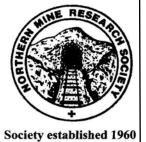
# Northern Mine Research Society

# Newsletter



www.nmrs.org.uk

February 2016

www.nmrs.org.uk

#### **Presidents jottings**

First of all a belated "Happy New Year" to all our members. Weatherwise the year did not get off to a good start but as the days grow longer we will all have more opportunity to get out and about. Perhaps you will find something of interest on our meets list, very kindly organised by Sallie.

Thank you to all of you who have paid your **member-ship fees** promptly which saves Malcolm a lot of time and effort. If you have not yet paid please take this as a reminder. Sadly without any money this will be the last newsletter you receive. Those who have paid will find their membership card for 2016 enclosed.

Our A.G.M. this year is to be held on Saturday April 16th at Mealbank Hall, Ingleton, LA6 3ER. The grid reference is 695735 and there is plenty of free parking. Book sales will commence at 11.30am (please let me know if you want to bring some of your own) with a pre-booked free lunch at 12.00 noon. In order to arrange catering for this please book your place with me prior to April 2<sup>nd</sup> on 01282 614615 (there is an answermachine should we be out) or mansemins@btopenworld. In order to avoid unnecessary photocopying please have a look at the minutes of our Autumn meeting on our website prior to the meet-

#### **Editor**

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Would you please note that the deadline for inclusion with the May 2016 Newsletter is the 30th April 2016.

Submissions are welcome that would be of interest to members of the NMRS. These can be forwarded to me as text/disc by post or you can email or telephone. If you require anything returning please ask. Photographs, plans and drawings are acceptable as long as they can be reproduced in black and white.

ing. If you are unable to access a computer please let me know on booking and I will make sure a copy with your name on it is available when you arrive at Mealbank. The AGM will follow lunch at the close of which, Bernard Bond will lead a short walk. Details of this will be given at the meeting but boots and waterproofs will be needed as a precaution.

The following day, April 17<sup>th</sup> I will be at a **second hand book fair** at Pendle Heritage Centre, Park Hill, Colne Rd., Barrowford, BB9 6JQ with some of our publications. This is a new venture by the Friends of Pendle Heritage in attempt to raise money to help the centre to continue. If in the area please pop in to say hello.

I would like to thank Keith Turner for some CATS, MOLES and PDHMS publications he so kindly dropped off at our house one very wet day. Those needed for the library will go to Sallie, the remainder will be available at our AGM. I have also received, courtesy of the Publishers, copies of "Bypassing Indian Queens –Archaeological Excavations 1992-1994" and "The Last Years of Coal Mining in Yorkshire" There is a review of both in this Newsletter and they, too, will be available from our library.

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On behalf of NMRS I would like to welcome the

following new members

Phil Cordingley Oldham
Eddie Downes Wakefield
Kelvin Green Worcester
John Hewitt Stoke on Trent
David Joy Skipton
Dr David Kiernan Barnsley

Dr David Kiernan Rodney Mitchell Todmorden David and Sue Parkinson Morecambe Graham Pickles Whitby Richard Rothery Bradford Michael Salmon Burnley **Gary Topping** Colne George Waite Manchester Philip Feakin London

In one case the membership was a birthday present to Dad from his son. How kind was that and what a surprise when I contacted him.

Our **Facebook page** continues to be well used and we now have over 440 followers. Graham Topping continues to send me regular "posts" which are amongst our most popular reads and Alastair Lings continues to advise me. Many thanks. I know not many of our members are on Facebook but it is surprising the wealth of information out there which I try to "share" with our followers. You do not have to reveal much information to join Facebook (one reason I was so dubious about it) so why not have a look and at the same time start to follow us.

**2016 is the bicentenary of the Leeds & Liverpool canal** and considering how important this was to mining along its route NMRS has made a donation

to them to help restore the mile markers along its route. Too late for this Newsletter but the end of January saw the emptying of the locks at Barrowford, fitting new lock gates and free tours of the site. Please check out our website for details of further events.

Malcolm has been working very hard on our **new website** and now that two volunteers have come forward to help him, myself and Mick Cooke, once up and running Malcolm's workload should decrease. Mike Gill continues to feed him information which is very much appreciated.

Regarding **publication news** our free offer on postage was well received in December. Please keep looking out for special offers.

Recently the press has reported unfavourably about various funding raising activities of some charities and their selling of personal details to third parties. We, at NMRS, are well aware of **the Data Protection Act** (www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data protection-act) and to how it should be implemented and can confirm we use any data we receive in approved ways. The data we keep is used for membership purposes only. We comply with all the strict rules that govern us and respect members' privacy by guarding the integrity of their personal data. If a member resigns their entry is erased from our database. Details are never passed to third parties.

And finally – why not make your booking for the AGM now before you forget!

#### **Barbara Sutcliffe**

#### MEETS PROGRAMME FOR 2016

Thank you to everyone who has offered meets.

# Saturday 2 April

Lord Carlisle's Railways.

Leader Clive Seal.

Meet at 11am at NY 589 585, south of Hallbankgate on the A689 between Alston and Brampton. A surface walk to look at a 1799 wooden waggonway and then follow the early twentieth century railway to Gairs colliery. The return route will follow an old coal road and look at the remains of lime works and coal workings. Bookings to 015 2424 1851

#### Saturday 16 April

Spring Meeting (AGM).

Ingleton Scout Hut, Meal Bank, Yorkshire, SD 6949 7394.

Book sales from 11.30am. Buffet lunch (pre-booking essential) at 12 noon, followed by AGM. After the AGM there will be a surface walk with Bernard Bond

Bookings to Barbara Sutcliffe (01282 614 615 or mansemins@btopenworld.com)

# Saturday 21 May

Forterra Brick Works (formerly called Claughton Brick Works).

Leader Bernard Bond.

The brick works are at Claughton on the A683, midway between Kirby Lonsdale and Lancaster. Meet at 10.30am by the Factory Entrance. NGR SD 563 664.

Maximum 15 people. Bookings to Bernard Bond on 015242 41857 (Answer Phone).

### Saturday 11 June

Cliviger lead and lime.

Leader Graham Topping.

A surface walk looking at the lead mines on Cliviger Gorge, travelling via the old pack horse route and looking at the limestone hushings in Sheddon Clough off Long Causeway. Both of these features were researched by Titus Thornber\* in the mid 1970s.

Meet at 9.30am at the Ram Inn. Burnley Rd. Cliviger. Please bring lunch and good footwear. Book-

ings to Graham Topping on 07973 905883 or email Glt2top@aol.com.

\*Titus Thornber wrote the book "King Charles' Mine" about Thieveley lead mine.

#### 17 to 20 June

NAMHO Conference, Dublin. As details are known they will be available on www.namhoconference.org.uk

# Saturday 9 July

Gunnerside Gill, Swaledale.

Leader Richard Francis.

A surface walk up the gill to Blakethwaite, returning via Winterings.

Meet at 10.30am at NGR SD 95 98, outside the Kings Head Inn in Gunnerside village (limited parking just across the Little Bridge to the west, with alternative parking before Gunnerside Great Bridge across the Swale (5 spaces) or beyond the cattle grid, west of the village on the old road to Ivelet (5 spaces). Walkers will need to be properly equipped with boots and waterproofs, and bring something to eat and drink. Bookings to Richard Francis on 01748 850181 (answer phone) or rwfrancis1@yahoo.co.uk.

# Saturday 6 August

Rimington lead and barytes mines.

Leader Mick Cook.

Meet at 11am at NGR SD 813 454. There is roadside parking. A surface walk of about 3 hours to look at the lead and barytes mining remains at Skeleron.

Bookings to Mick Cook on 01282 427 428.

#### Saturday 10 September

Heritage Weekend. See media announcements for details of mining and other industrial archaeological sites to visit.

# Saturday 17 September

Bales sites in Arkengarthdale.

Leader Richard Smith.

Meet at 11am at Foregill Gate Watersplash. A surface walk to look at Calver Hill bale sites. Bookings to Richard Smith on 07785 508 013 or rsmith@btinternet.com.)

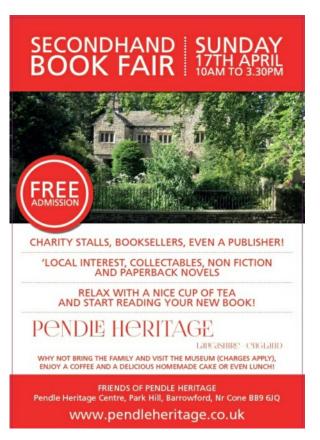
#### Saturday 22 October

Autumn Meeting at Gisburn Festival Hall SD 82 48. Book sales from 11.30am. Buffet lunch (pre-booking essential) at 12 noon, followed by meeting and presentations.

Bookings and presentation details to Barbara Sutcliffe (01282 614 615 or mansemins@btopenworld.com)

#### Sallie Bassham

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Note 'publisher'is NMRS!

# **North Pennines Mining History**

Two mining history organisations are holding a joint event in the North Pennines on 14th May 2016. The Friends of Killhope and the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society are planning an event at St Johns Chapel Town Hall. The theme of the day will be "Forgotten Minerals of the North Pennines". What we need you to do is put this event in your diary, come to the event, and think about delivering a paper or presentation. We hope to see you on the day. Detailed publicity and booking information will follow shortly.

Meanwhile.....if you have an idea for a presentation, please contact Margaret Manchester (Chair of the Friends of Killhope) via <a href="mmanchester@hotmail.com">mmanchester@hotmail.com</a>.

# **BCRA Field Meeting**

The British Cave Research Association will hold a field meeting in the Malham area on the 14th and 15th May 2016. The objectives are to provide a practical demonstration of water tracing techniques and to add to knowledge of the karst hydrology of the Malham area. There will be an evening meeting on the 14th to introduce the practical work which will be undertaken on the 15th. This will comprise:

\*) Release of a flood pulse by opening the sluice on

Malham Tarn. Data logging water depth recorders in the stream draining Malham Cove Rising and at the Aire Head Risings will monitor passage of the pulse. It is hoped that the pulse will also be monitored by temperature loggers placed in the phreatic cave behind Malham Cove Rising and at the risings.

\*) Injection of three separate tracers into sinking streams and installation of passive detectors to detect their passage. Water samples will also be collected for later laboratory analysis.

The package of methods is being co-ordinated by Professor John Gunn and other aspects of the meeting are being organised by John Cordingley and Graham Proudlove.

An evening meeting in Malham Village Hall is planned for talks on relevant subjects and for a discussion about re-forming the BCRA hydrology special interest group. There is plenty of accommodation, at all levels of comfort, in the area for those staying overnight.

For this meeting we need to know in advance approximately how many people are interested so that we can plan the various tasks involved. This first circular is a call for interest and a second circular will follow in due course with more detail of the experiments, accommodation etc. If you are interested to attend please email Graham Proudlove at mailto:g.proudlove@manchester.ac.uk and you will be added to the list of attenders. The second circular will follow once we have an idea of numbers.

# **NAMHO CONFERENCE 2016**

17-19th June 2016 at Dublin City University **Mining and social change** 

Abstracts for papers (300 words) are sought on the theme of Mining and Social

Change which could include the following topics: Regional identities

Migration

Urbanisation

Industrial housing

Education

Gender and the mining industry

Self-improvement societies / social philanthropy

Sport and leisure

Industrial action

Mines and quarries during periods of conflict Changing attitudes in favour or against mining.

The deadline for abstracts is Friday 26 February 2016. Please send these to

SharronSchwartz: sschwartz@era.ie



#### Celebrating the Tinworking Landscape of Dartmoor in its European Context - Prehistory to 20th Century

Tavistock, Devon UK, 6-11 May 2016

The first international conference exploring the tinworking landscape of Dartmoor in a European context, is to be held in Tavistock from 6-11 May 2016. It marks 25 years of the Dartmoor Tinworking Research Group, and 10 years of the UNESCO World Heritage designation of the Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape. Twelve lectures (including speakers from Czech Republic, France, Germany and Iberia, as well as Britain), four evening events and three full days of field trips, will make this a truly memorable and important occasion for anyone interested in Dartmoor's history and archaeology. Delegates will receive a Conference Booklet and a special medallion crafted in tin.

All bookings must be received by 30 April 2016. The full Conference Programme and details about booking are now available on the DTRG website:

www.dtrg.org.uk



# International Early Engines Conference 2017 – Preliminary Announcement

**Synopsis** – The inaugural International Early Engines Conference (IEEC hereafter) will be held at The Ironworks, Elsecar, South Yorkshire in May 11-13, 2017. The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for presentation and discussion of new research into heat engines prior to 1812.

**Headline Theme** – "Newcomen & colleagues achievements untainted by the smokescreens of Watt" **Background** – A wide range of new field and desk research into early engines lacks an obvious outlet, forum or focus and this is the underpinning rationale for IEEC. The event design is based on the International Early Railways Conference (IERC). Repeat conferences are anticipated every 4-5 years.

Conference Details – The conference will open at 12.00 on Thursday May 11, 2017 and close at 16.00 on Saturday May 13. Twenty papers, each of thirty minutes duration are planned, plus visits to local engine houses and related sites. Catering will be provided and relevant publications will be on sale by the sponsoring organisations. Delegate costs are likely to be around £100/person and will offer options for partners and day tickets.

Hotel and accommodation arrangements will not be handled by the conference.

**Sponsorship** – The facilities and support will be provided by Barnsley MBC. The Newcomen Society has

agreed to be lead sponsor and the Historical Metallurgy Research Society (HMRS), the Northern Mines Research Society (NMRS) and the South Gloucestershire Mine Research Group (SGMRG) have also agreed to provide sponsorship.

**Organisation** – IEEC will be organised and managed by a standing committee, whose members will be drawn from sponsors, venue providers and other stakeholders. Event administration, specifically bookings and publicity will be managed by the lead sponsor and host venue.(www.earlyengines.org)

#### **Outline Timings:**

Confirmation of sponsors, appointment of committee and initial publicity – December 2015

Initial Publicity and call for papers—January 2016

Deadline for declaration of intention to submit papers – April 2016

Deadline for submission of authors synopsis of papers – August 2016

Confirmation of final list of papers/speakers – September 2016

Bookings arrangements go live – October 2016

Delegate packs issued – February 2017

Conference runs - May 2017

Transactions published and distributed – May 2018 onwards

# Ideas for papers already proposed (to be confirmed):

An account of Newcomen engines preceding the 1712 Dudley Engine.

Excavation and research conclusions from the 1791 Watergrove Engine House.

Surveying and researching the UKs oldest complete Engine House at Brislington.

William Brown, Tyneside's Master Engine Builder 1745-1770.

Building the early boilers, trials and errors.

Was the 1712 Dudley Engine moved there from somewhere else?

Morton's Travels, an account of Henry Ford's engine purchases.

Revisiting the history of the Pentrich Engine.

Conservation of the 1795 Elsecar Great Engine.

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

Researchers into the history and archaeology of early engines (defined as heat engines constructed before 1812) who would like to present their findings are invited to indicate their intention to the organising committee by the end of May 2016. This needs to be followed by submission of a 300-word synopsis for consideration by the end of August 2016.

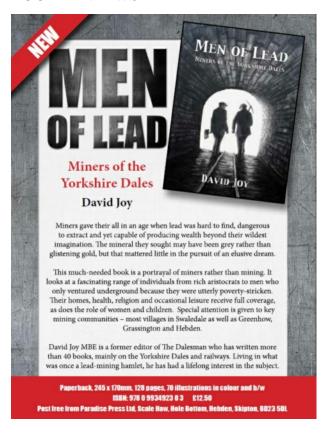
The standard length of papers is 30 minutes, with shorter presentations and papers welcome.

Proposals for papers are encouraged on a wide range of topics such as technical developments, operations, financing and of course industrial archaeology, should be sent to: <a href="mailto:admin@earlyengines.org">admin@earlyengines.org</a>. It is intended to publish the proceedings as a dedicated volume of the International Journal for the History of Engineering and Technology

Further details of the Conference can be found at: <a href="https://www.earlyengines.org">www.earlyengines.org</a> and these will be added to over time.

# **Steve Grudgings**

#### BOOK REVIEWS



# Men of lead -Miners of the Yorkshire Dales

One of our members, David Joy, has just written this interesting book. The inspiration came from the late Arthur Raistrick who had commented to him that there were plenty of books on lead mining but it was rare to find any direct reference to the conditions in

which men worked or to the effect of their health and their life. In my opinion this "complaint" has now been overturned.

A very readable social history account looks at how the gradual development of mining affected all involved and this is followed by the actual life of these men and also women, who previously have tended to be ignored. Key mining communities in the Dales are also studied. Towards the end of the book numerous sources and further reading suggestions encourage those who want to delve deeper. Also impressive is the index which also includes various headings for those who have a particular interest eg canals, companies, occupations, places and people etc. This book should appeal to many from local history enthusiasts to those who live or visit the area wanting to know what and how this interesting area was shaped.

Throughout the book are copious b&w drawings and both b&w and colour photographs. Priced at £12.50 the details on the flyer enable members to buy it post free. For those planning attending our AGM they will be available at the special price of £11.50. To reserve you copy for collection there please contact me.

### **Barbara Sutcliffe**

# Bypassing Indian Queens –Archaeological Excavations 1992-1994 Investigating prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and landscapes in Cornwall

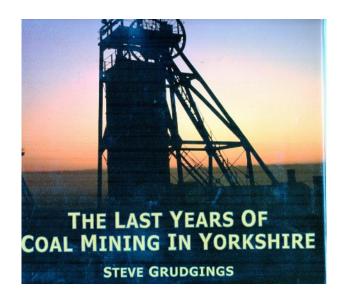
This is available as an e-publications (pdf) on CD from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council, Fal Building, New County Hall, Truro, TR1 3AY, Cornwall. Priced at £9.99 (free postage) email publications@cau.org.uk

This is a fully illustrated and comprehensive account of the archaeological excavations carried out along the A30 highway at Indian Queens, Fraddon in 1992-1994. In advance of and during road construction.

Some of the major highlights include the discoveries of unique Early Neolithic buildings within ancient farmland at Penhale, and diverse Early Bronze Age ritual and ceremonial monuments at Gaverigan and Highgate on higher land. The project provided new insights of regional and national significance on early settlement and landscape. Period-based chapters on the CD reveal developing land use and the increasing importance and exploitation of mineral metals in the Goss Moor basin. Farming and mining going hand in hand.

Of interest to the keen archaeologist 408pp, 119figs (many colour), 69plates, 77 tables and 9 appendices, full index.

#### **Barbara Sutcliffe**



# The Last Years of Coal Mining in Yorkshire by Steve Grudgings

With the recent closure of Kellingley Colliery in 2015 and earlier in the year the closure of Hatfield this is a very appropriate book for our times. It is crammed full of photos, most of which are now "historic" as the pits have now been demolished and the underground workings flooded.

After a geological map of Yorkshire there is a short section about the author and the photographs and another general introduction about coal mining in Yorkshire. A further map shows the locations and names of the 58 collieries covered. These are then arranged alphabetically in the contents page making navigation easy. Each colliery has some information about it and also photos, each with a caption.

Aimed at providing a unique photographic record of the end of coal mining in the county it certainly achieves this and for anyone wishing to find out more about the subject the author provides a personal reading list.

Published by Folly Books <u>www.follybooks.co.uk</u> it is a hardback with colourful dust jacket and 306pp with over 400 images of both small and large coal mines, and priced at £24.99.

#### **Barbara Sutcliffe**

#### **RECENT PUBLICATION**

The Story of Alderley. Prag, A.J.N.W. (ed.). 2016. Manchester University Press, xlviii+984pp. ISBN 978-0-7190-9171-1. (Hardback; 20.5 x 26.5 cms).

This book was mentioned in the last newsletter and has now appeared. It is the second to result from the joint Manchester Museum – National Trust *Alderley Edge Landscape Project*. The many facets of the natu-

ral, social and industrial history of the area are covered in six sections that include 31 contributions, 13 appendices, 64 colour and numerous black and white illustrations, glossaries of general, geological, and mining and quarrying terms, a bibliography and an extensive Index.

Alderley Edge is well-known as a mining district and the following are the main contributions on that subject in this volume:

The minerals of the Edge. Green, Braithwaite, Thompson & Warrington, pp.98-102

Early mining: the evidence before 1598. Timber-lake, pp.342-367.

Mining in the Alderley district: the documented period. Warrington, pp.368-413.

Working the mines at Alderley Edge: a contemporary perspective. Dibben, pp.414-435.

Primary mineralisation at Alderley Edge. Green, pp.788-799 (Appendix 6.1).

The following also contain references to the mining and related topics:

Approach to the Edge: a personal view. Garner, pp.24-46.

*Rocks, minerals and landforms: an overview.* Timberlake, pp.51-72.

The solid geology of the Edge. Thompson, Warrington, Pollard & Nudds, pp.73-97.

*The archaeology of Alderley Edge*. Prag & Timberlake, pp.303-341.

The Archive. Wearne, pp.504-539.

*The graffiti on stone and wood.* King, Pye, Dibben, Timberlake & Garner, pp.566-585.

Close to the Edge – ensuring the future of the Edge for everyone. Widger, pp.727-761.

By Seven Firs and Goldenstone: an account of the Legend of Alderley. Garner, pp.762-780.

The Hagg Cottages: the historical background to the 2003 Alderley Sandhills Project excavation. Pye, pp.881-889 (Appendix 19.3).

The National Trust Sites and Monuments Record (NTSMR). Widger, pp.902-907 (Appendix 29.1).

For further information visit <a href="https://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk">www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk</a>. The book may be ordered from Orders Dept., NBN International, 10 Thornbury Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7PP (<a href="https://www.nbninternational.com">www.nbninternational.com</a>; orders@nbninternational.com; customer services: 01752 202301;). A Special Launch Discount Price of £40 (normal price £50) has been advertised for orders placed before 31 March 2016 quoting OTH578 (add £3 for p&p in the UK).

### Dr Geoff Warrington, DSc., CGeol., FGS

#### **GOLD IN IRELAND**

My three visits to Ireland began in Northern Finland. "Mitka ovat Brittein saarilla?" [What are the British Isles"] enquired my Finnish friend as we drove north along an empty highway in Lapland. I had to think for a moment but when I realised that the term 'the British Isles' describes the clump of islands off the coast of Europe, I was able to explain it was a geographic name for Great Britain, Northern Ireland (Ulster) and the Republic (Eire). My answer sufficed ... until Pirjo asked if I could design a display covering the story of gold in Ireland (north and south). "I will have to think about it," I said and we drove on in silence for another fifty kilometres.

# The investigation begins

As luck would have it, Pirjo's casual question sparked an interest and it was not difficult to coax two friends, Alan Bladon and NMRS member Patrick Reeson to accompany me on an investigation of gold in Ireland. We used the ferry at Holyhead and arrived in Dublin on Monday; it was a holiday. In advance, the Director of the National Museum of Ireland had agreed to open up the gallery that featured 'The Gold Collection' – a stunning assembly of beautiful items from the Bronze Ages ... cases and cases of decorative jewellery ... carefully displayed and effectively illuminated. (But don't take my word for it, look on the National Museum of Ireland website.)

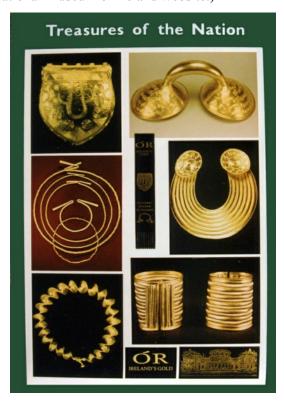


Photo:- The panel displaying a few of the treasures viewed by Ron and his colleagues in the National Museum of Ireland on the first day of the investigation

I recall we pleaded for access to the shop before departing ... to purchase sets of transparencies, postcards and books as worthy souvenirs.



Photo:- Having permission to pan, Ron found it enjoyable washing the gravels at the Red Hole on the Red Mines River, near Woodenbridge

Suitably impressed, we continued on to Woodenbridge in County Wicklow. Using a tenuous introduction provided by a Cumbrian prospector, Percy Collins, we located the owner of The Red Hole, a well-known hot spot on the Gold Mines River. Frank knew and admired Percy and agreed we could look for gold on his land, suggesting we had the "luck of the Irish".

The gold deposits only occur in a stretch of river 200 to 300 metres long and Percy had drawn me a sketch map, marked with the proverbial cross. It was hard to believe that this small river had furnished over 300 kilograms of gold since a tree fell over in 1795 and revealed a substantial nugget adhering to its roots.

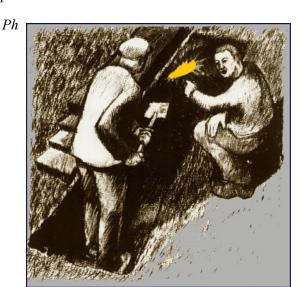


Photo:- Not only did the day-in-the-rain prove that the Red Hole was 'paying', the location gave a satisfactory return for the effort involved

We set to with vigour ... heaving rocks aside, scooping up gravel and working our pans in quiet pools of the running stream. Occasionally we stopped to take a photograph. Very soon, two things happened at once; we found grains of gold and it started to rain heavily.

Soaked to the skin and dripping wet, we continued to pan until four o'clock. After three warm show-

ers, we had a pint in the Gold Mines River Bar but could not avoid the searching questions of the locals. Because we planned to visit the west coast in the morning, we received much advice about the gold places.



oto:- Artist Ron Wilkinson produced a sketch to explain that many of Ireland's treasures were discovered during peat digging

Mindful of my obligation to create a display for Lapland's Gold Museum, I paid attention to the banter and a programme began to evolve as we travelled to County Mayo. We just had to see Croagh Patrick, known as "the holiest mountain in Ireland". There was a gold discovery here in the 1980s but local resistance forbids any prospecting or mining. It was the same story at Doolough; local protests objected to the possibility of pollution. Fair enough, I thought, as I photographed the loch.

We stopped briefly at Curraghinalt in County Tyrone to scour the ground and we agreed the geology suggested bedrock mineralization. (The report on a feasibility study is due in 2016, and the signs for gold mining are promising.) We returned to Westport for a good night's sleep before departing for Holyhead.

#### The investigation continues

My enquiries continued by letter and I received much help from contacts in Ireland. The Director of the Geological Survey of Ireland provided a stack of brochures, leaflets and pamphlets. The Secretary of the Mining History Society of Ireland invited me to return to Dublin so as to give a lecture and explain what I required in the way of pictorial material. In addition, he presented me with maps of Ireland – geological and geographical. That evening, surreptitiously, I received a pack of photographs after my talk. I could copy them for the display in Finland – provided I did not reveal the source – and then return them by post.

The photographs showed the activities in a new gold discovery in Ulster's Sperrin Mountains. My contact explained; during the 'Troubles', blasting with explosives was out of the question and compressed air was used as a poor substitute. Nowadays, these restrictions are easing and the Galantas Gold Corporation has opened a mining prospect near Omagh and expects approval in 2016 to explore underground.

Shopping for inspiration in Dublin, I bought two flags and learned the post office issued a set of Irish stamps featuring illustrations of the gold objects in the national museum. This was proof of the luck o' the Irish and I thought, "But this is where I had come in!"

#### The exhibition evolves



Photo:- The left-hand panel incorporates small versions of the panels in the exhibition and includes English explanations, whereas all other panels provide texts in Finnish

One way and another, I had enough material for the display required in Finland and drafted a layout for the curator of the Golden World project. Approval and some funding came by return and my task was to bring all the texts, the regions, the pictures and the maps into a coherent composition.



Photo:- Collected and donated pictorial material allowed the exhibition design to feature three centuries of gold recovery in the Wicklow Mountains Needing a few solid objects, the ferry company Stena Line Ltd. donated a generous supply of Irish souvenirs, many incorporating the Guinness identi-

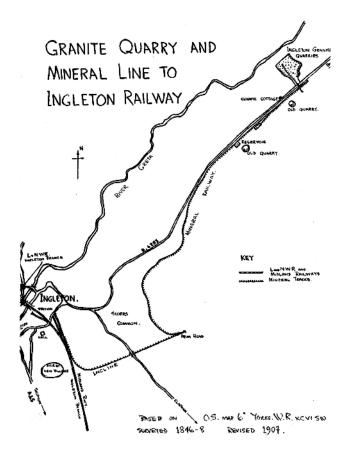
ty in the design. At first sight, they looked dreadful but when I next viewed them in Finland on display in a glass case, they looked good. I was pleased that Inkeri (the museum curator) was pleased and by way of endorsement, she asked if I would submit ideas for a display about gold in Burma! It took only a few seconds to accept.



Photo:- The final exhibition staged in the Golden World pavilion in Tankavaara, Finland, is a triangular unit adjacent positioned close to the Gold in Britain exhibit, and includes a glass cabinet of artefacts

#### Ron Callender

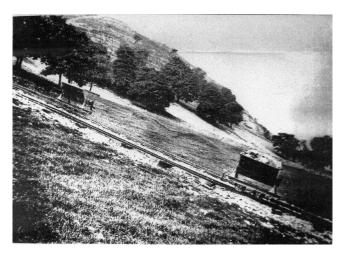
# **Ingleton Old XL Granite Quarry**



Further to the item in the November newsletter, Bernard Bond has sent some additional material which

clarifies the system used to transport the quarry output down to the main line railway in Ingleton. The rock was lifted out of the quarry on a (narrow gauge?) incline, then transferred to wagons on a standard gauge line that ran along the hillside above Hawes Road and round to Drum Top, the wagons being hauled by a small tank locomotive (Manning Wardle works no 711 of 1878, bought second hand as the quarry was not started until 1887). Here the rock was transferred to narrow gauge tipper wagons to be moved, one wagon at a time, down a c18" gauge incline. This was a balanced incline where the weight of a loaded descending wagon pulled an empty wagon up.

At the bottom of the incline the rock was transferred to standard gauge wagons to be moved along another standard gauge line to Ingleton Goods Yard for onward despatch on the main line railway.

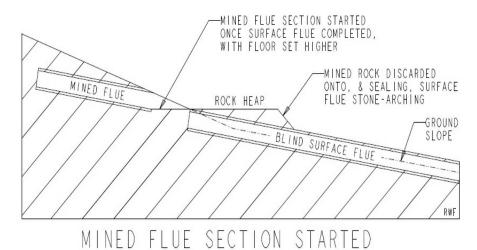


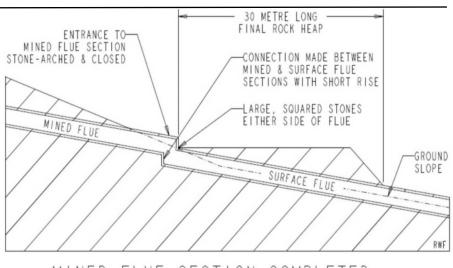
The aerial ropeway that opened in 1926 replaced the SG mineral railway and the second (c18" gauge) incline.

#### **Bernard Bond**

### SURRENDER SMELT MILL MINED FLUE SECTION

Sallie Bassham's interesting article entitled 'Surrender Smelt Mill Flue' in BM50, available online as a pdf, speculates on the presence of a flue condenser and contains the following:





MINED FLUE SECTION COMPLETED

'The next section of the flue, about 30 metres long, has been mined, driven like a level but at a steeper gradient. When it comes to day again there is a short vertical rise, which is easily negotiable. The break in the flue at this point may indicate only that construction was at different times or by different builders. There are, however, large squared stones beside the flue, aligned across it and suggesting there may have been an additional structure at some time.'

Historic OS maps clearly show Surrender Smelt Mill surface flue with a break, indicating a mined upper section. Having visited the flue on several occasions, including the NMRS meet led by Sallie Bassham on 1st August, I would like to suggest that the 30 metre long flue section, referred to in the above extract, was not mined through what appears to be an old lead level dead heap but continued as a surface flue right up to where the ground steepens. The mined upper section of flue was then started with the floor deliberately set higher and level with the top of the surface flue stone-arching so that extracted rock could be brought out and discarded over the surface flue thereby creating the heap. This also made the stonearched flue section beneath the heap airtight without the need for a usual covering of turf.

With the mined flue section complete and joined to an existing 12.5 metre deep shaft (still open), the flue was continued on the surface to end at a chimney stack on the moor top. Meanwhile at the start of the mined flue section, a connection was made through into the lower surface flue resulting in the 'short vertical rise' mentioned above. The entrance to the mined flue section was then stone-arched and closed, the 'large squared stones' possibly corner foundations to this structure.

My account does not explain the need for a mined, and therefore more costly, flue section. Producing a surface flue up the steepening hillside would not have been a problem when looking at the flue rising steeply from Blakethwaite Smelt Mill in Gunnerside Gill, Swaledale. An existing lead level was not utilised as the mined flue section was driven at a steeper gradient, while driving a flue section through a lead level dead heap would prove difficult and therefore avoided with a detour. However, as flues were deliberately long to give fume time to cool and leave high quality lead deposits on the internal walls, why make the reclamation process even more difficult by including a 12.5 metre deep shaft?

#### **Richard Francis**

### HONISTER SLATE MINE, CUMBRIA

This is the last working slate mine in England mining Westmorland Green Slate. Circa 1728 to date.

On a recent underground visit to this mine we gained an insight into the ancient methods of slate mining while being able to contrast them with the modern methods now being used.



The mine entrance is about half a mile from the visitors centre, workshops and offices. The access road is steep and quite rough thus the need for four

wheel drive transport.



The mine was bought and re-opened in 1997 by, Mark Wier, who purchased it from the Alfred McAlpine construction company for an undisclosed sum. He set about developing the mining side of the business in spite of having no experience or qualifications in mining. He enlarged the "Cathedral" mine main access tunnels so that modern excavators and dump trucks could be used to access the working areas of the mine. This enabled him to reach areas of high quality slate and produce it at a competitive price.



The mine has had a checkered history, opening and closing as demand increased and decreased. In 1981 the Moore, family bought the mine after years of poor management. They immediately set about a large program of capital investment in mechanisation and working practises. This resulted in the purchase and installation of rail mounted Eimco Rockershovels with battery operated locomotives and in-house designed rolling stock. New working practises were also implemented which resulted in increased productivity.



NMRS - Newsletter February 2016

The, Moore, family sold the mine to the McAlpine group in 1985 who kept it in production until 1989. It was the then put into a care and maintenance program until being purchased by Mr Weir.



As you enter the mine you get a sense of the size of the tunnels which are about 6mts high and 10mts wide which makes for good ventilation. The mine is split into two areas, the modern workings and the preserved galleries and tunnels of past operations.

There is a very impressive decline which is about 80mts and dipping at 1 in 2 down the Vein. This has a home made hydraulic haulage winch mounted at the top with a mine car attached to the rope. Down the side is a stair case which has been cut into the rock, there is also a safety a hand rail present. Traversing of this is difficult due to its steepness and the cramped conditions. But it is an impressive site to behold. In the galleries at the bottom there is an array of mining equipment such as rock drills with air legs attached, various splitting tools and plenty of blasting detritus. There is also a gallery where a rocker-shovel is set up along with a battery locomotive. There are also various types of roof



supports in situ thus giving a true reflection of past mining techniques.

You eventually arrive at the present day workings which is vast cavern or "cathedral" hence the mines name. This is vast with not a support in sight. The roof follows a cleat which is a natural parting in the rock and is both polished and smooth. This is a natural arc in shape which is self supporting. Blasting takes place at different levels with temporary access ramps being constructed out of waste rock. Loading is done by a relatively new 12 ton JCB, into a 20 ton dump truck. There is also a tracked telescopic drilling machine which has been adapted to suit this type of environment. This is a very modern operation on a relatively large scale.



The slate is taken out of the mine in the dump truck and processed into different grades. Down at the workshops there are various stone saws where the slate is sawn into blocks and then hand split into roofing slates of various sizes. These very expensive slates are then supplied to blue chip projects all over the world. Also large slabs are polished and CNC cutting equipment is used to make kitchen worktops. There is also a large demand for tourist related memrobilia which is also produced here.

Mark Weir was killed in a helicopter crash in 2011 and the mine is now being run by his brother and the dedicated staff, who I must say are doing a tremendous job. The whole experience lasted about 4 hours, a complimentary video was given to us all and it was very interesting and enjoyable.



Photo:- (L to R) Jeff Pickels, Jack Tempest, Graham Topping, Bob Chadwick

#### **Graham Topping**

#### **NEWS**

# **New Crofton Co-operative Coal Mine Proposal**

### The Project

We are proposing to establish a small drift mine to the south east of the village of Crofton and north and east of the small hamlet of Wintersett.

The mine will be owned and run by a Workers Cooperative, New Crofton Co-op Colliery Limited. The mine will employ around 50 workers and produce 3000-6000 tonnes of coal per week (the extraction rate varying with the seam being exploited at any given time).

The site has a long history of involvement in coal mining and was originally used by British Coal to store and then load coal onto the railway. It was subsequently earmarked for development as an opencast coal and fire clay mine by the British Coal Opencast Executive (BCOE), a project which our founder member, Bill Birch, was involved in.

BCOE's detailed investigations make us confident that the coal is there and we intend to submit a planning application to develop the site shortly.

#### **Jobs**

We expect the mine to employ around 50 full time staff once production is underway. These will be well-paid, highly skilled "proper" jobs which will last for the duration of mining, which we expect to be until 2036.

We are committed to ensuring that at least 50% of the workforce comes from the local area. We expect that there will be a core of experienced miners but the majority of workers will be new to the mining industry and will be trained up "on the job"

#### **Investment**

Over the life of the mine we will invest a minimum of £10,000,000 into the local community through a

community fund.

We also intend to invest around a further £40,000,000 of the mines profits into developing other co-operative enterprises in the region.

#### What is a Co-operative?

Co-operative businesses are owned and run by and for their members. All Co-operatives share a common set of values and principles which dictate how they behave. As well as giving members an equal say and share of the profits, co-operatives act together to build a better world. In the case of the mine the members are the people who have set the project up and the people who will work in the mine.

In the UK there has been a long tradition of cooperatively owned mines from the only recently closed Tower Colliery in South Wales right back to the mid 19th century with Co-operative societies such as the Darwen Industrial Co-operative Society owning and operating mines.

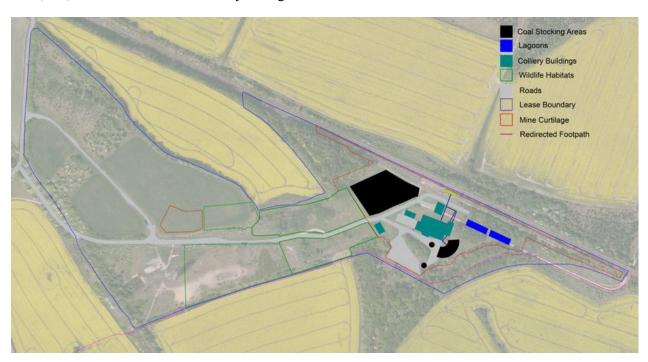
# **Community Engagement**

As a Co-operative we consider ourselves to very much be part of the community. As such we feel that it is very important that we work closely with the local communities (Ryhill, Havercroft, Crofton and Wintersett) and have been doing so for around 18 months now through a community liaison group. We will continue to work closely with the community through the life of the mine.

### **Community Liaison Group**

Discussions with various local partners has led to the formation of a Community Liaison Group which has met several times and which will continue to meet as the project progresses.

The group has members from all the parish councils, district council and private and voluntary sectors. This group will be instrumental in setting up the community fund.



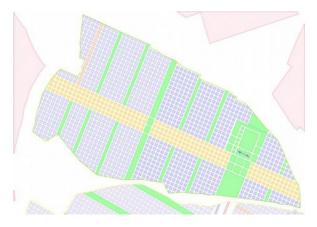
# Geology

There are 4.9 million tonnes of recoverable coal arranged into four seams which are separated into two areas (North and South) by a major fault. We expect to spend 5 years mining in the North and 16 years in the South.

#### **Room and Pillar Mining**

Coal is excavated by a continuous miner from a series of  $10 \times 6$  meter rooms which are separated by  $10 \times 10$  meter pillars. The coal is then shuttled back to a conveyor and transferred to the surface for processing prior to shipping off site.

The graphic below shows the northern area with the rooms as white areas and the pillars as grey shaded squares. The yellow and green areas are barriers which are not mined.



# **Community Fund**

We will set-up a community fund which will receive a minimum of £10,000,000 from the mine over its' working life. The fund will be operated as an independent charitable company with a board will comprising representatives from the Colliery, Ryhill, Havercroft, Crofton and Wintersett.

To maximise the impact of the fund we will be working with the local community to develop a community strategy over the next 18 months.

#### **Co-operative Investment**

The Co-operative will be investing around 45% of it's profits into the development of other Co-operative enterprises in the region. We estimate that this will be around £40,000,000 and we hope to leverage in a similar amount from other like-minded investors. The Co-operative will favour investing in enterprises which deliver social, financial and environmental returns.

# What will be happening during Construction?

- The site will be fenced off
- The ground will be prepared including laying roads and other areas of hardstanding
- Buildings will be put up on the surface
- Tunnels will be dug from the surface down into the coal (the drifts)
- The existing footpath through the site will be diverted through the woods to the south

During construction, work will be undertaken on the site from 6am to 10pm, 5 days a week.

We expect that the construction phase will take around 6 months, during which time there will be heavy vehicles occasionally coming and going from the site.

We have undertaken detailed environmental impact assessments and our experts are satisfied that noise and dust from the site will not impact anyone living Nearby.

# What will be happening during production?

The mine will operate two shifts a day, from 6am to 2pm and 2pm to 10pm hours, 5 days a week. During working hours the conveyor belts will operate. The mine fans and pumps will operate 7 days a week.

We expect 3-5 trains per week to stop at the mine for loading. Loading will usually be in the afternoon, but never finishing later than 6pm.

We expect 4-8 lorries to leave the mine each day, except for Sunday. We anticipate that some of these will go through Crofton and some through Wintersett Village.

# Legacy

Several things will happen once production finishes:

- The drifts will be made safe and sealed off
- The surface buildings will be taken down
- Roads and hardstanding will be removed or covered over as appropriate
- The site will be restored to its former state
- The diverted footpaths will be restored to their original routes
- The Community Fund will hopefully continue
- 50% of the Co-operatives Investments will be transferred into a permanent legacy fund for Co-operative and Community development

#### **Sent in by Graham Topping**

# **Introducing Alston Moor Community Energy**

Alston Moor Community Energy is a new Community Benefit Society1 located on Alston Moor, Cumbria. Our aims are to enable people to improve the environment, by developing community-owned renewable energy projects which will reduce carbon emissions, and, more locally, by reducing pollution from historic mine workings. Surplus income will be channelled into developing further projects or supporting the local community.

People can support our aims by becoming members of the Society by buying shares. The three founding Directors all live locally and have a range of experience, including renewable energy projects, climate change policy, project planning and development and finance.

# Our first project: Nenthead Hydro

The first scheme we are seeking to progress is the redevelopment of an existing Hydro power system located at Nenthead, a few miles from Alston, on the site of the former Nenthead Mines. The current system has been offered for sale by its owner. The redevelopment has been appraised by Teesdale Environmental Consulting through a study funded by stage 1 of the Department of Energy and Climate Change's Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF).

The study provided a strong business case to purchase and redevelop a 100kw system. This would also deliver the wider benefits of conserving the mining heritage and reducing runoff of heavy metals into the rivers Nent and Tyne, if undertaken as part of a wider catchment management plan for the site. The redevelopment is needed to ensure long-term compliance with Environment Agency policies, and to provide a system that is more appropriately sized to the catchment area. The cost of this work is estimated at around £700k. Depending on the way it is financed, and after paying interest on the members' shares, the scheme would return a small annual fund to the community.

# Progress to date

Following the study, we are now seeking to raise the funds needed to buy the existing hydro site and develop the scheme. This is challenging as the Society has no existing assets or collateral and so needs to be primed before it can be self-financing. We are working with Sharenergy, a co-operative which helps communities set up their own renewable energy schemes.

The current system is registered for the Renewable Obligation Certificates scheme. We believe that in the long term, registering for Feed in Tariffs is a better option. We have asked the current owner to obtain OfGem pre-accreditation for the current level of Feed in Tariffs which will be available until August 2017. The Directors are also taking professional advice on a draft contract for sale, various leases for the land and agreements for connection to the National Grid. We have also engaged DECC and OfGem on the practicalities of moving from ROCs to FITs.

We have also had preliminary discussions with the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority about repairing and re-designing the water supply system in a way that maximises the flow through the turbines while reducing surface run-off at times of heavy rainfall. This will help the EA to meet their objective of reducing heavy metal pollution in the river.

#### Finance

To cover costs of progressing the scheme to a stage where we can purchase the current system, we are making a loan application to the second round of DECC's RCEF fund. This will cover start-up costs including project management, legal fees, accountancy, planning, environment assessments, share offers and community engagement. This stage 2 loan is provided by DECC 'at risk' – if no finance can be sourced to allow the scheme

to progress, it will be written off. We are also talking to Eden District Council about the possibility of them providing 'pump-priming' funds.

We are planning a share issue to raise most or all of the capital for the scheme. People who buy shares will become members of the Society. Members will receive an annual interest payment based of the number of shares they hold during the anticipated 20 year life of the scheme. The society will be owned and run by the members, who will elect a Board of Directors. Every member will have one vote at general meetings no matter how many shares they own.

#### Planned Timescales

In order to buy the current system and complete the re-development work by the August 2017 deadline of the FIT pre-accreditation, the Society is seeking to raise working capital in the first half of 2016. There are a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, but we want to be in a position to run a share offer in late-spring 2016.

# **Distribution of Surplus Income**

Once the work required to purchase and re-develop the Nenthead Hydro scheme is complete, and we are selling electricity into the National Grid, the members will decide at a General Meeting how any surplus income should be distributed. Some may be retained to fund future projects, and the remainder made available to benefit the community of Alston Moor. At present it is likely that the Society will make an annual grant to a local charity. The trustees of that charity will then take on the responsibility for making sure that best use is made of the funds within the community.

#### **Further Information**

If you would like to keep in touch with further developments, please e-mail the Society - info@amce.co.uk - and we'll add you to the mailing list.

### Sent in by Richard Smith

### **Ecton Mine Educational Trust**

Ecton is a historic mining area, once one of the foremost mines in the British Isles, now a Scheduled Monument and a valuable educational resource.

The Ecton Mine Educational Trust has been formed with the principal aim of promoting education in applied geology, mining and mineral extraction. Thanks to the generosity of Mrs Elizabeth Cox, the Trust is the owner of the relevant mineral rights of, and the study centre at, the l8th century Ecton Copper Mines in the Peak District National Park.

The Trust provides the facilities for school and university teachers to run one-day or two-day field courses that introduce young people to subjects relevant to the minerals industry.

For further information about the Trust see:-

#### Sent in by Alastair Lings

# Hanson to reopen Monks Park stone mine

Hanson to reopen Monks Park stone mine

Hanson Bath & Portland Stone is reopening its Monks Park stone mine in Gastard near Corsham.

The mine has been dormant since 2004 but an unexpected termination of Hanson's lease at the nearby Hartham Park underground quarry has prompted the decision to reopen the site to safeguard specialist jobs and satisfy customer demand.

General Manager Rod Lafargue said the impact on local residents would be minimal. "On average, there will be up to six lorry movements a day from the mine entrance in Monks Lane. They will transport limestone blocks to specialist masonry works for shaping and cutting, including to our own facility at Keynsham.

"There will also be a small number of cars and light goods vehicles coming in and out for employees, visitors and deliveries." He said some preliminary work on preparing the site to for reopening had already been carried out.

Monks Park stone is a high quality and attractive medium to fine grained Bath stone which is suitable for new buildings, ashlar, and detailed masonry work such as fireplaces. It has been used on The Podium in Bath, St James's Parade, Bristol and the Calne Library as well as further afield in London and Oxford.

Bath stone is a nationally important building material which has been used throughout southern England for churches, houses and public buildings including sites of national and world heritage.

### Hansons website bathandportlandstone.co.uk

I recently visited the works of Alan Keef Ltd and found a stack of new rail that they will be supplying for the incline in the Monks Park Mine, with work due to start in the near future. The give-away feature was that the rails had been bent in the vertical plane for the transition between the horizontal and the incline.



**Rob Needham** 

#### Kellingley last shift

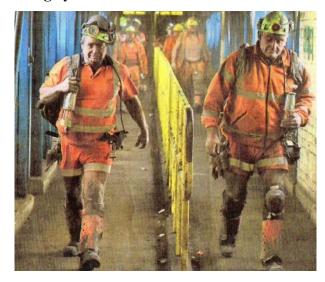


Photo:- Miners at the end of their final shift yesterday at Kellingley, Britains last deep coal mine (from Daily Telegraph 19 December 2015)

# **Out-bye my Journey**

Once their were many, then few, now none The skill of the miner the place of his work all gone Hang up your lamp, hand in your check as you exit the cage

Enjoy your last bath, time to collect your last wage

Communities have been spawned in-bye the muck and the dust

"It's been in our blood for generations" built on camaraderie and trust

Tap tap of the Deputy yard stick has now measured its last

The collier is no longer, just a faint memory an old friend from the past.

I started as a boy in the full bloom of my youth Now on the scrap heap a man ashamed of the truth A job for life was the boast of "King coal" Tomorrow I search for work too proud for the dole

Unique is our work hewing black dust from the ground Pit bottom now empty coal face all dark without sound Last shift now finished power turned off not a soul left in sight

Out bye my journey and yes don't forget to turn of the lights.

# December 18th 2015 **Graham Topping**

The news item in the Daily Telegraph accompanying the above photograph reported that the price of coal had dropped to a 12 year low of \$38/tonne. And China's coal consumption has been dropping for 2 years and may never recover as the moment of 'peak coal' ap-

proaches. In the UK, the Energy Secretary stated last year that all coal-fired power stations in the UK would close by 2025.

# Northern Echo, 4 November 2015 By Steven Hugill



Photo:- Workers at the former Coldberry lead mine in Upper Teesdale

Hundreds of North East mining jobs could have moved closer after a firm searching for zinc hailed the project's potential.

Minco says initial investigations across its Northern Pennine Orefield have yielded significant deposits, which have the potential to deliver millions of tonnes of zinc

The company has drilled more than 30 test holes across the County Durham and Northumberland border, covering areas between Allenheads, near Stanhope, and Nenthead, in Cumbria, and says numerous sectors harbour deep reserves left behind by lead miners.

The North Pennine field was the UKs's most important lead producer between 1750 and 1850, employing thousands of men across Teesdale, Weardale, South Tynedale and the Derwent valley.

Minco says its project could create up to 500 new jobs, with miners working some of the largest amounts of zinc in Europe.

In a half year report covering the period to June 30, the firm said its drilling had found significant amounts of Zinc, as well as lead, in a number of areas.

Danesh Varma, chief financial officer and company secretary, said 'We drilled 31 holes from late 2012 until the first quarter of 2015, with 25 sited to explore the Great Limestone horizon and six to test the deeper basal succession.

'The extent of the minerals discovered in the Great Limestone is encouraging.

'Similar minerals within the thicker basal succession would be economically very significant and further exploration of both is planned.'

The company is understood to have spent more than £500,000 on the development and director Rowan

Maule previously told *The Northern Echo* a mine could be developed within six years.

However, he said no plans were definite as it continued with tests.

He added 'This is an exploratory dig, we are not mining, and there isn't going to be a mine spring up in the next six weeks.

'This process is not like building a Tesco and getting planning permission.

'We have to find out what is there, what the volume is, and whether that is significantly strong enough for us to move on to the next phase.

'But this could be a world-class area, and is an important mining area because of its history.

'If our work proves sufficiently a mine could operate there, it would be very good for the economy and create good and well-paid jobs'

Minco's development area was first mined by Romans, with zinc and lead production starting in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and continuing through to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> centurty before working at reduced levels until 1938.

According to the company lead was the main metal harvesting profit, with zinc work mainly focussed between Coalcleugh, near Hexham, and Nenthead, in Cumbria, which produced more than 19,000 tonnes of zinc from 1942 to 1943.

# Sent in by Mason Scarr

### Daily Telegraph 26 December 2015

# Sirius bags fertiliser deal

Sirius Minerals, the North Yorkshire potash miner, has signed a deal to supply Chinese import and export group Huaken International when the site is fully operational. Huaken will buy up to 500,000 tonnes a year for seven years.

#### Rob Needham

### Daily Telegraph 26 January 2016

#### Vedanta closes Zinc and lead mine in Ireland

Diversified mining and energy company Vedanta Resources said its Lisheen mine in Ireland made its final shipment last week, completing a planned closure of the site. Vedanta, which also produces copper, coal, aluminium, lead, iron ore and oil, said mining activity at the zinc and lead mine had stopped in November. The Mine's closure, which was announced last April, will further tighten the supply of the metal used to galvanise steel. Lisheen had produced around 300,000 tonnes of zinc concentrate every year.

#### **Rob Needham**

#### News & Star 7 January 2016

# Shock closure of £2.4m Cumbrian mining museum



Whitehaven's £2.4 million coalmining museum at Haig Pit has closed because of financial difficulties.

In a shock announcement, the Board of Trustees said they hoped it would only be temporary.

Key funders Heritage Lottery said: "This is very sad news and our thoughts go out to everyone who has been affected."

The museum opened its doors to the public last February, expecting to attract 15,000 visitors in its first year.

And while it has exceeded its projected footfall, it appears to have hit several problems, some financial.

A Heritage Lottery Fund spokesman said: "While the organisation has received the majority of the HLF grant, one payment was withheld awaiting financial and other information. But we are aware that the organisation face wider financial challenges beyond this.

"Our staff have worked closely with Haig over many years and we will continue to offer our support during these challenging times."

The HLF is to meet with Copeland mayor Mike Starkie and the other main funder, Copeland Community Fund, shortly "to explore options for the best way forward."

There are hopes the closure will only be temporary, as pleas for support and further financial aid are being made.

In the meantime, while a solution is sought, bookings for events are to be cancelled and regular users of the venue informed.

A museum statement said: "We regret to inform that the museum, visitor attraction, cafe and events venue is currently closed."

Haig Pit Mining Museum is run by a board of volunteer trustees but ran into difficulties last January; its chairman, Bob Metcalfe retired (through ill health), the project manager resigned and its Manchester-based architects ceased trading.

"There were concerns over the continued delivery of the capital project and our main funder, the Heritage Lottery Fund, suspended funding last April, without giving a full explanation," said the board.

Since opening the new-build Visitor Centre in October 2014 and the new-look museum in February 2015, Haig says it has successfully worked to its business plan.

"The hard work and commitment of the employees and volunteers at this important site has seen the restoration of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and development of a derelict site into an accessible attraction and an accredited museu."

The revamped museum created five part-time jobs, giving the museum a total of eight staff who have lost their jobs. It also has around 28 active volunteers.

At an opening ceremony in February 2015, the Heritage Lottery Fund's Humphrey Welfare said the fund had given it strong backing over the years because Haig was about two key things, heritage and people.

He said Haig was "a very special place. It has survived. It played its part in the industrial revolution and coal was so fundamental to the establishment of Whitehaven and West Cumbria, an area known for the strength of its community."

Haig was bought from the National Coal Board in 1993 for a nominal 1p and has since become a registered charity, accredited museum, a company limited by guarantee and an Arts Award centre.

Tim Knowles, who is on the board of Copeland Community Fund, which co-funded the museum project, said: "I am sure everyone is shocked and disappointed to hear this news. I know how important this place is to Whitehaven"

Copeland MP Jamie Reed has also expressed his shock at the news saying it was "simply horrendous".

Haig's manager Pamela Telford has not commented on the closure.

Spanning two floors the new museum experience reflects local stories, landscape, traditions and tragedies of the West Cumberland coalfields. The adjacent Powerhouse is used for various local events.

West Cumbria Mining Company, which wants to reopen the coalfield to mine coking coal and has plans to do so by 2019, has used the museum venue for exhibitions and community consultation.

Its chief executive Mark Kirkbride said: "This comes as a complete shock and is very sad news indeed.

"The museum was a vital way of commemorating the extensive coal mining history of west Cumbria, whilst aiming to be a key contributor locally in terms of facilities and community involvement. I am currently trying to gain a better understanding of the current position."

### Sent in by Sallie Bassham

# The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery Open Day and Working Party, Saturday 23rd January 2016



# THE FIRST WORKING PARTY OF THE NEW YEAR!

A grey, but mild, Saturday morning saw Friends Chair Steve catch the attention of an inquisitive, passing dog walker, as he opened up the heavy steel gates to the Hemingfield Colliery site in readiness for another productive working day. Steve duly treated the gentleman and his four-legged friend to an impromptu tour of the site and an explanation of the archaeological and reclamation work underway.

The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery warmly welcome visitors and are always happy to showcase and explain their work to interested guests and to share their exciting plans and aspirations for the future of the site.

Volunteers Nigel and Amanda arrived soon afterwards, loaded down with tools for a productive day of archaeological excavation, eagerly anticipating the revelation of more hidden industrial features which will help to explain the history of the site.

# **RAIN CHECK**

Soon, other Friends and volunteers began to arrive, with Glen, John, Chris, Phil, Alan and Nigel (there are two Nigels!) reconvening for the first time since November. Last December was the UK's warmest and wettest December on record and Site Director Glen had suspended work at Hemingfield Colliery throughout that month and into January, as the building remains and features became submerged in a quagmire of squelchy mud and pools of water.

By 10.30am a sizable turn-out had assembled and the day's work could begin. The group split into two main groups, with John, Chris, Nigel and Amanda planning to continue the archaeological excavations on the east side of the switch gear building, while Steve, Glen, Phil, Alan and Nigel persevered with the tree-felling work at the west end of the site.



Photo:- tree fellers

# FOLLOW THE RED BRICK PATH



Photo:- A brick manufactured at Skyers Spring brick works, near Lidgett Colliery, in circa 1900

Using trowels and brushes, archaeologist Nigel and Amanda spent the morning carefully cleaning up the brick pathway running alongside the switchgear building, in preparation for an official photograph of the feature for the archaeological record.



Photo:- The 1930s brick path, newly-cleaned for the official archaeological record photograph

The pathway was laid over the original colliery yard in the 1930s

and is composed of a variety of red bricks, each

manufactured at one of the many brick works in the local area, such as Manvers, Skyers Spring and Stairfoot. Each brick bears the manufacturer's stamp and this allows us to date them to different periods in the nineteenth century, telling us that they were recycled from other buildings that had once stood on site.

Once the path has been officially recorded, it will be removed to allow for further excavation of the colliery yard beneath and the bricks will be recycled once more. The Friends plan to re-use each brick in the construction of the proposed future mining heritage centre on the site.

#### THE RAILWAY SLEEPER MYSTERY

Meanwhile, John and Chris extended the trench towards the concrete headgear, uncovering more of the foundations of a demolished boiler house. The features revealed so far in this area include part of a stone wall, several floor surfaces and a series of railway sleepers laid in a parallel fashion. Further excavation will clarify the archaeological sequence and the connections between the various features in this area, but the team put forward some speculations regarding the railway sleepers. In the 1940s, the present concrete headgear was erected and Site Director Glen suggested that the sleepers could have formed a platform on which the equipment used in this endeavour was based.

John and Chris's excavations also revealed several soil types relating to dumped building sand in this area, alongside coal deposits and iron oxide residues leaching up with water from the pit shaft. A large iron plate with a raised diamond pattern on one side was also uncovered. This had once formed part of a metal walkway and had been dumped on this part of the site during the erection of the 1940s concrete headgear.



Photo:- Uncovering the timber railway sleepers (foreground)



Photo:- The partially-exposed boiler house foundations (centre left)



Photo:- Lifting the iron walkway plate

#### TIMBER!!!!

Meanwhile, Steve, Glen, Phil, Alan and Nigel were tree-felling on the west end of the site. Since Heming-field's closure as a working site in the 1990s, this area has seen an invasion of silver birch trees which have formed a small copse.



Photo:- Clearing the trees on the west end of the site for future development

Offering dappled green shade in spring, glistening silver trunks and branches in summer and rustling golden leaves in autumn, the felling of these beautiful trees is regrettable, but totally necessary for the future development of the site.

Donning his protective red headgear, goggles and earmuffs, Site Director Glen began the work. As the saw whined, the sawdust fountains spurted and the trees toppled and fell. Meanwhile, the members of his trusty team got in touch with their inner primeval man, lighting a fire to burn thinner branches, whilst slicing logs from the thicker trunks to stash away in their man caves.

# THE LAST YEARS OF COAL MINING IN YORKSHIRE

The temperature had dropped by the afternoon and so the glowing fire provided welcome warmth and comfort as the Friends and volunteers drew round and stopped for some lunch. Friends Chair Steve had brought along a copy of his newly-published book THE LAST YEARS OF COAL MINING IN YORKSHIRE by Steve Grudgings. This is a beautiful book of Steve's evocative photographs of Yorkshire collieries shortly before they closed. Sadly, most of these have since been demolished and Hemingfield is one of the few Yorkshire collieries where above-ground buildings still survive and where the iconic shape of a mine headgear can still be seen on the skyline. Steve's book clearly illustrates the importance of saving Hemingfield Colliery and other important industrial sites for posterity.

Lunchtime also saw a morale-boosting visit from Director Christine. Christine has been gathering oral memories from people connected with Hemingfield to help inform the story of the site. She will also be coordinating the Friends of Hemingfield Colliery stall at Barnsley History Day on Sunday 20th March and this event was discussed with the team. We look forward to seeing you there!



Photo:- Lunch around the fire

# PIPE DREAM

After lunch, the two teams continued their work as before. The excavation of a linear feature, running at a diagonal from the switch gear building, was started. Archaeologist Nigel had spotted this feature on a previous working day and had deduced it to be an in-filled trench probably containing either a drain pipe or an electricity cable. Excellent eyesight is needed to discern the very slightly different soil colour and consistency of the in-filled trench and to excavate it accurately. Work on this area will be continued on our next working day.



Photo:- Can you see the line of the in-filled trench?

#### **POW WOW**

As darkness fell and the dying embers of the fire illuminated the stumps of the recently-felled silver birch trees, the Friends and volunteers gathered once more around the fire to reflect on the day's achievements and discuss plans for the next working day. We hope to expose more of the boiler house remains and will begin the task of making a scale plan of the features discovered so far.



Photo:- Taking a record photograph of remains associated with the demolished boiler house.

# From the Friends of Hemingfield Colliery website

# Heritage Railway magazine, 17 December 2015

# New Welsh mine 'would supply heritage lines'

Plans for a new coal mine beneath farmland in South Wales which aims to supply Britain's heritage railways have been submitted.

An application for a small private licensed mine on land near Penhyddwaelod Farm between Bryn and Cwmavon in the Afan Valley have been submitted to Neath Port Talbot Council by Rhys Jeffreys, who is applying for the exploration of an existing airway from mine workings leading to coalmine development. It is hoped that some 6000 tons of coal will be extracted from the site each year over four years.

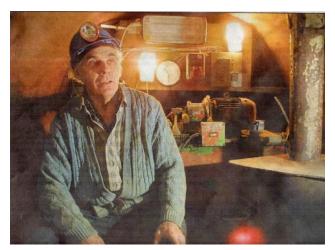
A letter accompanying the application said: 'The proposal can make a significant beneficial contribution to the supply of coal to the tourist trains that run in Wales and assist the tourist industry.'

However, local councillor David Williams said he believed that many residents would be against having a mine opened, pointing out that a similar bid made several years ago was thrown out by the council.

#### Rob Needham

The Forester 27 January 2016

The oldest freeminer, Robin Morgan, dies 'with his boots on'



Robin Morgan, the oldest freeminer in the Forest of Dean, has died at the age of 80.

He bought Hopewell Colliery, near Broadwell, 23 years ago and only sold it last year, although he continued to work there until last Wednesday, the day before he died. Although the mine continues to produce coal, it also operates as a museum, giving visitors guided tours underground.

Robin Morgan had mining in his veins, starting work underground with his brother by taking time off school at the age of 13.

He was eventually registered as Freeminer No. 4215 on July 1, 1975.

Rich Daniels, who was working with him at Hopewell the day before he died, said: 'It came as a complete shock to all of us here.

'We turned up for work on Friday as usual and when Robin had not arrived by nine we knew something must be wrong. Then we heard that he had died just the day before. We were all in bits.

'Typically, he was working right up until the last. You could say he died with his boots on, which is what he would have wanted.

'Robin was very special. You could not have met a more hard working, honest, fairer or generous man.

'Working with him was always a laugh a minute. He was a true forester.

'His legacy was immense in terms of the vast experience he shared with the miners he trained and what he did for the future of Hopewell.

'Hopewell will continue to produce coal and the museum will open for the season in Spring as usual. That is what Robin would have wanted.'

Jonathan Wright, who runs Clearwell Caves, said: 'As secretary of the Freeminers Association I knew Robin quite well.

'He was a unique character and such a hard working chap. He was immensely physically capable and actually got into the Guinness Book of Records for laying the most kerbstones in one day.

'His death is a terrific loss to the mining world as he had a vast knowledge and experience of mining in the Forest.'

Daniel Howell, Deputy Gaveller, Forestry Commission, Forest of Dean, said: 'I was both deeply saddened and shocked to hear of the death of Robin after speaking to him in recent times.

'He was from the generation of miners that were expected to keep going – defiant of all mortality.

'My childhood memories of visiting Robin at the various collieries he operated differ little to any more recent meetings.

'All of his sites were operated to the highest standards and his timberwork and ability to drive headings through very difficult ground were second-to-none.

'Ready to listen, Robin was always prepared to help other colliers with mining difficulties and knew the geology of the Dean like the back of his hand. If Robin spoke, you would be wise to listen – he was almost certainly right.

'He was held in the highest regard within the mining fraternity and had the highest respect of this office.'

I remember meeting Robin Morgan one day in 2014 when I was visiting the Heywood Drift Mine to see if the miners had reached the coal yet. I found Robin constructing a headframe over an old shaft which was to form the second exit for the Drift Mine.



The shaft, some 72ft deep, dated back to 1887. In 1957 Robin Morgan had worked this shaft and had built a headframe, which had subsequently rotted away. He seemed to be building the new headframe from old telegraph poles single- handed at the age of 78.

#### **Rob Needham**

# Daily Telegraph 28 December 2015

#### Chinese gypsum boss dies in well

The owner of a Chinese gypsum mine drowned after jumping into a well in an apparent suicide during efforts to rescue 17 workers after the mine collapsed and killed one person.

Ma Congbo, president of Yurong Commerce and Trade, was reportedly assisting with rescue efforts yesterday when he jumped into a mine well and drowned.

# DailyTelegraph 30 January 2016

# Trapped Chinese miners rescued after 36 days

Four miners who had been trapped underground for 36 days in a collapsed Chinese gypsum mine were rescued last night.

The operation to save the men trapped more than 650ft underground took two hours as each took turns to be hauled to the surface.

Footage released by CCTV showed rescue crews applauding as the men were brought to the surface in Shandong province, in eastern China.

These two brief news items must refer to the same mine collapse. I wonder what happened to the other 13 miners.

#### Rob Needham

## DailyTelegraph 5 January 2016

# Kyrgyzstan to deport the sausage joker

A Scottish mine worker who compared Kyrgyzstan's national dish to a horse's genitalia on Facebook is to be deported from the country.

In a message on his Facebook page, Michael Mcfeat from Abernethy posted a picture from the canteen at the Kumtor gold mine in the east of the country with an accompanying caption that upset workers and caused consternation around the country.

The 39 year old appeared to be poking fun at a Kyrgyz national dish – a sausage made up of horse meat and fat – called the 'chuchuck' which is traditionally boiled and served sliced up as a delicacy before meals on national holidays.

But Mr Mcfeat's joke fell flat and outraged officials at the gold mine reportedly called a short strike.

Local media reports then appeared to suggest that, realising his error, Mr Mcfeat tried to leave the country. He was detained at the country's main international airport outside the capital Bishkek and driven 250 miles back to the town of Karakol near the Kumtor gold mine.

There had been some suggestions that a local court could imprison Mr Mcfeat for up to five years for racial discrimination.

In the end, though, the authorities appeared to settle for deporting him for various visa infringements.

#### **Rob Needham**

# Historic limekilns to be restored

Plans are under way to restore the four limekilns at Bellmanpark quarry.

Despite being partly scrub covered, the kilns are a rare example of the area's industrial past and, alongside 90 metres of associated tramway, are scheduled as an Ancient Monument and deemed to be of national importance.

An assessment of the condition of the kilns, built in 1877, has been made and quarry manager Sam Wrathall and local historian Peter del Strother, the former general manager of the site, will now meet with English Heritage and Clitheroe Civic Society to discuss the way forward.

Bellmanpark Lime Works was opened by James Carter and William Rowe in about 1869. The limekilns discharged quicklime directly via wooden chutes into full-sized railway trucks. Sidings in tunnels under the kilns linked them to the main line which had been completed in about 1850.

A cement works was opened on the same site using a bottle kiln and traded as the Clitheroe Portland Cement Works.

The kiln did not operate for long because lsis Cement, which started in 1895 on the site of the present cement works, built six high-efficiency shaft kilns.



In 1898, Carter, who had also taken over Salthill quarries, joined Salthill with the Bellman kilns by a 1,500-metre railway line, part of which is still used today as the haul road from Bellman quarry to the cement works. About 5,500 tonne of rock and 21,000 tonne of clay had to be excavated to build the line.

A stone fountain was erected by those who worked at the quarry between 1869 and 1908 in memory of James Carter, who

died in 1903, and it still exists today. James Carter and Sons Ltd ceased trading in 1959/60.

This interesting item from Castle Cement, Clitheroe, was sent by Graham Topping

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