

C A T

The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust
Mining History Society



Conservation work at Middlecleugh mine

No. 86
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February

Do you know where this is? Can you identify the mine? What was its history?



This photograph was sent by Richard Quirk. He says “It’s a photo my Uncle had, and I don’t have a clue where it is. There seems to be quite a lot of mineral lines and I think you can make out Hoad Monument in the distance, so somewhere between Lindal and Ulverston.” I’ll print any information you send me in the next Newsletter.

Cover picture:

Tramming waste from the portal of Middlecleugh high Level. See John Brown’s article on page 12.

Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society Newsletter No 86, February 2007

Contents:

Furness photograph – Can you identify this mine?	Inside front cover
Membership	Page 2
AGM reports	
Chairman	Page 2
Secretary	Page 4
Treasurer	Page 4
Membership Secretary	Page 4
News	
CATMHS Journal Number Seven	Page 5
Library & Archive	Page 5
Mandall's Office.	Page 6
Florence Mine to close	Page 6
A New Cave Discovery	Page 7
Wanlockhead Miner's Library In Danger	Page 7
Coniston Geophysics Project	Page 7
Archaeology in the Lake District, 2006 Conference	Page 8
Meets	
Gunnerside Gill Meet Sunday 18 th June 2006	Page 12
Force Crag, 19 th November	Page 15
Before & After; Hospital Level and Levers Water Mines	Page 16
Boxing Day Meet, December 26 th	Page 17
Croesor Weekend 22 nd & 23 rd April	Page 20
Articles	
The Middlecleugh Project	Page 22
Mobilemapper and Mapping the Mining Landscape	Page 32
Minutes	
CAT minutes, 20 th November 2006	Page 37
Advertisement	Inside back cover
Society Officers and Committee Members	Back cover

News:

Membership.

We would like to welcome the following new members:

David Temple, from Eskdale

Philip Conway-Jones, manager of Coniston Holly How Youth Hostel. Philip has recently taken up the post and is in the process of setting up Slate and Copper Mining Education Packages at YHA Coniston Holly How, linked to Key Stage Studies. He has suggested that CATMHS might collaborate in this, providing illustrated talks and leading surface field meets. Peter Fleming arranged a meeting at the YHA prior to the AGM to discuss this interesting project. Alastair Cameron, Mark Simpson and Ian Matheson also attended. Philip also offered us the use of the hostel as a venue for meetings or events.

AGM and Dinner

The AGM and Dinner was held at the Crown Hotel in Coniston on 9th December. 14 people attended the AGM and there were 35 at the Dinner afterwards, some of whom had travelled a considerable distance. It was especially nice to see Richard and Eileen Hewer and David Sargent.

The four course turkey dinner was excellent, as was the service. The friendly waitresses endured some rather rowdy behaviour involving balloons, party poppers and pea shooters which rather shocked our Chairman! That Angela Wilson has a lot to answer for! After coffee, when things had settled down a bit, Alastair Cameron gave a presentation showing some of the work done by the Local History Group in surveying the Coniston slate workings, to which CAT has contributed. Jon Knowles showed some slides of the Abergellenni slate mine, and Mark Simpson ended

the entertainment with a collection of images of the CAT meets that he has attended this year, ending with a superb diagram digitally created from data obtained by GPS surveying.

A very enjoyable evening, marred only slightly by the noisy and occasionally rather inconsiderate behaviour from people in the adjacent bar.

Ian Matheson.

Chairman's Report.

Looking back through the last four issues of the newsletter, I am reminded that many things have happened, though not, I may add in the direction of new faces on meets or projects.

There was a full program of meets commencing with a visit to Ulpha Copper Mine followed with the next meet with a tour of the Brim Fell Mines. The year ended with a visit to Taylor's Level and Force Crag. Attendance on some has been select!! The great Knowles through trip took place at Abergellenni, and by all accounts was well worth the effort in going there. Full credit to those who pushed the exploration.

The newsletter has continued to improve and impress, more articles please. Having been the newsletter editor I know the treadmill of publication and the joy when folks send you copy. The newsletter is important in providing the membership at large the only way of keeping contact with the society. The same goes with the website, which is functioning well. I might also add that publications provide a means for members to let their views known should they wish to do so.

Committee meetings have been well attended and my thanks to all those who come to them, some travelling

considerable distances. I may point out that that the committee is not a closed shop and Monday evening is not rigidly fixed either. New members would be welcome, apart from anything else it would enable people to stand down or take on another position, should they wish to. All members play a valuable part in running your society and if one or two people dropped out we would have problems.

Mandell's, we are endeavouring to keep this relic of the slate industry, but its future is still in doubt, despite the efforts of our treasurer.

We enjoy good relations with the LDNP archaeologists, and members regularly attend the Mines Forum meetings. Some folks wonder if the exercise is worth it, but the perceived wisdom in the committee is that these meetings enable people to talk to each other. Also since these meetings are chaired by the LDNPA I would not wish for CATMHS to be the one who pulled the plug on them.

Projects: In the beginning of the year there was not an active project in sight, then there was a collapse in Hospital Level, which gave certain members something to get their teeth into in restoring the affected part of the level. The site is well worth a look. Middlecleugh came next and is still ongoing, another impressive undertaking. The entrance arching is now being restored. Kernal Level, I am given to understand, will start in spring. It is worth noting that these projects are carried out under the controls of our H&S policy, which took a long time and a lot of trouble to formulate. Everyone on site should have knowledge of them. Safety is every ones concern; all it takes is one accident to ruin a fine record and reputation.

In summer we had the GPR survey , carried out at Simons Nick and Back Strings, under the auspices of UCL, results are still awaited. My thanks to all who turned up to assist, Every one learnt a lot. GPR is not quick, nor is it easy, and lot of preparation work is required to get the best out of it.

The CATMHS archive has now moved to its final resting place, I hope, to the Ruskin Museum. All being well we will have an archivist to look after it.

Everyone should remember that we can only do what we do, because of the income generated by publications. Projects and equipment do not come cheap and we are fortunate in the services in skilled and motivated band of members who enable the projects and publications to happen. Your subs cover only the society running costs, newsletter and PL insurance. So, new ideas for publications would be welcome.

The future: all being well there will be a program of meets, but the emphasis will be on projects, where I believe the future of CATMHS lies. At the moment there is Kernal Level Investigative Dig on the cards but nothing as yet after that. Since there is some lead time before projects can start. i.e. obtaining permissions etc., we need some proposals now.

I would promote for consideration the purchase of a mapping GPS system so that members who do not wish to carry out underground work or archival research can carry useful recording work on Cumbrian mine sites. Much work has to be done to asses the viability of this and a FAQ sheet will be published in the next newsletter. Tied in with this is of course is the control of all our other assets, the value of which come to a tidy sum, the next

committee will address this issue. I hope I have covered most things. I wish all a happy new year.

Mark Simpson, Chairman

Secretary's Report

We had the usual 6 committee meeting during the year, all were well attended. The non-committee post of Archivist has remained vacant, with Ian doing most of that work. Jon Knowles took up the Meets Secretary post in January.

Apart from attending to the run of the mill enquiries I have been to 3 LDNPA Mines Forum meetings, with varying amounts of progress, as reported in our newsletter.

I sent a letter supporting the Whitehaven Record Office in their successful bid for funding to enable them catalogue the large collection of documents given to them by British Steel in 1997. They hope to complete the work this year and the list of documents will be published on the Cumbria archives website.

Cumbria record office is moving to Petterill Bank, on London Road, Carlisle. It will be a state of the art new office, they have aquired funding of £4.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £1.25m from CCC.

I have attended 3 NAMHO Council meetings as CAT representative and also the annual NAMHO Conference in Wales.

The 2007 Conference will be held in Devon, on 15/17 June, the details can be found on the NAMHO website.

Sheila Barker.

Treasurer's Report:

A quick glance at the Balance Sheet and a comparison of the Receipts and Payments Accounts for this year and last year would suggest that financially

the Society is doing rather well with balances of £16000 and a swing from a deficit of £3450 last year to a surplus of £3950 this year. However as was pointed out last year we have always simply funded our publications as we went along and having paid for printing have taken no account of any stocks in hand. Thus this year we had an income from these publications of £2550 without any attendant expenditure apart from the cost of packing and postage. The downside is that our income in future years will decline as stocks of "Lakeland's Mining Heritage" and other books run out although "Slate from Coniston" and the Trail leaflets should continue to generate income.

If we look at the basic operation of the Society, that is subscriptions, less Public Liability Insurance costs and Newsletter costs, then we end up with a net surplus of £560. Thus we are dependent on publications, the Gift Aid scheme and interest on deposits to provide funds for projects. In respect of these latter it should be noted that costs of repairs to Hospital Level were reduced due to a generous donation of considerable quantities of materials. Further expenditure at Middlecleugh is likely, and then in the not too distant future the re-opening of Kernal level will incur costs.

None of the above is intended to suggest that the financial situation is anything but healthy, quite the reverse, but it is the Treasurer's duty to guard against "irrational exuberance"

John Aird,
Treasurer.

Membership Secretary's report

Membership declined to 94 at the end of the year, mainly because we only attracted two new members. Each year

about 10% don't renew their membership. Last year we had 100 members, the year before there were 105 and the year before that there was an all time high of 115. My concerns are not with the loss of members due to natural wastage, but with our failure to attract new ones.

Newsletter

I'm grateful to those members who have contributed to the Newsletter, and I hope that more people will put pen to paper, or rather get busy at their computers. The Newsletter is the only record of our activities in the field and I think that it is important that we ensure that that record is complete. I do urge you all to ensure that all our meets and activities are reported. There is a lot of work for the meet leader, who may have to do a recce, prepare the ground, complete a risk assessment and ensure that appropriate equipment is available and cleaned up afterwards. He or she should also ensure that someone writes a report, but this could easily be done by one or more of the participants.

John Aird has put all the Newsletters up to No 82 onto CD, and I now routinely send him an electronic copy of each new issue. From this it should be possible to compile a complete record of our meets, if only they were all reported.

Archive

We moved the archive to the Ruskin Museum in September. It sits well alongside the Coniston Local History collection and the Museum display on the Coniston mines. We are very grateful to The Curator, Vicky Slowe for allowing us to keep it there.

Ian Matheson,
Membership Sec, Newsletter Editor.

Journal Number Seven

A decision was made at the Annual General Meeting to publish Journal Number 7. We will aim for publication at Easter 2008. I will edit it and Dave Sewart will do the technical work, preparing it for the printer. Its success will depend upon the contributors, last time there was a great response, so *now* is the time to start planning and drafting your article. If you are contemplating an article please tell me ASAP as it will help the planning and production if I know what to expect.

IM. ian@rothayholme.freemove.co.uk

CATMHS Archive.

As reported in the last Newsletter, the CAT Library and Archive has been re-located to the Ruskin Museum in Coniston. We are very grateful to the Curator of the Ruskin, Vicky Slowe for letting us have this facility. The following arrangements have been access for access to our collection:

The Committee have agreed pay an annual fee to the Museum. CATMHS members may have free access to the archive during the museum opening hours, but non-members must have written authority from the CATMHS Secretary, and must pay the Ruskin Museum admission charge. Such access will be supervised, and the museum would like three working days notice. The Membership Secretary will provide the museum with a membership list.

Non members may not remove any material from the Ruskin Museum and any member wanting to borrow material from the collection must have the written permission of the CAT Secretary. We have no objection to material being photographed. Details will be recorded in the visitors' book and the card file.

Mandall's Office.

The few lines below are taken from a recent Parish Plan / National Park project team meeting. Alastair Cameron wrote the minutes but Rachel Nutman, senior planner, suggested the text in italics should be included. I don't think that there is any risk to Mandalls!

Alastair Cameron

'Site 2, Old Furness Road

The development of this site for affordable housing had not progressed because the housing association could not agree with the owners of the site (the LDNPA) over taking on ownership of the rock face. The Parish Council will be writing to Bob Cartwright (LDNPA) stressing the fact that this requirement was putting the whole proposal in doubt.

It was noted that an ancient track-way and a small historic building were adjacent to the site and should be protected when the development takes place.'

Florence Mine.

Extract from the Guardian, 5.10.06.
Thanks to Allan Westall.

Europe's last deep iron ore mine is set to close. But its 71 year old owner, who still works the tunnels, says he has the key to its survival.

Five hundred feet below West Cumbria, down steep tunnels dynamited by generations of miners, Gilbert Finlinson offers the Government a way out of the most intractable environmental problem it faces: a fully tested site for a high level nuclear waste repository, complete with security, labour force and a willing community. Finlinson is one of Britain's last iron ore miners; he owns and still works Florence mine. It is just a few miles from the Sellafield

complex which stores more than half of all Britain's nuclear waste.

He says "I have been working these rocks for 52 years, and I know exactly what is suitable, Thousands of bore holes have been sunk and there are acres of good stable rock. I am proposing that they drive two parallel inclined tunnels from inside the Sellafield nuclear complex into the solid limestone here. There's acres of it here, up to 1800 feet deep. It's all geologically stable, there is a ready made drainage system via the mines, and hundreds of tests have already been done."

He admits he has another agenda: to save Florence from being permanently closed. The mine opened in 1914 and more than twenty million tons of ore have been mined and hundreds of miles of tunnels have been dug, but, for the last 20 years work has only been able to continue because BNFL has pumped out over 400 tonnes of water an hour to supply its plant at Sellafield. Now the water is no longer required, and this month BNFL stopped paying the £100,000 a year bill. The waters will rise a meter a day and within months millennia of mining commercial iron ore in Britain will disappear. BNFL has given the West Cumbria Mines Research Group £170,000 in compensation.

Finlinson and two colleagues, average age 64, mine about 500 tons of haematite a year, used in specialist dyes. If they stop it's the end of another piece of Britain's industrial heritage. Bruce McKurdy, director of science and technology at Nirex says "our investigations show that this limestone is permeable. You need to be able to guarantee that the nuclear material remains dry for hundreds of thousands of years. We do not agree

with Mr Finlinson's view. You are looking for dry stable rock."

"Even if the geology were acceptable," Mr McKurdy adds, "the process of choosing a site is as tortuous as the labyrinth of shafts below Egremont. If the government agrees that we should have a deep site, and there are those who say we should not, then the process of choosing where to site it has to begin. Any proposed place will have to go through extensive investigation

New cave discovery.

From the Daily Telegraph, 7.11.06.

A new cave, said to be the biggest in Britain has been discovered at Castleton, in Derbyshire. Its discovery is the result of more than a decade of work following the discovery of a paper written in 1793 in which a scientist, James Plumtree, described a network of caves beyond Leviathon, a well known cave system. Named Titan, the new discovery measures almost five hundred feet from top to bottom and features a stunning waterfall. A shaft has been created from the surface allowing cavers to abseil into Titan, saving a challenging five hour underground journey. The water from the fall drains into Peak Cavern.

The Wanlockhead Miner's Library In Danger

The Wanlockhead Miner's Library is the second oldest subscription Library in Scotland and indeed Europe and was established on the 1st November 1756. When it was founded, the Library was funded by subscriptions from the Miners, but a contribution was also made by mining companies too in order to encourage 'self-improvement' in the miners. There was a hidden agenda, as the mining companies believed that the Library would help to cut down on the unruly behaviour which existed at the time! The Duke of

Buccleuch was another major patron of the Library.

The Scottish Museum of Leadmining which currently owns Wanlockhead Miners Library is in financial difficulties again and has closed. The Museum of Lead Mining at Wanlockhead, along with the Miners' Library. It is unique and must be saved, but without a sizeable injection of cash immediately it will sink and the collections will simply be amalgamated into the National Collections. Please lend your support by writing to the Sunday Herald! The email address to write to is letters@sundayherald.com

Coniston Geophysics Project

I understand that Mike Mitchell has received a CD from the technician, Richard Rabe, containing photographs taken during the project.

Email from Phil Meredith:

'I am just writing to let you know about the meeting at the Geological Society of London yesterday (19 Dec) on "Recent Work in Archaeological Geophysics". Jack presented a joint UCL/CATMHS talk on "A Geophysical Investigation of 17th Century Copper Workings at Levers Water Mine, Cumbria". I was there and it went down very well.'

I was hoping to print an interim report on the findings of the GPR survey, carried out at Coniston last August. It is hoped that they might indicate the whereabouts of an Elizabethan level that was driven below Simon's Nick in order to de-water the workings. However, I have received so much material for this newsletter that I have decided to hold it over for the May issue.

IM

Archaeology in the Lake District 2006 Conference held at the Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, 18th November.

The conference was a sell out, 200 people attending, about 12 from CAT. Following the rather cold event at the Lakes School Troutbeck Bridge last year, this was the first time the annual conference has been held at the Theatre by the Lake. It proved to be a very fine venue, and the food and coffee was good although the seating was a little cramped for large people. The programme content and quality of presentation was excellent and left us all wanting more. There were however no presentations directly related to mining and quarrying. Perhaps we can put that right next year!

Introduction.

David Thornton, Chairman, Lake District National Park Authority.

David Thornton introduced the event and then spoke in defence of the LDNPA. During the past few months much had been achieved in turning round their difficulties. There is a new Local Development Framework seeking to provide housing for the young and to create new jobs, and a Vision for The Lake District National Park 2006 – 2030. Tourism was seen as a major factor and protection of the landscape, the major attraction, is essential. Information is on the LDNPA website www.lake-district.gov.uk Cumbria County Council has voted to continue the application for World Heritage Status and are awaiting a White Paper on Protection of Heritage. This involves the whole range, from pre-history to the recent past. The work of Local Community Groups is important. Protection of the Stone Age Axe sites is under consideration. Andy Lowe retired in September after three decades looking after the area's historic buildings.

Archaeology in the Lake District National Park 2005 - 2006.
John Hodgson and Eleanor Kingston,
Lake District National Park Authority.

John Hodgson reported that the first part of the NW Regional Research Agenda has just been published by the LDNPA. Part 2, which will deal with strategy, will be published next February. The world Heritage Inscription Bid of 1986 had been deferred, but a meeting at Wray Castle in October 2005 proposed that it be promoted, based on physical and cultural issues, especially Wordsworth. There is to be a financial meeting on 15th December to decide whether or not to go ahead. There is to be a Heritage Protection Review. The Central Fells Stone Age Axe Factory sites are to be covered by a Heritage Protection Agreement. The LDNPA is working with Community Archaeology in West Cumbria. Volunteers have been trained to assist with a Survey of Monuments at Risk, to record and monitor the condition of archaeological sites. Eskdale Mill Heritage Trust has been formed to purchase the mill from the County Council and to run it as a museum.

Eleanor Kingston reported on Planning and the Built Environment. The Waterhead Inn at Ambleside has applied to build new accommodation. As the site is adjacent to the Roman Fort two investigative trenches were dug. A fragment of a hazel wood post radio-carbon dated to the 14th century was found, but nothing Roman.

Part of a site at Wilson Howe at Lindale was excluded from current development as it is a possible furnace site, with links to Isaac and John Wilkinson. Isaac was in charge at Backbarrow and it was thought that he may have set up a furnace at Wilson Howe. In 1778 John Wilkinson set up a peat fuelled furnace on the site.

The Forestry Commission applied to extend their visitor centre at Grizedale on the site of the old hall and an archaeological evaluation was carried out. An excavation found that previous demolition had been very thorough. There have been several halls; Ford Lodge was built in 1737 by Newland Furnace owner Richard Fell. Montague Ainslie demolished it in 1840 and built a new Grisedale Hall. This in its turn was demolished between 1901 and 1904 and a third hall was built in 1906 by the Brocklebanks of the Cunard shipping line. The Forestry Commission acquired the site in 1936; it was used as a prisoner of war camp and finally it too was demolished in 1957. The current car park is built on its foundations.

Outreach:

There have been guided walks at Askham, Duddon Furnace and Coniston Coppermines – the latter led by Peter Fleming.

A grant of £170,000 had been obtained from the Heritage lottery Fund to improve access to archaeological information. This will be used to improve the LDNPA website, to provide leaflets and information panels and to fund outreach events and workshops.

New Research at Muncaster Castle.

Adam Menuge and Simon Taylor, English Heritage.

They are undertaking a detailed investigation of the building in its wider context, using the documentary record, but also hoping to involve local people in the work. Muncaster Castle became a castle in the 19th century. Prior to that it was a grey roughcast building in the style of most local buildings. The medieval tower, the right hand of the pair, dates from the 14th century, but the second one was built in 1830. There were several phases of modernisation in the late 19th century. The castle was re-modelled by

the architect Anthony Selvin and later by Ferguson. Plans of 1881 (Selvin) and 1818 (Ferguson) as well as drawings and old photographs are being used.

The National Trust's recent archaeological work and projects in the Lake District National Park Jamie Lund, National Trust.

Monk Coniston in the 19th Century was a pastoral patchwork that included Tarn Howes. Previously known as the Water Head Estate it had been part of the Furness Abbey lands, but little is known about it until 1761, when George Knott of the Newland Iron Company acquired it. He refurbished the estate and created parkland by thinning out the ancient coppice and planting thousands of trees. In 1806 Michael Knott inherited the estate and, retiring at the age of 32 from Newland Furnace, took out mortgages to develop it. Upon his death thirty years later repayment of these mortgages caused the break up of the estate. Knott planted trees to provide spectacular views, as can be seen from the estate map of 1832, and he created the walled garden and Yew Arbour.

In 1835 James Garth Marshall, who created Tarn Howes, paid £27,000 for it. He had a passion for planting exotic trees, and many of his specimens still exist. He died in 1873; his wife inherited briefly until her death in 1875, when it passed to their son Victor, who continued tree planting. In 1921 it went to James Ambrose Garth Marshall, who created Yewtree Tarn. He had to sell, and Beatrix Potter bought packets of the estate which were bequeathed to the National Trust on her death. In 1946 the NT acquired the rest of the estate to make it complete again. The house was and is still occupied by HF Holidays.

In the 1980's the NT carried out new planting, and in 2001 obtained HLF funding to focus on the legacy of the

Marshall family whilst celebrating and conserving important features and landscapes from earlier periods. Their aims are to manage the broad leaved trees, to remove self seeded trees, to manage and restore the arboretum, to restore key views, and to repair the L shaped walled garden. Full restoration of the garden would be too expensive, but it is hoped to repair the walls, re-roof the potting shed and to clear out the scrub. Volunteers are sought for this task, to begin in the spring, and also to do documentary research into the Victorian tree planting.

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.

Alan Vicars introduced the project, which is concerned with an area south of Eskdale Green containing Bank End Farm, a bloomery, an ancient trackway and a tumulus. In April a Level 1 survey was carried out, and in October the group spent six days looking at specific features, a tile kiln and a burial cairn, mostly using geo physics.

Jamie Quartermaine gave some details regarding the site. There are rental records dating from 1455 which indicate that there were six farms at that time. They can be located from small remains, but there is difficulty in deciding which was which. All six were consolidated into one in the 1600's. A grass mound at Forge Hills on Muncaster Fell was studied, and a resistivity survey carried out. They also surveyed by probing for stones. The results were good, revealing a cairn circle burial, and a rotating 3D plot was generated. The results demonstrate what can be achieved by non destructive methods.

Medieval Lakeland: a landscape historian reflects.

Dr Angus Winchester, Lancaster University.

An attempt to stand back and place the Lake District in the context of the Northern English uplands.

Upland forests and chases are legal areas and include the Copeland and Skiddaw Forests. Most of the uplands were controlled by major land owners and can be separated into private pastures, or vaccaries, used for cattle rearing, and frontier areas open to new settlement by peasants. Lakeland largely consisted of open forests whilst the Yorkshire Dales consisted mainly of vaccaries. Vaccaries in the Lake District were all at valley heads; eg Ennerdale, Wasdale, Gatescarth, Brotherilkeld, Stonethwaite. They were first recorded between 1267 and 1322. Most of the lower valleys were open forest; eg Newlands and Keswick.

Much can be learned from place names: Scale, seat, sett and shield all relate to summer pasture. The timing of movements of animals to and from summer grazing was tightly controlled by laws in order to protect both crops and grazing. The economy in the sheilings was based on milk. In the Lake District long distance transhumance did not occur, being limited to movement from the valley farmsteads to the sheilings at the valley heads.

Future work. Much might be learned regarding the organisation and development of the farming community by plotting charcoal pitsteads, medieval fisheries, medieval earthworks in the fells, pinfolds, sheepfolds, washfolds, etc and by surveying and plotting dykes and stone clearances. A systematic survey is needed.

Ring Cairns to Reservoirs: the Archaeology of the Duddon Valley

John Hoggett, Duddon Valley Local History Group and John Hodgson, LDNPA

There is lots of the archaeology in the Duddon, consisting of mounds and humps which are difficult to interpret. The area includes burnt mounds, long houses bloomeries, slate quarries, walls and wall features and ring cairns. The Duddon Valley Local History Group obtained a HLF grant of £50,000 to involve local people and carry out a Level 1 survey and some excavation. The project is scheduled for the period 2006 to 2009, and is on target. Training has been carried out in order to ensure level standards, and so far 20 Level 1 surveys have been completed, involving 60 participants and 485 man days. They intend to excavate a Bronze Age ring cairn in 2007 and hope to publish some information in 2008.

John Hodgson showed slides of examples of the Level 1 survey, including a well, a ring cairn, a Bronze Age summit cairn, a sheep pen, a shepherds hut and some linear clearances.

Excavations on High Street Roman Road.

Daniel Elsworth, Greenlane Archaeology

There was concern over a footpath repair project and whether it might affect the Roman Road. Hodgson's plan of 1828 shows the Roman Road, but there is speculation as to its immediate destination, Kendal or Ambleside. The line the road took in the vicinity is unclear and it was used as a pack horse route until the 1850's. The study comprised examination of background sources, a topographical survey and excavation of three small trenches to assess its condition.

The excavation was hampered by the weather and drainage trenches were required. The surface of the road was exposed but no structure was discernable, and it appeared that any stones or cobbles may have been robbed over the centuries.

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

Andy Lowe, Built Environment Conservation Adviser, LDNPA

Andy Lowe brought the Conference to a close by reviewing some of the successes during his career. Andy recently retired after 'a career in ruins'! In 1975 there were no designated conservation areas in the Lake District, now there are 21. In the 1970's 20 villages were surveyed, including Grasmere, Hawkshead, Broughton, Rydal and Caldbeck.. A study of current land ownership had revealed a medieval field system in the Duddon Valley; every year attention had been given to a church; Crook Church Tower and Ings Church had been conserved.

Ash Street in Bowness, Keswick Market Square and Ravenglass Main Street had been sympathetically refurbished. Following a fire, the Round House on Belle Isle was rebuilt, marrying modern and traditional methods. The Lake District had been designated an environmentally sensitive area, so now farmers can get grants to conserve barns and vernacular buildings using traditional methods and materials. Ambleside Heritage Trail was created. Priests Mill at Caldbeck, the Beatrix Potter Museum at Hawkshead, and Blackhall at Windermere had all earned Civic Trust Awards, as had Duddon Furnace. Acquired in 1980 Duddon Furnace was one of the first industrial scheduled ancient monuments in the country. The LDNPA has done significant things.

Gunnerside Gill Meet, Sunday 18th June 2006.



The picture above shows the extensive spoil tips at Kinning Level.

John Brown and John Aird sped off up to Sir Francis Level, the rest of the group setting a more leisurely pace to look at various sites around the valley. We ambled up the path through the woods, then leaving the main track and turning up hill past Winterings to the fell gate. Heading in a south-easterly direction over High Scar we reached Kinning Level at SD 9564 9930. It was started in early 1840's, working Kinnings Vein, which later intercepted Barbara Vein (one of the principle veins crossing the valley).

In heavy rain we retraced our steps, over Winterings Edge looking for Watersike Level which was driven about 1820, but the vein was barren and little work was done. After descending Brunton Hush we lunched in Bunting Level smithy.

We then followed the gill upstream to Pricilla Level, photographing the ore truck, portal and the falling main down to the St Francis engines. Continuing upstream we visited the Blakethwaite peat house and smelt mill; the remedial work started several years ago remains unfinished and has an abandoned look to it. After photographs had duly been taken, the rain having got the better of

us, we headed back down the valley. The entrance to Gorton Level was identified, its portal is in a rather inaccessible position. The structures at Bunting crusher house (*photo below*) and Sir Georges mine were explored before returning to the cars via the dressing floors at Sir Francis Level.



The treasurer and ace digger finished early and retired to the dry comfortable tea shop, but John will want to add his own version of events.

Attending were: Mark Simpson, Sheila Barker, Rudi Devriese, Roger Ramsden and Don Borthwick.

Sheila Barker.

Underground.....

John Aird and John Brown.

Sir Francis Level was named after Sir George Denys' son. The level was started in 1864 and proved to be very expensive to drive at a cost of £10 per fathom. Sir George was keen to speed up the work and introduced the rock drills in 1870. This speeded up the whole operation and reduced the cost of driving. They were powered by a waterwheel driving a Lowes double cylinder air compressor. This was quite an innovation for this area and was the first of its kind in Yorkshire. The air receiver made by E.R. & W. Turner of Ipswich still remains to this day and can be seen in what remains of the building at the entrance of Sir Francis Level. Drilling and blasting with black powder

was superseded by dynamite in 1873 and improved the rate of driving still further. The Friarfold Vein was reached in 1877 and later a shaft was sunk to test the vein at a greater depth. A hydraulic engine was installed at a cost of £4500.00 this included the engine chamber, sump, rises and dams. The engine was a Henry Davey's hydraulic pumping engine which developed fifty horsepower and also operated the winding drum. This engine was supplied with water via a pipe which descends from the Sun Hush Dam. This is what we had come here to see and with gathering clouds and no more gathering people the two of us set off up Gunnerside Gill towards Sir Francis Level. This normally takes about forty five minutes to reach from the centre of Gunnerside. Along the way we passed the 'surface walkers' led by Sheila Barker. Upon our arrival we spent a little time inspecting the air receiver and its surroundings. It was time to change into our underground gear and I had a cunning plan. Chest waders! I have been here before and have lasting memories of chest deep water (on me at least) and very cold too. Would the water be too deep for my chest waders? This question had troubled me for some days and I was about to find out! With the stones removed from the air shaft and ropes attached to the two pieces of rail which doubled up as a support for the stones and a belay point for our descent into the level, a depth of about twenty five feet. JA was first in and then I lowered the bags down to him and these were put on the only dry piece of ground at the side of the level. I carefully climbed down and landed on the ledge with the bags and then lowered myself into the water which was about waist deep. I collected my bag off the side and put it on my back. "Phew, what is that smell?" I asked, "there is something dead in here", and saw the remains of a putrefied rabbit on the piece of ground that our bags had

been on. JA lowered himself into the water just as I started moving off and in trying to make polite conversation I started to discuss the work at Hospital Level and the cost of some of the materials that we had used. Suddenly I heard a sharp intake of breath from our Treasurer. I had never quite had this reaction before when discussing CATMHS projects with him. I quickly realized that it was the extremely cold water hitting his 'oh....zone'. I continued walking in my very comfortable chest waders feeling rather smug. Although this level was driven through mostly barren ground, there are many interesting formations to see on this long wade to the hydraulic engine, including small stalactites, iron flows and some of the paraphernalia left behind by the Reverend John Hardy whilst photographing for his book 'The Hidden Side of Swaledale'. This paraphernalia consisted of a floatation raft made out of old plastic containers. Why he never removed these when he left remains a mystery to me, but having said that, if you have seen his book, it contains some excellent photographs. Making our way along the level, the water became deeper and according to my companion, colder, although he was not saying very much. Being in front, I had an excellent view of the floor and could clearly see that much of the rail is still intact and these became very useful later for walking on when the water became dangerously close to the top of my chest waders. I had the advantage of being able to spot any trip hazards and these were mostly large flakes of rock that had come out of the roof in places. The water started to become shallower until we reached an area where the roof had collapsed and it required us to take our bags off and climb over. On the other side we were back into the deep water again, then after a while, a sight that I had forgotten about, a white over-suit fixed up on the wall. I know not of its history or the

significance of it being there. Soon we reached an area that has been supported by timbers and as we squeezed through these vertical props, we could see that the level widened and then the shaft came into view with its lonely looking cage at the top of the shaft. It was hard to imagine that they started driving this Level in June 1864 and did not arrive to where we were standing until March 1877. Work on this engine chamber started in August 1879 and was completed in September 1880 and there were great celebrations with music and speeches and beer. We walked up the stone staircase into the engine chamber which did not appear to have changed since my first visit some fifteen years ago.



The above photo shows the two pump cylinders beside the top of the shaft.



The winding drum is to the left in the foreground and JB is pointing to the crossheads on the engine.

After inspecting the engine and winding drum, we went over to take a look at the pumps beside the shaft. The top of the cage is easily visible when standing near the edge. The operation of all this equipment was very dependant on there being sufficient water to drive it. At times of low water in the summer and hard freezing conditions in the winter there was not always sufficient water to power the machinery.



John Aird at the controls of the winding drum. A little more basic than the controls he was normally used to. There is a wet suit on underneath that caving suit.

Noticing the time, we hurriedly retraced our steps and made our way out to day. It was an extremely wet and horrible day. We just had to make it back to the tea rooms to get warmed through before they closed.

John Brown.

Meets:

Force Crag, 19th November 2006

John Aird (ML) John Ashby Jon Knowles, Roger Ramsden, Peter Sedgewicke.

“Is it really a good idea to have a meet involving an underground waterfall in the Lakes in November” queried an active member prior to failing to attend. Probably not must be the honest answer but surface conditions were reasonable as the group set off for the hours walk up Coledale.



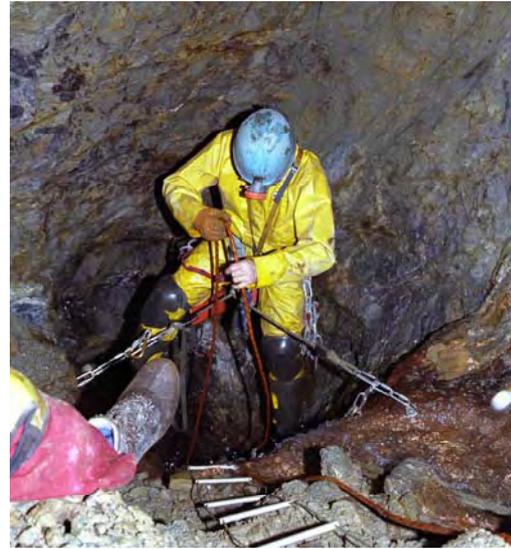
A quick check to avoid a possible “wardrobe malfunction”

Initial indications at No 3 Level were good, not too much water running down across the entrance or down from No 3 into the squeeze and on down the stope towards No 2 level.

However, as one eased down the awkward step at the bottom of the stope the noise of water falling down Gunn’s Rise rose to an ominous volume. Having the bolts in place at the top of the vertical section was advantageous even if geological conditions dictated they were placed a little low for comfort.

To accommodate all tastes both rope and electron ladder (for the ascent) were rigged. The descent was no real problem since leaning back on the rope

allowed one the luxury of only having the legs immersed.



Top of vertical section “Gunn’s Rise”

Once at the top of the incline it became apparent that a hand line was essential for further progress, due to the amount of water and a bolt was placed to give a rebelay, which allowed safe descent down the slope. Regrettably the 60m rope ran out 10 metres from the bottom of the incline leaving the party to negotiate the final five-foot vertical step without its assistance.

The ML’s confusion on the route at this point led to a brief panic that the route onward was blocked, but a left turn at the foot of the incline led through a very wet crawl to the first of the two ladders, due to the confined space these were uncomfortably wet.

Things were more pleasant once on No 1 level the water depth being the same as when last visited in May 2006, proving that the drainage through the outlet pipes was working well. The blocked entrance and the pipes along with the incline down to 0 level were all inspected prior to lunch being taken at the top of the 1200 ladderway. The depth of water standing in the rises

from 0 level was very much greater than in May being about 7-8 metres below the sole of No 1. This, in view of the good drainage from No 1 level, tends to support the views of one member of the New Coledale Mining Co who maintains that most of the water in 0 level accumulates from springs within that level and not by flowing down the rises from above.

After eating, Level 1 was followed all the way to the Radon Wall, although no volunteers could be found to climb through the hole into the waist deep water on the inner side. Returning, Shaw's Rise was crossed on the way to the ore pass down from the No 4 stope, this was scaled by Jon Knowles, whose rigging of a rope made the ascent much easier for those who followed.

From the top of the masonry a long slope of deads led up into the stope proper, which is of very considerable size. Vertically it extends (according to the mine plans) to No 2 level but because the latter was completely flooded for many years (until Gunn's Rise was driven in 1978) it is presently thigh deep in glutinous mud and no one has reported locating No 4 stope from above. At the very top of the accessible section is the famous "one legged" stool, while lower down there are some deep holes in the floor which might well repay exploration. The lead zinc ore in this area was extracted just before and during the First World War prior to the collapse of the zinc price in the 1920's.

The serious business of returning to the surface got underway; the wet ladders and crawl were undertaken, an extra length of rope added to the end of the 60m on the incline (courtesy of John Ashby, whose knee provided the vital step up to the tie in point). On arrival at the foot of the vertical waterfall

section (luckily on either side of the top of the incline there are short headings giving some shelter) a flaw in



R Ramsden along with a plethora of sacks emerging from the crawl at the foot of Gunn's Rise

the rigging became apparent i.e. the bottom of the electron ladder was about four feet off the floor. Jon Knowles prussicked up the rope and readjusted the ladder tether allowing the rest of the party to follow. The ascent could be described as "bracing" or "bl---- freezing" depending on viewpoint.

Back on the surface the weather conditions had deteriorated quite significantly and a rapid transit of the valley back to the vehicles ensued. Many thanks to all who attended for helping the ML see new areas of this interesting mine, and especially Jon Knowles for the photographs.

John Aird.

Before and after

Levers Water mine suffers from erosion of the very friable slopes of the funnel, so the entrance frequently becomes choked and drainage of the mine is affected.



On the morning of the November Committee meeting, John Aird went up alone to deal with the problem.



Having done most of the work, he retired to the BMSC cottage for lunch, where he met John Brown and Ian Matheson. After lunch all three drove back up to Levers Water in the Aird Landrover to finish off and give Messrs Brown and Matheson the opportunity to pose outside the entrance.

The committee had expressed concern that, now the clearance of the fallen boulder clay in Hospital Level has been completed, a person in a hurry or not paying sufficient attention could possibly walk straight through and fall down the hole beyond, where the false

floor has disappeared. Treasurer Aird took this one on board as well, and installed a stainless steel safety wire across the passage to encourage people to take a pause, observe and think.



The photograph was taken from in-by looking out, and shows the cable in place. The cleared passage and the timberwork and roofing installed by the digging team can be seen. The planks in the foreground cover the beginning of the false floor which is completely missing for several meters. Some steel pipes that have been in situ for about twenty five years facilitate the way on and a steel lifeline aids safety.

I.M.

Photos by John Aird.

Boxing Day Meet, December 26th 2006.

ML Mark Scott, Peter Fleming, Margaret Fleming, Ian Matheson, Mike Mitchell, Barbara Mitchell, Mark Simpson, Max Dobie and Joanne Casson.

On Christmas Day I received a phone call from a friend asking me if I was interested in a walk from Dow Crag to Wetherlam. The friend had just returned from a walk around the Fairfield Horseshoe. Cloud inversion, Broken Spectres and clear blue skies above 2000 feet, a day not to be

missed, and the same forecast for Boxing Day. “Sorry, leading a C.A.T. meet around Tilberthwaite, have a good walk”

By 9.45 all had gathered at a cold and damp Tilberthwaite car park. We followed the path past Tilberthwaite cottages then the path towards Tilberthwaite Gill. We paused for a while at a small working. I always thought that it was a copper mine, the sages in the group said it was a lead mine, Eric Holland in his Field Guide says it is a ‘small working on a zinc lode’, as does John Adams in Mines of the Lake District Fells.

We carried on following the path towards Tilberthwaite Mine and crossed the beck by footbridge to an old working, probably on Benson’s Lode that floods when the nearby stream draining Dry Cove Bottom overflows. This water then works its way through to Gill Head Level in Tilberthwaite Gill. (E.H., Field Guide) From there we followed an old path to where in the past there was dam which diverted water through a rock cutting then a lined leat to an old stamp mill.



A short walk uphill following an escarpment took us to ‘North Load Trial Mine’ (E.H.) where we had lunch. This working was flooded above boot depth so nobody ventured inside. The wonders of modern digital cameras showed a level that went in for a short distance, stop or turn either

left or right. Exceptional navigational skills then took us to Man Arm Mine, allegedly so called because there is a kink in the level like an elbow.

Not far from and just below the path that leads to Hellen’s Mine and Borlase Mine we passed the remains of what appeared to be a very old circumlinear dry stone wall approximately 20 metres long. Perhaps an old shieling or a shelter for cattle and sheep, who knows. Recent findings by historians and archaeologists suggest that the Fells of the Lake District were at one time more heavily populated than was once thought. Where the peat hags of Dry Cove Bottom are now there was probably a shallow tarn. Core samples of the sediments would give the answer. Perhaps a summer shieling and early copper workers lived here? Supposition, why not? The sages scratched their heads and walked into the deepening gloom.

After a short stay at the above mentioned mines we crossed over to the ridge to Hawkriggs and investigated an old flooded German stope with a hand cut gutter on its upper edge. Holland calls this mine Walker’s Works. Passing the nearby Booths Level, a trial driven in 1911 almost 100m long and by all reports a waste of time and money, we encountered a different type of volcanic rock used by man for hundreds of years, slate.

Commercial Break.

‘Slate From Coniston’ by member Alistair Cameron explains how slate was formed approximately 460 million years ago, where and how it was worked and by whom. It is money generated by CAMHS publications that helps to keep the Society financially viable.

Break over.

As we descended the gloom ascended, or did it stay in the same place?

A good path took us to High Fell slate workings. A Herdwick that had fallen a considerable height into one of the open workings was given the last rites. Slate is still quarried here on a small scale. Besides slate in the yard there are pieces of sandstone and a large block of polished black granite, maybe an engine bed which must have weighed in at well over a ton. The view from High Fell, on a clear day I consider to be one of the finest in the Lake District.

We slowly made our way down to Tilberthwaite then drove rapidly to the Black Bull at Coniston for a well earned hot chocolate.

I was told by my friend that the fell tops had been clear of cloud most of the day.

On Friday January 5th 2007 I returned to Tilberthwaite to have a more leisurely look around. I took a small spade a mattock and some imagination. My first stop was the flooded level of Benson's Load near the gill, and I cut a small trench to prevent the water from the gill running into the level. Just to the right of the working a path goes to Wetherlam Mine; below the path is a



platform and small dressing floor. Whilst waiting for the level to drop two small mortar stones were found. One has a small drill hole in the centre. Nearby was a similar size stone. This had three small holes approximately

20mm diameter and 20mm deep.



Could these be 'pilot holes' in an unused mortar stone? On a low retaining wall is carved the letter 'A' and another letter which may be 'L' or 'T'.

I continued to 'North Load Trial Mine' and dug out the entrance. The mine was flooded to about 450mm was easily drained. As Eric Holland says in his field guide '...consists of a 21ft long cross-cut and follows the vein [to the right] for about 42ft.' At the far end was a skeleton of a very young lamb. How long had it been there? It was probably taken by a fox many years ago before the mine entrance was blocked by silt and peat.

This vein from its highest point to where it vanishes into the hillside at the main mine workings is almost 200 metres long and runs as straight as a die. Near the spoil heaps here and almost covered are layers of very finely crushed copper sediment, malachite blue and rusty brown. This may be the site of an old mill. There is no running water nearby or signs of buildings. Perhaps they were all covered or removed by the workers in the 1800's. I returned to the car park pleased with my days work.

Maybe it is time to reappraise the Tilberthwaite area.

Mark Scott.

Croesor Weekend 22nd & 23rd April 2006

Jon Knowles (ML), John Ashby, Chris Cowdery, John Aird, Mark Waite, Steve Brown and Mark Simpson (Saturday only).

The objective of the meet was to try and improve the speed of access into the inner reaches of the Croesor Slate mine near Blaenau Ffestiniog so that we could undertake a Project to bolt up and explore the Old Levels B,C and D.

It had been our intention to pay for the key to the Swlan Dam road which would have enabled 750' of ascent to be avoided however due to the closure of the visitor centre this was not possible and we had to walk up. Incidentally the visitor centre is apparently to be converted into a bunk house. Most of the way up the road the ML suggested that it might be better to cut up across the hillside and all followed him. This scenic detour attained the same altitude as the road but it was much easier on the feet – any suggestion that the wrong route was followed is clearly untrue and those who complained of chest pains due to the steepness of the ascent must be unfit. From above the Swlan Dam we contoured round to the Rhosydd West Twll. Belaying off a fence post be dropped in the twll.



The team kitting up above the Rhosydd Western Twll – Photograph M. Simpson.

There had been a recent fall from the face above the open end of chamber BW and it was whilst descending through the sharp and unstable remnants that the ML knocked a rock onto his finger which did not appear to damage the rock but made a mess of his finger. Incidentally the above fall appears to be natural weathering rather than any continuance of the collapse in chamber AE but they could be connected. If the falls are connected this whole area will certainly collapse

in time. From BW we followed the usual route into Croesor. It should be noted that there appears to have been a small fall onto the loose slope where you drop back onto Floor 6 after climbing up to pass the missing bridge.



The author hammers in another anchor – Photograph M. Simpson.

On arriving above the flooded chamber in Croesor there was a massive amount of crap from previous groups and we did our best to dispose of as much of this as possible. To other groups reading this please take your CRAP home. The rigging for the descent to the water was tidied up and a number of stainless steel anchors installed to that it is possible to reach the boat launching point without getting wet. Despite bringing our own inflatable vessel we found a serviceable unit in situ and crossed the chamber on that before prussicking up into the level and making a start on improving the rigging for the traverse of the next chamber. On the return crossing Mr Brown tangled the cords used for pulling the boat across the chamber and quickly lost the plot. A similar problem happened to Mark who then spent the next 20 minutes going backwards and forwards in the boat, in the middle of the chamber, extracting himself from the tangle of cords – and he always joked about me always carrying a knife!



John Ashby at ease in the boat – Photograph M. Simpson.

Returning to Rhosydd floor 6 there was a debate about the quickest route back to the vehicles. One group squeezed down a chamber in Rhosydd before exiting along 9 adit whilst the other retraced their steps – there was little difference in time. The evening was spent at Capel Curig Youth Hostel where Mr Brown completely lost the plot over parking. This Hostel would have been OK if the more of the toilets worked and the showers and not be designed for someone slimmer and more agile than the author!

On Sunday we returned, less messrs Simpson and Brown, and followed the direct route to the dam since, surprisingly, this seemed more popular than the scenic route.

On arrival in Croesor we spent a considerable time re-rigging the pull cords for the boats before all crossed the chamber. We re-rigged the route across the timber / rail traverse in a safe manner. Ultimately we came to the conclusion that whatever we did it would still take too long to get into the inner reaches of Croesor to make exploration of the upper levels a viable proposition. On boating back across Captain Ashby, who displays more ability in the boat than in most of his underground endeavours, led the way. As he crossed there was suddenly a whoosh of escaping air quickly followed in succession by a curse, a splash and then the sound of frantic swimming. The boat had hit a submerged piece of sharp slate and had sunk instantly. After swimming to the shore, suitably refreshed, Ashby then abseiled up to the level and inflated our own new boat (£2.99) much to the relief of the others still in Croesor. Fortunately the new boat worked and all reached dry land safely.

We exited from Rhosydd in beautiful sunshine. An enjoyable meet but sadly one which did not achieve its objective.

Jon Knowles.

Welsh Slate News

With much help from John Ashby I now have available a CD containing electronic copies of what I believe is all of the Oakeley Slate Quarry Caban magazines. This was the in house Magazine of the Quarry and latterly also included the Votty & Bowydd Slate Quarries Co when they were taken over.

Whilst there are articles which are typical of Company in house magazines such as sports days, hobbies etc, there is much of interest about the working of the quarries. This magazine was produced for the Oakeley Slate Quarries Co Ltd between 1949 and the mid 1960's and was printed by the Abbey Press Ltd London. The quarries were in Blaenau Ffestiniog in what was then the County of Merioneth. The contents of the CD are jpeg scans of the copies of the magazine to which I have managed to gain access:

1949 May, 1949 Oct, 1950 Jan, 1950 May, 1950 Oct, 1951 Feb, 1951 June, 1951 Oct, 1952 Feb, 1952 Jul, 1952 Oct, No, Rear cover, 1953 Apr, 1953 Aug, 1954 Jan, 1954 May, 1954 Nov, 1955 May, 1956 Mar, 1956 Sep, 1957 Jan, 1957 Jul, 1958 Jan, 1958 Jul, 1959 Jan, 1959 Oct, 1960 Mar, 1960 Dec, 1961 Dec, 1963 Feb, 1964 Mar.

I hope that these CD's will provide a valuable research tool for students of the Welsh Slate Industry and will give more people access to the information contained in the small number of now very fragile original copies available. I have deliberately made no effort to make any money from this exercise, only to cover my costs, since I believe that this information, although in the public domain, should be more widely available. If anybody would like one please send me a cheque or stamps for £2 and I will send you one.

Jon Knowles.

Middlecleugh High Level Re-opening Project. 2006.

This is a diary recording the work carried out by the CATMHS 'digging team'. The work was planned for the early part of the year, but emergency work at Hospital Level delayed this until late summer. This was a joint project with North Pennines Heritage Trust and CATMHS, with the former applying successfully for Scheduled Monument Consent and funding, doing work on the mine shop and surrounding area and the latter re-opening the High Level, which included laying track from the mine to a tipping area to the north of the mine shop. Part of this track will be left in place once the works are complete and the mine tub will be left on the rails for added aesthetic value.

August 13th

Sheila Barker (SB), Don Borthwick (DB), Pete Blezard (PB), Anne Danson (AD), Colin Woollard (CW), Andrew Woollard (AW), John Brown (JB) and Peter Sedgewicke (PS) met to establish the route of the rail and the amount required and the methods of working to be adopted.

August 26th

PB, CW, AW met at Kendal to collect 200 feet of rail and transported it on their trailers to a location near Middlecleugh Level. The rail was stored in a very inaccessible place in the yard. This should have been a relatively easy job, but turned out to be a difficult one.

August 27th 0830hrs

SB, PB, Mark Simpson (MS), PS, CW and AW. Work started in earnest, digging out the floor in the adit and clearing a channel to de-water the entrance. Some lengths of rail were carried up the incline from the bridge

to the mine. This is an arduous task, especially when the rail sections are attached to the sleepers as these are.

September 3rd 0830hrs

SB, JB, PS, CW and AW. The Woollards continued with the task of removing material from the tail of the collapse. All of this is removed by wheelbarrow and tipped beyond the mine shop. Hard work! Another set of rail was hauled up to the mine and laid inside the entrance. This is no mean task and it was mostly down to the 'hard graft' of the 'Dynamic Duo' again. JB recovering from a hernia repair could only look on helplessly and making encouraging noises with our resident nurse making sure that that was all he did. JB and SB started surveying the route for the rail from the mine to the tip. PS arrived at lunchtime and joined with the surveying team, hammering pegs in showing the route of the track and the required gradient.



Not surprisingly the weather provided more rain than sunshine, but at 1800 feet above sea level what can you expect at the beginning of September.

September 10th 0830hrs

SB, JB, CW and AW. Whew, what a scorcher! I take back what I said! In contrast to the weather of last week, piles of discarded clothing were scattered around the site as the temperature soared and yes we forgot

the sun screen and mosquito repellent! Work on preparing the trackbed continued. Boning boards were erected once the levels were established and this made levelling relatively straight forward with someone sighting through. Turf was then cut and stored in stacks next to the track. Soil from below the turf was barrowed to the tipping area after ballast stone and the occasional artefact was removed. SB volunteered to do the job of collecting all the artefacts which would later be cleaned, photographed and recorded. With JB still easing his way back into manual work SB did the bulk of the barrow work. Twenty eight metres of track bed were prepared, but there was some essential work needed to some collapsed arching in a culvert over Middlecleugh Burn. This runs directly beneath the route of the track and needed to be done before any track could be laid on top of it. The culvert runs diagonally beneath the track at approximately eight metres from the adit. The top of the arch is only about one metre below the surface and so it was important to do a proper repair. Temporary formers were placed by AW, in his wet suit, underneath the part of the arch that had the stones missing whilst CW with some assistance from JB applied upward pressure with a pull lift suspended from a section of track allowing AW to position some props



beneath the formers. Once this had been done, the pull lift was removed, the damaged area of arching cleaned and replacement stones put in place and tightened up. Then the area was backfilled before the end of the shift.



September 17th 0830hrs

JB, CW, AW. The only way is up and the first job of the day was to haul another section of track to the top of the hill. This section would be introduced to Jim Crow and for those who don't know about Jim Crow, this is a tool for putting the bends into the rail. After leaving the mine entrance, the rail takes a slight turn to the left over the culvert which is angled at approximately fifteen to twenty degrees to the face of the adit. Soon we would be at the next stage of the project when material from inside the level would need to be removed, as well as the overburden directly on top of the collapse. A site meeting would be needed to ensure proper planning of this work and the possibility of designing a head-frame to lift out large

boulders may need to be considered. Before leaving, the formers were removed from the inside of the culvert and an inspection of the arching was carried out. It looked to be a very satisfactory repair.

September 24th 0830hrs

JB, PB, MS, AW & CW. We met at the Nenthead Mill and selected the mine tub and its top (donated by NPHT) which we would load onto PB's trailer once he arrived. By now the thick mist had descended and the flasks were out whilst waiting for PB who was running a little late due to the fog. A salivating tabby cat turned up out of the gloom and the cat owners amongst us were trying to keep it at a distance for fear of passing on whatever ailments it had to our own feline friends. The tub was loaded onto the trailer from a very convenient earth bank which acted as a loading ramp. Two planks were used to run the tub down into the trailer before securing it with ratchet straps. The rest of the morning was taken up with moving the tub and all of the remaining sections of rail up to the mine. Further surveying work took place after lunch and the levels were taken for the remainder of the track to the end of the tip. Work to level the remaining track from the mine shop started.



The day had improved and there were two visitors enquiring as to what we

were doing and another who knew exactly what we were doing. Mr. Raymond Fairbairn who is author of 'The Mines of Alston Moor' which is an official publication of 'The Northern Mines Research Society', who is at this present time carrying out more research and surveys in order to update the book. This was his second visit to the site since we began and he is keeping a watching brief. Where does time go to? Another day gone, but progress is good.

October 1st.

(The day the first tub was rolled out). JB, PB, Karen Beer (KB), SB, PS, AW & CW. The Woollards made a flying start, arriving at 0830hrs with the rest following in dribs and drabs. The remaining trackbed was levelled and the rail was laid. Intermittent showers were a nuisance factor, but did not really slow the work during the morning, although time was taken to view a most vivid rainbow which had one end directly over Nenthead. More digging needed perhaps? By the time lunchtime came along, there was only one section needed to complete the tipping end of the track. Once complete, the tub was filled and ceremoniously rolled out and tipped.



SB and KB had been laying ballast down the centre of the track uninterrupted up to this point, but now verbal warnings before each tub came out meant that this job became more intermittent. Six tubs of wet sludgy type material and two of good walling and arching stone were brought out. With limited space at the tipping end of the track JB and PS, with some help from AW from time to time, moved the spoil away from the track and landscaped it up the tip embankment.

October 8th

PB, SB, CW & AW. Work continued in a furious fashion, removing as much of the material as possible and this exposed some rather large boulders showing themselves and protruding into the level. These were secured using short acrow props and boards. There is a large diameter pipe coming into the level which appears to be almost vertical (some of the old compressor pipe from inside the level we suspected). Was this put in for drainage the last time this collapse was cleared, or was it used as a lintel to support some of the large boulders? If there is anyone from that original dig reading this, could you please shed some light on this? NPHT builders

have been at work on the mine shop outside the mine. Will they have the roof back on in time for the bad weather I wonder? This is a very wet place to be working and after such a good summer too. Tools were put away behind the gate for safe stowage until next week and the site checked before everyone went back home.

October 15th

JB, PS, AW & CW. Meeting a little later today saw a 0930 hrs start. JB met PB at Brough to collect some acrow props before going on to Nenthead. Following guidance from PB, work started on an exploratory dig on top of the level to try to establish the stability of the bedrock where it meets the level. Hopefully this would enable us to determine whether we would need to use a head-frame or not. A large boulder, sitting on top of the level just above the collapse close to the face of the bedrock, was the first target. Soil and stones were dug away from around it and the base was exposed. Estimating this boulder to be around about four and a half to five tonnes, it was decided reduce its weight before trying to winch it out of the way. Weak points were found and with clever use of chisels and bars, first the left hand side was reduced and then the top third was split off and turfered out in the direction of the level entrance. Sections of rail were driven into the ground and the base of the last one was used to anchor the turfer and pull lift. Not being able to identify any more weakness in the remaining boulder it was decided to drill and fit hangers onto the far side and roll it out in the same direction as the previous lump.



October 29th

JB, PB, SB, PS, AW, CW,

This turned out to be the last full day working on the top of the collapse and all of the shale contact around the hole above the collapse was revealed. Water was running off the fell into the crater and was ponding in the bottom where we were digging. Soon we had lowered the ground sufficiently to be able to bar through into the level below and drain the water off, which made digging so much easier. Spoil from here was being barrowed forward and tipped on top of the level towards the portal. When the re-arching has been done, all of this material will be put back into the excavation without having to move it too far.

We had a visit from Mole (well known mine explorer from the Forrest of Dean) who organises a group who visit Nenthead several times a year and do good exploration and conservation work in the mines.

November 5th (the day we broke through)

JB, PB, SB, MS, AW, CW. It's the day of the Wirksworth Mines Research Group winch meet at Brewery Shaft and AW was booked in to make his descent at 1000hrs, so there was a little time for him to join JB and CW who were preparing for work on removing the remaining boulders from inside the level at the base of the collapse.



The largest boulder and the one requiring attention first was drilled and fitted with an anchor. The 'pull lift' was attached and, with the application of some clever restraining methods, it was lowered and rolled to give it maximum exposure just in time for its attack with the 'Kango' hammer that MS and PB had just turned up with. PB had brought his generator along to power the hammer. It was decided that more loose material had to be removed and so work filling the tub began again. We decided to remove a couple of smaller rocks from the top edge of the hole to make it safe for working in the level. The generator was set up and PB took the first 'stint' on the hammer before handing it over to JB. AW turned up from his trip down Brewery Shaft which had clearly impressed him. He then took his turn. Liberal use of the hand hammer and chisel was also needed and it was this combination that soon reduced it to a manageable size. AW decided that it was time to pull the top of what turned out to be the last remaining flake towards us and after doing so,

announced that he could see into the level behind. We each took it in turn to have a look and we could see clearly into the level. There were no obvious blockages and it looked extremely straight and the water looked to be just above 'welly' height (as usual). We decided to spend a little time clearing a way through and try and lower the water a little before entering the level to check for any further collapses. Now we were at the point where we could quantify the amount of walling and arching that would be required. A quick measure up between the two remaining arches revealed that the distance was only six feet and it was obvious that this collapse was on the junction of two different sections of arching. The collapse was on the end of the narrower section where it joined the wider and presumably later section. It was agreed that there was not going to be as much work needed as we had originally anticipated. With the de-watering and clearing up done, everyone except SB, who remained behind for safety reasons, entered the level. Once inside, it was obvious from the 'tidemark' that the water level had remained almost to the top of the walls beyond the collapse.



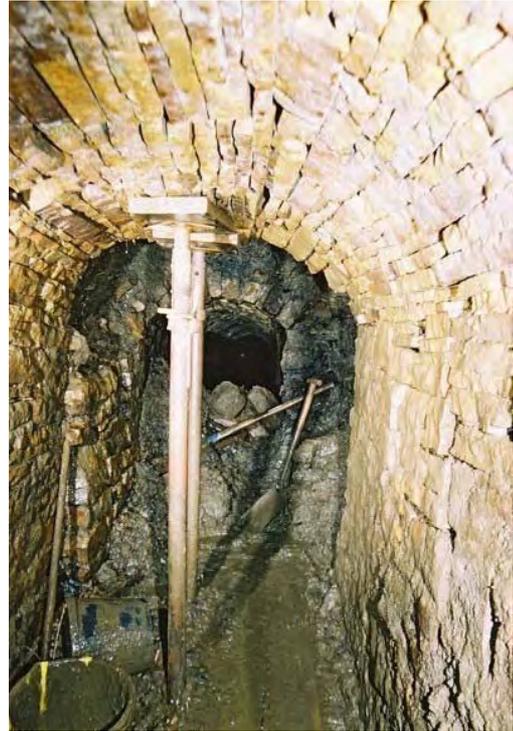
Here the arching is in good condition and further on where this ends, there is a great contrast between the stone and the blackness of the shale. It is remarkable how the level has kept its

shape considering it was driven in this normally unstable material and also how straight it was. Because the mine had been sealed up all this time, the atmosphere was very warm and cold air being drawn in from outside created a fairly dense fog. This reduced visibility to about ten metres, making it impossible to take any decent photographs on this occasion. Of course the water was above welly height to start with and then became deeper, reaching waist deep further in and quite gloopy and ocherous too. We made a decision not to deviate from the main level this time, but to see if the main level was free from any blockages. We came to an area where quite an amount of shale had fallen out of the roof and had nearly blocked the way forward. After a little bit of clearing by JB and AW we were able to crawl through under an arched section (obviously this had been a problem area when the mine was being worked) and continued on. At about the halfway point we came to the Middlecleugh North Vein which branches off to the left. JB and AW reached the extent of the main level where there is a rise up to the Longcleugh Vein. There was a magnificent calcite flow on the left just before we reached furthest point and then we were met with the stunning view of the rise at the end with its vivid red flow down the walls. Just before this rise there is a drive off to the right and through a recent study of the mine plan this looks to have at one time linked up with the Bog Shaft via some flat workings. Time was pressing and the events of the day were beyond our wildest dreams, and completely unexpected. It was wise to make our way out as quickly as possible and in doing so we met up with the rest of the team and reported our findings. We would find it hard

next week to concentrate on continuing with the job in hand and not to be tempted with further explorations. This would have to wait.

12th November

John Aird (JA) JB, PB, SB, MS, PS, AW & CW. It was good to have our Treasurer with us for the day offering help and support and seeing the progress since the summer. Travelling up from his treasury in London was a massive effort and the society is very fortunate to have such an active treasurer who takes a keen interest in everything that goes on, even at grass roots level and below (we know that he is really checking to see where the money is going). We are equally as fortunate to have an active Chairman MS who has a keen interest in these projects and is a regular attendee to this one. Whilst we are in the mood for handing out accolades, our Secretary SB, who is the driving force behind getting Middlecleugh 'on the rails' and is responsible for getting the access agreements which are required before any of these restoration projects can be carried out. She has been present and actively involved on most of the days here. Getting back to the day's entry, priority for the day was to clear the last of the material and expose the walls that were remaining in the area damaged by the collapse. We would need to check to see if they need to be taken down and rebuilt. Looking in-by the right hand side was the obvious first choice. Once this was cleared, work on removing the stone and excavating the shale behind to increase the depth of the new wall was underway. This all sounds very easy, but weaving around two supporting acrow props to fill the tub and working underneath a dales waterfall made this work particularly difficult and cold.



Conditions outside, picking and dressing stone from the piles that had been recovered from the level were no better and weather conditions continued to deteriorate throughout the day. It soon became clear that we were going to run out of good stone for walling and there was very little that was suitable for arching. SB was charged with contacting the local quarry and arranging for us to go and select the stone that we required.

Saturday 18th November

JB, AW & CW. Unfortunately the owners of the quarry would not be available to let us into the yard on Sunday morning and so we had to make the excursion this Saturday morning. We complained about the weather last week, but things became even worse this weekend. Winter has arrived early in this part of the country with the road from Weardale to the Nent valley becoming difficult with a good covering of snow. The road from Penrith over Hartside was no different. It was 9.00am and at the yard CW had his Landrover Discovery and trailer

and AW and he were already loading when I arrived. Here it was raining (sideways) and very quickly it became clear that our waterproofs were finding it difficult to keep this water out. Looking down on Alston we could see snow showers starting to drive in from the west. With the trailer loaded and the weight of its load estimated by the yard owner, we were on our way to Middlecleugh. By the time we arrived at the compressor house below the mine, the valley had turned white. This first load was stacked by the bridge and was mostly for walling. We returned for a second load which was to be arching stone. This load took much longer to select because of our determination to find the best for our purpose, but the demand is mostly for walling stone and there seemed to be a scarcity of stone suitable for arching work.

Sunday 19th November

JB, PB, SB, AW & CW. The gritters seemed to have travelled west up Weardale as far as Daddry Shield and then turned around. The road over the summit between Killhope and Nenthead was interesting! When I arrived at the usual parking spot, I received a phone call from Robert Hooper who was going to come and move the stone up to the mine with a JCB Fastrack with a front end loader attached. He was suffering from a severe toothache and would not be able to come himself, but fortunately he had arranged for Carl to come and do the job instead. This would not be until midday. So, with two towing and one steering, the wheelbarrow loaded with rock we were able to transport a few barrow loads to the mine and this enabled us to continue with rebuilding the right hand wall. In what looked like a re-enactment from a scene in Da Boot, snow melt was causing large

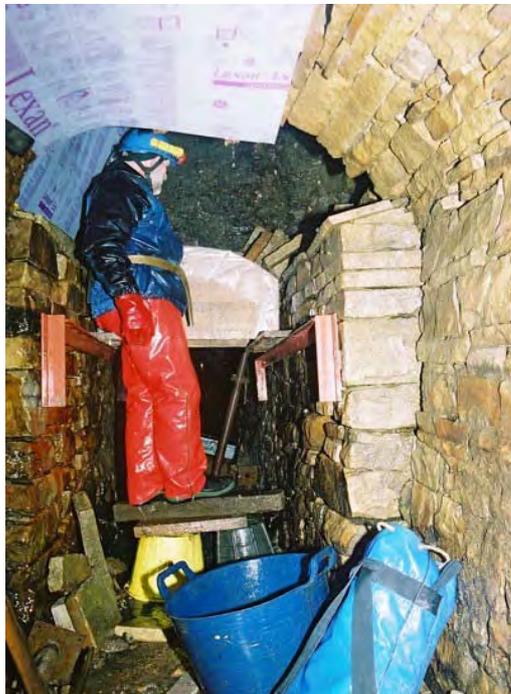
quantities of water to enter into the level through the newly excavated hole. A plastic sheet was hurriedly fitted to divert the very worst of it. JB and CW were on wall building duty while AW and PB were selecting and dressing stone. Just as we were about to go for lunch, Carl arrived with the fastrack and loader after doing a short spell of snow ploughing in Overwater. With the loader bucket filled with stone, the first load was taken up the steep temporary road to the end of our track. This was repeated and soon we had approximately four tonnes of stone tipped at the end of our track. This was loaded onto the tub base (the tub top had been removed and planks were put in place for transporting stone) and stacked neatly outside the mine entrance for ease of selection. By about 3.30pm the right hand wall was up to the base of the arch and with deteriorating weather conditions it was decided to call it a day. Some difficulty was met where the wall met the in-bye section of arching. There was a danger of this all falling apart and causing another collapse in-bye. This was made safe, but would have to wait until the next week before a more permanent repair could be done.

Sunday 26th November. PB, SB, AW & CW. With the right hand wall now complete and ready for the arching, the attention turned to the left hand wall. Not all of this required re-building and so only part of it was taken down. As with its opposite, it was necessary to excavate the shale from behind to create a little more depth for the new wall. Once this had been re-built there was the difficulty with the old arch. Stones were replaced in the old arch where it met the wall on the right hand side, making it right for the former to fit underneath. Next week should see

a turning point once the formers are fitted and the arching begins. It would be good to get this level re-arched as quickly as possible, if for no other reason than keeping the worst of the winter weather out. There was all of December and January to look forward to!

Sunday 3rd December.

JB, PB, AW & CW. Driving up Weardale and seeing the state of the River Wear, I was rapidly coming to the opinion that we would have much more fun white water rafting, but I continued my journey towards the Nent Valley to see if there was any chance of doing this on the river Nent. Not only was it wet but extremely windy too, with many objects ranging from dustbin lids to large rocks littering the road. When we reached the mine, water was cascading into the hole and resembling a mini Niagra Falls. CW and AW quickly dug a channel on the surface to divert some of the water away from the direction of the hole. With the aid of heavily weighted tarpaulins over the top of the excavation and perspex sheets fixed to the underside of the existing arching, we managed to create a reasonably dry area in which to work ('a reasonably dry area' is a relative term in this place!). In any case we did not want to



get the newly made formers wet! So the job of fixing the rails to the walls for the arching formers to sit on was under way. Outside AW was preparing more stone for CW and JB who were doing the arching and PB was supplying and transporting the stone and passing it up to the archers and providing lots of expert guidance and banter. It is always of great value to have someone at ground level with the benefit of an eye level view and who gives advice on where to place some of the stone on the former. Progress had been good and if we could keep this pace, the next week should see most of the arching done.

Sunday 10th December

J B, PB, PS, AW & CW

We had a later start than usual due to the annual dinner the evening before. Working conditions were much better than the previous week with much less water running into the level through the open excavation, though it was very cramped working on top of the arching. Progress was slow and it was very difficult to give a reason for this. Selecting the right stone for a given spot on the former is always (it seems) a bit of a compromise getting it to fit with all the others. Small drainage pipes were fitted into the four extreme corners to allow water to drain into the level.

Sunday 17th December

JB, PB, PS & CW

With AW spending a well earned rest enjoying a weekend in London, and with wanting to fulfil our goal of finishing the stone arching before Christmas another early start was required. Eight thirty and the sound of tyres rumbling up the mine road towards Middlecleugh hopefully did

not wake the local residents. The usual job of opening up the mine and withdrawing the tub, remove the tools left from the previous week and create a free passage to the work area was undertaken. Searching around for the few remaining stones with the correct amount of taper on them began, before CW took up his place on top of the arch to place the stones. With only room for one person on top of the arching now, JB and PB kept busy cutting and dressing the selected stone, supplying the master archer with them and giving advice on their correct placement.



It was around about 3.30pm when the final stone was placed and the job of packing the arching stones began, using thin slivers of stone and slate to tighten the arch. Up until this point PS had been busy in the warmth of the mine, shifting some the small piles of shale in the floor to the sides to try and reduce the water level. Once the arching was completed, he joined us for the great moment when the formers were removed and it was time to admire our work. PS had previously selected waste rock and this was used for loading onto the top of the arching. This is an important part of the process which gives the arch its strength. It is best to start off with small stone and increase the size as the excavation is filled in. This reduces the risk of point loading on the arching stones.



Sunday 31st December

JB, PB, SB, AW & CW

Another early start and the remaining pile of stone sitting on top of the level was dropped into the excavation. Once all the stone was in, some geotextile was laid on top and then the rest of the soil etc. was tipped into the hole. This layer of material should allow the water to pass through, but not the soil. Hopefully this will not only stop 'fines' washing through into the level, but will also help to consolidate the ground above the repaired arching. By the time we came to eat our lunch, the rain was lashing down, as per forecast. It eased briefly until approximately two o'clock, when it was just becoming very uncomfortable. Some more work diverting water away from the almost filled in excavation was done, but we decided to spend more time next week doing this. Work on cleaning some of the artefacts has been done by SB and below is a photo of a section of rail found during excavations.



Fish Belly Rail. Photo Sheila Barker.

A final report and photographs will appear in the next newsletter along with a brief history of the mine.

John Brown.

GPS mapping and the mining landscape.

In *the past*, mapping a mining landscape, or any landscape come to that, meant using traditional surveying methods, e.g. tape and compass, tape and offset, Total Station etc. The process needed knowledge of basic surveying, at least two people, time and good weather. Needless to say accurate mapping was not something to be undertaken lightly, and today if you wish to accurately survey a site you will still need the knowledge, the gear to do it, and time. We are talking about mapping a site to an accuracy of < 1 meter, to a scale of 1:500, quickly and easily. This standard of accuracy will yield useful maps and information.

Enter GPS mapping, which will enable you to achieve this with greater ease, using up less time, and with a device not much bigger than an ordinary navigation grade GPS unit. The system has 3 elements: an accurate GPS receiver, a very small computer (sometimes known as a PDA), and the mapping software. This has been totally integrated into one package with the Thales (now Magellan) Mobilemapper, which costs in the region of £1800 inc VAT. (There are other units, notably the Trimble Geo XT). More accurate centimetric GPS systems are available, but at serious money, £6000 at the lower end to £20,000 plus

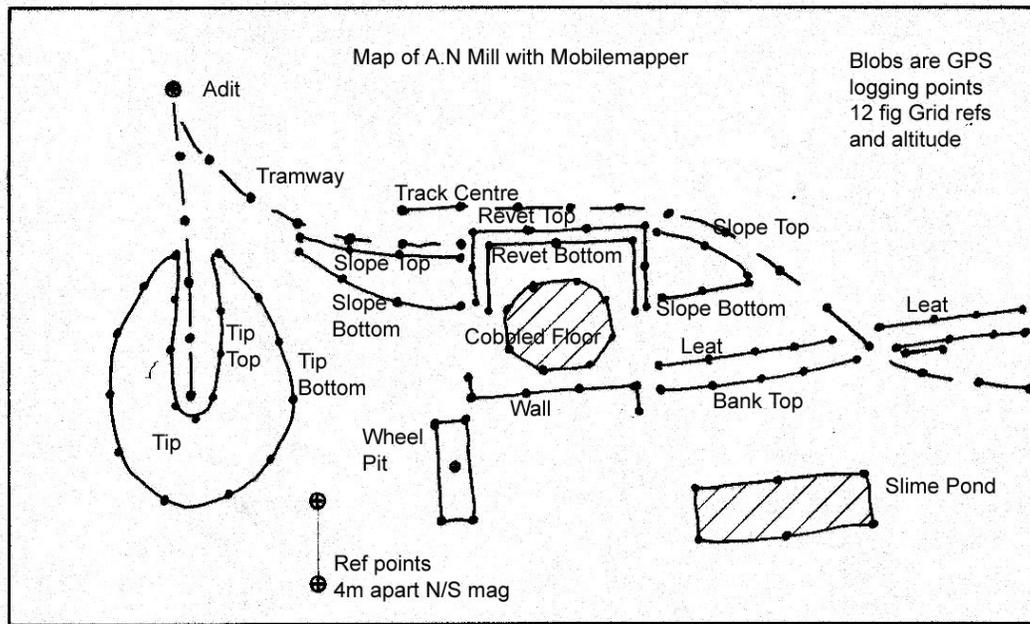
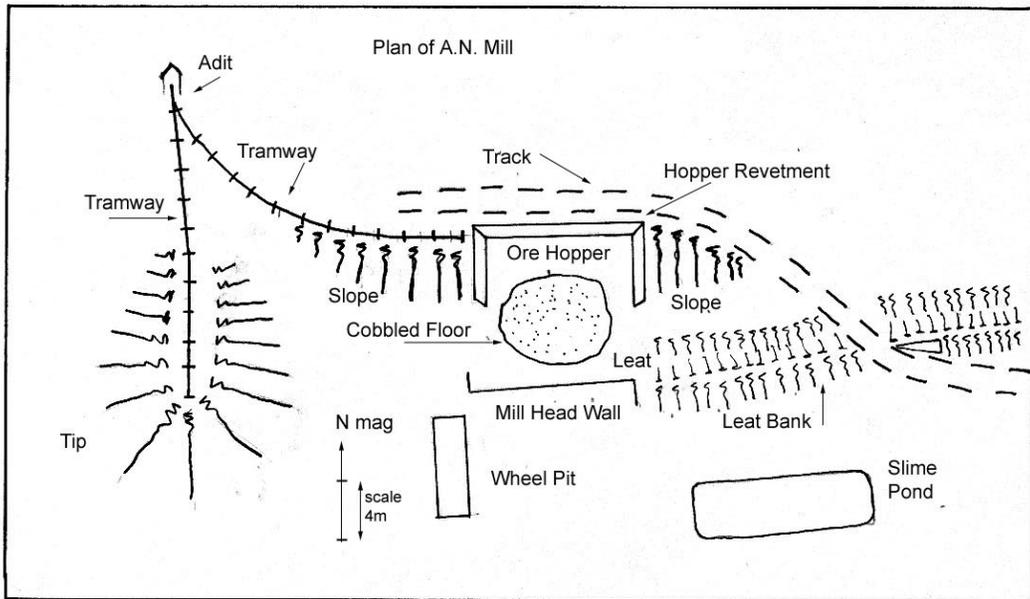
I would like to make a case that CATMHS should acquire a Magellan Mobilemapper, which would enable anyone with a small amount of training to make detailed records of mining or industrial history sites. The prime requirement of the mapping process is that it has to be easy to use, no knowledge of the technology being needed. All that is required is for the user to be able to recognise a mining landscape feature when they see it. The Magellan Mobilemapper meets these requirements.

All features can be categorized as one of three features: point, linear and area.
So on a mining site what are you likely to find:-

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| a) Adit | point feature |
| b) Tramway | linear feature |
| c) Tip | area feature |
| d) Mine Buildings | point feature if very small or area feature if large |
| e) Track | linear feature |
| f) Wheel pit | point feature if small or area feature if large |

And so on. There are obviously variations on the above, but the list gives the general idea.

Let us see how this applies to a hypothetical mine site:



The top diagram shows what you will normally see on a mine plan, but it started life as data similar to that on the bottom plan, which is what you create when using GPS mapping.

How do you map the above in the mobile? The unit has a menu with the features in it and you choose the relevant feature. It may be stating the obvious, but with a point feature you stand over the thing, activate the mobile and count to 10, For linear and area features you activate the mobile and leg it along or around the feature. And the unit logs the feature automatically – see the logging points in the illustration above.

Below is a list of features in the mobile and the associated symbol which will appear on the final map. There are just three feature *types* – point, linear and area.

Features per Feature Type		
	LinTrack	12
	Lin Tramway	8
	Lin Water Course	13
	Lin Wall Top Bottom	48
	Lin Bank Centre	2
	Vertical Feature	1
	Wheelpit centre	1
	Building Centre	0
	Enclosure Centre	0
	Pt Wall Feature	6
	Water Point	2
	Point Feature	6
	Linear Feature	0
	Area Feature	8
	Datum Point	5
	Photo Point	0
	Lin Slope Top Bottom	12
	Pt Slope Feature	1
	Grid	0

As you are holding the mapping device, you will be covering lot of ground, especially if you are mapping leats, banks and tracks. You will have to map the tops of tips and the bottom and top and bottom of revetments, but the end result will be a comprehensive record of the site without putting pencil to paper. When you have logged all the features the data is then downloaded into a computer (the software is in two parts; one is in the mobile and the other is in the computer). And lo! a map of all your efforts appears, just like that. Well not quite like that – The data collected so far will only give you an accuracy of 3 meters, even with 8 satellites up and WAAS corrections.

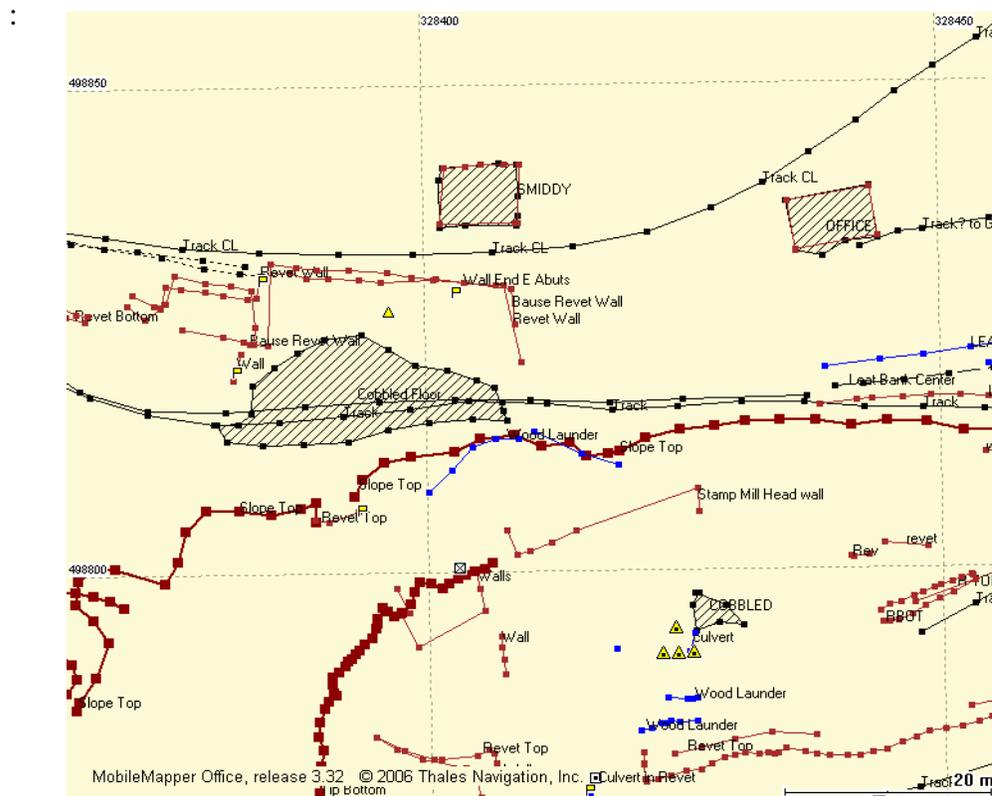
To up the accuracy to sub metric, extra information has to be put in to the PC in the form of land beacon data (RINEX). These are fixed beacons around the country and data from them is downloaded free from the Ordnance Survey web site and inputted into the PC. The software makes the adjustments (called post processing) and your map is now ready.

To give an illustration of the possibilities I mapped the Paddy End Dressing Floors in 8 hours, using a borrowed Thales Mobilemapper unit courtesy of North Craven Historical Research Group. Another half day would be necessary to log all the smaller features. Note: This does not supplant the need to use more detailed surveying methods if the situation required it.

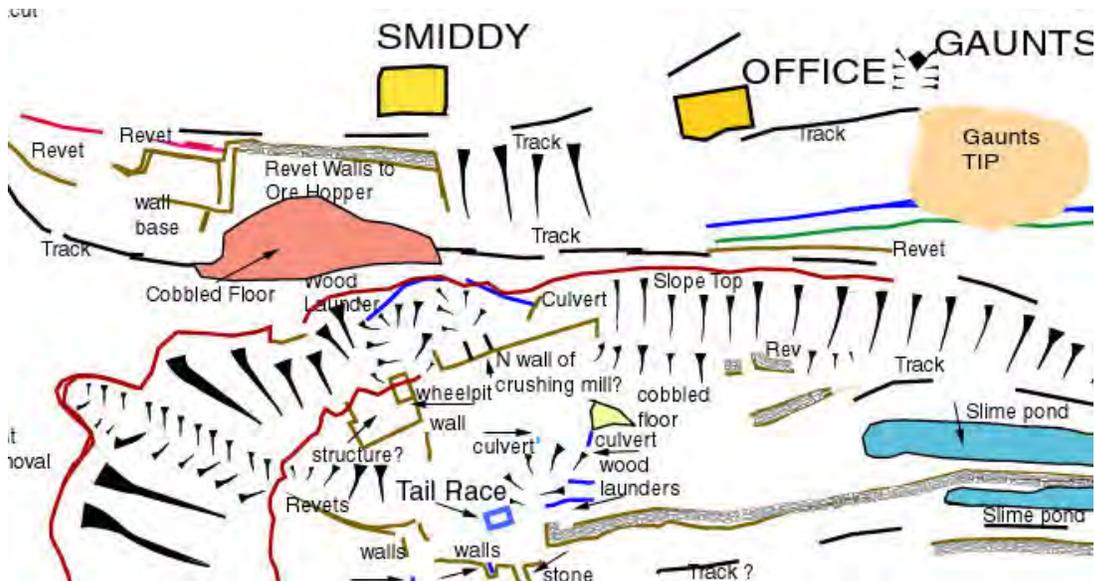
This is an aerial view (from Flash Earth) of the Paddy End area; The Dressing Floors take up the central portion and Levers Water Beck snakes down the left hand side. The track up to Levers Water can be seen running diagonally from right to left and thence off the top of the picture, and the water leats that used to carry water from Low Water Beck and on to Red Dell can clearly be seen.



To zoom into the small shaded area:



The comments e.g. Wall, Revet Top etc, were put into the mobile on site. The above may look complicated but all that was done was that the appropriate feature was chosen on the mobile and then the object was walked around or stood on as appropriate, nothing more.



The above was created using the data from the Mobilemapper map – look familiar?

The information can be imported into professional GIS systems e.g. Mapinfo, Arcview, etc. This is a serious recording procedure and is used by professional archeologists.

CATMHS is seeking the advice of the LDNP archeologists on how such equipment can best be used, should we decide to go down this route. If we were to acquire one, certain problems of usage have to be resolved, but since GPS mapping involves surface only activity it is hoped that more CATMHS members would participate in such projects. Using the instrument is very straight forward, and it speeds up the process of recording so much that worthwhile results can be obtained in quite short sessions, with great accuracy and freedom from error. It would facilitate projects such as recording the Paddy End Dressing Floors which is already in hand, but would perhaps also enable us to complete the Furness Relic Survey, which has been left off for several years and to embark upon other projects, to record the Tilberthwaite Ghyll mining site for example, not to mention projects further afield

This equipment makes possible the Cumbrian Mines Relic survey, this seems like a bold project, but one I think is worthy of CATMHS. But it will need your help. Will you support this project?

Mark Simpson, Jan 1 2007.

CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

Committee Meeting held on the Monday 20th November 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 Middlecleugh |
| 13 Mines Forum meeting | 14 CATMHS website |
| 15 Date and venue next meeting | 16 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. Mitchell (MM), M. Scott (MSc) & A. Wilson (AW).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm. 10 committee members attended.

D. Borthwick attended as an observer.

1 Apologies for absence from: All present.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 18^h September had been previously circulated to members.

It was **PROPOSED** by IM and **SECONDED** by JB 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 reported that English Heritage would shortly be making a decision regarding the 'Listing' of Mandall's office.

3.2 Item 15.4 JA had installed the wire safety rope in Hospital Level.

3.3 Item 7 IM suggested we discussed the RA forms after the AGM.

4 Secretary's Report

Received since last meeting

4.1 LDNPA – Information regarding the Draft Local Development Framework of the National Park - questionnaires to be filled in.

4.2 NAMHO –The NAMHO Council Meeting was held on 18th November, see NAMHO website for details of 2007 Conference in Devon.

4.3 BCRA – NIL.

5 Treasurer's Report

JA had circulated the balance sheet to committee members, covering the period from 18th September to 20th November. There had been significant income from: donations, publications and subscriptions. Thanks were expressed to Major Hext for his kind donation. JA would be asking the web master to publish our yearly accounts on the CAT website.

The current a/c stood at 2161.61 and the Scottish Widow a/c at 14000.00.

6 Membership Secretary's Report & Newsletter

IM reported that 40 members had renewed to date. The newsletter went out at the beginning of November, IM thought it a bit thin, missing several meet reports. Please send for the next newsletter. IM would like to print the 2006 AGM reports in next newsletter, all agreed.

7 Meets Report

JA reported a successful meet at Force Crag yesterday, 5 members had attended.

8 Publications

Route cards were discussed, also whether to produce Journal No.6. To be discussed again at January meeting.

9 Library

The contents of the CAT archive were moved to JRM on 20th September. Access to the contents was discussed and a policy drawn up. IM **PROPOSED** that:

a) CATMHS will pay an annual fee to the Ruskin Museum of £100 in return for storage of and access to the CAT archive.

b) CAT members may have free access to the archive during the museum opening hours.

- c) Non-members must have written authority from the CATMHS Secretary, and must pay the Ruskin Museum admission charge.
- d) Membership Secretary will provide the museum with a membership list.
- e) The museum would like three working days notice of an intention to visit.
- f) Lending: The CATMHS collection is for reference only. Non-members may not remove any material from the Ruskin Museum. Any member wanting to borrow material from the collection must have the written permission of the CAT Secretary. We have no objection to material being photographed. Details to be recorded in the visitors' book and the card file.

SECONDED by JA, all were in favour. IM would discuss details with Vicky Slowe.

MS would deposit the EH Coniston Survey and the CAT Paddy End underground survey in the library.

10 Coniston Mines & Quarries

Work at the Paddy End water treatment works is progressing. The LDNPA Archaeology dept. have sent out tenders for a more complete survey of the area and are discussing funding with United Utilities.

UCL survey – MM had received pictures from Richard Rabe and would make up a CD.

Thanks go to JA who had been carrying out maintenance work at Mandall's as well doing safety work in Hospital Level, over the last couple of days.

Today, committee members had cleared the portal at Levers Water Mine, again. Extra hangers are needed for January meet.

Members had surveyed nine supports for aerial fright to Saddlestone Quarry, as part of the Coniston Old Man History Project.

MS had been doing a high quality GPS mapping exercise on the Paddy End dressing floor, in preparation for CAT starting to do more landscape type surveys.

Kernal Level Hopefully work would start here in early spring. Access to the mine (and any others opened by CAT) after opening was discussed. It was decided in future that as part of the initial agreement, we should inform the landowners of our policy on the protection of any artefacts and rare geological features found. Maintenance of mines opened by us should be discussed; do they need to go on the meets list? SB to discuss with JK.

11 Hudgillburn Mine

Member Stephen Moreton had contacted the mineral rights owner, who had no objection to him taking mineral samples for research purposes. He will contact SB when he wishes to visit the mine. A maintenance meet is required at the mine.

12 Middlecleugh Mine

JB reported that work was continuing well at Middlecleugh Mine, stone had been taken up to the mine and walling of the gap in the arching had started, there had been 14 meets to date. DB showed the group the 1922 VM mine plan.

12 Mines Forum meeting

The meeting was attended for CAT by SB (see minutes), the next meeting will be 2nd March, at JRM Coniston, to be followed by a walk around the valley. PF will book venue.

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 29th January 2007, at the BMSC Hut Coniston at 6.30 pm.

15 Any Other Business

15.1 MS asked if should we buy a high quality GPS for CAT survey work and for general use by members; cost about £1800. He would research, to be discussed next meeting.

15.2 MM had been discussing Silver Gill Mine with Warren Allison who is keen to do more work there. We would give our support to the project.

15.3 DB discovered he had 2 sets of RCHME plans of Coniston, the spare set to go to Ruskin.

15.4 Arrangements for the AGM & Dinner were discussed. Please bring raffle prizes - AW would organise. Slide presentations after dinner – SB would contact JK.

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

SB 25/11/06

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“Incompetent” of Force Crag reports: “After Dr Descender rigged a pull through round a square timber to descend an ore pass and then left to carry out photography, I was at my wit’s end with worry to think one of the Society’s best ropes would be abandoned. I was needlessly concerned the **RRR** worked it’s magic as always and the rope slid down just as surely as a snake slithers silently to safety and security.

“The Chairman” says: “I would have avoided the embarrassment of leaving all those ropes

CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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