving the 171th 85 fathoms north
- 3) Sinking three sumps below the 141th. Each of these three sumps had been sunk in continuous ore ground (no. 1: 15½ fathoms deep, ranging from 2 to 3 tons lead and blende ore per fathom; no. 2: 12 fathoms deep, ranging up to 2 tons lead and blende ore; no. 3: 12 fathoms deep, ranging from 2 to 5½ tons lead and blende ore and averaging for the whole length sunk fully 4 tons of ore per fathom).

Unless these jobs were completed they would be of no use to the company. What remained to be done to finish the work, their Manager informed them, would require about 15 months' time at a gross cost of £50 per week or a total of £3250.

The Directors suggested to raise this money by the creation and issue of preference shares. To provide for all contingencies they asked for £6000 in £1 shares called "Class D" and to be numbered respectively from 30,001 to 36,000, which shares would have absolute priority over all existing shares as regards dividends and assets. By way of incentive the Directors were willing to take 750 shares themselves. The new shares were to be first offered pro rata to the shareholders with calls not exceeding five shillings per share. The total capital at this time was £30,000 divided into 15,000 ordinary or Class A, 5000 preference or Class B and 10,000 preference or Class C shares. A second Extraordinary General Meeting was convened for October 24th 1894 and it may be presumed that the resolution was accepted.

SNAEFELL MINING COMPANY, LIMITED.

R E C E I P T .

5s Od. per Share on application for

Preference Shares.

DOUGLAS, _____ 1883.

Received the Sum of _____ on account of the

SNAEFELL MINING COMPANY, LIMITED, per _____

For the SNAEFELL MINING COMPANY, LIMITED.

£ : :

In 1897 Snaefell Mine suffered a disaster in which 20 men died due to poisonous gases engendered by a fire in the timbers of the 130th level (described in some detail by P.J. Challis in *British Mining* No.23).

In 1906 the value of concentrates produced monthly (about £400) was just sufficient to cover costs. At About this time a substantial rock-fall 25 fathoms down in the main shaft sounded the death knell for the mine. After presumably having the “eyes” taken out (Quine’s dream), it soon closed. Mineral Statistics give the last ore return for 1908 while *The Mining Manual and Mining Year Book* for 1923 lists the Snaefell Mining Company Ltd as a company of not sufficient public interest, with the last detailed reference in Volume for 1910. Thus, we can assume that serious working ceased around that time. The company was struck off the official register in 1923. According to Mackay & Schnellmann the Snaefell Mine was never profitable despite a fair production from 1888 to 1893 because the main oreshoot was only found late in its life after a very considerable amount of capital has already been spent for too little return.

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