

## **1988**

### **Meet Secretary's Report**

There will have been 25 official Meets during 1988, of which 7 were of more than one days duration. These were the Easter Meet to North Wales, Spring Bank Holiday meet to Tyndrum, two weekends at Nenthead and one each in Derbyshire, Swaledale, and Cleveland. At Cleveland we were hosted by the Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society and given a very informed guided tour of Great Ayton Ironstone Mine, Sill Howe Whinstone Mine and Boulby Alum Quarries and we have invited the CIAS to make a return visit to the Lake District. At Boulby there is a working potash mine, which is believed to be the deepest working mine in Europe, and I hope to arrange an underground visit there next year.

The 18 one day meets all took place on Sundays and covered a variety of mine visits at all grades which included surface walks, guided underground visits and serious exploration. There were 5 visits to the Coniston Coppermine and two to the mines at Caldbeck, as well as meets at Greenside, the Borrowdale Wadd Mine, Thornthwaite, Carrock, Crossfell, Malham, Goldscope, Knockmurton and the slate quarries at Honister and at Coniston. It should be noted that the Borrowdale Wadd Mine is still in a dangerous condition following a rock fall in the lower workings, whilst the meet at Carrock is likely to be the last for some time, as all the adits have now been bulldozed in and the buildings have been removed.

There were 7 Wednesday evening meets, which included a work meet to complete the infilling at Ding Dong, a walk around the Lindal iron workings, a visit to Backbarrow Iron Furnace, an underground visit to Levers Water Mine and a surface walk to the workings on Brim Fell, both at Coniston and an evening at the County Record Office in Barrow, which attracted a surprisingly large number of people.

Support has been varied, with attendance ranging from 3 to 18 members. There is no clear pattern of attendance, but there does seem to have been a slight decline in the average number of participants. The Chairman circulated a questionnaire, which was returned by 21 people, in order to try to find out members preferences, but their statements do not seem to correlate with actual attendances. There is a small group of enthusiasts who attend most meets, some people are selective, whilst others attend infrequently. A glance through the so far incomplete set of Meet Reports for 1988 revealed that there were at least 44 different people who had participated, so it could be said that roughly half the membership took part. Don Borthwick and Alistair Lings must be commended, for Don, who is one of the regular supporters, travels from Gateshead, and Alistair has twice travelled over especially from Ireland.

In addition to the published meets there have been several exploratory meets at Coniston resulting in the discovery of more 'new' ground. Exploration of the New Engine Shaft in Red Dell resulted in the discovery of an iron kibble and ultimately gained entry to a part of Deep Level which we have long been trying to reach and which runs from the foot of

the New Engine Shaft via the Great Cross Course towards Paddy End. The details of this are published in the current Newsletter. There have also been new discoveries at Paddy End which include a vertical connection between the Arête Chamber horizon and the Boxing Day Dig on Top Level and there is probably still more to discover in this area.

Looking ahead, the new Meets List is now available and information is included about Coniston Exploration, SRT Training, social evenings and the Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit. The frequency of meets has been reduced slightly, for it is felt that perhaps a better attendance might result from fewer meets and that the more active members would like more time for active exploration and to pursue their own particular interests.

The big event in the forthcoming year will be the biennial conference of the National Association of Mining History Organisations, (NAMHO), which is to be co-hosted by ourselves and the Lake District Mines and Quarries Trust, from the 14th to the 17th of July. Our Society is to organise the display and exhibition area, provide one of the four lectures as well as a seminar and is to provide a programme of field trips. This is a major event which, if it is successful will considerably enhance our reputation. It will however involve a great deal of work and a lot of people will be required to man the display area and to help with the field trips. We look for the support of the membership in this project.

Ian Matheson  
December 1988,