

# CAT

The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust  
Mining History Society

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No.69

October 2002

**Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society  
Newsletter No 68, July 2002**

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**CAT web site: [www.catmhs.co.uk](http://www.catmhs.co.uk)**

### **Cover Picture**

The photograph on the front cover was provided by Alastair Cameron, and shows Thomas Warsop and Captain Cock, resting on the ground in front of the Bonsor Mill, Coniston Copper Mines. We believe that the picture was taken on or around the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1891, on which day Warsop gained full control of the operation of the mine.

It shows the mill, still quite intact, although fairly dilapidated. One can see the stamps and at least three water wheels. It is interesting that no one else is in the picture, suggesting that employees had been given the day off, naturally without pay. In front of Warsop is his terrier, Teddy.

### **Old Photographs**

From time to time, usually by sheer good fortune, old photographs such as this come to light. In this case, earlier in the year, Coniston resident and retired quarryman Mike Brownlee was taking his dog for it's morning walk when he was stopped by a motorist who wanted directions. Mike gave him directions and then happened to glance in the back of the vehicle. To his surprise he saw an old Warsop rock drill lying on the back seat, and commented on it to the driver.

The driver stopped the engine and introduced himself as a Mr Warsop of Worksop, near Nottingham. Needless to say Mike's dog missed out on the rest of his walk, as the next two hours were spent poring over old photos and papers which Mr Warsop had with him in the vehicle. Later in the day Mr Warsop left the collection with Phillip Johnston, at Bridge House in the village, from where three old photographs were borrowed by me, scanned on the Ruskin Museum computer and saved on a CD.

The original photograph was very faded, torn in places, stained and covered with spots of mould. It took hours, using Photoshop, to repair all the damage to

give the result shown on the front cover, which is still nothing like perfect.

Alastair Cameron.

### **Membership**

#### **Subscriptions are now due.**

Please complete and post the renewal form enclosed with this issue.

#### **New Members:**

We welcome

Mr & Mrs M J Sanders  
168 Broadway  
Grimsby, Lincolnshire.

Jonathan Dee  
16 Brickfield Road  
Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire.

Jonathan joined via the CATMHS web site. He writes 'I have had a longstanding interest in disused mines for many years. I was brought up on the Isle of Man, which has a very rich mining history. During the early 1990's I was involved with the local Civil Defence on the island and had the opportunity to follow underground river passages at the Snaefell and Laxey mines as well as caving in the Ingleton area. Since moving to Aberdeen my interest has been rekindled, however there appears to be a distinct lack of mining history in Aberdeenshire. I hope I will be able to travel to Cumbria and join the Society on some of its underground trips.'

#### **Changes of Address:**

**Dave Bridge** has moved to:

3 Brigham Hill Mansions  
Brigham, Cockermouth  
Cumbria CA13 0TL  
Phone 01900 827591

Chairman **Mark Simpson** is now at:

3 South View, Leeming Lane  
Burton in Lonsdale, Lancs LA6 3LE  
Phone 01524 262824

## **The 2002 Annual General Meeting, Dinner and walk.**

The AGM and dinner will be held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December. The Agenda and menu should be enclosed with this newsletter.

**Before the AGM, which commences at 4.00pm, there will be a walk around the slate quarries of Coniston Old Man**, led by Alistair Cameron, which will finish in time to get cleaned up prior to AGM. Walking boots and a lamp would be appropriate.

‘We will gather at 10am at the Walna Scar Fell Gate and leave promptly. The plan for the day will be to look at a few outstanding things within the Old Man Quarries and also (if there is time) to go into High Moss Head to look at the remains of the ‘weaselling’ operation that took place there. We will be back at the cars by 3.00 pm!’

### **Committee**

Once upon a time most of the membership came from in or near to the Furness Peninsular, and committee meetings were a local affair, usually held in members’ houses. This has changed, and membership of the Society and of the Committee is now geographically quite widespread, with most members having to travel considerable distances to attend meetings. Discussions have taken place as to how we could make it easier and more attractive for members who live some distance away to attend meetings. Currently our Committee meetings are held at the Barrow Mountaineering and Ski Club hut at Coniston Coppermines. Ideas have included reducing the number of meetings from six to four, Changing the time of meetings so as to enable people to travel or socialise after the event, holding meetings at a weekend, so that people can stay over, holding a formal or informal meet to

coincide with meetings, changing the venue. It may be possible to carry out some of our business via information technology and the internet. If you would consider standing as a committee member or have any ideas or thoughts on the matter, then please come to the AGM and air your views.

### **Situations Vacant**

You will see from the AGM Agenda enclosed with this Newsletter that Jon Knowles does not wish to stand again as Meets Secretary. Our thanks to Jon for his work. The Meets List is published twice per year and is usually circulated with the Newsletter. The post entails liaising with the Committee to compile a meet programme, agreeing the details with meet leaders, and compiling the list for publication. Most of this can be done by phone or email. It is not essential for the Meets Secretary to attend committee meetings, and assistance can be given with printing and distribution. If you think you can help then contact the secretary, phone 01434 381903, email [sheilabarker@cybermoor.org.uk](mailto:sheilabarker@cybermoor.org.uk)

### **Proposed Subscription Increase.**

Subscriptions have remained unchanged for many years despite rising costs. The cost of running the Society now exceeds income from subscriptions – even when the tax return from Gift Aid is taken into account. This is clearly not healthy state of affairs, and at the last Committee meeting in September it was agreed that subscriptions should be raised to £15 single and £20 joint or family. A proposal to this effect will be put to the AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> December. Below is a letter from our Treasurer explaining the situation:

‘I’ve summarised the state of our finances (for 2001-2002) excluding our income and expenditure on publications other than the Newsletter.

INSURANCE (Archive & Public Liability)	£595
EQUIPMENT (SRT & Surveying)	£575
NEWSLETTERS	£440
RENT (Mandles & BMSC)	<u>£ 90</u>
	<u>£1700</u>
SUBSCRIPTION INCOME	£1390
GIFT AID RECLAIM	<u>£ 300</u>
	<u>£1690</u>
<b>DEFECIT</b>	<b>£10</b>

We discussed the need to increase subscriptions at the Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September and the figures only serve to emphasise the importance of so doing.

The reasons for excluding the income and expenditure on publications are twofold, firstly our authors have donated their copyright to the Society and secondly we received a grant of £5000 to publish "Lakeland's Mining Heritage". Neither of these sources of income should be used for the day-to-day expenses of the Society. Additionally it is important to emphasise that we have made no expenditure on "projects" this year; last year we spent just over £1000 on the materials for the very successful "Grey Crag Level" re-opening.

As you will see from the figures, insurance is a significant part of our expenditure, I have just received the renewal documents and the premium per member has increased from £1.90 to £5.00. The insurer has sought alternative quotations, which varied between £20 and £25 per member. I believe we will see a very significant increase in rates next year. This insurance provides £2 million cover for all members (those who have paid their subscriptions!)

against third party claims for damage to property or injury to persons. This applies both to individuals (while involved in any activity associated with the aims of the society) and while taking part jointly in CATMHS meets. In an increasingly litigious society this is an absolutely essential protection both for individual members and officers and cannot be avoided.

I shall therefore be recommending an increase in subscriptions.'

John R Aird  
CATMHS Treasurer

## News

### Slate Waste from Blaenau Ffestiniog

The recently imposed aggregate tax of £1.60 per tonne may provide a spur to the Blaenau Ffestiniog Slate Industry. As anybody who has visited the town will know major Slate production over the last 200 years has produced prodigious tonnages of waste and some of this may now be economically sold as aggregate.

The following article appeared in the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald on July 11th 2002 and gives an idea of the plans currently being formulated:

### SLATE FREIGHT RAIL PLAN GETS BOOST.

Ambitious plans by the McAlpine Group to construct an aggregate loading area and multi-use railfreight facility on land at Rhiwbryfdir, Blaenau Ffestiniog, came a step nearer this week. Area planning manager Mark Roberts told members of Gwynedd Council's Merionnydd Area planning committee this week that objections to the development appeared to have been resolved. Mr Roberts said that since the last meeting in February, when the proposal was approved in principle, he had met with both company representatives and those who had lodged objections - including the roads

division of the National Assembly - with the result that only one issue was yet to be resolved.

Members Cllrs Ernest Williams and Owen Edwards welcomed such news and proposed that once agreement had been reached on that issue that outline planning consent be released, subject to the agreed conditions. The development covers about 12 acres of reclaimed land which formerly comprised the Glany-Don slate tip, located between the A470 trunk road and Glanypwll Road to the east, the Conwy Valley line to the west and an unmade track to the south. The conveyance of slate and loading of slate aggregate would occur between the hours of 6am and 11pm, but there would be need for train movements off site until midnight.

A previous report to the committee revealed that reserves of existing tipped slate waste at the Oakley Quarry are estimated to be in excess of 100m tonnes and future production is expected to add an additional 2m tonnes each year. This equates to five or six outgoing trains per day. One train load would equal 40 lorry journeys. The proposed terminal would be designed with a loading capacity of 2m tonnes per annum. It is envisaged that up to 8,000 tonnes per day would be transported out of the site.

McAlpine estimates that the scheme will cost up to £28m, with potential to create a substantial number of jobs. The extra revenue to the area is estimated as being about £20m. It emerged last year that one major train operating company had expressed an interest in establishing and operating the freight service from Blaenau Ffestiniog along the Conwy Valley Line, thus securing the long-term future of the line.” Emyr Williams.

Contributed by Jon Knowles.

## **Did Historic Mine Buildings get the Shaft?**

From the Rocky Mountain News, Friday Aug 30<sup>th</sup> 2002.

Frank Baumgartner has bulldozed two historic mine buildings on his land atop Red Mountain pass, and suggested Thursday that two more structures will be razed.

Last weekend Baumgartner hauled a bulldozer to the 1600 acres he owns in the Red Mountain mining District between Silverton and Ouray and leveled the picturesque Kohler/Longfellow boardinghouse and the mine manager's house. "I got sick of people using my land. There are no trash cans or toilets up there", said Baumgartner of Castle Rock. The mining district, partly owned by the U S Forest Service, is popular with mining buffs, photographers and tourists.

Baumgartner, a mining geologist, who also owned the property known as Castle Pines in Douglas County, had offered to sell the land with the old mining works, bunkhouses and sheds and other 1800's structures for \$11 million – more than the Forest Service could pay. He has dropped the price to \$7 million. Land in the area sells for less than \$3,000 an acre. "He said he was going to keep taking buildings down until we purchased his land", said Ann Hoffman of the Ouray County Historical Society.

Last year Baumgartner threatened to take down the mining district's centerpiece, the Yankee Girl Mine Shaft. He says he still may. The now demolished boarding house was visible from the forest Services' new £500,000 overlook near the historic area. "If they like the view so much they should buy it" Baumgartner said. The Colorado Historical Society recently spent \$7.100 to stabilize the buildings and build winter shutters to protect the structures,

but Baumgartner said he could get sued if anyone was hurt while touring the century-old homes on his land.

Last week, Baumgartner and the State Highway Department settled a dispute overland he claimed he owned on the Red Mountain Pass where tourists stop to take pictures. He said the state now owns the land and he only received £2500.

Rep. Scott McInniss, R-Colo., who has supported the state and county efforts to acquire the land in Ouray and San Juan Counties to protect the buildings, said he was outraged over the destruction. Baumgartner said, "Both counties would love to glom onto my land and my buildings and use it as a tour area for jeeps. But I've dropped from number one to number 26 on the Forest Service's buy list. I'm tired of fooling around, and I can do what I want with my property".

Contributed by Richard Hewer, who has just returned from Colorado USA, where he travelled 2500 miles exploring the mine sites, most of which are off the beaten track.

### **Cumbrian Mining Records now relocated to Whitehaven!**

The records of all Cumbrian non-coal mines which have closed have been transferred from the British geological Survey's premises in Edinburgh to Whitehaven. The Abandonment Non-coal Mines Plans recorded almost 250 mines which operated in Cumbria between 1819 and 1980. The earliest record is the Borrowdale Wadd Mines. The records refer to sites in Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness (Lancashire), and are available at the CRO, Whitehaven.

Thanks to John Helme for this information from the CWAAS Newsletter, Summer 2002.

### **CIHS Conference**

This takes place on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October at Hundith Hill Hotel, Cockermouth. There are to be five lectures, including two on mining topics: Elizabethan Mining in North Cumbria by Sam Murphy and The Saltom Pit Story, by Chris Wilde.

### **Life on a Line**

Recently published by Dr D F Merchant this is a new manual of modern cave rescue ropework techniques. It has been published online, the file size is 940KB @ [www.draftlight.net/lifeonline](http://www.draftlight.net/lifeonline) From Speleoscene, No 51, Aug 2002.

### **North Pennine Heritage Trust Nenthead Mines**

There are now admission arrangements for mines on the Nenthead site, which include Carrs, Capelcleugh Low, rampgill, Smallcleugh, Hodgsons Low, Firestone and Middlecleugh levels, and Brewery and Hangingshaw engine shafts. These include: All visitors are required to obtain permission of the trust before entering the site; There is an admission charge of £1 per person per visit; Vehicles must be parked at the Visitor centre; No vehicles will be allowed to travel to Smallcleugh Mine or any other mine entrance; Members of any group must comply with all Health & safety warnings. Full details from the Trust Office in the Rampgill Mine wood yard, phone 01434 382045.

From NAMHO Newsletter No. 43.

### **Recording the Underground Archaeology of Mines – A descriptive Specification.**

There are no defined standards for recording underground sites. This document, aimed at both professionals and members of NAMHO organisations, the people most likely to carry out recording of underground sites, aims to fill the gap. Copies of the guidance are available on the NAMHO website, [WWW.namho.org](http://WWW.namho.org)

## Meet Reports

### **Broughton Mills Slate Quarries, Wednesday Evening 8th May.**

On a very pleasant spring evening, six members met above Hoses Farm and made their way to the obvious quarries nearest to the road. The underground closeheads were entered via the middle access tunnel, the upper one being gated and the lower one being full of farm rubbish.

The underground workings are surprisingly extensive, consisting of at least three separate large chambers which became interlinked during the latter part of the working life of these quarries, which, at a guess, could have been in the 1930's or 1940's at the latest. No written records or references to the quarries have come to light so far.

The group then made their way further east to what appears to be opencast quarries, but on closer inspection evidence would suggest these were formally closeheads that have collapsed. The entrance tunnel to one of these was explored as far as was possible. After looking at the surface remains and ruined buildings we made our way over the fell side further to the east to examine an "ancient earthwork". It consists of a large mound with a chamber in the centre lined with slabs now partially collapsed. It could have been a burial ciste of great age. It is not marked on maps and not recorded where one might expect it to be. On the other hand it could simply be a gun

emplacement dating from the last war when the army used this area as a training ground. You can find it at GR 22409335. Go and have a look and let me know your opinion.

After failing to reach a decision on its origins, we retired to the Blacksmiths Arms at Broughton Mills for a refreshing pint.

Peter Fleming

### **Coniston United Mine and Brathay Flag Quarry. Wednesday Evening, 10th July.**

On a beautiful sunny evening ten members and one guest met at the Drunken Duck Inn, Barngates. Following a public footpath we first visited Brathay Quarry, which until recently had been abandoned and overgrown. It is now being re-worked



Brathay Quarry.

by the Kirkstone Green Slate Company. Sited within a wooded fold in the hillside it is not visible from the surrounding countryside. The slate is dark grey and of durable close-grained quality. Very suitable for the production of flag stones. We noticed several 'clogs' with lustrous veins of

iron pyrites running through the fault lines.

After looking around the quarry and at the machinery used there we proceeded to the scattered remnants of the Coniston United Copper Mine. This little known nineteenth century mine is located on several east to west copper veins to the north of Pull Beck, which flows into Windermere at Pull Wyke. Despite its name it had nothing to do with the better known mines at Coniston.

It was never an important mine and the proprietors lost a considerable sum of money on their speculation. The veins were too poor to yield a profit. Each of the five locations we visited were in a narrow band of Coniston limestone. Our first stop was to look at Pull Scar Cottage, which was formerly a mine building, probably the office. It is now a private house. The present owner, John Spencer, told us the building was extended many years ago but he thinks the staircase is original.

Nearby, in a tributary stream flowing into Pull Beck, is a level at GR.35420188. The entrance cutting is silted up with deep water behind it. In the summer of 1982 it was explored and surveyed by Sam Murphy in conjunction with the Kendal and District Mining Research Society, using an inflatable rubber boat. They found the level extended for 90 metres and was up to 2 metres wide. Towards the inner end two short side passages were driven but no stoping was evident and it is presumed the copper veins were barren at that depth below the surface.

We then walked through the woods and meadows to a second level at GR.35800210. The entrance, situated

in an old bottle tip, ran, like the first one, in a north westerly direction. Nothing was known about this level. It was not mentioned in Sam Murphy's report so Dave Bridge bravely volunteered to wade in to explore. He paced it out and found it to be of similar extent to the first tunnel with no sign of mineralization.

This done we proceeded towards Holmes Head Farm and with the permission of the farmer, Eddie Hettridge, we examined the earliest workings on the sett. These are located near the headwaters of Pull Beck. There used to be a shaft sunk in 1827 to a depth of 13 metres at GR.34750210. In 1852 the shaft was re-opened and the workings examined. Good Ore was found in the east end of the old workings. To the west the vein was cut off by a strong crosscourse. The prospects must have seemed bright for the mine, for by the end of the December a smith's shop and changing house had been erected and some ore was being dressed at the surface. Over the next two years intense development of the mine was carried out under the direction of the agent, John Boundy. The shaft was deepened to 24 metres, levels were extended along the vein east of the shaft, and a crosscut was driven south from the shaft along a crosscourse in hard blue limestone looking for the westward continuation of the lode. Ten tons of copper ore were dressed and sent to port during this period.

Hardly any trace of this shaft remains today save for a depression in what is now known as Low Riddings Field. It seems that many years ago a horse and cart were lost down the shaft and it was subsequently filled in. Not far from here in a small wood a deep cutting can be found in rock which marks the entrance to another level,

now blocked. This is probably the crosscut to the shaft and workings just referred to. Traces of barytes and chalcopyrite have been found in the nearby overgrown spoil heap indicating the crosscut reached the vein. This can be found at GR.34800185. Close by, in the north bank of the small stream, a lime kiln can be found, and about 40 metres upstream there are openworks and spoil heaps marking the outcrop of the vein.

Coniston United Mine was a speculation. It lasted only a couple of years as an active mine and then vanished from history. Mr. Boundy was the agent for another copper mine at Ulpha and it is interesting to conjecture whether his activities there led to the abandonment of Coniston United or if the veins were simply too poor to yield a profit. Certainly his work up to January 1854 had cost a total of £1217/4s/10d, but had raised only 10 tons of marketable ore, valued at about £8. per ton.

Having seen, as far as we were aware, everything that remains of Coniston United Mine, we retired to the Drunken Duck for a pint of ale. Thanks go to Sam Murphy for permission to quote from his research material, and also to the members who turned out and showed so much interest.

Peter Fleming

**Balcony Stope, Coniston,  
28<sup>th</sup> July.**

There was a good turn out of members for the trip I had in mind - Ian Matheson, John Aird, Roger Ramsden, Gerry Goldsborough, Chris Hargreaves and Mike Mitchell. By 10.15 we were trudging up to Levers Water, Mike

volunteered to check that the rope in South Vein was still there and would catch us up. The Back Strings were soon reached and thence down to the first pitch, to Orange Box Corner (Stope 5). Mike had reached us by then and was only coming as far as the top of the second pitch, down to Middle Level.

Blue Rock Chamber was reached without incident and lunch was declared. I finished first and was off to the top the third pitch in South Vein. All seemed to be well and after rigging the ropes as a pull through I set off down to the Balcony Stope drop off, the rest following on. We were soon standing on the balcony of the stope (Paddy End Stope South) and setting the rigging for the descent. The 'floor' was soon reached and we were able to see what had happened to the part of the stope in the area of the final pitch down to Grey Crag Level.

A large chunk of the hanging wall had come away in many large boulders. The large rock that the last descent party had been sitting had gone, or least been well buried. Things had so changed that we had a job recognising the old descent line. The whole area looked unsavoury, Roger gave everyone an interesting moment when the rock he was standing on moved. The hanging wall looked as bad as when I saw it last time. I would not like to say that it was impossible to descend any further but I think you would have to be desperate to try it.

Having satisfied our curiosity, we ascended back up to the Balcony and thence to the head of the next pitch down in South Vein. I led off, checking the ropes as I went, it being some time since the gear had been put in. The first obstacle was a stemple which I had put the ropes over to avoid

disturbing a nearby set of timbers. I went under changing from one rope to the other and thence down to the next belay position some 6m above Grey Crag Level horizon.

All seemed to be well and I called John down. The stemple referred to above seemed to cause problems, in that he tried to go over rather than under. Unfortunately this information was not passed back to Ian. Any way John arrived belayed on and I set off down to what was potentially the pitch that was likely to cause moments of interest. The first thing was one of the stemples that had held up the Puddingstone Level floor, and since the thought of penduling with this thing overhead was not attractive I pushed it down the stope (Archaeological importance notwithstanding). I descended further and the moment of truth arrived in that I tried to pull myself across to the bottom of the exit ramp. A straight sideways pull was not possible (the rope end was belayed to a hanger at the bottom of the ramp), so it was a case of asbseiling to the bottom of the loop and then prusicking up to the ramp. I was somewhat relieved to reach this belay position, as apart from anything else the descent rope was not damaged and the way on was now easy. (Ian at this time was setting the rigging down from the Balcony drop off to pull through mode).

John set off down and put in a bolt to enable easier traversing over to the ramp bottom where I was. Eventually he reached my position and set off up the ramp to Grey Crag Level. There then followed a long wait while Ian descended, the cause of this was a certain stemple which Ian with great difficulty went over. He arrived muttering dark things about stemples, belays and people who rigged the route down. The others after some time came

by Roger having the greatest problems as he was last man and had to pull the ropes through. This was not easy as the ropes would pull through only with great difficulty even with several more krabs attached to the existing hangers. It was this problem that finally defeated Roger on the final descent pitch. Eventually, in late afternoon we were all in Grey Crag Level and on our way out. It was an interesting thought that we could have been out several hours since if we had come down the old through route, and it was irritating to say the least that several ropes had to be left behind - would we never retrieve these things?

John Aird stoutly volunteered to come with me to finish the job off at a later date. This we did with Ian Matheson on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day of the last committee meeting.

The final retrieval trip - yes all the ropes are now out - John was the man who went down all the way to get them; he said it involved hanging upside down??. Anyway we pulled the ropes up to Middle Level by lunch time and over lunch contemplated our next move. I wanted to commence exploration of South Vein by traversing over to a floor that had been observed from below on the Middle Level horizon, going inbye. This I did and in what seemed a short time was over by the floor, Ian however was keeping an eye on the time and as I was about to step on new ground summoned me back. I know he was right but it was frustrating all the same, anyway I could have not gone any further as the last drill bit had gone blunt. So it was down the Through Route, and out. John had an unfortunate encounter with a sharp rock just by the head of the final pitch - he sat down rather hard on one, he bravely still came to the committee

meeting later. We were out in good time in bright sunshine and washed the gear whilst John retrieved the transport.

An object lesson about rigging belays for a pull through - by sling or chain of maillons creat a delta hang and hang the ropes off one big crab/maillon. Any one wishing to use the South Vein route as a pull through should be aware of this. A rope has been left in as a traverse line at the bottom of the last pitch and up the exit ramp in South Vein.

My thanks to all who came this way with me. Mike Mitchell's pendule remains a thing of wonder, and will probably never be surpassed – at least the way he did it.

Mark Simpson.

### **Evening meet at Hodge Close, Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July.**

My apologies to the three people who turned up on the date published in the Meets List! The date was changed from 14<sup>th</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July, in order to accommodate holiday commitments. The change was first announced in the April Newsletter, and details were published in the July Newsletter, so it just shows that not everyone reads it! It is unsatisfactory to change dates after the Meets List has been circulated but it is always worthwhile to check with the meet leader before attending. It helps the Meet Leader to know who to expect, and there is always possible that unforeseen circumstances may make changes necessary.

Present on the revised date were Meet Leader Ian Matheson, Peter Sandbach, Dave Robson and Paul Timewell, together with Dave and Elizabeth Sewart, who had an entourage of about

a dozen young people of assorted ages. I never did manage to count them all!

Looking across Hodge Close Quarry from the rim, it was apparent that further rock falls have taken place in the North West corner, and the gantry to which people used to abseil is now destroyed. The workings in the Tilberthwaite Valley are very extensive, so on this occasion we concentrated on the quarry workings in the vicinity of Bakerstone Barrow Wood. Peat Field Quarry has been worked since 1987, I believe by Sam Dougdale of Ambleside, but I understand that the lease has been taken back by Burlington Slate. It is now idle, but much of the machinery is still there, and it could probably be put into production quite easily. Nearby is a fenced off shaft which was used to dispose of slurry from the now closed operation at Moss Rigg. We walked down through the wood to visit the closehead below, where a concrete dam was constructed to contain the slurry. Further into the wood we entered the caverns where a few years ago large 'Acid House' parties caused concern. Finally we traced the course of the old tramway which links several of the old workings in this area.

Time, or rather daylight, had run out, and some of the party adjourned to the Sun Hotel in Coniston, leaving the equally interesting workings on the Moss Rigg side of the valley for another occasion.

Ian Matheson.

### **Hospital Level, Coniston Coppermine, 29<sup>th</sup> September.**

There was a good turnout for this meet. In addition to the Meet Leader there was John Aird, John Ashby, Sheila Barker, Dave Bridge, Peter Fleming,

Gerry Goldsborough, Jon Knowles, Chris Hargreaves, Roger Ramsden, Mark Simpson and Angela Wilson. Alastair Cameron was spotted near the BMSC hut, but said that he was going for a fell walk. Nearly everyone had previously phoned to say that they were coming, which was very helpful. One person discovered that he had not brought a helmet, and went back down to Coniston the borrow one from Geoff Wilkinson!

The aims of the meet were, first to descend through the holes in the floor of Hospital Level in order to refresh our memories of what lies beneath, and secondly to take advantage of the recent spell of dry weather to check out Waterfall Shaft and the stope beneath the recently discovered Launder Level, both of which are wet and unpleasant in normal conditions. The descent of Hospital Shaft from the surface, listed in the Meets list was a further option, but Chairman Simpson, who had done it previously, was discouraging about it. Something about nearly being clobbered by falling timbers.

Whilst getting ready outside the level Roy Garner with two members of the Coniston Rescue Team passed by. They were on a familiarisation trip down the Through Route, and we encountered them later on at the foot of that descent.

It was good to be part of such an experienced and competent group of mine explorers and cavers, and, apart from rigging a couple of pitches, I was pleased to let others do the work. To avoid congestion we split into two groups. First a rope was put down each of the two deep holes in the floor of the level in the hope that there would be a connection down below, making an up and down circuit possible. This was proved to be the case, and everyone

explored the spacious but rubble filled stope which extends as far as the foot of Hospital Shaft. There is a depth of about 200 feet between Hospital Level and Deep Level, which lies beneath it, but in places nearly half of this depth is filled with rubble. The story is that in the declining years of the mine the sides of the stope were stripped by explosives in the hopes that strings of paying ore would be found.

A pile of debris led to a hole looking into an extension of the stope, outby of the first descent, and Messrs Knowles and Ashby put some bolts in and abseiled down to the bottom hoping that there might be connection with Deep, but nothing was found. After this everyone went back up to Hospital Level for lunch, some of the party taking theirs outside to enjoy the autumn sunshine.

The next project was to put ropes down Waterfall Shaft and Launder Stope. They connect below the level, but it is a complex area and we hoped to find out more about it. Ashby and Knowles set off down Waterfall Shaft, and Ramsden and Goldsborough went down Launder Stope. It was noted that someone unknown had moved and damaged a section of launder since Peter Fleming and Ian Matheson went down a few months ago. Gerry got a fright when he put his foot through the floor, which is only inches thick, as much of the structure has fallen out beneath it.

It was soon apparent that the two ropes were indeed in the same stope, for Rodger and Gerry were startled by the sound of large quantities of rock falling into the depths quite close by. Waterfall Shaft had been used by the digging team clearing the Grey Crag Level blockage as a repository for some of the spoil. It was thought that,

as the bottom was full of debris anyway, a bit more would do no harm. Not all of it had reached the bottom, however, and the two Johns encountered a very unstable slope of this debris about 60 feet down. They eventually concluded that to clear or bypass it would take too long and prussicked back up to the level. John Ashby reported that the floor at the top of the shaft was drying out. The water had previously been diverted down Paddy End Shaft during the dig. So before leaving we directed it back down Waterfall Shaft in order to keep the timbers wet, and also in the hopes that in time of flood it would clear some of the debris below.

Meanwhile Rodger and Gerry were having a scary time in Launder Stope, somewhat discouraged by the sounds of the falling rocks dislodged by their neighbours, which were causing vibrations and air movements. The whole place is full of large, jagged and apparently very recently shattered rocks, the hanging wall is full of fractures; there are no level surfaces and everything seems to be on the move. It is not a nice place to be, and they were very brave or rather foolish to persevere. Chris Hargreaves wisely stayed on guard at the top. Rodger and Gerry scrambled down the steep slope inby, reporting that there seemed to be a bit of a sump at the bottom where the rubble slope reached a headwall, and that there might possibly be a level in the wall, but they could not be sure. The mine plans do show such a level, but so far it has not been found. Rodger traversed the other way, and by balancing on one foot on a pinnacle of rock protruding from the rubble was able to look round the corner into the continuation of the stope towards Waterfall Shaft, reporting it to be clean and deep. About this time Mark Simpson descended to join them, and

was so impressed by the place that he started back up again as soon as his feet touched the ground. I know how he felt!

Most of the spoil from the Grey Crag Level dig had been tipped down Paddy End Shaft, so to finish off we investigated to see if it had caused any problems. Again the two Johns, Knowles and Ashby, volunteered to go down. The shaft seemed clean and clear, although rather wet below the first staging. As it was getting late and it is nearly 200 feet to the bottom they decided to come back up. Peter Fleming and Ian Matheson then went down a short way for a look around. It is a very impressive shaft, nicely made, with some good stonework. When it was time to pull the rope out it came up minus the bag, which had not been tied on. I wonder what Dr Descender will make of that!

Whilst tidying up outside Peter Fleming noticed a movement below the track on the bank above Levers Water Beck. It turned out to be a small brown animal, quite plump but long, with a white bib and short ears. I think it was a pine marten!

Ian Matheson

### **Namho 2002 5-8 July, Aberystwth**

#### Thoughts

Sent off for details in February from Mole (John Hine) the size of SAE not specified so sent an A5, information came back promptly. This contained a brief lecture programme and field meet guide (visits were half or one day and timings were such that half day visits and half day lectures could be achieved allowing for travelling) plus list of meal/ accommodation required. A

useful aid was the NAMHO conference web site.

I made my decision and sent off money and e-mail address end of May 2 days before late booking price increase came in. Prompt confirmation. Lecture programme looked interesting, but did not understand the need for parallel sessions on Sunday morning. A schematic map of the area showing mine sites and the merits of each chosen site would have been useful. The sheer number of available site visits was a problem (organising leaders must have been interesting) I chose Clogau as a day visit but had to change later as I discovered that it was on the North side of the Dyfi estuary and so on the way back home.

The form used to indicate ones wish's seemed to be cumbersome, a form of multiple choice answers with first and second choice as well. This form was returned as confirmation of decision. This I think could have been improved upon i.e. a vertical list of visits with tick boxes against each (or Y/N if database system to be used) - confirmation and mailing could be integrated.

The Conference - Campsite location no problem - details had been e-mailed beforehand. The use of NAMHO direction indicators was a great help. Field good, facilities not used.

Conference reception was found mainly with the aid of indicator boards, the university building map was not a shining example usefulness, as when one made ones way to the National Library of Wales for the reception. Access to Penbryn Hall for stands etc. not easy - parking limited and the hall was on the first floor.

Plenty of room and tables - Coffee and biscuits and conference packs ready

(These packs were very nice - a plastic wallet containing amongst other things a properly printed and stapled copy of lecture topics and brief visit description, a more detailed information of the places which one had indicated on ones conference application, notebook biro and your meal tickets plus local tourist info). - and plenty of useful people about.- No problems.

After setting up the CATMHS information boards, (and here I must thank all the contributors for their photographs and for Ian Matheson for the use of his front room and laminator for the setting up of the display boards - it surprised me in the length of time it took). I checked up with the field visits table - a mixture of usefulness and confusion the 1:50000 OS maps showing visit sites and parking points - ok. The site visit name lists arranged by each day and half day - ok. Late information - ok. - The parking place plans - waste of space. OS map was adequate, especially when used with NAMHO indicator boards. There was a spreadsheet thing - whether it for use by delegates or Mole was not clear, looked very complicated

When I wished to change my field visits I saw the person responsible for the lists who then crossed out one list and added my name to another and repeated the same in her own lists kept in a ring binder. I can see that there would be problems if people just changed the public lists and the visit became over subscribed or not viable. So I assume that the visit organiser kept checking the public lists and updating herself and informing the meet leaders when ever possible.

Thought - every delegate attending field visits should sign the safety information and have their attention

drawn to it - 3rd party insurance not withstanding.

So the booking in was satisfactory - the parking situation was no problem, plenty of it on campus. The reception - well the National Library of Wales building is certainly a splendid place - red carpet and all. Red/White wine, fruit juice and standing around. Speech's by Peter Houghton, and chairman of Welsh Mines ( David Bick). Used PA. which is always useful if done well. Event over mercifully quickly - would have been nice to have integrated it with a tour of the library.

Nice evening and walked up to a student bar at the upper end of the campus - nice place and a good sociable evening followed. I found that there were quite a few CATMHS members were attending, Jon Knowles, Sheila Barker, Don Borthwick, Jane Morland , Mark Weight and several others.

When I returned to the campsite I was surprised to see how close people seem to like pitching tents - all one end of a 5 acre field. One thing I had forgotten - some folks have little idea how sound travels especially on a windless night, not including the talking.

Saturday - Had breakfast in the Penbryn Hall - Branwens Restaurent, (breakfast, midday and evening meals were available, at what I thought was a reasonable price and I liked what was on offer.) Note:- you had to indicate what meals you wanted in advance and was in the overall fee.

I had decided to attend the lectures that day as there was an interesting range of subjects on offer. For information of these look at the NAMHO Website. As far as topics of local (Cumbria) interest

went, Stewart Cresswell of Moles did one on the Myers Head Mine in Patterdale., Mike Gill on the Water resources of Grassington moor, Paul Thorne - Brewery Shaft Nenthead, and Dave Carlisle with Mike Gill on Swaledales Hydraulic Engines.

The days lectures finished at 17.00.

The NAMHO council meeting took place at 1800, which I attended with Sheila . Mike Moore, the chairman accepting our confirmation of running the 2004 NAMHO Conference, Stewart Cresswell for Moles offering to support us in this, which was also accepted. The rest of the meeting passed amicably, with Mike keeping a good grip on proceedings. All this is by now may be on the NAMHO Website.

I had originally planned to have a wander round the town and dine out in a hostelry, retiring back to the campsite with a good book. However due to the kind offices of a fellow CATMHS member, I attended the evening meal that took place in ones of the universities halls. I have attended many NAMHO Conferences over the years starting at IronBridge, and the Saturday evening occasion is the highlight of the weekend, the one that happened when the conference was at Charlotte Mason at Ambleside was one of the more memorable ones. (At the Steam Boat Museum). The highlight of the present occasion was the auctioning off of mining share certificates for, I think, mountain rescue funds.

Sunday - A bright sunny day - breakfast at Branwens and then straight to Frongoch, where the redoubtable Roy Fellows was giving tours round the place. A very interesting trip with an optional added wetness if required. Roy Fellowes, as those who have met

this intrepid character know, is someone that takes his mine exploration very seriously indeed, and as someone who has been to places that he has opened up, I have been singularly impressed by what he has done. Details of Frongoch Mine have been written up in a Northern Mines Memoir.

Sunday afternoon was spent back in the lecture theatre and taking down the CATMHS display boards. By 1800 hrs I was on my way home.

An interesting weekend, with the by now usually problem of having a weeks worth of lectures and visits to choose from a fact which I find very frustrating. The organising the field visits alone must have required organisation on a serious scale, and all credit to John Hine (Mole) and the rest of the team for doing this so well. The main observation about this is whether such a large choice was necessary. The lectures program was varied and interesting and the venue was very satisfactory with all the necessary facilities to hand (as one would expect of a university).

The occasion has given me, and I assume other CATMHS members, much to think about as regards when we host the NAMHO 2004 Mining In Cumbria Conference. This will take place at Coniston at the John Ruskin College. I take this opportunity to thank all those members who have volunteered, to assist with organisation of this future event. (Even if you cannot remember offering, I have a little list.)

Mark Simpson

## Doctor Descender

Dear Dr. Descender

I have just been made redundant, and have had installed a broadband internet connection. I now have a lot of spare time on my hands and the ability to download vast amounts of still and moving pictures. What shall I do with my time?

Wayne Kerr, Chorley.

Dear Dr. Descender,

Somebody hid my underpants on the first day of the NAMHO conference, but I didn't notice all weekend. Why is this?

Dear Dr. Descender,

After the NAMHO conference, I had a choice of rushing home to my lovely wife or taking the scenic route. I chose the scenic route. Was this the right decision?

R O'mantic, Huddersfield.

P.S. I don't carry a picture of my wife in my wallet. Do you think I should?

Dear Doctor

I recently put myself forward for election to the parish council somewhere boring down south near Huntingdon. Despite my amazing popularity why did nobody vote for me?

Not from Councillor Cowdery

Dear Not Councillor

I believe your abilities (?) certainly do not lie in politics, and I wouldn't waste much time venturing into diplomacy either. However if you were to enter the most tactless person in the world competition you would certainly win !

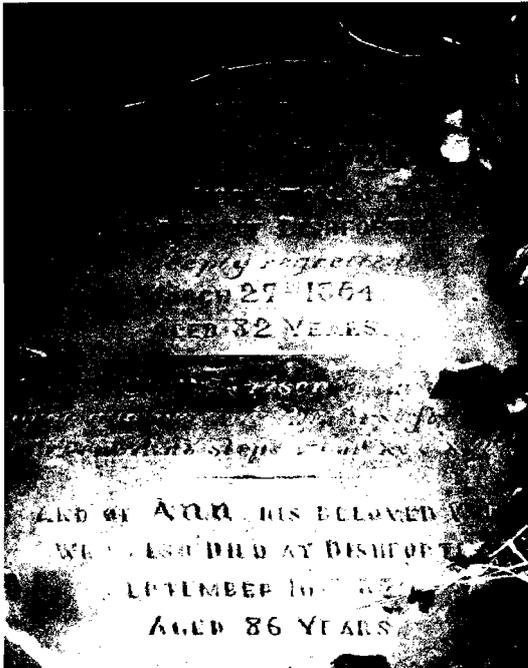
Doc

Doctor Descender this month has been provided by the Good the Bad and the Ugly.

## A Mystery Solved

By Dave McAnelly

As many will know my interest in the London Lead Company verges on the fanatical. Two of my heroes are Thomas Dodd and Robert Stagg. Unfortunately my research into the life of Thomas has been put on hold while I await further information. My research into the life of Robert Stagg is continuing, but a major puzzle was 'where was he buried?' His death is well documented; he died at Dishforth on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1864, but was there a gravestone?



Having dragged Karen (and her mother) around numerous graveyards without success I was about to give up when Karen suggested searching the internet. Karen, via the internet, was able to get assistance from the Cleveland Family History Society, which suggested a site to search. Last week I drove to Dishforth on a lovely sunny day (Karen was at work – ah!) and searched the graveyard suggested. I at first had my usual lack of success, but soon I was gazing at a wonderfully clear stone marked with the name 'Robert Stagg'; success at last!

IN MEMORY OF  
ROBERT STAGG  
FORMERLY OF MIDDLETON IN  
TEESDALE  
WHO DIED AT DISHFORTH  
DEEPLY TREGRETTED  
MARCH 27<sup>TH</sup> 1864  
AGED 82 YEARS

Now is Christ risen from the  
Dead and become the first fruits  
Of them that slept. 1st Cor. XVc XXv

AND ANN, HIS BELOVED WIFE  
WHO ALSO DIED AT DISHFORTH  
SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> 1879  
AGED 86 YEARS

## An approach to Radiation in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century!

The following synopsis is taken from information in "Mines & Miners of Cornwall" by A.K. Hamilton Jenkin - Volume VI, Around Gwennap. This concerns a mine originally known as South Tresavean, and latterly as Roscrow United. After abandonment after 1870 it was taken up again in 1912 by Captain A.E. Doidge and Mr. W. Tresidder who cleared the adit and did a little driving. It was abandoned by the start of the first World War.

"To test the radioactivity of the mine below adit, strips of metal were lowered 10 fathoms into the water and there left suspended for some weeks. The results were communicated to a Dr. Martindale who as a technical authority confirmed the presence of uranium ores, and on the strength of this small quantities of the mine water were bottled and sold for a time as "Roscrow Natural Water, Radio-Active". It was even proposed to erect a spa on the site so that health-seekers might "bask" in the radiation

Contributed by Peter Hay, Jon Knowles

## **Journal 5 and the Greenside Dig**

I have received the following letter from Ian Tyler:

“Ref: Greenside Article in the Mine Explorer IV published by CATMHS

I have read the initial article on the Greenside Project with interest, and feel that, on behalf of Mines of Lakeland Society, I must make a couple of observations due to some inaccuracies. In order to get things into perspective, I feel that I should explain to your readers, should you wish to print this in your newsletter, some of the background to the Lucy Tongue Level Project and the reason for this letter.

Indeed it was the lack of interest displayed which prompted my reluctant decision to resign from CAT and form another group which became MOLES. Under this banner, we negotiated with the National Park and obtained permission to open up the South Level at Greenside, and the LDNP was satisfied with our reports and photographs of the work done here. A further eighteen months of discussion and correspondence, we were eventually given the go ahead to start work on opening up the Lucy Tongue Level. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1992 MOLES invited CAT to join in the venture by letter to S. Barker.

Based on this agreement, official application was made to Peter Davies of the LDNP by Ian Tyler and the late Doug Sharman and the go ahead was given with a time span dating from the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1992 until the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1993.

The dig was commenced on Wednesday November the 4<sup>th</sup> 1992 10.00am and at this initial dig 4 Moles were on the site. At dig No 2 on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 8 Moles and Sheila Barker from CAT were present and at dig No. 3

on November 11<sup>th</sup>, there were 5 Moles but no one from CAT.

On dig no 4 on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> November, 8 Moles and 5 members from CAT were present and the initial entry was made into the Lucy Level. The dig continued through the concrete plug for the next few weeks. Eventually on the plug was broken through and the first walk up the Lucy was taken on Wednesday December the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1992 by Doug Sharman (video camera), Ian Tyler (surveying) Warren Allison and Martin Carter and a video was made on the actual day. At 850 yards of level were initially explored when a substantial fall was encountered, all the level explored was surveyed and photographed.

The level was subsequently secured and landscaped in accordance with the LDNP requirements and after 24 meets, the dig and the final securing of the level was completed by Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January 1993. During this period digs were attended by 156 MOLES and 49 CAT members and the project was finished inside the required time limit.

It appears that the information laid out in the printed articles in Explorer IV failed to observe the simple courtesy of naming our society but referred to us as “some other group” and that this group had little or nothing to do with the efforts at Greenside. Just for the record the mine closed in 1962 not 1972.”

### **After the Opening**

The costs for the dig had run high and the MOLES committee on behalf of the Society, decided that enough funds had been allocated to the project. However although the original project had finished, some members of both societies wished to continue the dig and consequently a meeting was initiated by MOLES and held at the Kings Head at Thirlspot on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1994. As

a result of this it was decided that Warren Allison of MOLES, Clive Barrow of COMRU and Peter Blezard of CATMHS would co-ordinate the ongoing dig to Smiths Shaft.

It was certainly most gratifying for all mine explorers that, under the guidance of Peter Blezard and the keenness of Warren Allison and others, the dig was pursued for a considerable time and indeed they succeeded eventually in opening the way through to Smiths Shaft. A commendable achievement for both groups.

### **Conclusions**

As a complete override to this I must say that as the Chairman of MOLES it would not be in our society's interests to allow the position not to be explained fully and fairly. To further indicate our unbiased attitude towards other groups I have enclosed a copy of MOLES newsletter No 5 which gives our version of the project."

### **Journal Editors reply**

"I agree with most of what Ian Tyler says in his letter, there is no disputing the basic facts.

I was wrong not to mention MOLES by name in my Editors Note, and I apologise for this. However my actual words were "Another group obtained permission to re-open the Lucy Tongue Level at Greenside Mine .." thus making it clear that CAT was not involved in this negotiation. Ian Tyler did indeed propose to two CAT AGM's that we should seek permission to re-open the Lucy Level, and the membership voted in favour, but he did not pursue the matter within our Society.

In his article in Journal V Warren Allison states "In 1992 permission was granted by the Lake District National Park Authority to re-open the entrance, which

was to be gated." Again there is no claim that CAT obtained this permission, but it is perhaps unfortunate that MOLES were not attributed the full credit. I am pleased to put the record straight. Warren goes on to say "So in November members of CATMHS and MOLES (Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society) started work on digging out the entrance." At the conclusion of his article he states "The project would never have succeeded without the support of CAT and MOLES ...". This seems to me to be fairly balanced; it was after all written in the CATMHS Journal which sets out to celebrate CAT achievements.

### **For the record:**

Moles and COMRU withdrew financial support from the Greenside project, leaving CATMHS to continue alone. It cost CATMHS over £1600 to complete. The team, Peter Blezard., Peter Sedgewick, Collin Woolard, Andrew Woolard, John Brown, William Snaith and Warren Allison, the only people named in Warren's article, were the main driving force behind the completion of the project. Most are members of MOLES as well as CATMHS.

Indeed, I believe that for most people the main issue was the successful completion of the project, and membership of one society or another was not really an issue. Again, for the record, Warren Allison of MOLES and Clive Barrow of COMRU are CAT members, and Mike Mitchell of COMRU was Chairman of CAT MHS

I am grateful to Ian for the article in MOLES Newsletter No 5 which gives their version of the project, and I have reprinted it in full in this Newsletter."

Ian Matheson  
Journal and Newsletter Editor.

NB References to Mine Explorer IV in Ian's letter should read Mine Explorer V.

## **Inside Greenside.**

**Reprinted from MOLES (Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society) Newsletter Number 5, June 1993 by kind permission of Ian Tyler.**

“As most mining enthusiasts know, Greenside was the biggest lead mine in the Lake District and operated from around 1790 until it closed in 1962, when the depth of the lowest level was 273 fathoms below the main tramming level, the Lucy Tongue Level.. This level had been commenced during the year of 1853 and had taken upwards of 17 years to drive. All it's length had been hand drilled using black powder. It was pushed on by two man driving teams, and in the latter years the tunnel was pushed forward twenty four hours a day.

Eventually the level reached the vein nearly a mile from the portal, thus creating a connection with the much older workings above. These stopes were still productive and provided a second way out for the men, and also the much needed ventilation which also benefited the higher workings. Most important was the fact that now all the ore was to be transported out of the Lucy by ponies pulling up to four tubs of ore directly to the mill and the furnaces of the Greenside smelter.

Over the years numerous people have descended the ladders from the Glencoyne level onto the Lucy, and a few of these have ventured past Smiths Shaft only to have to return to make the weary journey back up the 760 feet to day ... Just imagine if permission could be obtained to dig open the entrance to the Lucy so that we could walk the mile

in to Smiths Shaft and explore other areas of this vast mine! What treasures, what secrets could a venture like this reveal?

After eighteen months of negotiation and a final site meeting with Mr Peter Davies of the L.D.N.P. and Mike Mitchell of C.O.M.R.U. it was finally agreed that we could dig open the adit. The dig was to commence on the 4<sup>th</sup> November (1992) with the proviso that a full photographic record be kept, that the level would be surveyed, and that any disturbance of the ground would be re-instated. There was to be no damage to the existing ruined buildings, the level was to be gated at our expense and access was by permission only. Digs could only be on Sundays and Wednesdays. Just prior to our starting, the Park asked if we minded if C.A.T.M.H.S. joined our forces, which of course we readily agreed to. C.O.M.R.U. also wished to contribute their expertise and so it meant that we had more hands to the pump and a three way split of the expenses.

Initially we had thought of excavating the level entrance with a JCB, a mini digger, and finishing off by hand but where to dig exactly was the main problem. We were aware that the level had been blown in during the closure of 1962 and that the rubble from the two houses spanning the entrance had been landscaped across where the entrance should be. The line of the bedrock cut obliquely across the tunnel, so wherever we chose to start we would have a dig of something like 20 yards in and a total depth of thirty to forty feet down to hit the level roof.

There was absolutely no clear indication of where the level actually started,

despite the first hand knowledge of Eddie Poole and Walter Burnett, both ex Greenside miners, for they could not pin point the position exactly. Eddie was keen to bring up his JCB, or even his RB45 face shovel: "We'll 'ave that bit o' muck owt o't bloody way in no bloody time, four hours at the bloody most. Tha' wants nowt to be bugging about wi' shovels!" declared Eddie. "Two weeks from today I'll clear the bugger out!"

The discussions ran on regarding manual or mechanical means of digging, as, naturally, the purists wanted to dig by hand and the more impatient wanted Eddie's JCB on the job. As it was there were still two weeks before Eddie could start which gave us something like four meet days, so, undaunted by the task, it was agreed that the dig would commence by hand. On the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1992, Peter Blezard, Martin Carter, Doug Sharman and Ian Tyler arrived at Greenside. The plan was to cut a trench following the bedrock to expose it's definite line, somewhere below which lay the level. Martin started to excavate in and around the buildings and after a few hours of solo digging he had discovered a wall going in. This was initially thought to be part of a building. The rest of us were exposing the bedrock, which was angling outwards nicely, while Martin persisted with his dig and eventually called out that he had in fact found the level! "Cobblers" cried we .... "No, no, it's here" cried he, and to our surprise ... it was! Just as easy as finding the Titanic! With the two level walls exposed a bearing was taken and the bedrock followed down.

Easy to say, but far harder to do. The overburden at this point was something like thirty five feet of boulders, soil,

clay, slimes, wood, iron and concrete. These were just a few of the things that we were going to encounter. All of this material had to be dug and deposited away from the area in a place designated by the L.D.N.P. A site hut was constructed to protect my sandwiches, and a loo area. This was going to take some time.

We agreed that the dig would be kept going from the top downwards, following the rock down. This had two advantages, one being that the face above was secure, and the other that it was easier digging. Soon the trench was twelve feet wide and moving outwards, and the two wheelbarrows were never still.

Dig No4 on the 15<sup>th</sup> November was a memorable day when eight M.O.L.E.S. and five C.A.T.M.H.S. members turned up. The day was bitterly cold, with snow on the high ground, and the dig commenced once more with vigour. We were some thirty feet down to the bedrock face and the trench coming in was a continual problem as the angle of repose was too vertical, so a large quantity of material was raked off to stop it falling onto the diggers below. On doing this we came across numerous boards and railway lines, and realized that we were spot on with our calculations ... the level must be just below us.

Three feet down we came to more railway lines and concrete ... was this the dreaded plug? It had always been rumoured that the level had had tons of concrete poured in to seal it. Undeterred we hammered away, hacksawing the rails and bars and cursing whoever had created such an obstruction. Eventually

Warren Allison and Peter Blezard (the younger) heard the pinch bar create the booming of hollowness beneath our feet, and within a few minutes we had a small hole between the level roof and the bedrock, the start of a perfect entrance .... the Lucy was ours.

Elated by our success we worked on removing sufficient roof to gain access, each piece being carefully removed outby. Although the level was booming we did not know whether the level of silt had built up, or the level choked, or worse still, sumped to the roof. Chink after chunk was removed until we had a hole big enough to get through, but because of the angle of entry we still could not see inside properly. Peter Blezard (Moles) and myself were the first in, relieved to find the level virtually dry, although we could hear water pouring and gurgling in what seemed like vast quantities! The initial rock appeared to be quite sound and the level was quite misty however, as we walked forward we were able through the gloom to see what we had dreaded - the plug - a boulder and a concrete wall totally blocking the way ahead. Sited in it were eleven three and a half inch pipes, three at the bottom, six in the middle area, and two near the roof. The water was gushing through these, spraying the area in front of the wall. Our looks said it all ... the level had definitely been secured. We turned back somewhat forlornly to walk the fifty feet back to day to break the news to the others.

Soon everyone had descended onto the level and seen for themselves the enormity of the problem facing us. The main question was how to get the wall down: jack hammers, dynamite, sledge

hammers? Rumour had it that the plug was twelve feet thick and we had a working space of only six foot six inches of height by six feet of width, which is tight for underground working. A few test blows with a fourteen pound sledge hammer confirmed our fears. The wall was solid and craftsman built to last. Another problem was the amount of water that it was holding back. It certainly wasn't the full amount going the mile back to Smith's Shaft or it would have been shooting out from the pipes, but we knew there was pressure as it was coming from ten of the eleven pipes including one of the high ones.

The discussion continued for some time, and finally it was decided to secure the level as a priority. Mike Mitchell and I agreed that two thirty six inch pipes should be placed in the entrance at an angle of 45 degrees and be back filled on top. The pipes would be big enough to take a stretcher in case of an emergency. The small matter of the wall would be resolved by the use of two Kango hammers. This was arranged with the L.D.N.P. and we expected to complete the task on dig number 6 on the 21<sup>st</sup> November.

By now the dig on the exposed portal was abandoned as it was apparent that charges had been placed in the roof and that all the level outby the bedrock was down totally. We could see that four 4" pipes had been laid in the floor first to allow the water to flow into Swart Beck.

The pipes in the plug were rodded with spectacular results as gunge and grot flew out and it was apparent that they were well furred up, however we soon had them flowing freely.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> November a good team of 10 Moles and 9 CAT members turned up and after a full day from 10.00am to 5.00pm and with two very worn out Kangos, we had removed two cubic metres of the wall. In fact the wall was still very much intact and the team was very much worn out! Everyone was soaked with the water from the pipes and the noise was deafening but the battle went on relentlessly. Twenty minutes was about the most one could manage without going outside for a breather or to do some more work on preparing the entrance for the concrete pipes.

By Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> November a substantial area of the wall had been removed but we still had no idea of its thickness. The construction, as we were finding, was of concrete aggregate made from the quartz mill tailings and boulders set in a very good mix. The boulders were well bedded and would not give even under the weight of fourteen pound hammers. We found that using 7lb and 3lb hammers with drill steels was the most effective method. All the waste was lifted outby apart from the large stones which were used to build a retaining wall. The plug had now been worked on for about 32 hours of continuous driving by 44 people over the period, and the activity was relentless, hard, and hot. Our tenacity paid off however, and by 7.00pm that evening the remaining group of Clive, Steve, Warren, Peter, Doug and myself saw the initial breakthrough. The removal of the top drainage pipe by our "little persuader", Warren, allowed us a glimpse into the level proper ... it was standing! Elated, relieved and totally wrecked we made our way back to civilisation, hot baths, food, home comforts, the wife ... oh, yes ... the wife.

The next working party was on Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> and on opening up the level we were horrified to see it flooded to a depth of 4 feet at the portal. It took us a while to realise that the heavy rainfall of three days ago was now filtering through the system and the main outby pipes could not take the excess. This was also aggravated by the fact that the pipes were partially choked with rotten wood ... definitely a job for Dynarod, Glenridding! Despite these adverse conditions the wall was still attacked with vigour and was finally large enough to allow us access together with video camera to record the momentous occasion. Peter, Martin, Doug, Warren and myself all struggled through the hole and landed in the azure blue water, and from the stagnating bottom rose thousands of particles of rotten wood. This was the offending rubbish which was blocking the outby pipes. Ideas for solving the problem were put on hold for the time being, and we moved off, sloshing our way slowly up the level, savouring every moment of this latest adventure. Within a hundred yards or so we were out of the water and the level became virtually dry. Survey marks adorned the walls as the level meandered on. It was cut partly through immensely hard rock, and in these places it was slightly smaller at 6 foot high by 4 foot wide instead of 6 feet 6 inches by 5 feet. There were only two proper side drives, the first one on the left side had lain undisturbed for many years and, following a quartz stringer, it ended after 30 yards. Here, near the forehead were a stone seat and a tallow candle. Further along the level the roof had been supported by dozens of iron girders in the weak section of the clay vein and the void above looked particularly menacing.

All the way along the level recesses had been cut in the walls so the miners could avoid the oncoming loco and its rake of tubs. The second side drive to the right was investigated but this was only 12 yards long to a forehead. Copper staining was spotted in the roof in places but this appeared to be from copper wire or fixtures for the loco cables and would hold no interest for the mineral fraternity. Three dams had been constructed at various stages, one just behind the wall and two higher up in the level. These had obviously been to stem the flow of water while the wall was being built. Past the final dam at 700 yards in, the level was well flooded and here we decided to go forward in pairs. At about 800 yards the level came into a walled and girdered roof with wooden boards between. It was these rotten boards which had given way and here the level was completely down ... but not for long!

The level was cut in 1853 and the hand-drill marks of the initial drive could be clearly seen. There were no artefacts to be found and although the sleepers were still down, all the rail and compressed-air piping had been removed. All the pots for the electric railway had also gone. Walking up the twisting and steadily rising level it was not difficult to imagine the sweat and toil which had been spent in getting the ore. By just the glimmer of a few tallow candles it had taken dozens of men 8 years to gain the distance which we walked in 30 minutes.

The walk back down the level was filled with excitement and talk. We really had expected the level to be down long before it was and now with only a short distance between the fall and Smith's Shaft, a complete breakthrough was a

distinct possibility. First things first though, and the build up of water caused by the wood debris was the priority. There were plenty of suggestions and the simplest and most effective was to use chicken mesh over the inby pipes to prevent the wood passing through the wall. As it collected in the area it would be removed and taken outby. The outby pipes would be rodded, so if anyone saw a Mole walking around with 100 feet of draining rods he was just doing one of those jobs that Moles do.

On Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup> dig No. 10 saw a large turnout of 17 people and the group split up to do different jobs. While some continued chipping at the wall others undertook the search for the main inspection cover for the outlet pipes, which was eventually found after a great deal of excavation. It's amazing how difficult it can be to locate a 4ft X 5ft iron plate under 4 feet of rubble when you only think you know its whereabouts. However, it was found, the pipes were rodded inby and outby and the wood debris contained.

By December 20<sup>th</sup> dig No. 14, all the dams and mini-falls in the level had been removed and it was now a dry walk to the fall. Work continued all through the Christmas holidays clearing the entrance and digging the wall away in preparation for an internal security grill.

The next objective was to secure the level entrance proper. This was to be effected by the use of two three foot diameter concrete pipes and a steel door. Collecting the pipes from a builder in Carlisle and transporting them to Greenside was a doddle. Getting them to the level entrance ... now that was something else! They seemed to have

only one gear ... yes you've guessed ... reverse!!

By dig No. 20 on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the pipes were in position with no real trouble apart from a couple of hernias, a bad back, a groin strain and sore throats from continually yelling "LOOK OUT!!!". Still, we finally got them in situ and no clever dick will get them out again. Within days they were backfilled with 30feet of rubble around them and encased in concrete and boulders. The facial artwork was done by Pete Blezard (MOLES). By dig No. 22 on January 10<sup>th</sup> all the exterior work had been concluded with the fitting of a steel security door to prevent unwanted intruders. A further internal steel grill was also installed.

This project is a credit to MOLES and everyone can share equally in the success. Members unable to attend working meets have contributed by their support of the Society and the success is as much theirs as it is of those Moles who were able to be there.

It goes without Saying that this project would never have got off the ground without the help of the L.D.N.P., and in particular Mr Pete Davies and Mr Andy Lowe. We have even had the ultimate accolade from Mr Roy Harding (local Park Warden) who thinks that we have done a wonderful job and can be justly proud of it.

The total number of work meets was 22 starting at 10.00am and finishing at 5.00pm. Over the weeks the attendance was M.O.L.E.S. – 138, C.A.T.M.H.S. – 48. Others – 3.

Anyone wishing to Lucy Level or Glencoyndale Adit should contact Ian Tyler. Remember there is no vehicular access up to the mine.

Work is still continuing underground, please telephone 0228 561883 or 0228 41255 for details of meets.

*Ian Tyler (He of the groin strain, hernia, bad back, etc.etc.etc.) (He wasn't that good anyway.)*

#### **Editors note**

Since going to press with this article and with Ian Tyler's letter and my response to it, I have looked again at journal V, and re-read the page describing the cover pictures. Under the caption for the frontispiece I wrote:

' ...CATMHS obtained permission to re-open it' (The Lucy Tongue Level). This is incorrect, and as these articles show, the permission was negotiated by Ian Tyler through MOLES.

In talking to some of the individuals who were involved at the time some more information has come to light. It seems that perhaps the full story of the Greenside Dig has not yet been told. It would be nice to fill in all the details, so if anyone else would like to put their point of view I would be pleased to hear from you. Watch this space!!

Please note that opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily agree with those of the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society.

**CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**Committee Meeting held on the Monday 2nd September 2002 at the BMSC Hut, Coniston.**

**Agenda.**

- |    |                          |    |  |
|----|--------------------------|----|--|
| 1  | Apologies for absence    | 2  | Minutes of the last meeting              |
| 3  | Matters arising          | 4  | Secretary's Report inc. NAMHO 04         |
| 5  | Treasurer's Report       | 6  | Membership Secretary's Report            |
| 7  | Meets Secretary's Report | 8  | Newsletter & Journal No. 5               |
| 9  | Other publications       | 10 | Coniston Coppermines                     |
| 11 | Hudgillburn              | 12 | Date and venue of next committee meeting |
| 13 | Any other business       |    |  |

Present: M. Simpson (MS), S. Barker (SB), J. Aird (JA), I. Matheson (IM),  
P. Fleming (PF), M. Mitchell (MM), M. Scott (MSc) & A. Wilson (AW).  
The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm. 8 members in total attended.

**1 Apologies for absence** from: D. Bridge (DB)

**2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 20th May had been previously circulated to members. It was PROPOSED by IM and SECONDED by JA that the minutes be signed by the chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings. This was carried unanimously. The July meeting had been cancelled as most of the committee were on holiday.

**3 Matters arising**

- 3.1 Item 6 SB had sent the revised publication leaflet to Karen Beer.
- 3.2 Item 4.1 JA had studied the details and had voted yes.
- 3.3 Item 9 Pump pipe. M Sc was getting a price for suction pipe.
- 3.4 Item 5 IM wanted the exact wording to be to be put in the NL, this was to be "CATMHS members should only enter active workings with the owners consent". JA would check insurance details regarding non-official CAT meets.
- 3.5 Item 7 MS had contacted several members regarding being co-opted onto the committee, to be discussed at the AGM.
- 3.6 PF had given SB the remaining copies of Journal's 1 2 & 3, No 2 was already sold out. They were to be sold for £5 each.

**4 Secretary's Report.**

The secretary had received:

- 4.1 From English Heritage A CD-ROM of the Step 1 report of the Chemical industry, for the Monuments Protection Programme. JA took this to read and would comment if appropriate.
- 4.2 From LDNPA:
  - 1) Best Value Performance Plan 2002/3.
  - 2) Annual Report 2001/2.
  - 3) Getting it Right, A review of the next NP Management Plan, they would like somebody to attend a workshop on 3 October, the chairman will attend.
- 4.3 NCA 2002 AGM papers and NL. Proposal for Insurance (a Constitutional amendment required), all this is ongoing.
- 4.4 CIHS Bulletin and notice of the October Conference (for CAT library).

4.5 NAMHO and CLIHF newsletter's.

4.6 Jake Almond had given us a collection of documents regarding The Hay Gill Mines, Caldbeck, to be catalogued for the CAT archive.

4.7 Several CAT members attended the NAMHO Event in Aberystwyth, MS took the re-designed display boards, which were well received. The committee would like to thank members who supplied photographs for the display and for the work done in getting it all together. MS and SB had attended the Council Meeting, where it was agreed that CATMHS should host the 2004 Event in the Lake District. A very good weekend with good trips and speakers.

4.8 NAMHO 04' SB had written to John Ruskin School to confirm the NAMHO event date, to be held on 23/25th July 2004. A special meeting to be held in the new year to decide on details.

MS would be contacting Ian Tyler and others to ask for their help with talks and meets.

### **5 Treasurer's Report**

JA presented a balance sheet for the period 17th May to 17th August which included:

The current a/c now stood at £2718.15 and the building society a/c at £4718.94.

Newsletter & Journal No. 5 expenses were £294.57.

Lamberts-final payment for printing Journal No. 5 £1396.50

Replacement Disto £176.25

Income from publications and donations had been £1238.19.

JA PROPOSED "That the society transferred the funds now in the Furness Building Society a/c to a Scottish Widows Treasury Tracker a/c, as it would earn more interest", SECONDED by MM. All were in favour.

### **6 Membership Secretary's Report**

IM reported that due to the increased cost of printing and postage all the membership subscription was now used up on the production of the Newsletter, and various other communications that had to be sent out. After discussion the committee decided to put a motion to the AGM to increase the subscriptions. IM PROPOSED the motion "That the single membership should become £15 and dual membership £20", SECONDED by MS, all were in favour.

Two new members had joined recently.

### **7 Meets Secretary's Report**

The next Meets list was due in November, suggestions were made for meets, these were: Silvergill, Buttermere and Rampgill. IM would need the list to go out with the next NL. SB to contact Jon Knowles.

### **8 Newsletter & Journal No. 5**

IM reported that contributions were needed for the next NL by the end of September. NL costs would go up as he had to replace his printer.

Journal No. 5 had been delivered and was now in the shops, members had received their copies and thanks went to all those who had sent donations. IM would send out review copies. He had received a letter from Ian Tyler regarding the article on Greenside, this would be printed in the newsletter.

The reprinting of the CAT publicity leaflet was discussed, Karen Beer had suggested improvements, IM would contact her about these.

PF expressed the committee's thanks to Ian for his work on Journal No. 5. In return Ian wished to thank Dave Stewart(DS) for his absolutely brilliantly efficient help in the production of the journal.

DS thought it would be a good idea to produce Journals 1, 2 & 3 in one volume to celebrate Cat's 25th birthday, this would be given consideration in the future.

## **9 Other Publications**

Alastair Cameron (ADC) would be willing to revise 'Slate from Coniston, but would like to do it this autumn, as after that time he would be producing another volume of the 'History of Coniston'. All agreed to this suggestion, ADC to be asked to find out the cost. Two of the Trail leaflet's needed to have the walk time and distance added, they could then be reprinted.

MS and DB were progressing with the Paddy End underground survey publication.

## **10 Coniston Coppermines**

The CAT ropes had been removed from Paddy End Mine, and some new ground looked at. The finale pitch on the 'Through Trip' had been re-rigged.

A rope review was needed, The ropes in Mandall's would be examined. Details to be discussed at the next meeting. JA was asked to buy new drill bits.

An email had been received from ADC listing problems regarding the proposed work to clear the collapse in Horse Crag Mine, Tilberthwaite. This project would be shelved at present.

## **11 Hudgillburn Mine**

There have been no meets at Hudgillburn since the last committee meeting, hopefully they will start up again in October.

**11 Date and venue of next Committee Meeting:** 11th November 02 at the BMSC Hut, Coniston.

## **13 Any other business**

13.1 Details of the AGM and annual dinner were discussed, it is to be on 14th December at The Yewdale Hotel, Coniston. Preceded by a walk around the Old Man Quarries, Meet at 10.30 at the Fell Gate. Please remember to bring raffle prizes.

13.2 The Treasurer had been contacted by the Charity Commission who were concerned that we had no equal opportunities clause in our constitution. JA would look into the matter, then contact the Chairman, suggesting a motion which could be put forward at the AGM, to amend the Constitution.

13.3 IM suggested there should be a general discussion at the AGM regarding the frequency, and venue of committee meetings, with a view to encouraging more members to participate, he would put an article in the next NL. It was agreed that this should be done.

13.4 IM asked if we could book the BMSC Hut for accommodation for the 2003 AGM. All agreed.

13.5 PF asked for help with the annual Barrow Mountaineering Club mining meet on the 20th October.

13.6 SB reported that the NORPEX dig in Rampgill was now open. A phenomenal amount of work had been carried out, NORPEX were to be congratulated on their skill and determination over the years.

13.7 Clive Barrow had downloaded information on the Local Heritage Initiative, SB would read it to see if it would be possible for us to apply for funding for our projects.

13.8 PF reminded us that the CAT socials at The Farmers Arms, Lowick would start again next Wednesday.

13.9 MS to buy a copy of Ian Tyler's latest book (Gunpowder Mills of Cumbria) for the CAT library

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9pm.

SB 07/09/02

Chairman

## CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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- |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
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| Mark Scott    | Mark Simpson  | Angela Wilson |
- Honorary Members: Sheila Barker, Peter Fleming,  
John Marshall, Mike Mitchell.