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The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust  
Mining History Society

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No. 85

November 2006

# Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society

## Newsletter No 85, November 2006

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### Cover picture:

Roger Ramsden inspecting the blue cascade in the far reaches of Taylors Level. It was first discovered in March 1982 and featured on the cover of Journal 1. See John Aird’s report of the meet on page 12.

Photo: Mark Simpson

## News

### Membership

It is with sadness that we report that Damien McCurdy has died. Damien, who had been in poor health for a time, was a long time CAT member. From Richard Hewer: He was an enthusiast who was well liked by all his colleagues. My best memory is of the trips we made together with Richard Bird into the mines of Derbyshire. He was amongst the more reliable members of our group and, although we haven't met up for some time, I'll retain these fond memories!

### CAT Library and Archive

John Aird, Ian Matheson, Mark Simpson and Mark Scott recently moved the CAT Library and Archive to the Ruskin Museum at Coniston. We are very grateful to the Armitts for housing it for the last three years.

The Committee have yet to determine the final arrangements for access at the Ruskin. However, CAT members who wish to view or to study our collection should first make an appointment with the Curator, Vicky Slowe, phone 015394 41164. Individuals visiting for the first time will be charged the Museum entrance fee. The Ruskin is a fine museum, well worth a visit for its own sake. Amongst the collections are exhibits on Ruskin, WG Collingwood, Donald Campbell and Bluebird, and a mining and quarrying display to which CAT contributed. Note that, during the winter, the museum is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.

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### Kernal Level Project

All the permissions for this project have now been obtained, and work will start later in the year when the digging

team have finished their work at Nenthead.

### Paddy End Dressing Floors

Following the washout last year that caused damage to some structures and heaps on the Paddy End Dressing Floors, Eleanor Kingston of the LDNPA Archaeology Department said that she would try to get a professional survey done. It was expected that CAT would be involved. The project has now gone out to tender, for a level 3 survey with plans to the scale of 1:500, which would tie in with the 1996 Royal Commission survey of the area. We recently received an enquiry from Greenlane Archaeology Ltd of Ulverston. 'Eleanor Kingston of the Lake District National Park Authority suggested that I contact you regarding a tender we are putting together for archaeological recording of the Paddy End Dressing Floor, Coniston Coppermines. We would appreciate the help of CATMHS during the survey, so as to make the best use of your members' expert knowledge. We would hope that CATMHS would also benefit as they would be able to learn about techniques of archaeological investigation and recording. Ian Matheson met with them on site on Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. Tenders are required by 28<sup>th</sup> September.

### Geo-archaeological study at Levers Water. (Search for lost Elizabethan Level)

An update from Peter Fleming on the information in Newsletter No.84:

The team from UCL, Prof. Phil Meredith, Dr Ruth Siddal, Richard Rabe, Technician and Student Jack Walpole will arrive at the BMSC cottage on Sunday morning 6th August. They will spend the afternoon assessing the problems at the various sites where the apparatus is to be used. No assistance will be required for this.

On Monday they will be setting up the Ground-penetrating Radar and Magnetometer over the known Coffin Level in Red Dell (Cobblers) to calibrate and fine tune the equipment. On Tuesday a similar exercise will be carried out over Hospital Level to determine where it crosses beneath Levers Water Beck.

Wednesday and Thursday transport will be provided to carry the equipment up to Levers Water Dam to undertake the main object of the survey to locate the lost 40 fathom adit level begun in Jan 1617 which took 3½ years to drive. It is believed to be buried under the spoil heaps below Simons Nick. Friday will be kept in reserve in case the weather delays the operation.



Assistance will be required on all of these days to help carry the equipment to the various sites. Eleanor Kingston, the National Park Authority archaeologist may be attending on either Wed or Thurs.

From Mark Simpson:

I felt privileged to see such equipment in action and realise we have been fortunate to have the gear tried out in such an interesting situation. My thanks to all who turned up to help, and we wish Jack every success in his chosen profession.

From Phil Meredith:

I am just writing to thank you and everyone from CAT for the fantastic help and assistance we received during our recent geophysical fieldwork project in Coppermines valley. I am grateful for all the input, from the initial germ of the idea to the donkey-work of carrying equipment round the fells, and everything in between. In particular, we could not have done it without the Land Rover to carry the equipment up to the Levers Water dam.

I would be grateful if you would also express our thanks to everyone else who came along to help. I only have the above e-mail addresses, so I can't contact them directly.

Jack is now busy processing the data, but our first impression is that we have very good features in the same location in both the magnetometer and radar data. Obviously we need to finish the processing before we can be confident about this, but it is very encouraging. Jack has to submit his final project report in March 2007, but I am encouraging him to complete a draft report before the end of 2006. Once I am happy with that I will circulate a copy to you.



In the meantime, Richard is preparing a CD with all the photographs and

video clips we took, together with all the raw geophysical data. Thanks once again, and we will be back in touch when there is more to report.  
Phil Meredith.

### **Newland Furnace Trust – ‘Capping the Furnace’.**

One of the reasons given by ‘Blackett-Ord’ (Consulting Engineers) for the structural problems with the furnace stack was the ingress of rain water via its top, and capping was advised as a solution. For the past year the top has been covered with temporary tarpaulins to shed the water down the flue and the subsequent drying out of the stonework and the wooden beam below has proved the point.

Now that the Charging Floor has been restored to the edge of the furnace consideration was given to how this capping could be done and funded. A meeting earlier this summer with English Heritage agreed in principle to the need, suggested that a survey and photo record should be made of the stack extension foundations, agreed that the water could be drained to a soak away in the wheel pit, and advised us to apply for a ‘Management Agreement’.

The plans were put together quickly in order to meet the English Heritage deadline of August 31<sup>st</sup>, prior to a September meeting. The submission includes a membrane covered with a concrete and slate surface sloped to a buried drain system and piped through the corner of the blowing chamber down the outside wall to the soak away. The application also allows for the survey etc. to be done by Oxford Archaeology North. The membrane, concrete, paving and drain would be done by a local builder with the remainder of the work, rubble removal,

soak away and associated piping, completion of the firebrick lining and safety grill, along with rebuilding the perimeter walls done by Trust members.

We are expecting a reply to this application shortly, and if approved considerable planning will be needed to decide the order of the tasks required, especially as all the work will be out of doors! Our manpower and time are limited and any offers of help with this project would be much appreciated.  
John Helme.

### **The Furness Furnace - Newland (Newland Furnace Open day)**

"I gather the furnace at Newland will be fired on September 9th. When's the best time to come and see it?"

This enquiry came as a result of our publicity about Heritage Open Day and we explained that though the furnace would be open to the public then there was no possibility of a firing as the aim of the last 17 year's work was preservation not restoration.

There is much more to the preparation of an Open Day than would at first appear.

First, the publicity- press, radio, internet, posters, letters and word of mouth to TICs, local groups etc.

Then came the tidying up - the usual clutter of building materials and equipment to be sorted out, weeds to be cleared and dust settled, lighting to be arranged and safety matters considered. A 'risk assessment' study revealed possible dangers, obstructions that could be tripped over, low beams and lintels that might catch the unwary (hard hats to be supplied) and open holes to be taped off.

It took many hours to gather the information for the exhibition, to print and laminate photos, documents etc. and attach them to the borrowed display stands. Tables were erected and artefacts positioned to explain 145 years of the furnace's working life and the toil of more recent times to ensure that the neglected remains don't disappear altogether.

Eventually all was ready and on the appointed Saturday over 90 visitors arrived throughout the day in the quiet hamlet of Newland just off the A590 near Ulverston. In the charging house they studied the display and then were led in groups along the valley to view the remains of the leat, the rolling mill and blacking mill, now still and deserted, but formerly the centre of busy industry. Back in the charcoal furnace they learned how once this had played an important part in the iron industry of Furness and its economic development.

The time devoted by the band of volunteers to the Open Day preparations might have been used to repair more walls and further stabilise the structure but it's not just the preservation of the building that they are aiming for but the educational aspect too, for 'History Matters', as the logo of the Civic Trust and English Heritage points out. The significance of this becomes obvious when grants are applied for.

Judging from the comments in the visitors' book the lack of flames was not a disappointment. There were many compliments about the results of the hard work, the interest of the exhibition and the knowledge that the guides had shared. Thanks and donations were most welcome and there's even the possibility of further offers of assistance which would be

especially appreciated by the small team of voluntary workers who suffer more and more from tired legs and aching backs!

Remarks such as "fascinating", "we never knew it existed" and "I had no idea it was here, even though I'm a local" were most encouraging.

Enthusiasm was fired, even if the furnace wasn't!

Joan Helme.

### **English Heritage grant to conserve Backbarrow Furnace.**

From a report in the Westmorland Gazette, 29.9.06:

Part of Backbarrow Furnace is being developed into a £9 million business and residential area, which will include nearly 18,000 square feet of office space. As part of the planning consent the blast furnace must be restored and people allowed access to visit it.

English Heritage has now pledged a substantial grant of £150,000 towards the restoration of the furnace stack, charging house and engine house. Repair work should start in the next few months and will include re-pointing of the buildings and making sure they are safe for people to visit. It is hoped the site will become an important feature on the tourist trail for the area. There will be boards explaining the importance of the furnace.

### **Civil Engineering at Coniston**

There is a lot of heavy earthmoving work going on in Coppermines Valley at Coniston. There are two projects being carried out simultaneously.

United Utilities are extending the water treatment plant that was built at Paddy End. They have established a base at the foot of the Coppermines track and have fenced off an area north and east

of the present treatment plant. I understand that the work has been monitored by an archaeologist in case any historical remains be uncovered .

The second project is the re-installation of a hydro electric plant in Church Beck. Some four years ago Coniston Parish Council obtained planning consent for this, but nothing has happened until now. When I returned from holiday I found an email from Dave Sewart which concluded with the remark 'I may visit Coniston when George Tarr commissions the turbine' A bit puzzled by this I asked him to explain:

'I may get some bits wrong. Before the First World War there was a pelton wheel with the intake just above Miner's Bridge & the outfall somewhere near the Copperhouse Later the intake was extended to the currently obvious one higher up the beck. That was all swept away (I think between the wars) and a Francis turbine put in a new turbine hall lower down the beck. Around the 50s-60s that was scrapped as the grid had reached Coniston & that electricity worked out cheaper.

Now the emphasis is on 'green' power so George Tarr is well under way reinstating it with a Gilbert Gilks pelton wheel. His 'third' turbine hall is even further down the beck adjacent to the stream which comes under the old railway bridge. The hall foundations are presumably in by now but red tape & inefficient faulty bureaucracy keeps delaying matters (like the footpath needs to be closed for health & safety while the new pipeline is laid). When finished it should generate up to around a third of a megga watt. It could be generating by November.

I know that years ago the government

put a tax on using 'their' water, & this made many of these small units unprofitable. Now of course they want them back, but the pipelines often cross numerous people's land making negotiations tedious & reinstatement difficult. Governments can usually be relied on to produce the best short-sighted

decisions.  
Dave Sewart.



*Construction of the new dam at the top of Church Beck Gorge.*

### **Rosyth Slate Mine**

Reported by Celia Hancock

Another large crater on the surface has recently been observed. The original surface crater is now rather deeper and there is another large deep one to its east. They are both to the north of the west twll and extend toward the buildings on floor 2.

The long term future survival of these buildings must be in doubt. Underground, the original fall does not appear to have extended any lower down the 5-9 incline so the deepening of the original crater seems to be due to settling. The new fall has pretty well filled the chambers behind the compressor rooms beyond Oxford Circus, B and C east. It all looks very nasty.

At Conglog the adit on B has been partially dug out. The deepest water is

now only knee deep The artifacts still remain in B6 but the little winch that used to be in B1 has disappeared - a souvenir no doubt.

### **NAMHO News: Cwmystwyth Mine**

The Crown Estate are in the process of carrying out safety works at Cwmystwyth Mine, Ceredigion. After the works are complete, the WMPT is hoping to meet with the Crown and its agents, to discuss its involvement in the future management of the mine, and possible access agreement. Would member organisations please note our possible involvement with the future of this site, and please refrain from visits, until negotiations have taken place. Once talks have taken place with the Crown Estate, the Trust will advise NAMHO of arrangements that have been made. Thank You for your co-operation in this matter. G Levins, Secretary, Welsh Mines Preservation Trust, [graham.levins@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.levins@btinternet.com)

### **NAMHO Conference 2007**

The 2007 NAMHO conference is being hosted by Tamar Mining Group in association with Plymouth Caving Group and other local NAMHO member organisations and will take place over the weekend of 15th - 17th June 2007.

Morwellham Quay, on the banks of the River Tamar, once at the centre of the greatest mining enterprise in Queen Victoria's empire, will provide the backdrop for the conference. John Taylor learned his trade in the district and few British mining fields can claim such a rich and diverse metalliferous mining heritage - the area has a well documented mining history dating back to the 1290s.

The Tamar Valley is an area with vast potential for conference field trips. Above ground highlights include John Taylor's Tavistock Canal,

Morwellham Quay and the well preserved remains of the arsenic industry.

Below ground, an embarrassment of riches includes trips as diverse as a sedate tram ride through the George and Charlotte Copper Mine (a popular tourist attraction locally) to the vertigo inducing vertical pitches of Devon Great Consols which boasts among its highlights, stoping of biblical proportions and some of the finest accessible mine timbering in the UK.

The importance of the Tamar Valley has been internationally recognised with its inclusion in the UNESCO Cornish Mines World Heritage Site bid.

Mining aside, the Tamar Valley is one of the most beautiful and unspoiled corners of Britain and is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB (despite mans best efforts to the contrary!) and, if that is not enough, we have some jolly good beer and local farmhouse cider!

### **World Heritage status awarded to West Country tin mines.**

After a submission by Tessa Jowell, the Culture Secretary, the decision was taken in July by the World Heritage Committee meeting at Vilnius, Lithuania, to add the mining landscape of Cornwall and West Devon to the list of Britain's 26 existing sites.

The site proposed includes the remains of deep mining from 1700 to 1914 in 10 areas: St Just, Hayle, Tregonning, Wendron, Camborne-Redruth, Gwenapp, St Agness, Luxulan-Charlestown, Caradon and the Tamar Valley, and Tavistock. The area was the world's greatest producer of tin and copper in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This status recognises that the cultural identity of Cornwall and West Devon was transformed by mining during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Mandall's Office -continued

Our concern for the future of Mandall's Slate Office on the Coniston Station site in view of the intentions of the LDNPA to develop the site for housing, was reported in Newsletter 83. The CATMHS Committee felt that we should try to get the office building listed in order to forestall any possibility that it could be demolished. The building relates to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century slate industry, but the cobbled pony track beside it is believed to be much earlier.

When it became clear that once the stabilization of the cliff face was completed the LDNPA were only interested in disposing of the whole site, the Committee believed that they should discover the attitude of the LDNPA to the proposed attempt to list Mandall's office. The following exchange of e-mails took place: -

*Dear Ms Moss*

*I would be grateful if you could advise*

*Me what the LDNPA position would be if CATMHS applied to have Mandall's listed as being of historical and architectural interest.*

*John R Aird*

*Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society*

*Dear Mr. Aird*

*Our Building Conservation Adviser Andrew Lowe visited the site and provided his report to me on 20 April. I have only just found time to consider his comments and let you have my view on behalf of the Authority as owner of the site.*

*Andrew's view was that the building has some historical*

*interest, but is of more local interest than national significance. From an architectural point of view he similarly feels it has no features of special importance, and is really of local rather than national architectural merit. In his opinion the building is not worthy of recommending to English Heritage that it be considered for listing. It does not possess sufficient special architectural or historic interest. It has now lost all it's original context. For these reasons I am afraid I could not recommend the Authority to support any application you might wish to make to have the building listed.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Bob Cartwright*

*Director of Park Services*

*Lake District National Park Authority*



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Mr John R Aird  
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W5 2SG

Our Ref: 162490  
Direct Line: 0207 973 3374  
Fax: 0207 973 3111

22 September 2006

Dear Mr Aird,

Mandall's Office, OLD STATION SITE, CONISTON, SOUTH LAKELAND, CUMBRIA

Thank you for your letter dated 25-APR-2006 asking for the above building to be listed.

Your application has been forwarded to our territorial team and they will now begin their assessment of the building and will be compiling their advice to the Secretary of State.

If you know the contact details for the owner of the above building, and have not already provided us with this information, we would be grateful if you could do so. Please contact the Territory Co-ordinator on the number below.

We will contact you again in due course to advise you of the Secretary of State's decision. However, in the meantime, should you wish to track the progress of your application then please contact Ms Amos, Territory Co-ordinator on 01904 601873 quoting our ref 162490.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

*Danielle Devlin*

Ms Danielle Devlin  
Operations Co-ordinator,  
1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you provide, including personal details, and any information obtained from other sources will be retained by English Heritage, in hard copy form and/or on computer for administrative purposes and future consideration, where applicable. English Heritage will not release personal information to a third party if its disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in the Data Protection Act 1998

Whilst fully understanding the LDNPA's financial difficulties and that having the building listed may make disposal of the site less easy Mr. Cartwright's suggestion seems to be that, provided enough of any given site has been destroyed, then there is no point in preserving anything that remains. The Committee strongly dissents from this view believing the office and path complement each other perfectly and even if modern housing is constructed around them are still worthy of preservation. We were grateful to receive the above letter from English Heritage confirming that they are investigating the site's worth and have not just dismissed the application out of hand.

On 19<sup>th</sup> October English Heritage inspector Ken Robinson met with Ian Matheson at the site in order to consider its suitability for listing. He spent half an hour there, taking photographs inside and out. He will report to EH at York, where the decision will be made. This will be sent on to the relevant government department by 21<sup>st</sup> November for confirmation. The decision remains confidential until then, but we should know within 2/3 months.

### **Archaeology on the Lake District 2006 – Conference**

#### **Programme**

9.45 am - Introduction

David Thornton, Chairman, Lake District National Park Authority

9.50 am - Archaeology in the Lake District National Park 2005-6  
John Hodgson and Eleanor Kingston, Lake District National Park Authority

10.10 am - New Research at Muncaster Castle

Adam Menuge and Simon Taylor, English Heritage

10.55 am - Questions and Discussion

#### **11.00 am – Coffee**

11.30 am -The National Trust's recent archaeological work and projects in the Lake District National Park

Jamie Lund, Archaeologist, National Trust

11.50 am - In the Footsteps of Mary Fair: Investigating the Archaeology of Lower Eskdale

Alan Vicars, Eskdale and District Local History Society and Jamie Quartermaine, Oxford Archaeology North

12.10 pm - Medieval Lakeland: a landscape historian reflects  
Dr Angus Winchester, Lancaster University

12.55 pm - Questions and Discussion

#### **1 pm – Lunch**

1.45 pm - Ring Cairns to Reservoirs: the Archaeology of the Duddon Valley  
John Hoggett, Duddon Valley Local History Group and John Hodgson, LDNPA

2 pm -Excavations on High Street Roman Road

Daniel Elsworth, Greenlane Archaeology Ltd

2.15 pm - A Career in Conservation: Historic Environment Work in the Lake District National Park 1975 - 2006

Andy Lowe, Built Environment Conservation Adviser, LDNPA

2.55 pm- Questions and Discussion

#### **3pm - Tea**

#### **3.30 pm – Finish**

#### **Tickets**

£9 with tea and coffee or £13 with tea, coffee and lunch

Please book before Monday 13 November 2006. LDNPA, phone 01539 724555.

## Standard Meet Controls:

**Access Control** – Care to be taken to leave the entrance to the mine as found. Consider the likelihood that children or other visitors may enter the mine if the entrance is left open. Use any entry control established for the mine.

## Personal Clothing and Equipment

The following is intended to be a guide. Please discuss the trip with the meet leader. If in doubt, bring it, you can always leave it in the car. With clothing, multiple layers are preferred and spare warm clothing recommended

Grade of Trip	Clothing - Mandatory	Clothing - Recommended	Equipment - Mandatory	Equipment - Recommended
Easy - Surface	Warm and waterproof mountain gear, rucksack and walking boots.			Whistle. Map.
Easy - Underground	Depending on the mine either warm clothing and a boiler suit, or an undersuit and oversuit, or cagoule and waterproof trousers. Stout boots.	Gloves. Steel toe cap and mid-sole boots/wellingtons. Knee pads.	Helmet complete with chin strap and helmet mounted lamp giving at least 8 hours duration. Battery belt. Food. Drink.	Back up lighting which can be helmet mounted – this is mandatory for small groups. First aid kit.
Difficult	Depending on the mine either warm clothing and a boiler suit or an undersuit and oversuit. Stout boots.	As easy.	Back up lighting which can be helmet mounted. Climbing/Caving helmet (not industrial/site helmet). Sit harness. Chest strap. Descender. Ascender x 2. Cows tails. 4 Karrabiners. Whistle. Spanner.	Hammer. Tackle sack and lanyard.
Severe	An undersuit and oversuit. Gloves. Steel toe cap and mid-sole boots/wellingtons. Knee pads.		As difficult plus tackle sack and lanyard.	Slings. Knife.
Exploratory	As severe.		As severe.	As severe. Discuss with the meet leader. This could anything from an inflatable boat or a wetsuit to timber or drills.

**First Aid** – First aid kits to be available on all club meets.

**Animals / Pets** – Animals and pets are not permitted except dogs on surface walks.

### **Guidance**

The following texts provide guidance on most issues associated with the techniques for underground exploration:-

1. SRT a Training Manual by Dave Elliott. A clear and straightforward basic introduction.
2. Vertical by Alan Warild. A book on advanced SRT techniques with special emphasis on light weight vertical rigging, some aspects of which are clearly not applicable to mine exploration.
3. Alpine Caving Techniques by Georges Marbach and Bernard Tourte. The definitive French text recently translated into English. Covers almost everything you will ever need for all aspects of exploration.

Jon Knowles  
Meets Secretary.

### **Ellesmere Port Boat Museum**

Dear Sir,

Thank you for writing an excellent report on the Boat Museum visit, but I think I should correct the suggestion that my great uncle Tom owned the woodworking shop, now a conference centre. He worked there until about 1960, for the Shropshire Union Canal Company and then for the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

Sandbaches lived at 2 Porter's Row from about 1850 until it was demolished, but it was always rented from the canal company.

Yours Sincerely,  
P Sandbach

### **A note from the Treasurer**

Assuming that the Accounts for 2005-06 are approved by the Committee at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November, they should be displayed on the website shortly thereafter so members may view them before the AGM.

John R Aird  
Treasurer

### **Meets:**

#### **Carkettle, 9<sup>th</sup> August**

Present: A Westall, P Flemming, A Bryson, D Cutmore, P Sandbach (ML) and dog.

From Lindal Green we took the old turnpike road, pausing to look over the gate at Backguards pit in the vicarage field. Past the entrance to Duerden's abattoir, there is a footpath leading up to Pylon Pot, or West Pit, as it was. Pylon Pot is still there, looking deep and dangerous with mature trees rooted 30ft down the shaft. The level known only as HV3 was still there, but the rest of the field had been transformed. Three years ago, this field was typical of the area, with small subsidances and piles of spoil in no discernible pattern, all covered in scrub and brambles. It is now 50 acres of pleasant parkland with nothing to break the teeth of a forage harvester.

My opinion is that this is as it should be, that land supposedly permanently destroyed by mining should be restored to its original state. There are stories told of shots fired in Whitriggs that brought down turnips instead of ore, now turnips could be grown again.

But that I think is unimportant because changes like this are happening continually from Pennington to Roanhead. Like it or not, in 20 years time the only traces of hematite mining in Furness will be a few fishing ponds and a very few mine buildings that have found a modern use. So I would urge anyone interested in the history of the area to walk the lanes and footpaths now, with a camera in one pocket and an 1880 OS map in the other.

The footpath comes out behind Belle Hill cottages and we paused to look at two old pits nearby before following the track to Pit Lane, and then up the hill to Snipe Ghyll. Opposite Snipe Ghyll cottages is Poaka open works. The deposit marks the northernmost point of the main vein. It was discovered by Joseph Rawlinson in 1870. He sold his mines in 1873 to the Furness Iron & Steel Co., which went bankrupt in 1879. It was reopened by the Askham & Mouzel Co. in 1882.

Above the cottages is Wagg Reservoir, nearly dry, and just below the dam you can still see a pile of rubble, about the size of two houses. It was Roper's Row, containing 20 cottages housing 105 workers.

Carkettle Lane leads straight down to Whinfield. The view from the top was one reason for coming this way, but there was no view tonight. The weather was overcast, windy and threatening. We stopped at Carkettle pit, another of Joseph Rawlinson's ventures. Poaka and Carkettle were both furnished with inclined planes to connect the mine to the Askham and Mouzel tramway. We found the ore bunker where the ore was tipped into the narrow gauge wagons and the engine bed, but did not stop to look for the site of the shaft in the failing light.

Further down the track, we passed another mine just off the Main Vein. As far as I know, it has no name or any recorded history.

From Whinfield we turned up the road as far as the cottages that were Harrison Ainslie's mine office, then crossed a field back to Pit Lane. Derek Cutmore provided tea at his house.

Peter Sandbach.

References:

A Mc Fazdean, The Iron Moor  
Articles by Roy Mason on the Lindal & Marton website.

## **Red Dell Stopes, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2006.**

Peter Fleming (ML) John Aird, Mark Waite, Roger Ramsden and Mark Simpson

This was a meet where all the rules were broken, the meet leader overruled from the word go, his knowledge and wisdom ignored. The net result was that the Chairman, who did the "dissing" suffered not at all while this report writer was forced to take considerable unnecessary exercise!

The ML's plan to enter Flemings Level was dismissed out of hand as being "far too wet". (The ML had brought his wetsuit, no-one else had). Descent through the stopes was the option chosen. The Chairman accepted the Meet Leader's choice of descent point, but the ML's memory of what lay below was not very good (not entirely surprising since his last recorded visit was in NL 46 1996). The author was told to get on with the drilling and rigging and did so, to such good effect that he found himself dangling in midair above the stemples installed in 1991. Penduling across and seizing the last one of these in an attempt to get back onto solid ground, he was not pleased when it came away and fell noisily down to Deep Level. Luckily the traverse line fitted in 1994 was in better condition. The Chairman followed, avoiding the dangling by wedging himself in a narrow opening above the large block on which he swore he had instructed the writer to land. Ensnared he issued instructions that the writer should rig the 35m rope and descend straight down to Taylor's Level. Approximately 32m down the said rope he landed on a rock pinnacle, with a short blind level to his right and very considerable vertical descent to his left. Calling for more rope he was told, "You've gone the wrong way. Come back". Some time later and pleasantly warmed from the exertion he was back where he started, to find Mark Waite waiting to point out the ML had remembered that you went on up the pile and then down the slope on the other side down to where the intact Taylor's level passed the New Engine Shaft.



*Lunch by the New Engine Shaft*

From here on the ML and Chairman's memories seemed to improve quite well and good progress was made on to Triddle shaft visiting the Blue Pool en route.



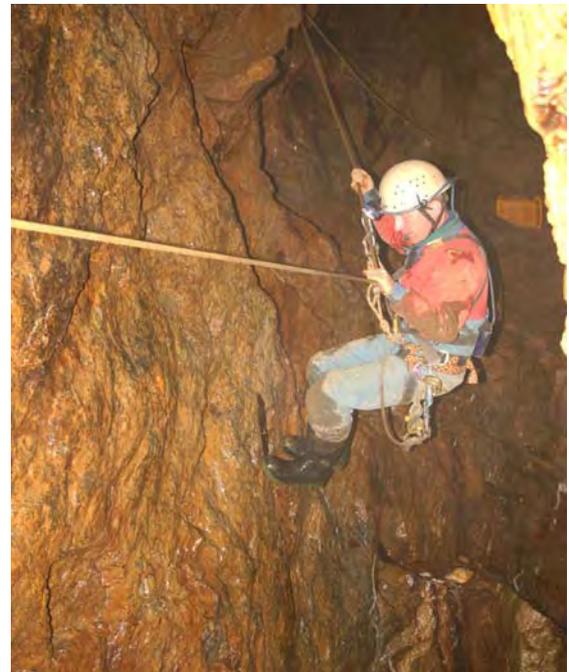
*Peter Fleming at the Blue Pool*

Having declined numerous suggestions from the ML that we climb ladder ways using fixed ropes that had been in place for at least ten years, a traverse rope was found to be in place. In a 180-degree reversal of position Mark and the writer firmly declared that both rope and anchors were in excellent condition and invited the Chairman to cross first. Having watched him display both agility and ability we were all forced to follow.

As we approached inner end of Taylor's level we were reminded of the splendid sight we were about see; the "Blue Cascade" as depicted on the cover of Journal 1. However it was found there had been a small fall and

beyond it the water was well above thigh level, possibly at waist level and the ML couldn't quite remember how far it was to go.

The ML said he'd seen the Cascade in its original pristine form and since he hadn't got



*Mark Waite crossing Triddle Shaft*

his wet suit on he wouldn't bother. The Chairman just said he wasn't going to get wet, and Roger announced that he hadn't brought his camera so there was no point. Hero Waite complete with camera plunged in and was gone for some time. Returning he pointed out to the author that he would miss a truly amazing sight if he did not do likewise, and he was totally correct. The return to surface was conducted much more in the approved CATMHS manner.

Mark Simpson and Roger Ramsden returned some days later, which allowed Mark to take the photographs of the minerals; he also took all the other illustrations.

My thanks are due to the ML and the Chairman for the splendid guidance they gave, to Roger for de-rigging and to Mark for preventing me missing a truly remarkable underground area and bringing the drill out.

John R Aird

**Coniston Slate, 22<sup>nd</sup> October.**

ML Ian Matheson, Mark Simpson, Mark Scott, Mike Mitchell, Clive Barrow, Alastair Cameron, Maureen Fleming.

Alastair Cameron asked if CAT would assist the Coniston Local History Initiative in their survey of the slate workings on Coniston Old Man. We agreed to carry out a GPS and photographic survey of the old Spion Kop aerial flight. Constructed in 1902 this was the first of the aerial ropeways serving the Coniston Slate quarries and descended from Spion Kop Quarry to a loading platform and tramway just above the slate track leading north from the Walna Scar fell gate.



*Comparing GPS's prior to the start!*

We were fortunate with the weather. Saturday was a washout, and Sunday was forecast to do the same. However the mist cleared and the rain stopped shortly after we arrived, so we had a window of fair weather. Alastair and Maureen went off to do their own thing and the rest of us struggled up the exceedingly steep fellside. The cable was supported by wooden pylons on stone bases, and most of these remain, as does the cable and various artefacts. We photographed each one and plotted a ten figure OS grid reference, using GPS



*Pylon No 8, looking down the flight.*

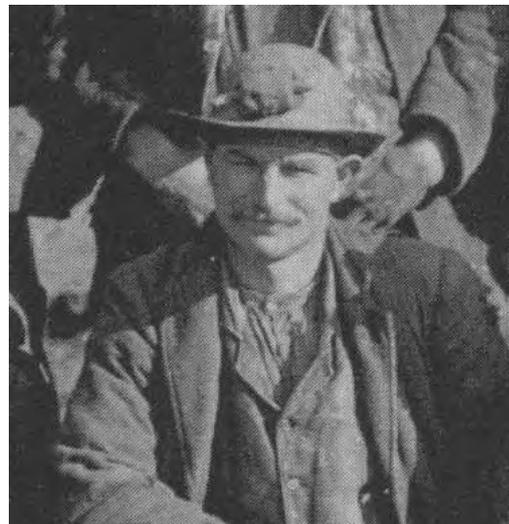


*Pylon No 7. The wooden pylon has slipped off its base, but is still supported by its braces.*

**Robert Fell**

1875-1938

Miner, Quarryman and Farmer



Here we have a shot of Robert, taken from a group photo of miners at Hodbarrow around 1900. His headgear, a hard felt hat is complete with ball of clay through which is stuck a candle. By this time Hodbarrow, which was unquestionably John Barrett's (of Coniston Copper mines) greatest investment success, had settled to producing merely double-digit percentage returns year on year for the investors, down from the occasional 100% plus returns of previous years and still had another sixty years of life ahead.

The above photograph is reproduced by kind permission of John Marsh from "The Lake Counties at Work" ISBN 0-7509-0888-2

William Bickford

## Les Forges de Varennes

Last year whilst on holiday in Normandy I came across some remains of an ancient iron industry, but at the time I was unable to investigate. This summer I went back for another look.

The iron industry of the Orne region of Normandy seems to have developed in parallel to that of Furness in England. In the middle ages there were small open cast iron mines. Many small forges with water wheels were first established on small lakes and were first recorded in a census of 1357. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century a decisive step forward was made by using hydraulic energy to work the bellows.

In the sixteenth century a number of water powered forges were in existence and in 1750 a blast furnace similar to that at Newland was in operation at Varenne. In the middle of the 19th century the artisanal forging mills disappeared little by little to make way at the beginning of the 20th century with industrial centres. Those disappeared in their turn from the year 1960; the last mine ceased its activity in 1989.



*These two buildings are the survivors of a battery of 8 furnaces built in 1901, which were the first calcination kilns established in a mining site of Basse-Normandie.*

Thirty years after the end of the extractive industry, a circuit has been

created, Le Circuit de Fer, a walk of about 12 kilometers, to explore the vestiges of the old and modern exploitation of iron ore in the area. The principal sites worth visiting each have an information panel which make it possible to revive the history of a past which is not so remote.



*Calcination kilns built in 1935 to replace those of the Red Hillock. They began operation in 1938, at the same time as the Central Well (shaft) of Pralon, 1500 meters away. They were connected to the shaft by a bucket ropeway which was replaced in 1958 by a conveyor belt two kilometers in length.*

To house the mining personnel, mining cities were built, still very identifiable in the landscape; 160 houses were built in the 1920's. A school and a playground for the children supplemented this unit, as well as a swimming pool and village hall. A hostel with 16 rooms was built to place the single people. Today it is an inn, l'Auberge de

la Mine. In 1960, the mine employed 430 workmen and employees, 183 were placed in the working cities, 62 in the hamlets. The remainder of the personnel lived the surrounding communes. The company placed 193 families free, the others received a housing allowance.

A few kilometres away, at Champsecret, is the the Forges de Varenne, designated as a historic monument, which operated from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The site still conserves most of the layout: the blast



furnace, the forges, the charcoal barn, the fendery and the miners chapel. The first written mention is an acte notarié of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1586, but the neighbouring forge at Halouze was created in 1530.



*Moulded objects, fire backs, cooking pots etc. were produced.*



*Finery: The cast iron was transformed to wrought iron in the three forges. The 16<sup>th</sup> century chimneys of the forges are remarkable in Europe.*



*Fenderie: This rolling mill was recorded in an inventory of 1614. It is the only 16<sup>th</sup> century fendery in Europe with two reverbatory furnaces*

The entire complex, though buried in the forest, is intact, including the system of leats and ponds drawn from the river Varenne. In summer one can get a three hour guided tour.(in French) The complex closed down, I think, in 1895. Apart from a century of disuse, the only changes are that a chateau was then built nearby, and more recently the charcoal barn has been converted to residential accommodation.

If you find yourself in the area, which is closer to London than Barrow in Furness, it's well worth spending a couple of days exploring.  
Ian Matheson.

## CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

Committee Meeting held on the Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 at the BMSC Hut at Coniston, starting at 6.30pm.

### Agenda.

- |    |                         |    |                                     |
|----|-------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | Apologies for absence   | 2  | Minutes of the last meeting         |
| 3  | Matters arising         | 4  | Secretary's Report                  |
| 5  | Treasurer's Report      | 6  | Membership Sec. & Newsletter Report |
| 7  | Meet Secretary's Report | 8  | Publications                        |
| 9  | Library                 | 10 | Coniston Coppermines                |
| 11 | Hudgillburn             | 12 | Mines Forum meeting                 |
| 13 | CATMHS website          | 14 | Date and venue next meeting         |
| 15 | Any other business      |    |                                     |

**Present** M. Simpson (MS), S. Barker (SB), I. Matheson (IM), P. Fleming (PF), M. Mitchell (MM), M. Scott (MSc) & A. Wilson (AW).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm. 7 committee members attended.

**1 Apologies for absence from:** J. Aird (JA), D. Bridge (DB), & J. Brown (JB).

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 15<sup>h</sup> May had been previously circulated to members.

It was **PROPOSED** by IM and **SECONDED** by PF that the minutes be signed by the chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings. This was carried unanimously.

### **3 Matters arising**

3.1 Item 12 MM still had to see Mark Weir re aerial photographs. PF had made preliminary enquiries at Walney Flying School. A price of £80/90 was quoted; PF would contact them again for further details.

3.2 Item 3.2-Mandall's-JA had received a reply from English Heritage refusing our request for Mandall's to become a scheduled ancient monument.

3.3 Item 3.2 D. Borthwick had bought The Life and Times of 'Charles Roe' and Ian Tyler's 'Goldscope' –SB would store the books until we move the contents of our archive.

### **4 Secretary's Report**

Received since last meeting:

4.1 LDNPA–Nil

4.2 NAMHO–SB had attended the NAMHO Conference and Council Meeting. The new NAMHO guidebook had been produced and SB would put a copy in the CAT archive.

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

JA had sent his apologies, as he was unable to attend. He had circulated the balance sheet to committee members, covering the period from 15<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> July. Most significant income was from donations and publications. Thanks to JB for donation of materials for the conservation of Hospital Level.

The current a/c stood at 1693.97 and the Scottish Widow a/c at 13500.00.

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

IM reported we have two new members and that he would be sending the next newsletter out on Monday.

### **7 Meets Report**

We had received an email from Jon Knowles:

A) He had received only two offers to lead meets; four more were suggested. The number of meets required in a year was discussed; most thought we should concentrate on projects, as very few members attended meets. PF thought we should continue as we were; to be discussed with the Meets Secretary. It was thought we should put more details regarding the aims and objectives of the meets in the NL and on the meets list.

B) JK still thinks the RA documents are too complicated for ordinary meets. MM said the new documentation was mostly for work meets and a simpler form could be used on mine visits by members. To be discussed with appropriate members.

Member Dick Quirk had put an article in the Evening Mail informing readers that the model of Rita Pit was now on display in the church at Lindal. It was suggested that we should arrange a visit for CAT to go and see the model.

**8 Publications**

It was agreed that PF would ask the Coniston TIC if they would stock our Coniston leaflets. We will update our leaflets in time for next spring, as they play an important role in the interpretation of the Coniston mines.

**9 Library**

SB had written accepting the John Ruskin Museum kind offer to house the CAT archive. IM and MS had fitted the extra shelving requested. Arrangements to be made to move the contents at the end of September. SB to write to the Armit Library thanking them for looking after our books etc.

**10 Coniston Coppermines**

We had received written SMR consent for the reopening of Kernal Level. MS read out the conditions of the consent that we have agreed to adhere too. Preliminary surveying could commence at an early date.

The water company had obtained planning permission to extend the Paddy End water treatment works. The archaeological watching brief contract is to be carried out by the North Pennine Archaeology Co. Ltd. (A subsidiary company of the NPHT). We are hoping to use their data to complete a survey of the area.

Phil Meredith is expected on 5/11 Aug. for the GPR survey, when help will be required taking equipment up to Levers Water. MM is looking into hiring a suitable vehicle. The LDNPA are still hoping that consolidation work will be done to repair the flood damage to Paddy End dressing floor.

Conservation work at Hospital Level had been completed, the committee expressed their thanks for the excellent work done there.

More clearance work is required at Leverswater Mine – date to be fixed at next meeting.

**11 Hudgillburn Mine**

Nothing to report

**12 Mines Forum meeting**

The minutes of the April meeting had arrived, the next meeting will be 25th August, decision to be made on who will attend.

**13 CAT website**

The website was working well.

**14 Date and venue of next Meeting**

This to be held on 18th September 2006, at the BMSC Hut Coniston at 6.30 pm.

**15 Any Other Business**

MS had been talking to the engineer in charge of work at the Paoka Beck drainage tunnel. He may be able to get access to an old map of the area and explore the tunnel.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

SB 25/07/06

## CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

Committee Meeting held on the Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2006 at the BMSC Hut at Coniston, starting at 6.30pm.

### Agenda.

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Apologies for absence   | 2 Minutes of the last meeting          |
| 3 Matters arising         | 4 Secretary's Report                   |
| 5 Treasurer's Report      | 6 Membership Sec. & Newsletter Reports |
| 7 Meet Secretary's Report | 8 Publications                         |
| 9 Library                 | 10 Coniston Coppermines                |
| 11 Hudgillburn            | 12 Mines Forum meeting                 |
| 13 CATMHS website         | 14 Date and venue next meeting         |
| 15 Any other business     |  |

**Present** M. Simpson (MS), J. Aird (JA), S. Barker (SB), I. Matheson (IM), D. Bridge (DB), J. Brown (JB), P. Fleming (PF), M. Scott (MSc) & A. Wilson (AW).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm. 9 committee members attended.

D. Borthwick attended as an observer.

**1 Apologies for absence from:** M.Mitchell (MM).

### 2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July had been previously circulated to members.

It was **PROPOSED** by MS and **SECONDED** by PF that the minutes be signed by the chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings. This was carried unanimously.

### 3 Matters arising

3.1 Item 3.2 Mandall's - JA had sent a follow up letter to English Heritage for the "Listing" of Mandall's office and also contacted them by phone. They will be 'sifting' through the applications on 14<sup>th</sup> September, so hopefully we will hear from them shortly. Information from Alastair Cameron regarding the situation on a local level, "It is hoped that if the housing project goes forward that Mandall's and the public footpath will remain outside.

3.2 Item 16 MSc reported that work continued at Paoka Beck.

3.3 Item 3.4 JB reported that work had started at Middlecleugh Mine, Nenthead, there had been 4 meets. The first when, P. Blezard and C & A Woollard had transported some of the CAT rails from Kendal and taken them up to the site. The other three had seen the team clear the level down to the sole up to the fall, lay track and repair the collapsed culvert. Method of work and RA forms had been completed. The project to be reported as a separate item at the next meeting.

### 4 Secretary's Report

Received since last meeting:

4.1 LDNPA—received Draft Rights of Way Improvement plan, suggestions required.

4.2 NAMHO—The next NAMHO Council Meeting will be held in November, see NAMHO website for details of 2007 Conference in Devon.

4.3 BCRA – Notice of AGM, Newsletter and Speleology.

### 5 Treasurer's Report

JA had circulated the balance sheet to committee members, covering the period from 17<sup>th</sup> July to 18<sup>th</sup> September. There had been significant income from: donations, publications and interest from the Scottish Widows a/c.

The current a/c stood at 2161.61 (this a/c no longer gains interest) and the Scottish Widow a/c at 14000.00.

### 6 Membership Secretary's Report & Newsletter

IM reported we have 92 paid up members, the next newsletter will go out on 1<sup>st</sup> of November. He requires copy as soon as possible. IM still needs several meet reports for the next newsletter. The sad death of long time member Damian McCurdy was reported and regrets expressed.

### 7 Meets Report

The meets list had been sent out to members. Unfortunately a mention of the Newlands Furnace project was missed off the meets card, but this work continues and helpers would be welcome. MSc offered to lead the Boxing Day meet, meet at the ford in Little Langdale. It was decided that we would clear the portal at Levers Water Mine on the day of the next Committee meeting.

**Risk Assessment Forms** – JB did not agree that they were difficult to fill in and said that they became easier with use. It was decided that we would have a training session in the afternoon before the AGM.

## 8 Publications

PF had asked the Coniston TIC (now privately owned) if they would re-stock our Coniston leaflets, they agreed. We have decided to raise the trade price to 60p, as they now sell them at a higher price. When visiting the Middlecleugh site Ray Fairbairn asked when were we producing our next CAT journal!

## 9 Library

Arrangements have been made to move the contents of the CAT archive on 20<sup>th</sup> September; any help will be gratefully accepted, meet at 9.30 at the Armitt. JA had repaired the map chest (he asked permission to re-claim his expenses-£37.36) and MS & IM had put up the required shelving at JRM.

## 10 Coniston Coppermine

Work at the Paddy End water treatment works is progressing. The LDNPA Archaeology dept. are to send out tenders for a more complete a survey of the area.

The team from UCL, Prof. Phil Meredith, Dr Ruth Siddal, Richard Rabe, Technician and student Jack Walpole arrived at the BMSC cottage on Sunday 6th August for the GPR survey. They spent the afternoon assessing the problems at the various sites where the apparatus was to be used. Sequel of events: **Monday:** Trials across tunnels by Youth Hostel and ground above Courtneys Xcut and Hospital Level. **Tuesday:** Trial by shore of Levers Water. **Wednesday:** below Simons Nick. **Thursday:** above Simons Nick. PF spoke to Phil who was hopeful that after analysis there will be an interesting result. They also took a water sample from the beck in the area of the white stones, to solve the puzzle of why they are that colour.

A maintenance work meet is to be arranged at Mandall's, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> November, contact JA.

IM had been talking to George Tarr regarding the turbine being erected in Church Beck, it is on the site of the earlier turbine and will be completed by the end of the year.

## 11 Hudgillburn Mine

Member Stephen Moreton had contacted SB asking for the details of the mineral right owner, which were supplied.

## 12 Mines Forum meeting

The meeting was attended for CAT by DB & SB (see separate notes), the next meeting will be 10th November, at Blencathra, decision to be made on who will attend.

## 13 CAT website

The website was working well, but still needs more information from members.

## 14 Date and venue of next Meeting

This to be held on 20th November 2006, at the BMSC Hut Coniston at 6.30 pm.

## 15 Any Other Business

15.1 IM would send the AGM papers out with the next newsletter.

15.2 IM had attended the annual open day at Newlands Furnace, which was well attended. They were shown around to see all the latest work, with the charcoal barn and the blowing house restored the site looked very impressive. Possibly the final project will be to cap and consolidate the furnace stack. The group are to be congratulated on the sterling work over the years.

15.3 PF was contacted some time ago by Doug Brown of Stockport, who had found a polished stone axe 3m from the portal the coffin level in Roughton Ghyll. It was in very good condition and PF thinks it is a Langdale stone axe.

15.4 JB reminded the committee that we still had to replace the safety line/chain in Hospital Level–action JA.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

SB 19/09/06

# CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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