



Presidents Jottings

The first newsletter of another year and thank you to all who have paid their **membership fees** promptly which is a big help to Malcolm. Those who are now paid up will find their membership card and meet list enclosed. There will be more events during the year but unfortunately these had not been finalised by the time the cards were printed. A gentle reminder to those of you who have not paid up this will be your last newsletter! As a Society we are very fortunate to have healthy finances and membership numbers but I do wish more of you would contribute to our continuing success with suggestions of any ideas that could benefit us. The last newsletter mentioned vacancies on our Committee, could you help us please? Not one person has shown an interest in becoming Membership secretary and that is a very important cog in the smooth running of our Society. I am hoping for a rush of written applications with proposers and seconders to our secretary, Mick Cooke, after you have read this.

Our **A.G.M** this year is on Saturday April 22 at a new venue Cliviger Village Hall. This is at the rear of 380 Burnley Road, Cliviger, Nr Burnley, Lancs, BB10 4SU between Burnley and Todmorden on the A646. The grid

reference is SD873286. The numbers on Burnley Road helped us to find the location but there are signs pointing to it at the small turnoff. There is a car park with two disabled bays and a disabled access tarmac pathway and inside a disabled toilet.

As usual book sales will commence at 11.30 (please let me know if you intend to bring some of your own) with **the pre-booked free lunch** at 12.00 noon. In order to arrange catering for this please book your place with me prior to April 10th on 01282 614615 (there is an answer machine should we be out) or email mansemin@btopenworld.com. Also in order to save time and photocopying please look at the minutes of our Autumn meeting on our website prior to the meeting. 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 the Hall. The AGM will follow lunch after which Graham Topping will lead a walk focusing on the fringe collieries of the Townely Coal Company.

Prior to this on Sunday 9th April I will be representing our society at a **second hand book fair** at Pendle Heritage Centre, Park Hill, Colne Rd., Barrowford,

Editor

Rob Needham

Pike House, George Lane, Littledean, Glos.

GL14 3JL

tel:- 01594 823487

email:- rob.needham2@hotmail.co.uk

Would you please note that the deadline for inclusion with the May 2017 Newsletter is the 30th April 2017.

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.

Contents

PRESIDENTS JOTTINGS.....	1
PROGRAMME OF EVENTS FOR 2017.....	2
FORTHCOMING EVENTS	3
BOOK REVIEW	5
RECENT PUBLICATIONS	6
OBITUARY.....	7
NEWS IN BRIEF	7
CONONISH DIARY	9
WHAT ARE MINING EXPLOSIVES?	10
THE MINERS LIBRARY: PART ONE	11
THE YARROW VALLEY	12
SKELERON	14
HEMINGFIELD COLLIERY	15
CONCERNS OVER THE FUTURE OF GROVERAKE MINE	19
NEWS FROM THE INTERNET	20
MINING START UP HOPES TO DRILL FOR LITHIUM IN CORNWALL	23
REPORT FROM THE NEIMME OCTOBER AGM	24
LATE NEWS - AN OBITUARY	24

BB96JQ with some of our publications and other books that have been kindly donated to us. This is a free event so if you are in the area please pop in and say hello.

The weekend of 27, 28 May the **Yorkshire Mineral & Fossil Fair** is taking place at Tennants in Leyburn and as last year Northern Mine Research Society will have a stand dedicated to our publications. There is a flyer printed elsewhere in our Newsletter. As it is a free event with free parking and plenty to see on site please try and come along and introduce yourself to me. Also if you want to save on postage you could collect orders from me there.

On behalf of NMRS I would like to welcome the following **new members**

Stephen Blackley	- Huntingdon
Stephen Dalglish	- Ashton under Lyne
Michael Daynes	- Loughborough
Richard Dixon	- Bicester
Rowan May	- Sheffield
Nick Pigott	- Glen Parva
Mark Thompson	- Romford
Tony Woods	- Shipley

Since our last newsletter we are sorry to hear of the **deaths** of John Seal and John Goodchild. Where applicable condolence cards have been posted out. John Goodchild did a great deal of writing for our memoirs and you will find an obituary to him elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our **Facebook page** continues to be well received and we now have over 800 followers eager to read both our news and that of other members and organisations with similar interests. It was through Face-

book that I learnt that UK Mining Ventures who operated the Rogerley Mine in Weardale would not be returning this year. For several years we were welcomed there by the American owners and those of you who were able to join our oversubscribed underground, informative visits will appreciate just how fortunate we were. I have contacted Cal Graeber who gave of his time so freely to thank him again for allowing our visits. There is more about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

Our **website** continues to expand and it is worth checking it for added information. Malcolm has already expanded it using Alasdair 'Ali' Neill's index of NMRS Publications received before his untimely death. We have so much to thank Ali for as he left behind a wealth of information. Mike spent most of the festive season working on Ali's database for Cornwall, comprising 6847 records so these will be the next to be added to the website.

Just a reminder that we at NMRS are well aware of the **Data Protection Act** (www.gov.uk/data-protection-act) and how it should be implemented and can confirm that we use any data we receive in approved ways. It is kept for membership purposes only. If a member resigns their entry is erased from our database. Details are never passed to third parties.

Checklist

Do I need to renew my membership?

Have I booked for the AGM?

Have I considered how I could help the Society?

Barbara Sutcliffe.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS FOR 2017

All meets subject to weather, and permission being granted. Further details in Newsletter.

ALWAYS contact the appropriate meet leader if you intend going on a meet, please. Dogs are not allowed on some sites: please check with the meet leader before bringing a dog.

Saturday 22 April Spring Meeting (AGM)

Cliviger Village Hall, BB10 4SU, NGR SD 873 286: The Hall is at the rear of 380 Burnley Road. Book sales from 11.30am followed by buffet lunch and AGM. After which, Graham Topping will lead a short, archaeology based walk on The Fringe Collieries of the Townley Coal Company. Lunch booking is essential – Barbara Sutcliffe 01282 614 615 or mansemins@btopenworld.com.

Saturday 13 May Hansen Quarry, Ingleton

Meet 10.30am at the quarry entrance car park on the B6255 Hawes road out of Ingleton. Be the first to view the new mega (and much needed) east wall

extension and the quarry production buildings. Please bring a hard hat.

Leader is Bernard Bond (01524 241 857 with answer-phone)

Saturday 10 June The Collieries and Geology of West Calderdale

Meet 10am at Walsden Library, Rochdale Road, Todmorden, OL14 7SN.

A moderate walk of 4-5 hours over good ground, looking at the abandoned Foul Clough Collieries workings and The Temperlays Pipe Works Collieries. Bring lunch, and wear good walking equipment. Leader is Graham Topping 07973905883. Glt2top@aol.com.

23 to 26 June

NAMHO Conference at Godstone, Surrey. www.namhoconference.org.uk

Sunday 30 July Nenthead Lead Mines

Meet 11am at the Nenthead Heritage Centre car park, NGR NY 78 43, on the south-west side of the A689. Surface walk.

Leader is Mick Cooke (01282 427 428)

Saturday 12 August

10.30am to 12.30pm, Garage Book Sale at The Old Manse, 93 Halifax Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 0EQ. 01282 614 615 or mansemins@btopenworld.com. Followed at 12.30pm, by a surface walk to look at the archaeology at Fox Clough Colliery, Colne, led by Graham and Gary Topping, 07973905883. Glt2top@aol.com. Meet at 93 Halifax Road, Nelson, BB9 0EQ,

August

Yorkshire Dales. See May Newsletter for details.

Saturday 2 September

Cleveland Ironstone Mines. See May Newsletter for details.

Saturday and Sunday, 9 and 10 September

Heritage Weekend – see relevant website for details of local events.

September

Possible trip into the jet mines near Guisborough. This is not a trip suitable for everyone - its 100% stooping and crawling in a 7km maze of low, loose shale passages, with some slippery slopes to access and a couple of squeezes. It requires a good level of physical fitness and would not be suitable for anyone with a hint of claustrophobia, nervous about the roof coming down or getting lost. Max group size 8.

More information from Chris Twigg chris.twigg90@gmail.com

Saturday 21 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)

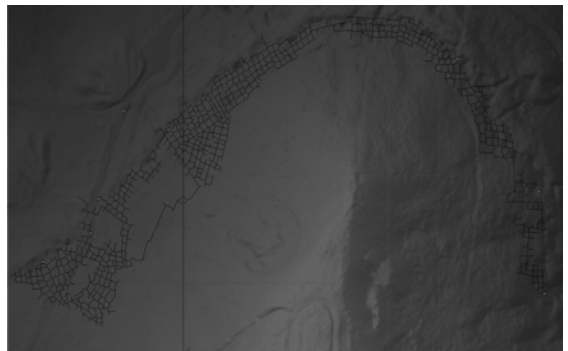
Request for a meet leader for PDMHS meet at Grassington/Cononley

Paul Chandler of PDMHS has written asking for someone to lead meets at Grassington and Cononley in May, or June or July. If anyone can help, please contact Paul on

paul.derbyshirecaver@btinternet.com

Guisborough jet mines

Chris Twigg has sent two photos and a survey of the mines. I found these of sufficient interest as to justify inclusion in the newsletter. Hopefully these will persuade enough members to result in a trip being arranged. And then someone will, please, send a visit report to the editor.



Survey and two photos of Guisborough jet mines sent by Chris Twigg

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

www.earlyengines.org



The Ironworks, Elsecar, South Yorkshire, UK

11th- 13th May 2017 PROGRAMME

Thursday 11th Morning

10.00 Venue Open for Registration

12.00 Welcome and Conference Opening Speech - John Hamshire and John Tanner

12.10 Agenda, Logistics and Arrangements – Steve Grudgings

12.15 Buffet and opportunity to tour the venue

Thursday 11th Afternoon – Chair David Perrett

13.15 Geoff Wallis – *Restoring the Elsecar Newcomen Engine: high ideals, deep mysteries*

13.50 Phillip Hosken – *Cui Bono? Inventors and the beneficiaries of their endeavours*

14.25 John Hunter – *Pumping Engines at the Sheffield and Attercliffe Collieries in the eighteenth century*

15.00-15.20 – Refreshments

15.20 Tony Coverdale – *John Padmore of Bristol and his use of a water commanding engine – 1695*

15.55 John Kanefsky – *Analysis of numbers of UK Newcomen engines built prior to Watts first engine of 1776*

16.30 James Greener – *“Yorkshires first engine”: Austhorpe 1714*

16.45 John Tanner – A short talk on “Elsecar Ironworks-Past and Future” followed by a guided site tour

17.15 Opportunity to meet fellow delegates and visit:

- The restored Newcomen Engine which will be “working” (numbers limited)
- The Elsecar Heritage Railway (EHR) workshops
- Hemingfield Colliery (20 minutes away by guided walk)

19.00 Onwards – Hot Buffet at the Market Tavern Elsecar (100 yards from Venue – drinks not included)

Friday 12th Morning - Chair Richard Smith

07.45 Coach Trip to Rockley Engine House and Furnace – Guided by SIAS (there is a charge of £7 to cover costs)

08.30 Venue Open and Refreshments available

09.15 Welcome, Recap Day 1 and run through Day 2 agenda

9.20 Rick Stewart – *John Smeaton and the Fire Engine*

9.55 James Greener – *Bromsgrove Revisited – The chain of events leading to Newcomen’s 1712 engines*

10.30 Suhail Rana – *Henry Beighton’s influence on and contributions to Newcomen’s work*

11.05 Refreshments

11.25 Richard Lamb – *James Watt’s analysis of the performance of the Ranter engine, Wednesbury and others*

12.00 Victoria Owens – *James Brindley’s steam engines, 1756-1759*

12.35 Buffet Lunch

Friday 12th Afternoon – Chair John Tanner

13.35 Peter King – *George Sparrow and the spread of the steam engine in the north Midlands*

14.10 Bernard Champness - *Fairbottom Bobs, a review of evidence*

14.45 David Perrett - *Henry Ford and Herbert Morton’s 1928 engine collecting endeavours*

15.20-15.40 Refreshments

15.40 Mike Nevell – *Power and Innovation: Excavating pre-1812 steam engines in the Manchester area*

16.15 John Barnatt – *Investigating the 1794-95 Newcomen Pumping Engine at Watergrove Mine, Derbyshire*

16.50 TBC – *Short paper*

17.15 End of Friday Programme

18.30 Coach departs Elsecar for Wortley Top Forge

19.00 – 22.00. Group and individual tours of Wortley Top Forge

19.45. Evening Meal (drinks not included)

22.00 Coach departs Wortley Top Forge for Elsecar (possibly routing via nearby Hotels etc.)

22.45 Coach arrives at Elsecar

Saturday 13th Morning – Chair Peter King

07.45 Coach Trip to Rockley Engine House and Furnace – Guided by SIAS (there is a charge of £7 to cover costs)

08.30 Venue Open and Refreshments available

09.00 Welcome, Recap Day 2 and run through Day 3 agenda

09.05 Les Turnbull – *William Browns Giant Tyneside Engines*

09.40 David Hardwick – *Surveying the UKs oldest complete Newcomen Engine House, Brislington 1740*

10.15 Steve Grudgings – *Discoveries and dilemmas - Excavating the 1791 Serridge Engine House,*

10.50 Refreshments

11.10 Ken Pointon – *Constructing a Newcomen Engine in the 21st Century*

11.45 TBC – *Short Paper*

12.00 Closing Address

12.10 Onwards, Delegates Depart

13.00 Venue Closes

To register your place at the conference please visit www.earlyengines.org and follow the link which will transfer you to the booking facility kindly provided by Barnsley Museums Service

The International Early Engines Conference is sponsored by The Newcomen Society for the History of Engineering and Technology, The Historical Metallurgy Society, The Northern Mine Research Society and The South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group. The organisers gratefully acknowledge the support of Barnsley Museums.

Lea Bailey compressed air gala

May 13th/14th 2017

To celebrate the restoration of the Eimco 401 to working condition, Issing Sid will be visiting from Statfold. Richard Dixon will be demonstrating operation of examples of compressed air rock drills from his collection. The resident Eimco 12B rockershovel will be operating as well as the Eimco 401. Issing Sid is a modern recreation of a Lishman & Young patent underground loco originally built in the 1870s for a colliery in Co Durham.



The Eimco 401 loco was built in US in the 1960s for underground use, and this example was imported recently from a mining contractor in British Columbia and is unique outside North America. More information will be posted on the Lea Bailey Light Railway website at www.lblr.org.uk

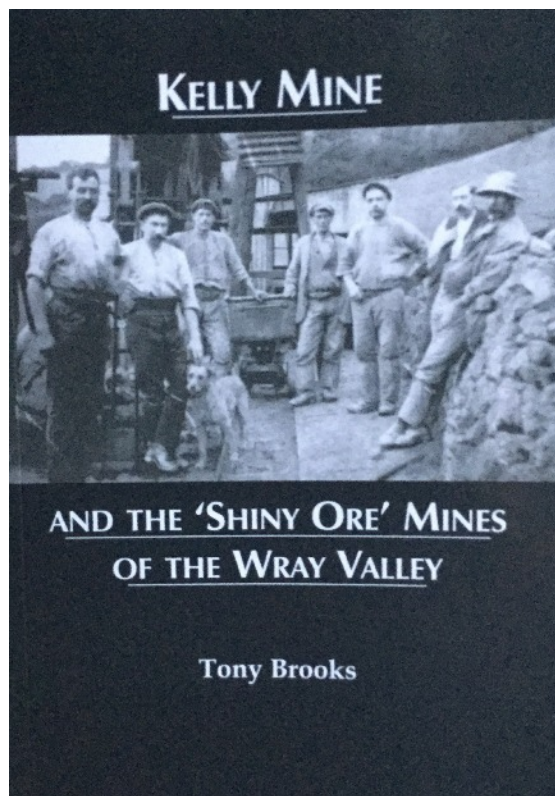
Rob Needham



Yorkshire Mineral & Fossil Fair

Leyburn show - NMRS are having a stand at this event so please visit and say hello

BOOK REVIEW



Kelly Mine and the 'Shiny Ore' Mines of the Wray Valley by Tony Brooks

Recently published by the author the 'shiny ore' in the title is the local name of micaceous haematite. This was mined commercially for over 200 years in the Hennock-Lustleigh area of Devon. The book explains its main use was as an important ingredient in rust resistant paint and was mined nowhere else in the UK.

The actual mines covered in the book (from north to south) the Wray, Pepperdon, Kelly, Hawksmoor, Plumley and Shaptor. All were small concerns usually employing less than ten people. Much of the mines' surface structures have been swept away, though Kelly mine survives as a conservation restoration project.

The book is the story of these mines and some of the people who worked there. With nearly 100 b&w plates and figures this is a well constructed book, fully referenced, utilising manuscripts of the time with many actual quotes and drawing probabilities and possibilities from old O.S. maps.

The geology of the area is followed by the development of the industry in the early years. The shaft accident at Lustleigh in 1910 where a young miner was killed was extensively covered in the Western Guardian and that report is quoted almost in full to demonstrate working practices at that time as other evidence is somewhat lacking. Other newspapers of the time have also been used in Tony's research. All of which helps to form an idea of what things were like at the time.

The author also questions statements that have been made previously about Kelly being absorbed by Ferrubron in 1917. The Kelly Preservation Society have tried to trace the men who actually worked there and record their spoken memories. These go back to the late 1920s and the book has some interesting and informative quotes from them useful for the continuing story of the area. It is good that a section is dedicated to the Kelly Mine Preservations Society and all that they have achieved. Before and after photos demonstrate how much hard work has gone into their continuing work in making the mine probably unique in the UK - a metal mine with almost all of its original equipment restored in situ and in working order and where all is mostly powered by utilising two waterwheels and a water turbine. As the author says, "Come and be captivated." The book is an excellent record of the mines of the area, presented in a very readable format and interspersed with written and recorded quotes with suggestions and arguments as to working conditions and actual events.

Copies of the paperback are available from the KMPS Secretary and Archivist, Nick Walter at 11 Lears Lane, Chudleigh, Devon, TQ13 0LP. Price £15 including p&p.

Barbara Sutcliffe

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Rare and vivid account of Wallsend pit tragedy is unearthed over 180 years on

A new book publishes unread details of an explosion which killed 76 boys and 25 men in North Tyneside in 1835



Funeral cortege after the Montague pit disaster

A rare early account of a North East pit disaster which killed more than 100 miners has been unearthed and published for the first time.

The detailed story of an explosion at Wallsend Colliery in 1835 was found deep within the archives of the London Library.

It's one of a number of treasures re-discovered among the million-plus books on 17 miles of shelves in the 175-year-old independent library which is regarded as one of the UK's top literary institutions.

And it's led to an assortment of material - not been widely seen for decades if not longer - being printed by Pushkin Press in a new series of books called Found on the Shelves.

The title of the small Wallsend booklet, which pretty much tells the story in itself, is: "A full account of the Dreadful Explosion of Wallsend Colliery by which 101 Human Beings Perished!"

The 1835 tragedy at Wallsend Colliery was one of 11 major explosions there alone within 53 years and it was caused by deadly natural gas catching fire.

A plaque to remember the victims was erected at the local St Peter's Churchyard by Wallsend Local History Society in 1994.

The £4.99 book is just 62 pages long but captures all that happened in a vivid account by witnesses at the time, given during a five-day inquest.

From www.chroniclelive.co.uk website

Graham Topping

The catalogue on the Pushkin Press website lists:-

ISBN 9781782273257 A Full Account of the Dreadful Explosion of Wallsend Colliery by which 101 Human Beings Perished! Various authors, PB, 96 pages £4.99

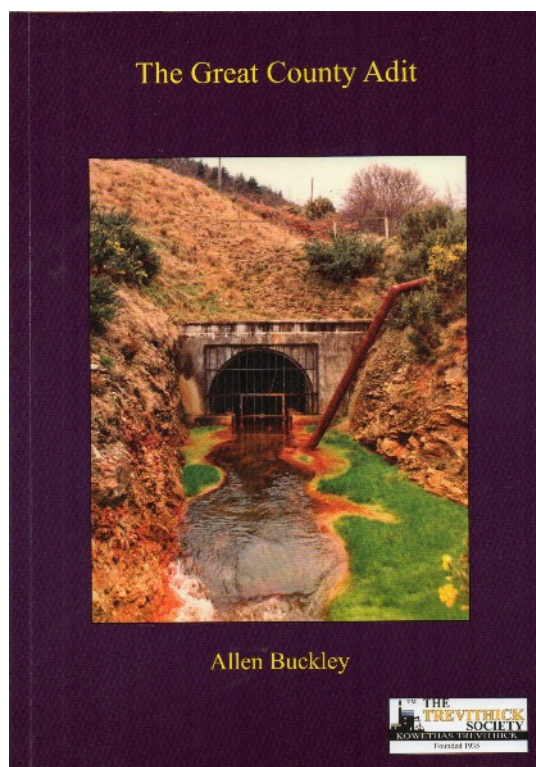
The Great County Adit, by Allen Buckley

Published by the Trevithick Society, 2016, 128 pages, S/B, £15.99. ISBN 978 09575660 8 8

In a mining region like Cornwall, where a shared boundary was as likely to lead to litigation as friendship, the Great County Adit was a remarkable undertaking, more successful than any other combined mining project in the region and on a much larger scale.

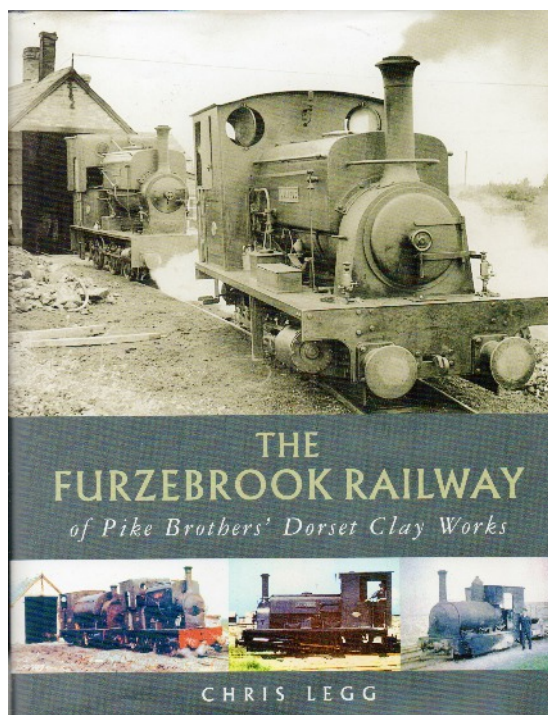
From its start point at Twelveheads the adit extends for a straight-line distance of just about 7km to the WNW. The total length of the County Adit will never be known; a minimum length of 64km of tunnels was driven through 5 parishes and over 60 mines to drain an area of 31 km².

Allen Buckley's book, published in 2000, has been out of print for some years and has been virtually unobtainable. With regular requests for copies, author and publisher decided to reissue this important volume. A larger format has enabled inclusion of an improved series of definitive maps, new illustrations and a gazetteer of mining remains along the adit's course.



Rob Needham

The Furzebrook Railway of Pike Brothers' Dorset Clay Works, by Chris Legg



This book is a companion to the author's 'Fayle's Tramways' published in 2014. Together the two volumes cover the major ball clay producers in the Isle of Purbeck. Although they are books about the railways, they include considerable coverage of the mining of ball clay on Purbeck. Both books are published by Twelveheads Press, from whom they can be bought online. The Fayle's book is priced at

£16 for the softback edition and the Furzebrook book is £28 for the hardback edition.

Rob Needham

OBITUARY

John Goodchild died after a short illness on 6th January 2017, aged 81 years.

Born in 1935, he was educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield before starting work at the West Riding Records Office at County Hall. He was the founding curator of Cusworth Hall Museum near Doncaster before becoming Wakefield District Archivist and principal local studies officer.

Just before the Nationalisation of the Coal Industry in 1947, the young John Goodchild was given a guided tour of the Low Shops engineering facility of J & J Charlesworth Ltd at Rothwell. Of particular interest there were two beam pumping engines which fired John's interest in local history and coal mining in particular. From then on he began collecting maps, plans, books and manuscripts, often given as presents by his family.

After retiring he formed the John Goodchild Collection which contains many thousands of items acquired as gifts, purchases or finds from industrialists, institutions, solicitors, accountants, surveyors, individuals, auctions and derelict buildings. The Collection contains a wealth of information from the 12th century onwards and is particularly detailed on the 18th and 19th centuries. For some reason, John was not interested in coal mining after 1914, I think to him it lacked the romance of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras.

John Goodchild was a leading authority on the West Riding of Yorkshire and the author of over 140 books and manuscripts, as well as being a prolific lecturer and speaker to a diverse range of groups. He was given an honorary Masters Degree by the Open University for his work in local studies and on the West Riding.

The John Goodchild Collection is now preserved and held at the new West Yorkshire History Centre, Kirkgate, Wakefield.

Eddie Downes

John wrote a great deal for our Memoirs, there were three articles in the 2016 one, we will miss him.

Barbara Sutcliffe

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rogerley Mine

Over the past couple of years a number of events have conspired to make the operation of a small-scale mine in Northern England much more difficult and expensive. Many are bureaucratic in nature, which seems to

be the way of the world these days. We could bore you with the details, but perhaps that's best done over a beer somewhere else. Suffice it to say that we've decided to call it a day and close up shop. Thanks to all of you who have supported us over the years. And to borrow a phrase from someone else, "what a long, strange trip it's been."

All is not doom and gloom, however. We are currently in discussion with some local friends who have specimen mining experience about taking over the day-to-day operation of the mine. Please stay tuned for more...

In the mean time, we will be at our usual spot for one more time at the upcoming 2017 edition of "The Tucson Show," Hotel Tucson City Center (InnSuites), room 144. We hope to open the doors on Friday, January 27. Cheers!

www.ukminingventures.com

NMRS are very appreciative of the help given to us when we visited Rogerley over the years.

Barbara Sutcliffe

Queen Street Mill

The situation with regard to the Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, which ... is in Harle Syke, is a little more complicated. We were told that a decision about the future of the museum would be made public in the days before Christmas. It is now mid-January and no information has been forthcoming.

What can be said is that the County Council's only tenant in Queen Street Mill - East Lancashire into Employment (ELE) - which is a training organisation for people with disabilities, has been turfed out of the building, along with their disabled tenants! The latter occupied about ten small craft workshops in the mill. The tenants of these workshops paid a rent (to ELE) but those that have survived closure of the Hallam Street part of the mill, where the workshops were located, have had to find new premises elsewhere.

At the present time the County Council is not saying very much about the museum and its future.

Courtesy of "The Briercliffe Society
Newsletter no 112' January 2017

Disappointing news about Queen Street Mill, Harle Syke, near Burnley. So many of our members managed to visit it last year and were very impressed.

Barbara Sutcliffe

Wolf Minerals secures 200 jobs at Devon mine

Devon county council has granted Wolf Minerals an extension of planning permission on its Drakelands open-pit tungsten and tin mine until 2036. The Aim-listed company has also gained approval to run operations at its processing plant 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Wolf Minerals said the move has secured 200 jobs at the mine.

Daily Telegraph, 25 November 2016

Giant sinkhole forces midnight evacuation

A 66ft-wide sinkhole that forced the evacuation of several families has prompted concerns that a network of 'maze-like caves' may be putting the public in danger.

Several families from Ripon, North Yorkshire, have been told they will not be able to return to their homes after they were evacuated on Wednesday night.

The hole, which is 'unknown in depth', opened up at around midnight, swallowing large parts of the terraced properties' gardens and patios. The area is prone to sinkhole activity. Experts believe they are caused by thick gypsum deposits beneath the area dissolving.

The incident is close to where another opened up under a 100-year-old building in Magdalen's Close in 2014. At the time, the British Geological Survey said that gypsum below the town had dissolved into a maze-like cave system.

Experts have not confirmed whether the same problem caused yesterday's hole. Residents said that they had been left 'traumatised'.

Daily Telegraph 11 November 2016

Diverted traffic



Photo from Reuters

A sinkhole almost 100ft wide and 50ft deep opened up in the Japanese city of Fukuoka yesterday. It swallowed a four-lane road, leaving multi-storey buildings teetering on the edge. Nobody was hurt but the power supply to an airport was disrupted.

Daily Telegraph 9 November 2016

Forterra Brickworks, Caton



With a very steady flow of brick sales, time has been given to the replacement of the chimney of the Abatement Plant. The photo, taken on 1st September 2016, is of a section of the 100ft chimney, which is now complete.

Bernard Bond

Ingleton Granite Quarry



Photo:- Ingleton Quarry, c1956



Photo:- Ingleton Quarry, 2008 (photo Hansons)

On 13th May there will be a return visit to the quarry to see the east wall extension, the quarry depth being c130 meters. Full planning permission has been given to 2020.

Bernard Bond

Monk's Park Mine



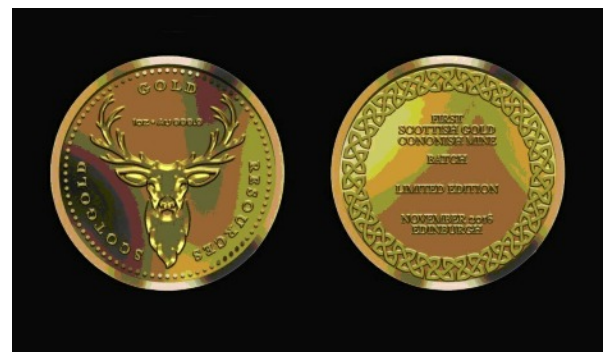
After a period of closure, Monk's Park underground quarry, near Corsham, has been re-opened by the Hanson Group. This involved the relaying by Alan Keef Ltd of part of the incline track that takes stone out of the mine. A block of stone leaves approximately every 15 minutes and here one of 5 tonnes weight is just starting its journey into the daylight.

Photo and information courtesy Alan Keef Ltd

CONONISH DIARY

Following celebrations to mark "the first pour", Scotgold Resources' directors have kept their word and produced sufficient gold for 12 limited edition 'rounds'. That is, twelve ounces of gold from Britain's one and only gold mine have been used to make twelve collectable, artistic pieces.

To the credit of the management, the design avoids using a thistle, or St Andrew's flag, or heather, but settles for the head of a stag. Each round comes with a certificate from the Edinburgh Assay Office, which supervised the pouring of the gold to guarantee the provenance of each of the pieces.



Release of ten items was by a sealed-bid auction with bids starting at £1,300, although the company retained round eleven "for corporate purposes" and number

twelve was “made available” to Glasgow’s Hunterian Museum. Round number one went for just over twenty one thousand pounds, although the average price evolved as £4,557.9 per ounce ... a premium of 378% for a spot price of £950.

I will make do with a peek at the one in the Glasgow museum.

Ron Callender

WHAT ARE MINING EXPLOSIVES?



Drilling and blasting is an essential part of the mining cycle. In almost all types of mining the rock is broken by the use of explosives. Blasting technology is the process of fracturing rock by the use of a calculated amount of explosive so that a predetermined volume of rock is broken. Blasting is used in open pit and underground mining operations.

Many factors have to be taken into account when deciding what drilling pattern should be used and which type of explosive should be used. These would include, the rock type, its density, its strength, the environment and surroundings. Blasting is potentially one the most dangerous aspects of mining so safety is a paramount concern. Drilling patterns and detonation devices are not covered in the scope of this article but these also play a vital role in the blasting process.

Different types of explosives

The primary explosives used in mining are, High Explosives. These are produced in various form such as, dynamite, slurries, dry mixes, emulsions and hybrid heavy ANFO (ammonium nitrate fuel oil). High explosives are extremely powerful and rely on explosive charge for detonation. These can either be a heat source or electrical charge. Explosives are materials that produce violent chemical reactions. These reactions generate large amounts of heat and gas in a fraction of a second. Shock waves produced by the rapidly expanded gases are responsible for the destruction of the surrounding rocks in the blasting process.

History

Gunpowder was first invented by the Chinese around A.D. 850. For hundreds of years they used it in the production of pyrotechnics only. It was the Europeans who by the 14th century developed its use for military and commercial use. Gunpowder is made from a mixture of Charcoal (carbon), Sulfur and Saltpeter (potassium nitrate). When these three chemicals are ignited, a chemical reaction takes place very quickly. The products of that reaction are Carbon Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Sulfur Dioxide and Nitric Oxide (all gases) as well as two solids, Potassium Carbonate and Potassium Sulfide. The four gases formed in the reaction are heated to a very high temperature and thus expand rapidly. This combined with a shock wave are the main characteristics of all high explosions.



Gunpowder or black powder

In 1856, Italian chemist Ascanio Sobrero, invented the first modern explosive, Nitroglycerin. This however proved to be very unstable and difficult to handle. In 1859 a Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, began to look for a solution to this problem and mixed Nitro with an inert absorbent substance called, Kieselguhr, and created Dynamite. His invention revolutionised the mining industry. Dynamite was five times as powerful as Gunpowder, relatively easy to produce, and reasonably safe to use. For the first time man could apply the use of explosives to the liberating of earth's resources for productive purposes.



Modern examples of Dynamite

Terminology explained

1. **Chemical explosive.** A compound or mixture that releases chemical energy violently and rapidly, creating heat and a shock wave generated by a release of gases.

2. **Dynamite.** An explosive made by soaking an inert absorbent substance with a mixture of Nitroglycerin, a combustible substance and an Antacid.

3. **Gun powder.** An explosive mixture of, charcoal, Sulfur and Potassium Nitrate.

4. **Nitroglycerin.** An explosive liquid used to make dynamite.

5. **T.N.T.** Trinitrotoluene. A high explosive.

6. **Primary explosives.** Mainly used to set off other explosives. These can be heat based or electrical charge.

7. **Low explosives.** Characterised by the fact they burn only at their surface, such as Gunpowder.

8. **High explosives.** Characterized by the fact they are extremely powerful in nature. When detonated by heat they are called prime explosives, when detonated by electrical charge they are called secondary explosives. When mixed with oil or wax they become malleable and are termed plastic explosives.

Safety

Blasting in mines is by nature dangerous but very few fatalities and injuries are actually caused by explosions themselves. In the past 20 years most of the explosive related fatalities and injuries in surface mines have been caused by workers being struck by flying rocks. In underground mines the same problem with flying rocks have been responsible for the majority of incidents, followed by explosive fume poisoning.

The future

There have been several experiments with Nuclear explosives in mining applications but these have not been fully successful. There is also a public perception problem with its application of a peaceful nature. Developments with Cardox, (carbon dioxide) Hydrox (Hydrogen Dioxide) capsules are progressing but their application seems to be employed in cleaning and scrubbing operations rather than mining.

Conclusion

For the majority of us we associate explosions with a Big Bang followed by a cloud of dust and flying detritus as portrayed in Hollywood movies. However the destructive power of explosives has been harnessed by the mining industry to enable it to become a productive element of the mining cycle. The tearing apart of terra firma in order to gain access to the earth's valuable minerals. Without explosives this demand could not be satisfied in this modern world.

Graham Topping

THE MINERS LIBRARY: PART ONE

With justification, at the end of 2016, Leadhills Heritage Trust celebrated the two hundred and seventy fifth anniversary of the library, which the miners of the Lanarkshire village originally established as a "reading society" by electing a 'Preses' (president) and purchasing books.

Twenty three miners founded the library in 1741 and levied subscriptions on the members. The library collection, housed in a small inauspicious building in the main street of Leadhills, began as the Allan Ramsey Library. The earliest books were of a religious nature, but other popular subjects were geology and mining around the world. Nowadays, wire grills protect the valuable first editions of Sir Walter Scott and Anthony Trollope; leather binding is a clue to the books that were much-read.

To the credit of the trustees, the library now operates as a museum and displays artefacts having a link with the history of mining in the locality. The miners' banner dominates one wall and a portrait of Allan Ramsey (1713-1784), honours the illustrious poet who lived in Leadhills prior to moving to Edinburgh as a portrait painter.

There is gold on display but to my mind the best exhibit is the Leadhills Supergroup – a collection of rare geological specimens, bearing local names, such as Lanarkite, Leadhillite, Caledonite, and Susannite (after a nearby lead vein).

No prizes for guessing who discovered a yellow brown crystal called Macphersonite !



The emblem that marks each of the library books



A Sketch by a local artist of Leadhills miners' library



The photograph from 1956 features the fading traces of the mining industry in the Leadhills

Ron Callender

THE YARROW VALLEY

The Yarrow Valley, to the south of Chorley, is a surprisingly beautiful and unspoilt area, well worth a visit in its own right, although very muddy in places. It can be walked from the Yarrow Valley Country Park, just off the Chorley-Coppull road, as far east as the A6, passing from the Country Park through a central section where a path must be followed through fields, into a well-wooded hidden valley. It passes through coal measures and appears to have had a long history of coal mining, from the 16th or 17th Century up until 1965 when the nearby Ellerbeck Colliery closed. There were mines at the Country Park itself, but these were landscaped in the 1980's, leaving at least one NCB-capped shaft visible.

Starting at the Country Park and heading east, there are five different former water-powered sites, three of which appear to have been connected to the coal mining. The first and most obvious is at the Country Park itself, where two lodges are fed via a leat from Birkacre weir: this was to supply a cotton mill associated with Richard Arkwright, which has long disappeared and was situated in the area of the car

park. It was burned down in a riot in the 1770's: refer to the internet for more information!



Photo:- Site 2, shaft, plinth and rubble mound

The second site, just upstream from Birkacre weir, was Drybones Colliery (5755 1445), where a backfilled shaft will be seen to have a substantial plinth situated between it and a mound of rubble, suggesting pumping machinery was located here. Carrying on upstream, the path soon enters a substantial cutting ending by the river, where it appears a weir once stood: the cutting is likely to be a leat which possibly fed water-powered pumps at Drybones.

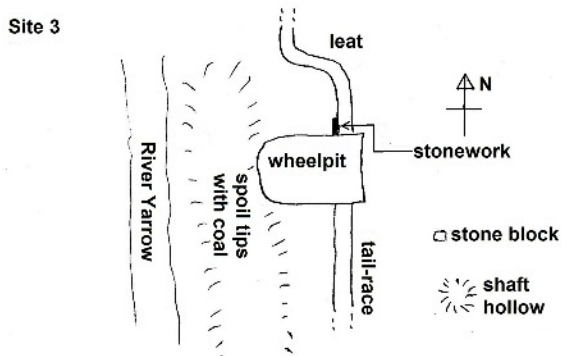
Carrying on upstream, after a footbridge is crossed there are signs of coal working in the east river bank before the confluence with Eller Beck is reached. This stream appears to have had its course diverted, upstream, to allow the ground to be worked. If time allows, Ellerbeck Colliery and Duxbury Hall Colliery can be visited further upstream. The former has a few foundations and the capped shafts visible, whilst the latter is mainly occupied by modern industry, with at least one backfilled shaft visible in the woods. Both were served by a railway which ran east to the main line north of Adlington.



Photo:- Site 3, wheelpit, tail-race and leat

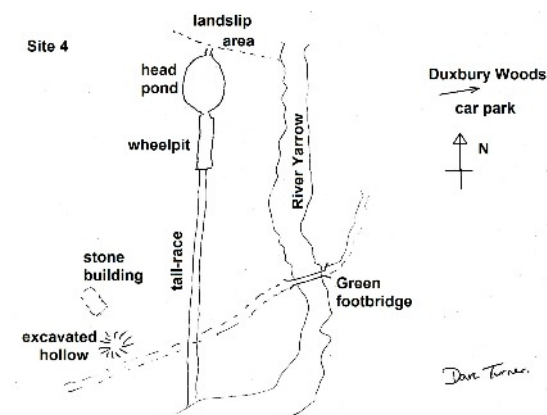
Beyond Eller Beck a field is crossed and the river regained at a footbridge below stone steps where coal fragments may be seen. However, keep inside the fence line along the top of the bank to the right and a set of wooden steps will lead down to the river

beyond a deep pool. Just beyond is the third site where an obvious artificial cut in the east river bank will be seen, which leads to a large wet hollow (5830 1465), with a considerable amount of coal slack visible on the bank between the hollow and the river. This 'D' shaped hollow is some 5m by 4m and must have contained a water wheel, as there is a headrace visible some 2.5m above it, with the cut forming the tailrace.



There is a shaft hollow a short distance to the SE, with a solitary stone block in between, but the size and shape of the wheelpit and the fact that both the headrace and tailrace are at the east end of it suggests a pumping shaft could have been sited at the western end, with pumps directly connected to a water wheel. Beyond here a leat can be followed northwards until it peters out at about 583 150. It must be of some antiquity, as it is very degraded and is buried under a tip from other coal workings, itself carrying a sizeable oak tree, part way along. The weir that fed it must have been somewhere near the grave of the dog 'Bevis'.

Further upstream, on the west bank near a green footbridge, will be found the fourth site, where another obvious open cut runs in a straight line from the river roughly north to a narrow, deep hollow in the bank above the river (5865 1550).



(There is another channel running SW from here which appears to be natural: there are similar ones elsewhere). Above the deep hollow is a wider, shallower hollow. Fragments of coal can be found nearby. The deep hollow, some 2m wide x 5m long,

appears to be a wheelpit, with the shallow one forming its headpond. There is just a trace of a leat feeding it, but beyond here the river bank is interrupted by a landslip and any evidence of a leat would have slid into the river long ago. However, a short distance upstream was the fifth site, Duxbury Mill, a corn mill, which was supplied by a leat from Duxbury Weir, now on the other side of the new road (B5252). (There are at least two shafts with NCB caps near this mill, of which just ruins remain, so coal is present). It would seem plausible that if a water wheel existed here it could have been supplied from the headrace or tailrace of Duxbury Mill, not far upstream and on the same river bank. There is no evidence of a shaft, but it could have been sited in the area of the landslip. Beyond the lower end of the open cut, by the footpath, can be seen a large excavated hollow that could have been a trial pit sunk looking for coal: there is the odd fragment on the dumps. Behind it can be seen the foundations of a stone building, of indeterminate age.



Photo:- Site 4, building remains

Members may not be aware of the excellent series of digital map images freely available on the National Library of Scotland website, of various series of Ordnance Survey maps covering the whole of the UK, at scales as large as 6 inches to the mile, with each sheet covered at several publication dates, some going back as early as the 1840's. The earliest sheets for this area are dated 1849 and show Drybones Colliery (and several others on the higher ground) and Duxbury Mill, but nothing in between, where the third and fourth sites are located. This would suggest that these sites are very early, as would the lack of any trace of buildings on them, other than mentioned above. The third site is the most complete: it is fascinating to imagine that machinery out of the pages of De Re Metallica could have once worked there, pumping an early coal mine. The fourth site is less clear and could even be an early corn mill. Perhaps other members would like to inspect these sites and add their thoughts: someone may have access to more historical information that could shed some light on this fascinating area.

PS: access to the third site is most direct from Burgh Hall Lane South (5800 1515), cutting across the fields down to the footbridge. Expect mud! The fourth site can be easily reached from Duxbury Woods car park at 5885 1550.

David Turner

SKELERON

Comment on article in November newsletter

I am just commenting on part of Ken Geddes' piece on Skeleron in Rimington, specifically on page 20 where he mentions the three lime kilns.

I have well over 150 clamp lime kilns on my database and have excavated more than a few so I think I am in a position to make sensible comments. The ones in question are indeed lime kilns of the clamp - or sow - kiln variety and I looked closely at this cluster some years ago. Of those for which I have been able to obtain secure radiocarbon or archaeomagnetic dates my overall date ranges run from the 1020s to the late 17th century, and I have documentary evidence for one being constructed in the 1850s in Swaledale. The only way to determine within which period given clamp kilns fit is to excavate as the earthworks do not vary - indeed I could show readers one we built and (successfully) fired up about four years ago as experimental archaeology and superficially it looks the same as my earliest proven kiln. I published a typology of clamp lime kilns (*Ind Arch Rev* 30.2, 2008, pp 127-43) showing how the internal details and technology changed through the centuries, so the story of early lime kilns is not "confused and contradictory" as my typology is based on excavated examples. What to me is fairly certain is that the Skeleron cluster has nothing to do with the Romano-British period, and I see no way in which they were linked with the strip fields. The use of lime as a soil input long post-dates the period when these arable strips were active (for more on this see my BAR 525, 2010).

Regards

David Johnson (Dr)

Response from Ken Geddes

I welcome the comments from Dr Johnson on the Skeleron Limekilns. Perhaps he could suggest how I and others could access his 2008 paper in *Industrial Archaeology Review* which he refers to. I am sure anyone interested would gladly reimburse his photocopying and postage costs if it is not otherwise available.

Roman lime-burning technology has evolved from batch to continuous technology much earlier than

the medieval period, which is usually defined as 500-1500 AD. By its nature, such a change would have been fragmentary and the references I have read, I maintain, are "confused and contradictory", due to very few contemporary records. I think I should declare my professional interest in batch and continuous production of chemical products and the economics and functionality of both approaches, along with their scale of production. As I was not aware of his paper, I was not able to take it into account. However I concluded seemingly correctly that the Skeleron kilns were the Clamp Kiln design which is a continuous process.

Production of lime in an isolated community such as Skeleron would be for local use and - then as now - used for dressing acid soils in late autumn. This would allow the lime to be absorbed by winter rain and the soil conditioned ready for sowing in the spring. As the need for lime was over a short period at the end of the harvesting of arable and vegetable crops and similarly in the case of pasture land - cattle and sheep often being taken under cover in the winter in many places - production of lime was short-term and a batch process possibly attractive. However my conclusion that the kilns were continuous Clamp kilns was supported by Dr Johnson's excavations and carbon dating. At no time did I think nor suggest that the kilns at Skeleron date from the Romano-British period.

Strip farming existed throughout the Medieval period and was simply the renting of agricultural land to tenant farmers by local landowners. These plots, large sized "allotments", happened to be in defined strips and were replaced by walled fields after the Inclosure Acts (sic) from 1604 to 1914. Arable and vegetable production declined around the date of the first Acts as wool was a more profitable than seed crops and vegetables. Also climate change resulted in wetter autumns in Lancashire which made arable farming difficult. However some clues to the earlier landscape remain. Barley Bank Street in Darwen is often quoted. Farmers engaged in strip farming cooperated in crop rotation and other tasks.

The strip fields at Skeleron imply the local existence of arable farming at some time (although some "strips" may also have been used as unenclosed pasture with tethered animals). Strip farming even exists today in a few places and the much smaller "allotments" have carried on the tradition. I have found no detailed information on the scene around Skeleron at the time of the earliest carbon dating of 1020 AD. I am fascinated by his comment that "... [I am] fairly certain is that the Skeleron cluster has nothing to do with the Romano-British period, and see no way in which [the kilns] were linked with the strip fields. The use of lime as a soil input long post-dates the period when these arable strips were active". As the Romano-British period was from 43-410 AD, is he saying that the Skeleron strip

fields are pre-Roman? It would be good to have the chronology of this area clarified. Similarly, the Romans certainly had quicklime for use in cements at a very early age. I do not know when it was first used as an agricultural soil improver although Cruikshank et al in <http://www.glenbuchatherine.com/> says: "The use of lime for agricultural purposes was known to the Romans".

If there was any local arable or vegetable production, whether using the strip fields or otherwise, why should lime dressing not be used to improve yield in all local fields? In fact the optimum pH for vegetables is 7 against pasture at pH 6.5 so the former would use more lime per acre to "sweeten" the soil than pastureland? If Dr Johnson's paper presents evidence of the whole area was devoted to pasture with no strip fields or other arable use at his earliest carbon dating of 1020, it would be interesting, as this would have been some 600 years before the Inclosure Acts. I would certainly accept that use of lime on pasture may well have been the strongest motivation for local limeburning, but would like to know when grain crops and vegetables ceased to be grown in the Skeleron area.

Rather than pursuing this point further, I am more interested in knowing if the evidence indicates a single working kiln in the quarry which was moved twice to be closer to, or not impede, the current working face - or were all three working simultaneously? If all three kilns were roughly contemporary, does it indicate three different owners or the need to increase the production three-fold to meet demand? Were all kilns worked by a group of farmers collectively who all benefitted from the product?

I am also interested in the post-production treatment and application of the quick lime. Lime burning produces Calcium oxide (CaO) which is a highly alkaline (caustic) material. It is exothermically reactive with water and difficult to handle. I know of a case where a wheelbarrow of quick lime exploded, blinding the man pushing it. It is usually "slaked" by the addition of water to form Calcium Hydroxide, $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$, which is still highly corrosive, but safer. Was this done at Skeleron? Slaked lime with three to six times by weight of water forms a slurry which is easily spread on agricultural land without the hazard of using dry powder, especially in windy conditions.

And may I be really controversial by asking if the nearby mysterious shallow pits, which are tentatively ascribed to lead trials, could have been used for this purpose? The pits are located about halfway from the quarry to the trackway. Can Dr Johnson cast any light on this?

Ken Geddes

HEMINGFIELD COLLIERY 2017 – Happy New Year!

Events, dear boy, events...

2017 has arrived. We made it. Happy New Year to all of the Friends, volunteers, supporters and local partners who helped to make a real difference to saving and protecting our heritage last year: May 2017 be full of fun, new friendships and further progress. There's much to do!

The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery began the year by setting out the programme of events for the whole year ahead, so there's plenty of opportunities for people to visit and see what's happening. We're always pleased to see and hear from anyone interested in the site, the local area, its people, environment and history.

Whether through a family connection, mining memories, or curiosity, there's much to discover at Hemingfield and throughout the surrounding area, from Elsecar up to Wentworth; from Barnsley to Rotherham we are fortunate to live in a semi-rural district with strong industrial and transport links to the big regional cities. It provides a beautiful balance, and the Friends would be delighted to hear from anyone, as well as sharing our knowledge of the site, it helps us to understand the development and impact of the colliery over time.

So, as 2016 retreats into memory, cards and decorations come down, and cruelly-uprooted evergreen guests are ousted for another year, it's time for the new year to get underway: life in Hemingfield very much goes on.

Ad-mire-ing Progress

Except for the mud of course. On Saturday 7th January 2017 the festive rain (if there is such a thing) frus



View across the site on the morning of 7th January 2017 (photo credit: Glen Sheppard)

trated activities on site. The sodden pit yard was somewhat churned up from comings and goings, so the

Friends agreed to adjourn the open day, and start the year with some research and preparation; more reading and writing, responding to messages, and generally easing their way into MMXVII.

Even still, there's progress to report on site. The roof restoration work on the 1840s winding engine house has leaped forward since the last open day of 2016, with a fine re-laid slate roof in place on the main building.



The ridge stones are on their way to being put back in place too. As work is completed on one part other works can continue, on the back and lower side brick extensions, to restore a rot-free weatherproof cover for the future after years of languishing unloved.



Detail of the restored roof line of the winding engine-house, showing neatly re-laid Welsh slate roof on new battens (photo credit: Glen Sheppard)

Next, work on the drainage should follow: with fascia boards, guttering, flashes and down pipes. We look forward to reporting on the development of this important restoration work as the year continues – hopefully the Friends can see in the darker days of winter with a renewed roof over their heads.

Thanks giving

Once again we must give huge thanks to the groups who have supported us to make this possible, including the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) whose banner is proudly displayed next to the winding engine house; the Association for Industrial Archaeology, and Subterranea Britannica

Friends in the Field, or Catching the drift

The Friends and volunteers are never idle or still, and the Christmas holidays provided the perfect opportunity to get together and share some of the various strands of research individuals have been undertaking over the past year. On 29th Dec 2016 it was time to get outdoors and do some fieldwork: a trip to view any surface remains of the Elsecar water drift. – ‘The Elsecar *what?*’ you say?

Glad you asked: the drift is a long drainage feature, an underground water channel, first hewed out under Elsecar in the eighteenth century to help drain the coal mines worked by the Marquis of Rockingham. Its origins are somewhat obscure, but it was certainly extended over time, especially between Skiers Spring and Thorncliffe in 1839-44, to support Earl Fitzwilliam's collieries and ironstone mines and those of his lessees Newton and Chambers. Exploring its path involves us a historical, geographical and geological journey, connecting the landscapes we see around us today with their industrial past.



Detail from 1911 Ordnance Survey map of the areas from Elsecar to Tankersley – note the Sheffield Barnsley railway (Chapeltown Branch)

Leaving Broadcarr Road, just at the top of Armroyd Lane (SK372997), the group set off up the public footpath skirting the bottom edge of Cloughfields and over through Skiers Spring to-

wards Tankersley. We began on the trail of the Elsecar- Thorncliffe Drift extension, that is the part stretching from Hoyland towards Tankersley. The quest was for any surface remains of the water drift – that is the site of the air shafts which were sunk as the drift was being sunk, and maintained as a means to clear the drift of blockages. The group also kept their eyes peeled for any other survivals.

The group proceeded through Skiers Spring Wood to a clearing, where Stead Lane cuts down from Hoyland Common down to Broadcarr Road. Skiers Spring wood is designated as an ancient woodland having existed continuously since 1600, though the wood has been the scene of coal and ironstone mines, and of brickworks. Stead Lane has two sets of railway bridge abutments, only one of which still has a bridge -technically an underbridge – carrying the railway between Barnsley and Sheffield. Opened in 1897 by the Midland Railway, the Chapeltown Branch Extension brought many coal concerns into direct connection with goods and passenger transport links and created a series of bridges, tunnels and new stations which are still in use today.

While out and about, the group met local resident and author John Moorhouse who took time out to explain the history of the area, and make the Friends aware of a colourful local tale – *the Cheerio Trail* – being the true story of the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam's mysterious voyage to Cocos Island in search of treasures unknown. The story, which has the epic scale of a film, can be found described with many evocative photographs of the expedition, in John Moorhouse and Stephen Cooper's book 'Earl Fitzwilliam's Treasure Island: The Mystery of the Cheerio Trail'.

It was a frosty morning, but the morning light silhouetted a newly-erected bridge, and framed a lovely view across the fields to the spire of Wentworth Church. It's easy to think that railway engineering was a purely Victorian preserve; in fact the work continues to this day, such as the bridge replacement at Stead Lane. It was completed by contractors AMCO Rail, using a steel deck fabricated by Carver Engineering, in



Stead Lane new underline railway bridge, December 2016

Doncaster: South Yorkshire engineers solving local challenges.

The new bridge replaced the battered 1897 original, seen here in March 2013



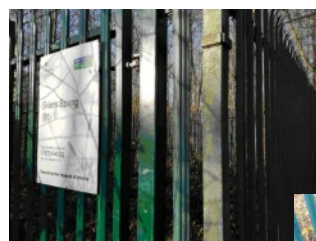
March 2013 – Stead Lane underline bridge

Moving on the walk took the group through the remains of Skiers Spring Colliery, now a rather confused series of demolished buildings and dumped mounds which have become overgrown runs for off-road bikers and the odd dog-walker.



Morning sunlight on the site of the old Skiers Spring Colliery

In amongst the rubble and spoil were a couple of intriguing fenced-in capped shafts.



Moving through the remains of Skiers Spring colliery, the group pass the Lidgett garage building, the much-altered survivor of Lidgett Colliery which operated from around 1883-1911, taking over from earlier ironstone mining and re-using the same shafts.



View of Lidgett Garage, formerly the engine house of Lidgett Colliery (1883-1911)

A Bird of Prey by the Motorway: a tale of Tankersley

Moving on across Sheffield Road, the footpath crosses from Hoyland into Tankersley parish. The group pass further concrete-capped shafts. Here the landscape changes again – into a mixture of lumpy woodlands surrounded by open agricultural fields – themselves hiding the mixed history of this land, which includes post-war opencast coal mining. Walking on the remains of the Tankersley Hall come into view:



The ruins are a powerful reminder of former glories – a mansion house in the centre of a medieval deer park, one which was encroached upon by ironworking and coal mining. The ruins themselves live longest perhaps in the world of cinema – the 1969 film *Kes*, directed by Ken Loach and based on the 1968 novel *A Kestrel for a Knave* by the late Barry Hines. Ironically, though fictional, the film has become something of an historical document in itself – capturing several industrial scenes which have vanished from the landscape – such as shots of the Skiers Spring Colliery.

Writing in 1856 Sir Warrington Wilkinson Smyth (1817-1890) described the area:

From Park Gate, near Rotherham, over Lord Fitzwilliam's fine property of Wentworth, to Tankersley, and on to the west of Barnsley, may be traced in succession many of the more important basins of ironstone, the value of which, added to a particular method of working, has imparted a strange aspect to the surface, which is reflected in the well-executed shading of the Ordnance map.[...]

The result of the belling, and the open work which not uncommonly accompanies it, is to leave long lines of irregular holes and pits, often so considerable as to unfit the land to agriculture, and to induce the planting of belts of trees. The ironstone bind or shale appears not to be prejudicial to their growth, and the strips of plantation thus offer to the eye, even from a distance, a clue to the arrangement of the strata beneath the surface. Smyth, W.W., 'Iron ores of the Northern and North-Midland Counties of England', in Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London: 1856, pp.33-34

Remains of the ironstone workings are still to be found all around use in Tankersley. From the golf course, around to the Church and on towards Skiers Spring, there are distinctive mounds which betray the workings. The mounds general consist of large amounts of spoil, in this case the tiny gray shale which was mined with the ironstone nodules. The shale gives way from time to time, and long-veiled mounds reveal the stone rubbish beneath:



A wooded mound, with a slip of shale, centre-right, revealing the ironstone working origins of the site.

Something which certainly has not vanished from the landscape, and very much defines it to this day, is the M1 – specifically the Tankersley section around Junction 36. Built between 1966-1968, the engineers encountered hundreds of bell pits from ironstone working, as well as shallow coal workings. The motorway obliterated much industrial history from the map, and divided Hoyland from Tankersley in a way which is hard to appreciate given the flow of miners back and forth during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

Rounding off the tour, the group turned up Black Lane, under the M1, and approached St Peter's, Tankersley, the parish church. Here, perhaps appropriately, can be found the gravestones of many individuals connected to ironstone and coal mining, as well as the iron trades in the Nineteenth century.

Sunset in Wakefield: In Memory of John Goodchild

As this post was being finished, the sad news reached us of the death, aged 81, of Mr John Goodchild, of Wakefield. Mr Goodchild (1935-2017) was a significant local historian and local studies archivist, gathering and annotating a vast collection of material over more than 40 years. To mining history enthusiasts his name was familiar as a regular contributor to *British Mining*, though his knowledge and writings touched on all aspects, religious social and industrial of life in the West Riding of Yorkshire and beyond. He will be missed by a wide circle of friends and colleagues, and not least by the Unitarian congregation of his beloved Westgate Chapel.

The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery themselves have benefited from Mr Goodchild's knowledge and wonder irreplaceable collections which he kindly made available when we began work on the history of Hemingfield pit, Elsecar and the industrial undertakings on Earl Fitzwilliam's estate.



Sunset at Milton, looking up the line towards Skiers Spring

The Friends of Hemingfield Colliery Thursday 12th January, 2017

CONCERNS OVER THE FUTURE OF GROVERAKE MINE

The "Friends of Groverake Mine" at Rookhope in Weardale is striving to raise £18,000 to save the mine headgear after the owners announced plans to demolish it. As the last remaining headgear in the North Pennines, it is a monument to the former lead mining industry, and quite a famous landmark.

A group "The Friends of Groverake" was set up to try to save the headgear. After months of getting

nowhere, the land agents finally agreed to give them four weeks to submit a proposal. A strong business plan was produced with the backing of the registered charity "The Friends of Killhope", and this was sent to the agents in September 2016. The response was that The Coal Authority needed the headgear to be taken down, so it was going to be demolished imminently. When questioned about this, The Environment Agency and The Coal Authority issued a joint statement clarifying their positions. It stated that they did not need the headgear to be removed, and that they could work round it if they needed to use the site for water treatment in the future.



On Friday 25th November 2016, five members of "The Friends of Groverake Mine" committee met with the land agents. An agreement was reached to allow the Friends to take on a twenty-five year lease to conserve the headgear in situ. However, there were conditions and costs attached, with a tight timeframe. An appeal was made to the public, and by mid-December over half of the required sum had been donated. Further details are available at www.friendsofkillhope.org.

History of Groverake Mine

Workings at Groverake probably started during the medieval period and the mine takes its name from these early opencast workings. Mining certainly took place on the Green Cleugh vein in the 17th century. A series of large opencasts called Fraser's Hushes were worked on Green Cleugh vein in the 18th century.

For most of the 18th and 19th centuries, the lead mines at Groverake were worked by the Beaumont Company which first developed major mining operations at the site at the end of the 1810s; and they continued working the mine until the early 1880s. In 1882, the mine was purchased by the Weardale Lead Company which worked the area for fluorspar and lead up until 1940. However, it was only when the Branchland Fluor Mines Ltd took over opera-

tions that the productions of fluorspar ramped up with improved treatment techniques. Eventually, British Steel Corporation purchased Groverake and developed it into the leading fluorspar producer in the ore field. British Steel drove a new level and extended the existing shafts. The Rake Level was re-driven to give access to the upper levels of the veins and the Firestone Level driven for access to the lower levels. The Drawing Shaft was sunk further into the Great Limestone to a depth of 91m. The Whimsey Shaft was sunk to the Three Yard Limestone to a total depth of 165m.

In the late 1980s the Weardale Minerals and Processing Company acquired the mine; but in 1991 its parent company went into receivership resulting in another change of hands. The mine was then operated by Sherburn Minerals, and worked until 1999. At the time of its final closure, Groverake was the last commercial fluorspar mine operating in the North Pennines.

The above article is taken from Newsletter 112 of the Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society, and used with permission.

Sallie Bassham

NEWS FROM THE INTERNET

Found by Graham Topping

A project by Sirius Minerals to build a Yorkshire potash mine is set to create up to 2,500 jobs after the firm secured a total of \$1.2bn in funding.

The fundraising will go towards the construction of one of Britain's biggest mines near Whitby.

Around 2,000 construction jobs will be created and a further 2,500 will be employed when the plant is fully operational, expected to be in 2021.

The financing includes \$300m (£242m) gleaned from Hancock Prospecting, the firm controlled by Australian mining billionaire Gina Rinehart.

Sirius will fire the starting gun on construction in January and, once completed, the mine will produce polyhalite, which can be used as a fertiliser.

A 37-kilometre underground tunnel is to be built to take the polyhalite from the mine to a processing plant on Teesside.

Planning permission has also been granted for two further intermediate shafts at Lady Cross Plantation and Tocketts Lythe.

Redcar MP Anna Turley said: "This financing news is great for Teesside. Sirius Minerals' polyhalite project is very well supported locally and we are looking forward to seeing the start of construction.

"Sirius can become a significant business for both the area and the UK for generations to come and the

jobs and investment they are bringing to Teesside are very welcome."

Environmentalists and organisations including the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the National Trust have campaigned against the mine.

Yorkshire Post

Mining for memories of days when coal was king

Alex Wood

IT came in on a great wave of optimism, sweeping away a system that had existed for centuries and bringing hundreds of private firms under government ownership.

The 70th anniversary of Nationalisation is being marked this year by the National Coal Mining Museum with a new exhibition.

The National Coal Mining Museum for England has asked local communities to share memories of their mining heritage, for a new exhibition, 'By the People, For the People'.

The museum wants to hear from the dwindling group of people who experienced life before January 1 1947, when the industry came under the umbrella of the newly-created National Coal Board, changing the landscape of British mining forever.

Described as "the great experiment of socialism", over 900 pits were taken off private coal-companies' hands as the country emerged from the turmoil of the Second World War and given over to public ownership by the then Labour government.

All mines and collieries with over 30 miners came under the NCB, a single body which oversaw production and development, regulated wages, introduced widespread safety and welfare reforms and invested heavily in technological improvements.

Previously the hundreds of individual companies had operated their own systems - some miners got housing as part of their salary or tokens instead of money to spend in the shops. Some were good employers, others less so.

One year on from the closure of Britain's last deep mine, the museum is asking people to share their stories for an exhibition opening on April 3, called "By the People, For The People."

They want different viewpoints - whether of the coal owner whose mine was taken over, to the miner's wife who experienced some of the improvements which came with the new system. Nationalisation saw more research into the conditions that afflicted miners as well as new villages built to house workers, including houses in White City in Grimethorpe.

Anne Bradley, curator of social and oral history, is hoping to record interviews or ask people to write down their anecdotes: "We are very conscious as

with the Bevin Boys, there aren't many people left who remember working under private companies. "If there is anyone who comes in with memories pre 1947 that would be fantastic, as it is probably going to be a last chance to capture those memories.

"If not, we hope to get people with memories of the early days of the NCB and what it was like working under the newly-formed organisations."

Debates about nationalisation had been rumbling away well before 1947. In the late 19th century there were debates about nationalising the banks and steelworks - and so it continues today with the railways.

In 1947, Britain was going through post-war rebuilding. The combination of a left leaning political climate, mass unemployment and failing coal production meant plans to nationalise coal production - discussed as early as 1893 - finally got the go ahead. Curator of art and photography Imogen Holmes-Roe said: "What we have discovered is that for a lot of people - whether it turned out to be true or not - there was a huge amount of hope that there was going to be a new era for mining, not just for the industry, but the community supporting it.

"Nationalisation is a term that's bandied about but what do people really understand by it? This is what we are trying to explore."

Three events are being run by the Museum to gather people's stories.

Miners, ex-miners, relatives, coal merchants and colliery owners, or anyone related to the industry before 1947 and after, are being invited to attend.

The Museum is interested in exploring stories regarding working conditions, management, training, welfare, female workers, home life and health and safety.

The first event is on January 24 at the Museum, followed by South Elmsall Library on Tuesday February 28 and West Yorkshire Archives Service on Tuesday March 21. They all run from 1pm to 4pm. Visitors will be able to share their stories with the Museum's curator and librarian. Material will be used for the website and social media as well as the exhibition. Visit www.ncm.org.uk or call 01924 848806.

Johnston Publishing Ltd

Anglesey Mining want to raise £310,000 to 'expedite' development at Parys Mountain but several previous attempts have failed

By Owen Hughes, 30 November 2016

Anglesey Mining want to raise £310,000 to help try to re-start work at a copper mine that was once the biggest in the world.

They have started a share issue for project development of Parys Mountain mine near Amlwch.

They have agreed to issue 12,000,000 new ordinary shares on the London Stock Exchange to "expedite development" of the zinc, copper and lead mine. But several previous attempts to bring back mining at the site after more than 100 years have failed



Sunset at the pit head on Parys Mountain

Anglesey Mining's most recent multi-million pound deal to re-start work at Parys Mountain collapsed in 2009 when the economic crisis sent metal prices tumbling.

Mining at the site dates back 4,000 years, with the Romans among those who extracted vast resources of copper.

In the 18th century the copper mine was the most productive in the world — copper from the mine was used to sheath the British Admiralty's wooden ships of war.

The proceeds of this issue will be used for project development of the Anglesey mine and for general working capital.

The Parys Mountain property is a significant zinc, copper and lead deposit with small amounts of silver and gold.

An updated scoping study is currently being prepared by Micon International Limited and Fairport Engineering Limited, both of which are acknowledged experts and leaders in the resources sector.

Bill Hooley, Anglesey Mining chief executive, said: "We are very pleased to announce this financing, which represents significant support for Anglesey Mining, and we look forward to completion of the updated scoping study and to expedite development of the Parys Mountain project."

Anglesey Mining will make an application for these shares to be admitted to both the Official List and to trading on the London Stock Exchange's main market.

It is expected that such admission will become effective and dealings will commence on December 14.

TrinityMirrorMerseyside

Buyer wanted for 'fabulous opportunity' Giggleswick Quarry

A BUYER with a vision is being sought to buy the disused Giggleswick Quarry near Settle.

Quarry operator Hanson closed the site ten years ago after successfully extracting all its limestone reserves.

And now it has put the 31 acre site, which sits firmly inside the Yorkshire Dales National Park onto the market.

Agents, Dace, Son and Hartley, which is looking after the sale from its Settle office, said a guide price was not being put on the quarry, but that the telephone had already been ringing with inquiries.

"This has to be one of the most unusual properties we've ever handled and it represents a fabulous opportunity for the right buyer," said manager, Jason Preston.



"It's a truly unique opportunity, in a stunning location, at the southern end of Giggleswick Scar."

Development of the quarry will be subject to permission being given by the national park planning authority, which has indicated in its local development plan that around six acres in the base of the quarry could be suitable for 'employment use'.

Mr Preston said: "It will interest businesses that require a vast outdoor storage space or it could offer a dramatic backdrop for a wide range of leisure activities, subject to planning.

"It has the added benefit of being in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, but still within walking distance of all Settle's amenities and its road and rail links, as well as offering easy access to Skipton and



the M6, which will further enhance its appeal with leisure businesses."

The 31 acre site is less than a mile from the centre of Settle and is surrounded by stepped benches, up to a height of around 100 feet, and a large, flat area in the centre.

Hanson UK communications manager David Weeks said: "This quarry has provided a vital supply of limestone for local use for many years and employed many local people. We would love to see the site being put to beneficial after-use."

To find out more about Giggleswick Quarry, visit the website dacres.co.uk

Newsquest (Yorkshire & North East) Ltd

West Cumbria Mining

Coal mining in West Cumbria dates back to the 13th century when the Monks at St Bees started to exploit the local coal seams. Seven centuries of mining activity followed on from their lead until the last deep coal mine in the UK, Kellingley, closed in December 2015 with around 450 job losses.



West Cumbria Mining (WCM) is a private UK company, focused upon the development of its Cumbrian Coking Coal project. The project sits within the Cumbrian coalfields and is located adjacent to the former Haig Colliery, from which 48 million tonnes of coking coal was extracted between 1917 until it closed in 1986, much of it beneath the seabed over four miles offshore.

WCM has been busy over the last two and a half years undertaking a programme of coal exploration, both onshore and offshore, with the aim of constructing a large scale, state-of-the-art underground coking coal mine. Coking coal (also known as metallurgical coal) is used in the production of steel and is a different product to thermal coal, which is used in coal fired power stations to produce energy. Thermal coal production is now in decline as the Government plans to ban all coal fired power stations by 2025 and are instead looking towards renewable energy and nuclear power to meet CO2 reduction targets.

The WCM project will see a very modern approach to a traditional industry in both the design and mining method, with environmental considerations at the forefront of the company's plans. The new, low profile surface buildings have been designed to have minimal visual impact on the surrounding area in stark contrast to the large winding gear and headstock traditionally associated with mine buildings of the past.

All product will be moved by rail via a buried conveyor to prevent extra traffic on the roads including the mine reject which avoids the need for a waste tip on site. The coal will be transported by rail to Redcar Bulk Terminal on the North East coast where it can be exported easily into Europe. WCM will also aim to supply coking coal to the UK steel industry which is starting to show signs of recovery following the slump in steel prices seen in 2015. The new mine will create over 500 skilled and unskilled jobs and WCM aims for at least 80% of these roles to be filled by local people. As part of WCM's desire to engage openly and honestly with the local community, regular community update events are held at the WCM office, which is housed in the visitor centre of the former Haig Mining Museum. The next event will be held on Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th March from 10am -4pm with all members of the public being invited to attend to see the latest plans and meet the team involved.

Contact Us

Address: Jacktrees Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5BD

Phone Number 01946 816 716

Guide Media Group

MINING START UP HOPES TO DRILL FOR LITHIUM IN CORNWALL

20 January 2017

It has been announced that there are plans to extract lithium in Cornwall. The presence of lithium in under-ground hot springs in Cornwall has long been known; but, until now, the water was regarded as a nuisance as it flooded tin mines. Lithium is increasingly being used in electric car batteries and for power storage; so the lithium-rich water has become a potentially valuable commodity that could boost the Cornish economy and create new jobs.

A company called Cornish Lithium has been formed, and has secured rights to look for and exploit the metal. The Chief Executive of Cornish Lithium, Jeremy Wrathall, is a graduate of Camborne School of Mines.

The exploration area is about 300 sq km and is centred on Camborne, Redruth and St Day. The exploration costs are estimated at about five million pounds. Drill holes at least 400 metres deep will be drilled; and, if enough lithium is found to make the

project economically viable, then processing plants will be built and the metal extracted. Cornish Lithium has also secured rights to geothermal energy contained in the hot lithium-rich springs. It is anticipated that this energy will be utilised to generate power for processing, and any surplus can be used to power local industries.

Elsewhere in the world, lithium has been extracted through evaporation in ponds thousands of acres in area. However, Cornish Lithium will use new technology which is more compact and more environmentally friendly. The Cornish exploration is economically worthwhile because of the new technology and the increasing demand for lithium.

It is thought that the presence of high levels of lithium in the Cornish springs is due to the interaction between highly saline water from a nearby sedimentary basin and the granite under Cornwall. Some of the granite rocks in Cornwall are rich in lithium and, over millions of years, this lithium appears to have become dissolved in the waters that have interacted with the granite.

Professor Kip Jeffrey, the Head of the Camborne School of Mines, said "Although this project is still at an early stage, it is very exciting news. He explained that the Cornish miners had long known about the lithium-rich waters that seeped into the tin mines. "If successful, it will be good for the whole of Cornwall and I believe will also have wider potential implications for the whole for the UK"

George Eustice, MP for Camborne, Redruth and Hayle, said it was exciting news and could create a new industry and jobs. He said, "The recognition of lithium in waters beneath areas of Cornwall represents an opportunity of a new mineral extraction industry in Britain. Lithium is a strategic mineral given its importance in modern technologies. If the team at Cornish Lithium is successful in developing this opportunity, the UK may not have to rely on imports of this vital mineral in the future. Canadian mineral exploration company Strongbow Exploration, which is involved in the lithium scheme, recently bought the South Crofty tin mine in Pool, which it is looking to re-open. Landowners Tregothnan Estates will also be working with Cornish Lithium. Another player in the scheme is the Cornish company Mineral Exploration Ltd, owned by 'born and bred' Cornishman Simon Ward who said, "There's a danger that soon we will have a generation who don't even know anyone who has worked in a mine. Hopefully lithium will be the new gold in them there hills."

Guardian (also in Daily Telegraph)

Sallie Bassham

Exciting news from the Mining Institute

This Annual General Meeting of the membership of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, having considered the Development Strategy adopted by the Council of the Institute, affirms the intention of the members present to transfer the assets of building, collection and staff to the new entity (working title The Great North Institute) that the Council will have created by the AGM next year to hold those assets in the future and deploy them in line with the Vision set out below.



The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers - founded to address the safe and effective exploitation of the natural resources of the North East - will create as a legacy a new Institute dedicated to exploring the future of that region, its people and the distinctive contribution it could make to the global as well as regional consequences of the industrial revolution that began - and ended - here.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of its correspondents and are not necessarily agreed with or shared by the Northern Mine Research Society, its Officers or the Newsletter Editor. The accuracy of statements made in articles submitted for publication will not normally be checked for validity by the Newsletter Editor. The responsibility for the content of articles submitted by individual members or groups remains with the authors and cannot be accepted by the Society, its Officers or the Newsletter Editor.

LATE NEWS - AN OBITUARY

Alasdair 'Ali' Neill

We regret to announce the death of Alasdair 'Ali' Neill, from cancer, on 28th October. Ali, a long standing member of this society, was a passionate caver, mine explorer and mining historian who devoted a great deal of time and energy to amassing data on mines, of all types, everywhere. His body of written work is sadly small, but his knowledge of mining in Cornwall and Devon broadened and extended the range of data included in "Mining in Cornwall & Devon, Mines and Men" (Exeter 2014). His index of NMRS publications and Newsletters may be seen on our website at <http://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/index-of-nmrs-publications-newsletters/>

Ali arranged for his written archive to be managed by friends in Cornwall, which is being done. He also arranged with NMRS for his **Mines Index** (a Word file with 6,028 A4 pages) to be made available on the Society's website. Work on this truly massive task, which will help researchers for years to come, is in hand and it will become a fitting legacy for Ali's work.

Mike Gill

Finally, a big thank you from me to Peter Hay who proof reads each issue to prevent me submitting my typing errors to the printers!

Rob Needham

Data Protection Act

Members are reminded that the NMRS maintains a list of their names and addresses solely for the purposes of printing labels for Membership Cards and posting newsletters and publications. Such details are deleted from the database for any member who leaves the Society, either after the committee have been notified or after it has been determined that an overdue subscription has not been paid for several months.

The Northern Mine Research Society is a
Registered Charity
No. 326704

Visit our Website

www.nmrs.org.uk