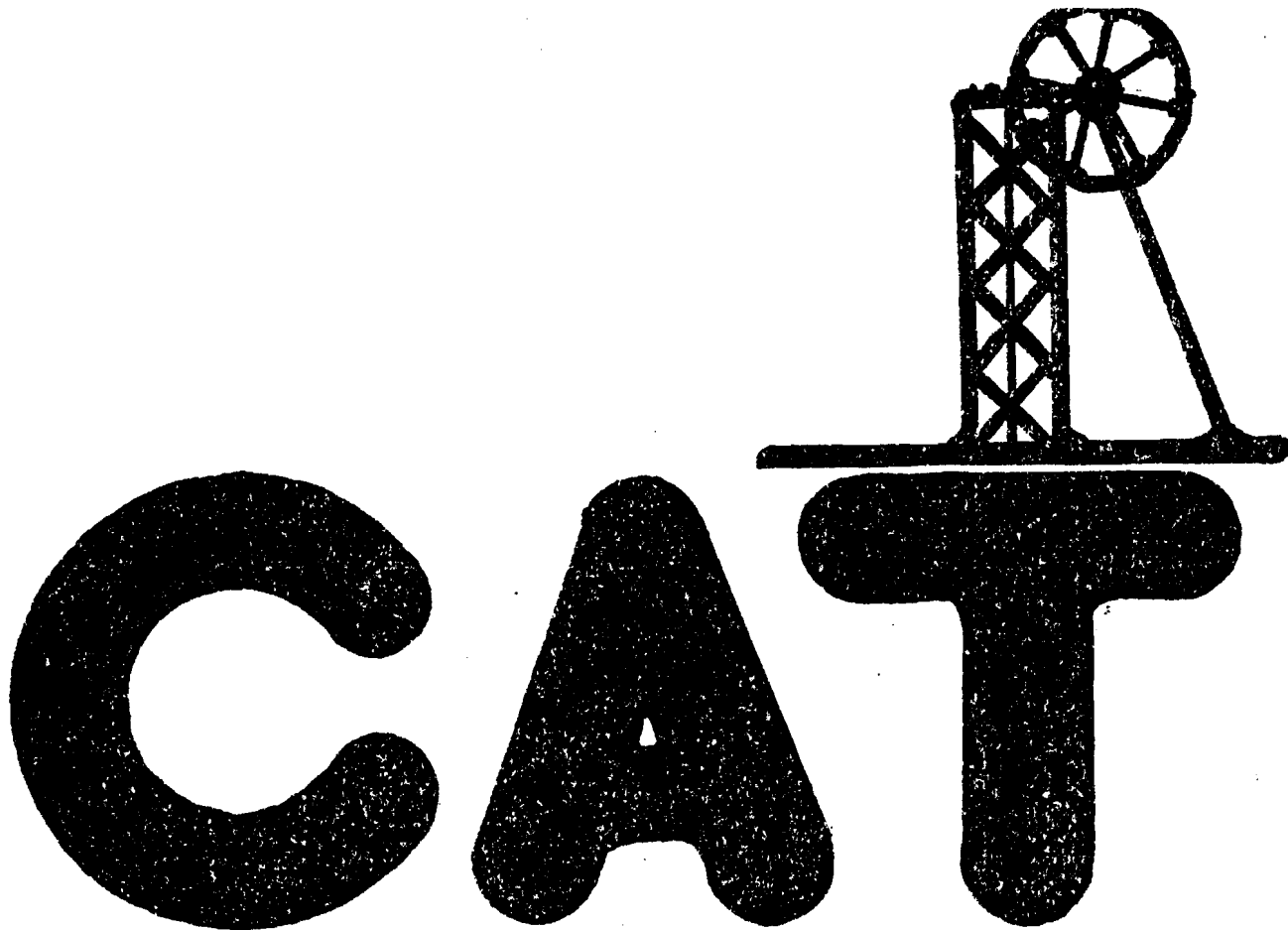


# CAT



*Newsletter No. 7*





## CONTENTS

|             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Page 1..... | Chairman's Report 1984.             |
| 2.....      | Greenside.                          |
| 7.....      | Nenthead Meet.                      |
| 8.....      | Book Review.                        |
| 9.....      | The End of an Era?                  |
| 11.....     | And While We're on the Subject..... |
| 12.....     | Briefing.                           |
| 13.....     | CAT Christmas Quiz No.1.            |
| 14.....     | New Discoveries.                    |
| 15.....     | Odds and Ends.                      |
| 18.....     | Christmas Quiz No.2.                |
| 20.....     | Black List.                         |
| 21.....     | Meets Review.                       |

### CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 1984

Chairman - Peter Fleming  
Secretary - Eric Holland  
Treasurer and Membership Secretary - Maureen Stone  
Meets Secretary - Alen McFadzean  
Tackle Master - Chris Jones

### COMMITTEE

Ken Battersby, Dave Blundell, Mike Maher, Mike Mitchell, and Alan Westall.

## FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

\*\*\*\*\*

Chairman's Report 1984

The 5th birthday of our Society passed almost unnoticed on the 9th October this year. Ever since the inaugural meeting, which was held at Stainton Old Hall in 1979, it has been a case of all systems go in two senses - one being the administrative aspect of the club from the point of view of the officers and their committee, in the face of increasing membership, and the other the almost countless new mine systems we have pioneered in this time.

It has all been very rewarding and encouraging, and whilst we have not yet perhaps reached 100% maturity as a society (has any other), we have developed among our more regular meet attenders, a hard core of members who are now experts in pushing things further than we had previously thought possible. This has only been made possible by constant practice and the advance of technology and associated techniques. This has borne fruit in the last year or two, particularly in Coniston Mines, where important new discoveries are still being made by SRT methods which are recorded for the benefit of all our members in future copies of the Newsletters and Journals. However, the committee is very much aware of the requirements of the great proportion of members who cannot, or do not wish to partake in the 'hard stuff', and we hope that the content of the meets lists reflects this.

CAT Journal No. 1 had a print run of 1,000, of which only about three hundred remain. We expect them to go by early spring 1985. It will have been noticed that the frequency of the Newsletter has increased. I think that the Newsletter is an important, regular information link with the membership. I should like to see more contributions from members, perhaps in the form of readers' letters or "news briefs", containing news of mining interest country-wide, which could be of use or interest to all members. Another idea is a regular cartoon feature - if we have an artist willing.

The CAT publicity slide presentation has been let loose on the public three or four times this year, and although it still needs polishing up a bit it has resulted in extra journal sales and new members.

Recently we have looked at a small building in Coniston, with the intention of using it as a store/museum or base for the Society. The Planning Board was approached with the intention of taking out a lease, but the land on which it is situated is possibly going to change hands shortly so it is a case of waiting a while yet.

Another new development this year is the formation by one of our members of a Cumbrian Ore Mines Rescue Unit (COMRU). It is affiliated to the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association but will also cover the Northern Pennine Ore Fields including Nenthead. A good number of CAT members are included on the call-out list. A report on a training meet appeared in our Newsletter No.6.

For a successful five years of progress it is a duty and a pleasure for me, as retiring chairman, to extend gratitude and appreciation to the Club's hard-working officers and committee members both past and present, who have made all this possible - not forgetting the ladies who organised fund raising parties - and to the members themselves for their enthusiasm and encouragement. With such support and backing, I am sure my successor can look forward to a further five years or more of success and progress. To him or her, I say Good Luck, and to you all Best Wishes for 1985.

*Peter Fleming*

# GREENSIDE

by McF

On the 7th of October a dozen C.A.T. members visited Greenside Mine in Glenridding near Ullswater. This was the fourth official meet at the mine, and differed from the others in so much as the objective was to thoroughly explore the Low Horse Level, one of the three main adit levels, rather than to descend the 740' of miners' ladders to the Lucy Tongue Level. The day went well; very little new ground was covered, though aided by a series of excellent surveys from the Blundell Collection we were able to determine precise locations for future digs and establish which areas of the mine would be worth examining more objectively.

Greenside Mine is by far the Lake District's largest lead mine; its neighbours, Hartsop Hall, Eagle Crag, Helvellyn, and Brown Cove, are almost insignificant in comparison. It could even be argued that it is the largest mine in the Lake District, that it is deeper and embraces a wider area than the Coniston Copper Mines, though don't take my word on that. One thing is for sure, it is certainly not as complex as the Copper Mines, there are not as many infuriating loose ends to tie up. But the scope for exploration in Greenside is enormous; there is an immense area of stoped ground above the Lucy Tongue Level which has never been penetrated, there are major haulage levels - the 36fthm Level and the 48fthm Level - which follow the vein for thousands of feet but have so far proved evasive, and there are the shafts, Willie Shaft and a number of rises and ladder-ways, all awaiting discovery.

It is a sad fact that no significant exploratory work has taken place in the mine since the workings were rendered accessible in the 1970s. Since those early days most mining societies visiting Greenside, C.A.T. included, have been content to descend the 740ft to the Lucy Tongue Level, wander down to Smith's Shaft and Lucy Shaft, photograph the rather splendid makeshift museum in Warsop's Crosscut, then embark upon the long and weary ascent back to the surface. And this is probably the crux of the matter; it is such an arduous slog up to the entrance in the first place, and so energy-sapping carting ropes, ladders, and shovels up and down those rises that no one has the strength or inclination left to commence digging and heaving rocks about - far easier to stroll along to Warsop's Crosscut and take more pictures of old boots and clog irons. There is also another factor which, I suspect, has played a major role in the demise of genuine exploratory trips into Greenside: the stopes and levels flanking the ladder-way between High Horse Level and the Lucy Tongue Level are so impressive and expansive that people tend to assume these are the limits of the mine. Not so, they have observed but one tiny portion. The Great Stope, that fantastic excavation entered from the ladder-way between the High and Low Horse levels, is just part of a much larger stope which has collapsed. Below Low Horse Level the ladder-way descends through more stopes; these are the workings of the Alma, a secondary ore-shoot mined since the 1930s. The Alma, although on the main Greenside Vein, is but a fraction of the stoped ground on this horizon. South of the Alma, towards the Willie Shaft, are workings dating back to the 1850s which are, according to the old surveys, far more extensive than anything so far explored.

So there is plenty to go for in Greenside; the potential is quite staggering. In theory both the 36fthm Level and the 48fthm Level should run from the Alma right through the old workings, past the Willie Shaft, and into another series of large stopes in the South Ore Shoot above the Lucy Shaft - a total distance of 2000ft. Of course, a considerable portion of this ground may have collapsed, indeed it is not unreasonable to assume the whole shebang has given up the ghost and tumbled in. Supporters of this opinion point their fingers at the Low Horse Level, drawing attention to areas of badly shattered ground brimming over with huge boulders; I will point mine at the Lucy Tongue Level which traverses the whole of the productive mine without one blockage. Somewhere between the two there is an awful lot of ground waiting to be explored; if this has collapsed then it's hard lines, if not the Cumbria Amenity Trust should be in there and searching for the Willie Shaft.

Now I don't wish to give anyone the impression that C.A.T. hasn't done any original exploration in Greenside, in fact it can be said that very nearly all new ground in the mine was opened up by our members. Our associations with Greenside date back to 1972 when Alan Westall, then a young and ambitious mountaineer, came across a rusty wheelbarrow on top of a small spoil-heap at the head of Glencoyne dale. On making enquiries he discovered that this was the spoil-heap of the Glencoyne Level, a short crosscut to the higher reaches of Greenside Mine, and official escape route from the Lucy Tongue Level. The entrance had been filled when the mine closed in 1962, but unlike the Lucy Tongue Level, which was blown in and plugged with concrete, this was filled with spoil only.

Later that year Westall returned with Eric Holland, Peter Fleming, and others, to have a crack at winning into the mine. Heartened by a successful dig at Coniston, where they broke into the Bouncy Level up above Triddle Shaft, they set about digging into the Low Horse Level. Within a few hours the level was open; Low Horse was explored as far as the first stope where it was found to be blocked by huge boulders.

The dig in the Glencoyne Level took a little longer. All through the winter months the team worked at the spoil. The miners had done a good job; a shallow shaft rising to the surface from just within the entrance had been filled with rubbish, this was removed from underneath and carted out in the wheelbarrow the miners had abandoned. The main diggers were Westall, Fleming, Holland, Ronnie Calvin, Peter Blezard, Anne Danson, Ray Bland, and Phil Meredith. At times the weather was so cold, bare hands stuck to the metal of shovels and wheelbarrow handles. But the diggers were rewarded for their patient work; late one Sunday evening, in the depths of winter, they broke through into the upper levels of Greenside Mine. Knowing that what lay before them was a deep and a complex mining system they waited for the following weekend to commence the descent.

Peter Fleming takes up the story: "We returned the following Saturday and entered the Glencoyne Level, looking along every tunnel we came to, not knowing where we would find ourselves. After descending a short ladder onto what we now know is High Horse Level we discovered the top of a very deep shaft down which a series of wooden ladders had been hung. We clambered down these ladders without any safety lines, taking no precautions whatsoever, and alighted on the Low Horse Level horizon."

After wandering along the Low Horse level they came to the post 1930 workings of the Alma ore-shoot. From here another series of ladders, this time made of steel, took them down a further 440ft to a platform between two 50ft shafts which dropped directly onto the Lucy Tongue Level. The ladder-way continued down the most northerly of the two shafts and was in two flights, with a wooden platform half-way down.

Fleming: "We could see the Lucy Tongue Level and were all agog with excitement. Up till then all the ladders had been made of steel but for some reason these last two were wooden. While descending the penultimate ladder I could feel my fingers sinking into the wood. I set off down the last ladder but when my eyes were level with the top rung the whole thing collapsed. I sailed backwards into the darkness clutching two pieces of wood. Lucky for me the bottom was very muddy."

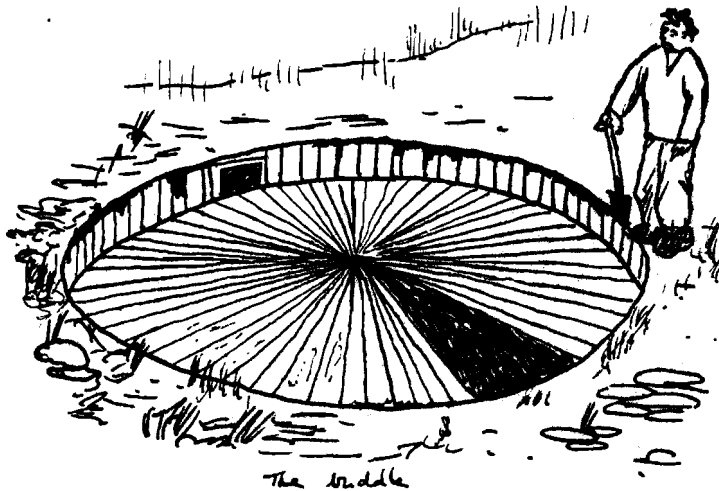
Fleming, after performing this spectacular arrival on the Lucy Tongue Level, was faced with the dilemma of finding a way back up the shaft. Blezard volunteered to climb back to the surface and fetch a rope, a feat which he accomplished in record time, though he needn't have bothered for just after he departed Holland noticed that there was a compressed-air pipe running down the other shaft, so he shinned down to join his comrade. That day Fleming and Holland pushed the Lucy Tongue Level as far as the flooded Smith's Shaft in Warsop's Crosscut. They managed to shin back up the air pipe in time to meet Blezard returning with the rope.

Subsequent visits laid bare the Lucy Tongue Level in the form we know it today. The foot of Willie Shaft, which drops from somewhere on the Low Horse Level, was discovered though found to be blocked with debris. This was as expected for the shaft timbering collapsed many decades ago and was never cleared by the miners. Not far from the foot of the Willie Shaft, just off Warsop's Crosscut, Fleming discovered the foot of Brooke's Sump, a ladder-shaft descending from the 48fthm Level and running parallel with the Willie Shaft. This was sunk in three stages and is known to connect with the Willie Shaft along a short crosscut on the

48ftm Level. Fleming ascended the first set of ladders, which took him up about 70ft, and found himself on a tiny platform. He was at the top of the lower stage of Brooke's Sump; the middle stage was off-set slightly and had been sealed up with railway lines and woods. No way on. Fleming returned to the Lucy Tongue Level and the sump was never climbed again.

During these early trips the Great Stope was partially explored. Because of the incredible dimensions of this stope it was not possible to relate its size to those of the other workings below. When standing at the entrance, which is a window off the uppermost ladder-way, lights would not penetrate to the other end; when standing in the floor, lights would not penetrate to the roof. To further the cause of science a distress rocket was launched from the window in the hope it would illuminate the complete stope. The rocket landed behind a rock pile and before fizzling out performed its task masterfully. At the further end of the stope were boulders - to use the words of Eric Holland - the size of bungalows.

The Cumbria Amenity Trust, which did not become an official society until September 1979, had its first meet at Greenside during May 1980. This was a weekend meet. We camped at Gillside Farm, which was handy for both the mine and the village. On the Saturday we had our first, and so far most rewarding, archaeological dig. Members Wickenden, Wade, Cole, Holland, Fleming, McFadzean, and the Battersbys, carefully exhumed an early nineteenth century buddle along with two sets of crushing rollers. The buddle, a circular wooden tank thirteen feet in diameter, was in



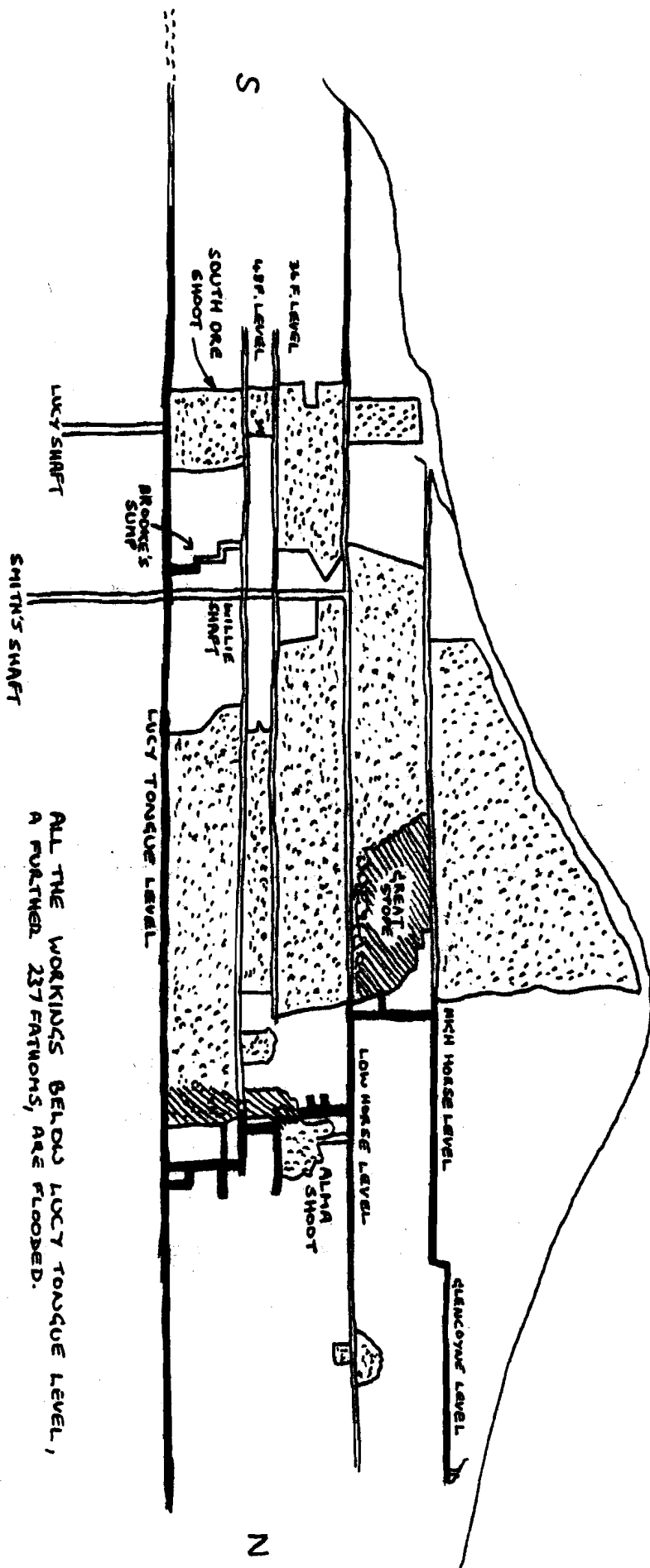
remarkable condition despite its age, and was constructed of several dozen identical segments which tapered towards the centre of the tank. The buddle was used for separating finely-ground galena from waste material, the idea being that a quantity of veinstone would be placed in the centre of the tank (which was slightly conical, the centre being higher than the perimeter) and washed slowly towards the edges by a steady trickle of water; a paddle mechanism aided the process and the waste was washed away leaving the heavier lead deposits stranded on the cone. A wooden

conduit directed the waste and excess water to a nearby beck. The crushing rollers were in a worse state of repair; for a start the actual rollers had disappeared but the balance mechanisms and the main framework were still there. This machinery was installed by the Greenside Mining Syndicate and was engaged to process ore from the High Horse Level workings. A waterwheel, propelled by water from the nearby Top Dam, powered the various machines.

The following day Mark Wickenden, Dick Wade, Stuart Cole, Fleming, Holland, and McFadzean were joined by Mike Mitchell and Peter Dawes for a trip down to the Lucy Tongue Level. Mike and Peter were already familiar with the mine, having been down on several occasions previously. For Peter Dawes, Greenside Mine holds a special interest; his father, grandfather, and two uncles, worked here as miners. His father, after serving his apprenticeship, worked his way up to being chief driller, sinking shafts and testing drilling equipment for Ingersoll Rand and various other companies, before being obliged to find alternative work because of respiratory problems.

No new ground was covered on this trip but in November 1981, after another trip to the Lucy Tongue Level, C.A.T. members scaled a high and very unstable boulder slope at the southern extremity of the Great Stope, and established that there was no way on into the extensive nineteenth century workings which follow the Greenside Vein for another 1000ft. A trip in November 1983, when no less than thirty-two members turned up, also revealed no new ground, this being purely a visit to the Lucy Tongue Level for those who had never been down Greenside Mine before; but having said that, Martin Maher and Mike Mitchell bottomed one of the deep stopes on the Alma shoot and determined its exact position above the Lucy Tongue Level

# SECTION ALONG GREENSIDE MAIN VEIN



ALL THE WORKINGS BELOW LUCKY TONGUE LEVEL, A FURTHER 237 FATHOMS, ARE FLOODED.

STORED GROUND

EXPLORED GROUND.



by shouting to each other through a blocked ore-hopper. Also that day, McFadzean and Dobie attempted to scale Brooke's Sump but the wooden ladders had deteriorated since Fleming's partial ascent in 1972 and they were forced to retire after a few feet.

And that brings us back to the 7th of October. At last the time had come to make a concerted effort to penetrate the unknown territories of the Greenside Vein and hopefully win through to the top of the Willie Shaft. Wickenden, Blundell, C.H. Jones, Tyler, Hewer, and McFadzean, attempted to find a way through the collapsed stopes from the outer end of the Low Horse Level. The idea was to follow the wooden hangers which had at one time carried power cables to the top of the Willie Shaft and thence down to the electric winding engine at Smith's Shaft. Not as easy as it sounds, for the level branched into two just before the collapsed stopes were reached, each branch running into crushed ground. A quick recce revealed that both of these branches were adorned with cable hangers, which complicated matters no end. After several hours poking and digging this section of the Low Horse Level was abandoned, it being clear that the possibilities of finding a way through were very slim indeed.

Meanwhile Mitchell, Webb, Wilson, and Westall, entered the mine through the Glencoyne Level and descended the old rises to the Low Horse Level. Now those of you who have been down Greenside may recall that a large-diameter cast-iron pipe accompanies the ladder for part of the way, indeed you can't help noticing it for every now and again it tries to muscle in and nudge you off the rungs. This pipe is a relic of the mine's former glory, dating back to the days when the Willie Shaft was the main artery to the deeper levels, and was installed during the 1850s at about the same time as work commenced on driving the Lucy Tongue Level. The pipe carried a water supply to the hydraulic winding and pumping engines at the head of the Willie Shaft from dammed workings on the High Horse Level. At a later date a second pipe was installed, bringing water from the Low Horse Level down through the workings to a second set of hydraulic engines at the head of the Lucy Shaft. Mitchell and team reckoned that if they followed this pipe through thick and thin it would deliver them, like the yellow brick road, to their journey's end. What an amazingly simple idea! I can't imagine why nobody had thought of it before. So they followed the pipe which, after a right-angle bend at the foot of the ladder-way, disappeared into a masonry wall. After removing several rocks they found themselves in a short tunnel, terminating after a few yards in collapsed ground. At this point Mitchell reckons the pipe is running under the floor of the Great Stope, which is not good news. So much for the yellow brick road. And so at one end of the Low Horse Level we have a water pipe disappearing into rock and rubble, while at the other end diverging routes of cable hangers are busy doing the same thing. Somewhere between the two, like a pig-in-the-middle, is the Willie Shaft.

Harking back to what I was saying about there being no significant discoveries in Greenside since the early '70s: this is true although it will have become apparent from this brief account of the Cumbria Amenity Trust's associations with Greenside Mine that every now and then a little progress is made. On future meets the emphasis will be on pushing into new territory or 'forced exploration' as it says so dramatically on the introductory page of the Log Book. That doesn't mean there won't be any visits to the Lucy Tongue Level and the museum in Warsop's Crosscut; on the contrary, there are places down there that are in need of a little attention. - the stopes above the Lucy Shaft, the foot of the Willie Shaft, the ever tantalising Brooke's Sump, to name but a few. So there's something to go at for a start. And who knows, when all that's been sorted out there might even be time to take some more photos of old boots and clog irons.

---

Percy Pitprop says:

If you need someone small to get through a 'fall'  
you could do a lot worse than get Dennis,  
but if the water is deep - say four or five feet,  
he finds it a bit of a menace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Percy Pitprop says:

Always check your welly before you put your foot in it!

---

Nenthead Meet. 27th-28th October 1984.

The regular pilgrimage to the Alston Moor area was again centered on Cherry Tree cottage, Nenthead. A few folk arrived on Friday night and started the festivities early in both the Crown and the Miners. The party then retired to a Disco in the Village Hall, which, it must be said, is the coldest place in the North of England. The CAT contingent spent the night clustered around an old candle stub that Peter Fleming discovered in his beard. Peter tried hard to get the Disco to play a waltz with no success and Mike Maher had to be restrained from inspecting one of the local attractions.

Saturday dawned to find the CAT team considerably strengthened by the arrival of several others including Martin Maher who was a bit miffed to find that no-one would come with him on a descent of a deep shaft on a single rope. Conservative (Dave Blundell's) estimates put its depth at 450 ft. and this brought forward hurried excuses such as acute vertigo, recent heart transplants and old war wounds. Eventually a dual effort was decided upon with groups going to Haggs Level and the Firestone Level. After the Haggs party had set off a figure lurched into view carrying his worldly goods in a huge rucksack, none other than Alastair from Whernside Manor who made a habit of appearing and disappearing all weekend. He quickly strode off in pursuit of the Haggs party.

The Firestone Level trip was very much into unexplored ground as the group quickly found out. The level had already been surveyed on a previous trip and the way on was felt to be down a shaft which was drafting strongly, the further reaches of the mine being filled with foul air. The shaft proved to be about 40 ft. and dropped into a sub-level, the shaft continuing downward choked to about a quarter of its original diameter by thick red mud. The level walls were of very loose shale and no suitable belay could be secured until an old metal bar was found and wedged across allowing a descent to be made with extreme care by Martin Maher. He descended about 20 ft. to a level and tried to enter it but found his way blocked by a baulk of timber. A dig was started but the slowly collapsing sides of the shaft forced a retreat. At one point Martin was engulfed by a massive slide of mud. Two other shafts were located but the team was finally beaten back by a lack of suitable tackle for belays. The group left the mine in quick time led by 'Kung Fu' Cameron (Scotland's answer to Bruce Lee) who it is said climbed out with prusik knots made from his bootlaces. The Haggs Mine team also found several new places, unfortunately they were all behind unfinished digs. Some people have no staying power.

Saturday night was spent in the pub where a pickled egg eating contest took place with plenty of 'dog' for lubrication.

Sunday dawned with the shocking news that Mike Mitchell would not be attending having been forced back on the M6 due to mechanical failure in his bath chair. Several parties set off to investigate mines all over the area. The final tally included Flowedge, Nattras Gill, Holyfield, Farnbury, Redgroves Hush and Dun Fell.

An excellent meet with the promise of vast new treasures just around the next corner (honest). Thanks are again due to Helen Sherlock for allowing so many of us to invade

her premises. Finally if you havn't sampled the delights of Nenthead yet make an effort to come to the next meet.

### Parys Mountain Mine.

As some of you may have read in the National press this old mine may soon be re-opened on Anglesey. A Canadian Company, Imperial Metals Corporation are thinking of investing £25 million on developing copper mining.

### Book Reviews.

The British Lead Mining Industry.. Published by Dyllansow Truran, Redruth.(ISBN 9-90756-6-81-2) Price £10.95 Written by Roger Burt.

This book has been written by an acknowledged expert on the field with many publications already behind him. It is primarily an economic history and is ~~the~~ definitive work on this subject. There is much to interest the mining historian and it is set out chronologically so that there is a common thread running throughout the book. A good buy that would fit very nicely in anyones Christmas Stocking.

A History of Lead Mining in the Pennines. Arthur Raistrick and Bernard Jennings  
The Lead Miners of the Northern Pennines. C.J.Hunt.

Both the above are re-published by Davis and Kelsall, priced at £15.00 each.

These books have been much sought after for many years and have at last been re-published in a limited edition of 500 copies each. Both are excellent books.

All 3 of the above can be obtained from the Dales Railway Bookshop, Embsay, Skipton, Yorkshire. Dont forget post & pack ing.

Percy Pitprop says: Members who scrap their cars on the Queen's highway must be in a miniority!

Percy Pitprop says: All that glitters is mostly water!

DO YOU WANT EXCITEMENT,  
ADVENTURE, DISCOVERY? DO YOU  
WANT TO BOATLY SO WHERE NO  
LADDERMAN HAS GONE BEFORE?  
THEN CONTACT MAUREEN STONE  
AT STAINTON HALL,  
STAINTON, BARROW-  
IN-FURNESS, AND  
ASK HER TO BEAM  
DOWN AN APPLIC-  
ATION FORM FOR  
THE CUMBRIA  
AMENITY  
TRUST.

THE TRUST BE  
WITH YOU.



# THE END OF AN ERA?

by McF

It came as quite a shock to hear, on Radio Cumbria's early morning news on the 26th of October, that because of rising costs and an unhealthy order book the Buttermere and Westmorland Green Slate Company were laying-off twenty-five men at Honister Quarry, with the possibility of more lay-offs in the immediate future; even more of a shock to hear reports from Kendal that a Lakeland quarry, the identity of which was unknown, was to close down. For a few dark days it looked as though the end had finally come for Honister - England's longest lived and most extensive slate mine - and that an era spanning three-hundred years was about to draw to a close. On Monday the 29th of October the Northwestern Evening Mail reported that on the advice of a firm interested in taking over the quarries all twenty-five men were to be reinstated and the entire workforce put on a three-day week. Good news for the quarrymen. There have been no further reports in the press.

It is rumoured that there are no less than three companies interested in purchasing the quarries one of which is probably, though not definitely, Burlington Slate Limited, of Coniston. Previous to the mid 1970s Burlington Slate Limited was regarded amongst the Cumbrian quarrying fraternity as the poor relation; now, subsequent to its acquisition of Broughton Moor Quarry (which was heavily in debt), Elterwater, Moss Rigg, Spout Crag, and Brossen Stone quarries, it is by far the most prosperous of the local companies and has sales offices in London and Dallas. If Honister is taken into the Burlington fold then that will leave only Kirkstone Quarry, owned by the Fecitts of Skelwith Bridge, as the sole effective opposition.

So what does the future hold for Honister? Well that's a hard one to answer, for in all truth it's surprising that it has lasted this long. Slate mining ceased to be competitive when heavy earth-moving machinery was introduced into the open quarries during the 1950s and '60s. Far easier, cheaper, and safer to work an open slate quarry than a close-head, and what's more there is far less wastage of good slate metal. It makes economical sense to quarry slate in six-ton clogs, load them onto lorries then diamond-saw them into roofing-slate sized blocks ready to be rived, rather than to blast slate into clogs weighing no more than a ton (which wastes good metal), manhandle them with pulleys and air-winches onto bogeys, tram them out to daylight, reload them onto lorries and then saw them to size. That's not to say the Honister management has stood back and allowed the tides of modernisation to wash by, indeed the opposite can be said - they have re-equipped the mine to the best of their abilities, installing electric locos and an electric winding engine at the top of the underground incline. The sad fact is (sad from an economical point of view as opposed to an ecological one), that the narrow beds of cleaved volcanic ashes which constitute the Honister slate metals are so restrictive and are inclined at so steep an angle that they cannot be worked by opencast methods except on the very crown of the crag.

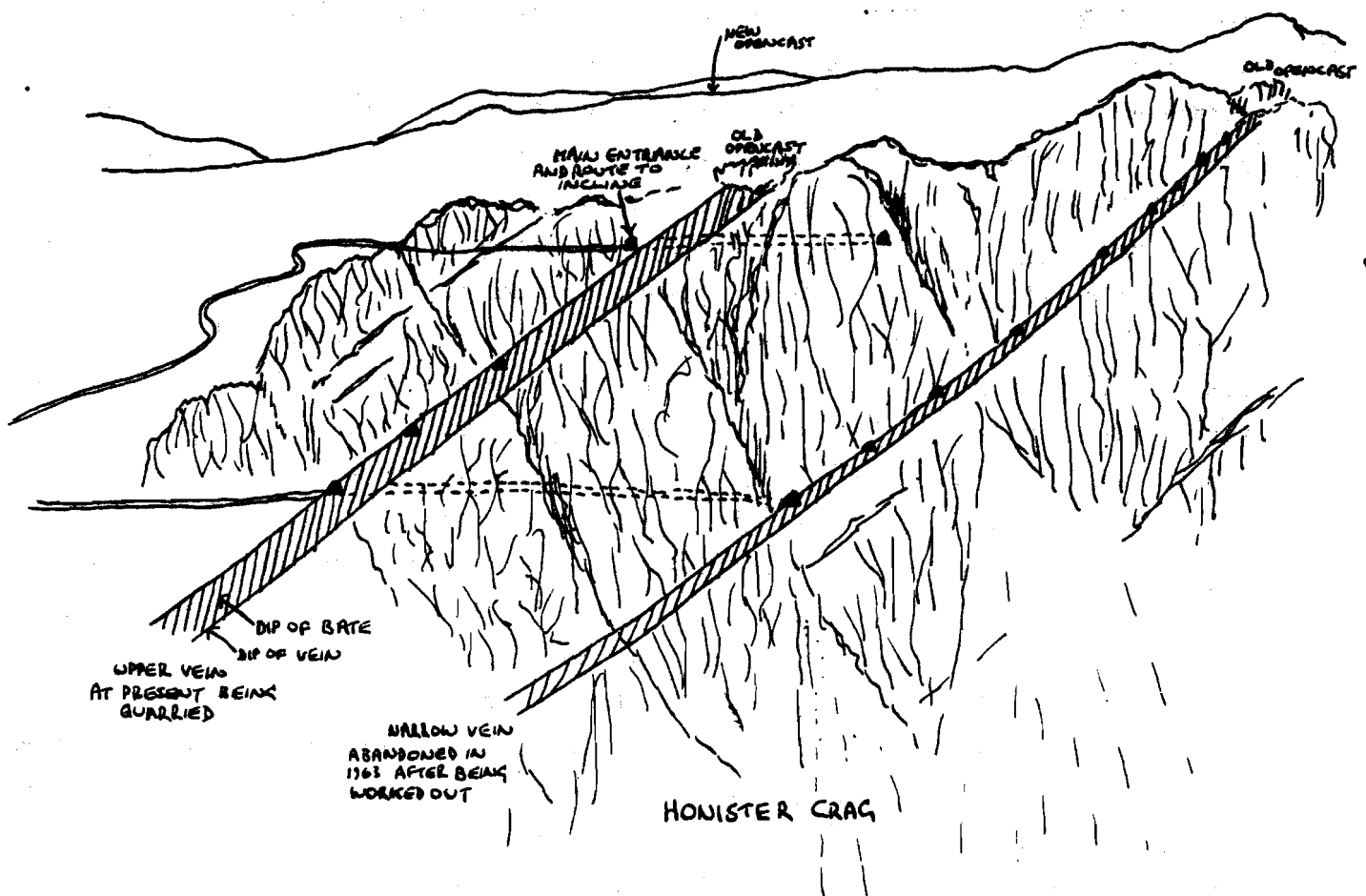
The slate beds, or veins, of the Lake District number about a dozen and run roughly parallel and in a north-easterly/south-westerly direction following the bate, or cleavage, of the slate. These veins can be divided into two main groups - the upper veins, which traverse the higher beds of the Borrowdale Volcanics (the host rock), and which include the Dunnerdale, Coniston, Tilberthwaite, Elterwater, Loughrigg, Kirkstone, Caudale Moor, Kentmere, and Long Sleddale slates, and the lower veins, which traverse the base beds of the Borrowdale Volcanics, and which include the Buttermere, Honister, Yew Crag, and Borrowdale slates. How these veins are situated locally determines whether they are quarried by opencast or close-head methods. When a slate vein intersects either the north-west or south-east slope of a fell it is generally quarried opencast and across the bate, simply because the vein presents itself in such a manner as to allow large quantities of metal to be removed from its side; prime examples of quarries worked in this situation are Brossen Stone (erroneously renamed Bursting Stone by the Ordnance Survey), and Kirkstone Quarry. When a vein strikes a fell on the north-east slope then it passes straight through the centre of the mountain and emerges in the south-west; when this happens the vein is mined, the workings progressing along the bate and into the mountain; the classic example here is Honister, others are Yew Crag Quarries, Old

Man Quarries, Caudale Quarries, and High Fellside Quarry; alternatively, if the vein surmounts a ridge or crosses ground which is relatively flat then it can also be quarried along the bate - if the vein is wide enough - by sinking workings down into it; this practice has been used extensively at Hodge Close, Pennyrigg Quarry, Betsy Crag Quarry, the massive Burlington Quarry at Kirkby-in-Furness, and with a limited success on top of the crag at Honister.

The trouble with the open quarry at Honister is that because of its altitude and distance from the saw sheds it can only be worked during the warmer months. This summer it was not worked at all, the reason being the working floor, which is presently about twenty feet below the quarry entrance, had flooded during the previous winter and the company was reluctant to meet the costs of pumping it out. Attempts to syphon the water were not successful. This was unfortunate because the slate metal found in the open quarry is of an excellent quality.

Over the past three years the company has been driving a tunnel from the highest level of the mine, along the slate vein to open out new reserves which were thought to lie beneath the open quarry about half a mile south-west of the crag face. If this venture proves to be successful then a new close-head will be initiated two-hundred feet beneath the open quarry, and slate clogs trammed out along the level to daylight without having to be raised on the incline. The tunnel is more or less completed. A ginnel has been blasted out across the bate to establish a working face and slate metal is now being removed. But according to the quarrymen the slate is of a very poor quality, too many seams running through it, too fractured and impure.

So the future of the Honister Slate Quarries is very uncertain; most of the good metal has gone, the old men took the best and the easiest to win. If Honister closes then we shall witness the end of an era, the Cumbrian slate mining era; another traditional industry will die a death; and another thirty-seven men will be signing on the dole.



## AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT....

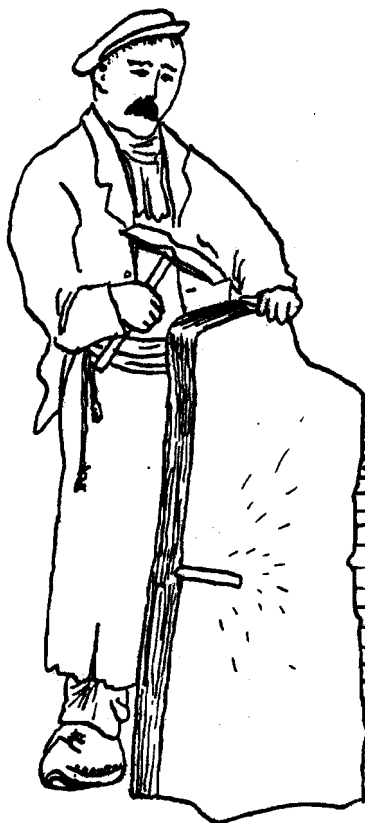
Slate riving, or splitting, is one of the few old skills that seem destined never to be replaced by mechanisation. All the slate quarries and mines of England and Wales still employ full compliments of rivers (pronounced rye-vers) and to watch them at work tapping away at the slate metal is a joy indeed. Riving machines have been tested over the years, but with little success; one has been recently installed at Burlington Quarry, and is at the moment still on trial.

The secret of riving slate is, like all those other skills that look simple enough to the layman, experience. For those of you who have never watched a river at work - and his mate the dresser, clipping the slates to their final size - here is a description taken from the North Lonsdale Magazine in the 1890s. The author, who is unknown, has just hitched a ride up the incline from Kirkby station and is picking his way through the batteries (spoil-heaps) of Smithy Hill Quarry, one of the many in that chain of quarries known collectively as Burlington, or Kirkby Quarry.

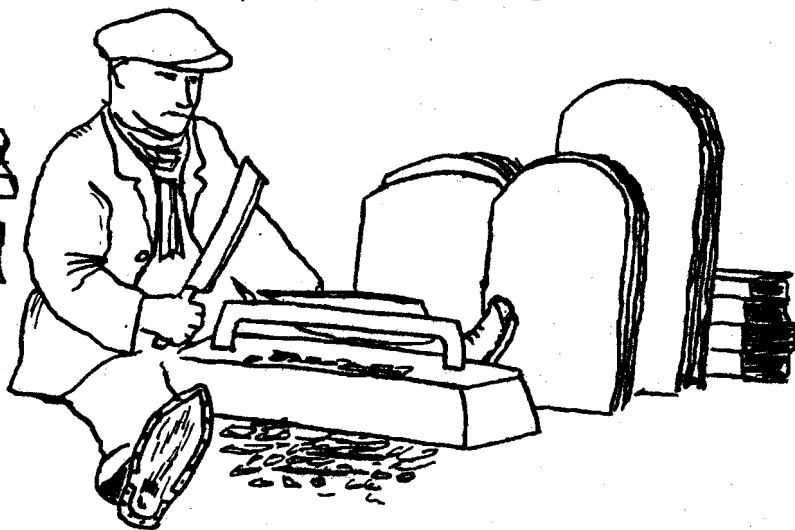
Prizzently I set off heyer up, for ther' was a bit furdur et gang, but t' waggins duddent run o' t'way that time. I fun' mesell amang heeaps o' rubbish an' brokken steeans, wi' clinkin' an' hammerin' gahin on o' rownd, but I cuddent see a body anywhars. In about five minnits I reeacht t' top, whahr lile rails ran about ivvery whars varra near - sum cummin' out o' dark hooals, and gangin' reet across a wide level spot, wi' a lock o' shades evven on t'edge. Ther' was t'bell that co's t'quarry foke to wark, an' tells 'em when ta leeave off; an' I meeakk na dowl it sounds plainer at neet than i't'mornin', if I izzent mistacken.

I meead ower to t' forside o' this pleeass past some girt weighs, and sah o' t' fellas ageeatt. Lads was drivin' horses an' waggins owt o' t' tunnels, an' bringin' girt clogs o' stuff to t' chaps i' thor shades as they co' ryvers, to be keckt up reet in front o' them. I'd heeard a deeal o' toke about this ryvin' job, sooa I teeak partiklar noatis o' yah chap as seem't ta hev it off gayly weel. He layt't owt a girt lump o' mettle, hofe as hey as hissels, fra his leeadd, an' set it up on end, an' then tappt deftly reet across fra yan side to t'other, ta scrat a mark like. He hed a queerly sooart o' hammer, wi' a sharp edge at ayder side, an' he streeakk ower t' seeamm coorse agayn an' agayn, liggin' on mair ivv'ry time, till at last it reeavv off clean throo, seeamm as a bit o' wood. It leeakt varra eeazy, an' I telt 'em sooa. He sed, "Ey, wy, it is ta them at knaas how te dew it, an' hes sarred the'r time tull it." He let me try a lile bit, but I fund it owt it was nin o' my job, for I was varra num indeed.

Evven anenst was a fella sittin' on t' ground, dressin' t' sleeatts his mate hed rivven up atop of a thing afooar 'em like a dure screeaper, wi' an' ahd carvin' knife or summat o' t' mak, an' he choppt corners off yan end till it was rownd. I ext 'em what he was dewin', an' he sed, "Meeakin' Kirby Rowndheeads, thou, duzzent ta see." "What's ta say," I clappt in deftly, "hezzent t' foke rownd heeads i' Kirby, then?" "Neea, that's o' maphment. Sum mafflin' fella set it agahin' yance, but it's sleeatts ye knah et gev that bye-neeamm to t' spot, 'cos the'r kenspak amang udder sooarts." "Thow's larnt me summat I duddent knah afoor," I sed, "an' I'se obleeged ta tha."



THE RIVER AND THE DRESSER AT WORK. THE RIVING HAMMER WAS LAST USED IN THE 1920S, AND REPLACED BY A HAMMER AND CHISEL. THE DRESSER FINISHES THE SLATES ON A BRAKE, CHOPPING OFF THE ROUGH EDGES WITH A WHITTLE. THIS METHOD OF DRESSING IS STILL USED THOUGH MOST DRESSING IS NOW DONE ON A SPECIAL MACHINE. BURLINGTON SLATES WERE CALLED KIRKBY ROUNDHEADS BECAUSE OF THEIR DISTINCTIVE SHAPES. THIS NAME LATER BECAME A NICK-NAME FOR KIRKBY FOLK.



## briefing

- FORCE CRAG MINE is in the process of being reopened by the New Coledale Mining Company, for the extraction and separation of sphalerite, the ore of zinc. The men behind the venture are engineer Mike Sutcliffe, Kendal businessman Lindsay Greenbank, and our own Peter Blezard. The mill is in working order but the company hopes to build up a stockpile of ore before putting it into action. A good deal of underground maintenance has taken place throughout the summer, there being a bad collapse on No.1 Level, the main haulage level, and rotten timberwork in No.0 Level. Things are now shaping up; rails have recently been laid into one of the stopes, and No.1 Level widened in places to allow a loco to pass.

THE 1985 MEETS LIST should be on its way to all members. There is a typing error in the meet for the Peak Caverns, 2nd and 3rd of March. The time to assemble on the carpark is 11:00 hours, not 12 noon as stated, for that is when the cavern gates are scheduled to open. Although Peak Cavern is a 'show cave' we have permission to enter parts of this famous system which lie far beyond the limits of the tourist area.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1985 are now due. The price is the same as last year, and is excellent value for money: £4 per person or £5 for a couple. Cheques and Postal Orders should be sent to Maureen Stone, Old Stainton Hall, Stainton, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, and made payable to the Cumbria Amenity Trust.

ERIC HOLLAND'S latest book is now at the publishers and should be available in hard-back before very long. The book is a history of the Coniston Coppermines and should retail at about £15. A small price to pay for twenty-five years of a man's life, says Eric. There will be a discount for C.A.T. members.

### CAT Christmas Quiz.

The one you've been waiting for. Something to think about when you're tired of Christmas leftovers. The rules are very simple; all you do is work out the solution to the problem set out below. Write down a detailed plan of action to solve it, what your orders are and how you want them carried out. But there is more than one way of solving it and don't assume anything that isn't in the text. The winning solution must reach me, Chris Jones. 3, Bell Hill Cottages, Martin, Ulverston. by 15th January. The winning solution will be printed in the next newsletter. The prize will be two books, one of which will be 'Yesterdays Golcondas'.

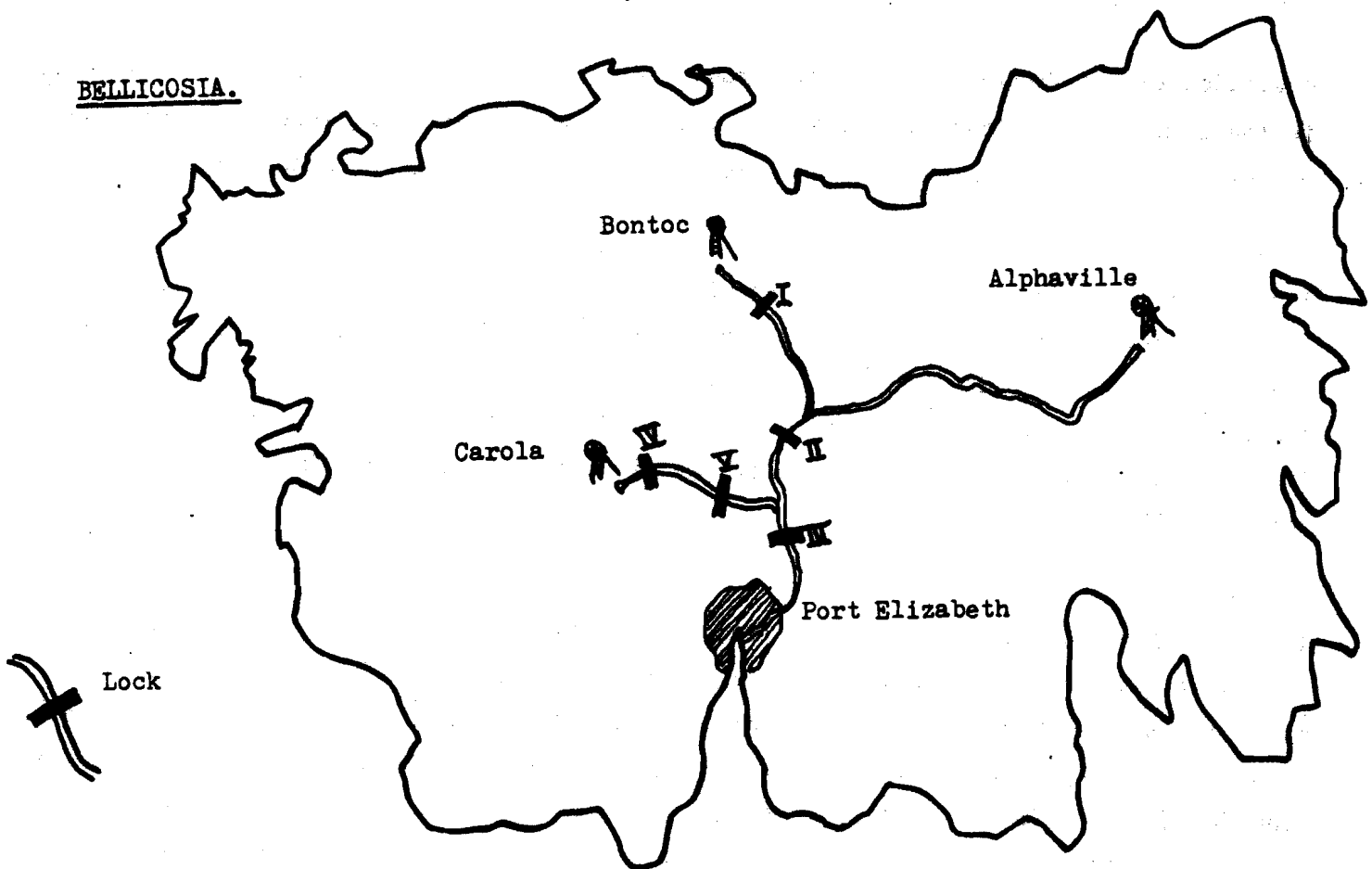
You are the resident mining engineer on the beautiful tropical island of Bellicosia. The economy of the tiny island depends on trading £30,000 worth of its rich mineral wealth for vital supplies each month. On the dock awaiting transshipment is £22,000 worth of zinc ore. The freighter, which has two holds will be arriving in one hour and will leave again within 72 hours. Any delay over this will incur a penalty of £700 per hour, a charge which the finely balanced Bellicosian economy could not meet. The government are becoming desperate as a series of misfortunes have hit this vital trade and the island council has appealed to you for help.

You manage the three productive mines, Alphaville which produces zinc, Bontoc - tin, Carola - coal. The present market prices are Zinc:£800/ton, Tin:£400/ton, Coal:£200/ton. The only means of transport from the mines to the dock at Port Elizabeth is the rather delapidated canal system. Lock II is at present inoperative and repair work has not yet started. The work will take 12 hours to complete and it will take 7 engineers to do it, all must be present before work can start and all are at present in Port Elizabeth. Your three barges, of maximum 10 tons capacity are in Port Elizabeth, Bontoc and Carola, they cannot move without their skippers and they are all in Port Elizabeth. Two of them are visiting the the third in hospital who is too ill to take his vessel. They have your sole means of transport, a landrover which can hold 4 plus the driver. It travels along the towpaths which are the only roads to the mines at 10 m.p.h. The barges are at present empty.

The barges can only move at 2 m.p.h. and it takes a  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour to cross-load one ton of coal or tin and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour for zinc. A barge takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour to negotiate a lock and there is only room for one. You have unlimited manpower for loading and unloading and large stockpiles of materials at all three mines. Alphaville is 80 miles from Port Elizabeth, Bontoc - 40 miles, Carola - 20 miles. Lock II is 20 miles from the Port. You have good telephonic communication with all mines and a radio on the barges and in the Landrover.

Time is not on your side and the last man to let down the Bellicosians may still be glimpsed wandering the highways and byways of his native Furness, a broken man, muttering of the mines he worked in as a boy and how he could command huge fees for a single underground appearance. Now, alas he only has a pet Tyrolean hat for company.



BELLICOSIA.Sweatshirts.

If you would like a sweatshirt using the motif which appears on the front of the Newsletter please contact Chris Jones. If sufficient interest is shown an order will be placed. The cost should be around £7.50.

New Discoveries.

A vast new extension to Ding-Dong has been entered by Mark Wickenden (see Journal No. 1) from the place on the plan called "Derby Rise". This can only be got at when the water level is very low and will be inaccessible for most of the year. He was joined on one of his trips by several other members who were amazed at the size of some of the chambers and the complexity of the workings. It has by no means been fully explored and awaits further work.

Just when we thought exploration was coming to an end on the Coniston fells a party of CAT members have recently discovered a new level, complete with a wealth of artifacts, secondary mineralisation and even wall to wall (well, nearly) bats. It even has an inviting drop into pastures new at the other end. Its discoverers have promised a full report for the next Newsletter and I am sure that a full account will appear in the next journal.

Onto the Alston Moor area and several CAT members have entered a mine after diligent and exhausting work. Rumours are rife about it but suffice to say that it has been

described by its finders as an 'underground Eldorado of relics and remains'. So great is the secrecy that surrounds this find that they won't even tell me of it's precise whereabouts. Several digs are progressing underground and they hope to reveal all soon!

### Force Crag.

Any intending visitors to this mine should note that the famous through trip from top to bottom via the LaPorte incline is no longer possible. A massive rockfall from the stopes above has blocked the internal end of the High Force Cross-Cut right on the shaft. Rubble is spilling over into the shaft and the whole thing is very unstable. It is not possible to get past the blockage without a serious dig which might disturb the fall, blocking the shaft.

### S.R.T.

As you will see on next years meets list a training day has again been organised. If you think you are missing out on too many trips because of your inability to perform, don't delay, make sure you have the gear and can attend. As on the previous occasions, a full range of pitches will be rigged with all sorts of variations such as Knot passing (can be painful), intermediate belays, rigging and Tyroleans (not a reference to Eric's hat). If all this sounds like a foreign language to you then please try and attend. If you are not sure of what gear to buy then talk to Mike Mitchell, Dennis Webb or Chris Jones.

### Journal No. 1.

Just when you thought you'd heard the last of it. We still have about 300 (out of a 1,000) to sell and they are going slowly. If you have a wonderful scheme for disposing of the rest (that doesn't involve their destruction) I (Chris Jones) would be pleased to know. Until we have sold them all we cannot afford to have the next one printed. Hassle your friends in other societies today.

### Journal No. 2.

Articles continue to pour into my house but there are still room for more...

### More Expense!

A reprint, facsimile edition of Sopwith's 1833 work, 'An Account of the Mining Districts of Alston Moor, Weardale and Teesdale.' will shortly be on sale. Please order from the Dales Railway bookshop, Embsay.

### P.D.M.H.S. Publication

The Peak District Mines Historical Societies latest publication has found its way onto my desk. It deals exclusively with the mines around Nenthead and represents the culmination of a lot of work. It is a must if you are at all interested in the area. It also poses a few interesting problems for us to work on next time we are there.

### Descenders

Several people have been inquiring lately, 'which is the best descender to buy?'

The answer is not so simple. Firstly, safety must be to the forefront and for this reason an Autolock descender is a must. A figure of eight is not good enough when using a single rope. An autolock descender will only permit descent when its brake is released. This enables stops to be made in mid-pitch and also if some accident befalls the explorer whilst on the rope they cannot fall if they let go. Secondly, the descender is never completely unhooked from the harness when completing change-overs, etc. A figure of eight may be dropped causing a serious incident. Lastly autolocks do not damage the rope as much as figures of eight which tend to grind mud and grit into the rope fibre.

There are really only two choices of autolock descender open to the underground explorer although there are 5 or 6 on the market. These are the 'Lewis descender' and the Petzl 'Stop'. They have recently been extensively tested and the results (BCRA 1982) show that both these types have considerable advantages over the rest and each have certain small advantages over each other. So it is probably down to a personal choice between these two models. They are both expensive (around £16) but a wide range of spare parts are available.

B.C.R.A. (Dec., 1982) Cave Science, Techniques and Equipment, Vol.9., No.4. pp.248-252.

#### Personal Equipment.

All members embarking on trips underground, are, I'm sure aware of what equipment they need but it may be prudent to start investing in a few extras. Those of you who have read your committee minutes regularly will see that the club has recently spent £116 on new rope and a bag to keep it in. However rope protectors and self-drilling bolt anchors come under the heading of personal equipment so buy some of your own for use on meets. Whilst on the subject of ropes remember to try and look after them. Don't thankfully get to the bottom of the pitch and trample on the rope lying on the floor, that bit might be tied on the top of the next pitch.

#### The Chairman.

As you will see Peter Fleming is retiring from the chair (probably in favour of a younger man) and both the editors of this Newsletter would like to record their thanks for the support and advice which has always been so readily supplied. Peter was a founder member of CAT and has held the post since its inception. We hope that he is still not far away when needed. Peter was also one of the instigators of the Journal and has worked very hard on its production mainly in the binding and quality control department. He must have lost track of the journals he has taken to bits and re-stapled. His successor will have his work cut out.

#### Equipment.

This can still be ordered from Chris Jones at an advantageous price, get it now before the SRT training meet. Telephone Chris for an up-to-date price.

C.O.M.R.U.

The rescue unit has now been formally adopted by the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association and a small sum of money has been granted towards the purchase of equipment. A trailer is being custom built and this will be stocked with equipment such as rope, stretchers, bolt drills, etc. This will be kept at a central Lakeland location to be picked up by members attending an incident. Money is required for the purchase of more gear so if you feel like some fund raising for a good cause I'm sure that the team leader will be grateful. If you want more information on the team contact the team leader, Mike Mitchell.

Oscars.

Sid Perou had better look to his laurels for in our midst he has some competition. Roy Garner from Ambleside is experimenting with underground film-making. What next? A CAT video nasty? The Sound of Mining? The mind boggles. However if all went well it would certainly put the Cat among the pigeons (or even the frogs) at the annual speleological film binge in Vercors.

Tyndrum.

Those members who enjoyed (?) their trip to Tyndrum Mine in Scotland last Easter and was less than impressed may take heart that little has changed over the years. It was described in 1796 by the traveller, Charles Hatchett, as "I never in my life saw a more desolate and dreary place not even in the remote parts of Russia or Poland, neither does the climate here afford any compensation for the aspect of the country... Near the inn are some mines belonging to Ld. Breadalbane...the weather and my disposition did not permit me to visit and examine the spot." How little mine exploration has changed through the years.

Welsh Wheels.

Those of you who were concerned that the Ystrad Einion underground water-wheel was about to be spirited away to darkest Devon need lose no more sleep. No sale has taken place and the wheel is still nestling safely in its hole. Some basic conservation work has apparently recently been done on that other gem of a wheel at Cwm Cyprith.

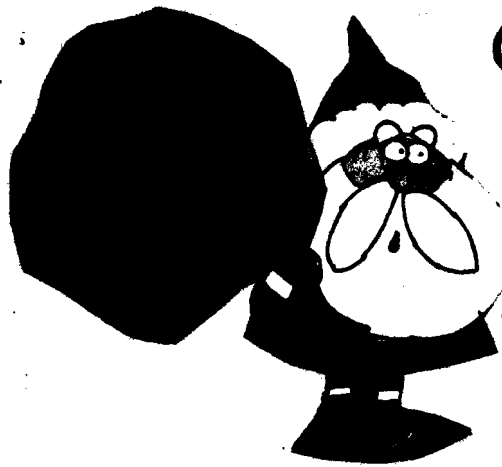
Membership.

Maureen has recently reported that membership stands at 85 and is steadily rising. I hope they don't all turn up at a meet together.

Newsletter.

If the quality and quantity of this publication is to remain at such an incredibly high standard then it would be nice to get more copy from out there. Even a short sentence or two about some project, rumour or gross lie will always be gratefully taken in and if its not too libellous may even be printed.

# CHRISTMAS QUIZ II

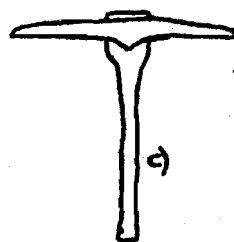
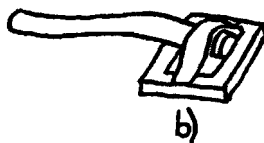
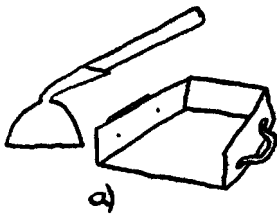


THE FIRST MEMBER TO ANSWER ALL THE  
QUESTIONS CORRECTLY WINS THIS  
YEAR'S STAR PRIZE - A BOTTLE  
OF WINE. SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO  
ALEN McFADZEAN  
7 SILVER STREET  
MARTON  
ULVERSTON  
CUMBRIA

BEFORE THE END OF JANUARY 1985



- 1 If a pit pony was said to be 'on the gin' would it be a) bleary-eyed and slurring in its speech, b) staggering in circles, c) biting miners as they passed in the dark, d) on the sick.
- 2 The miners' name for sphalerite is a) black jack, b) blue john, c) red ken.
- 3 Which British actor starred as a mine manager in the film 'Gold'?
- 4 Actor Tom Bell played a drunken collier in the television adaptation of a D. H. Lawrence novel: what is the name of the novel?
- 5 Which callous and unscrupulous industrialist owned the mines, mills, and munitions factories of Utterly?
- 6 The miners' name for barytes is a) Iceland spar, b) heavy spar, c) fluorspar.
- 7 Put a name to the following tools.



- 8 The extensive copper mine beneath Levers Water at Coniston was worked mainly by Irish immigrants, hence the name a) Green Ginnel, b) O'Rourke's Drift, c) Knockmahon Mine, d) Paddy End, e) Mick Mulligan's Sump, f) Tattie Pit.
- 9 'Bate' is the quarriers' term for a) slaty cleavage, b) lunch, c) wages.
- 10 'Bait' is the quarriers' term for a) slaty cleavage, b) lunch, c) wages.
- 11 A 'corrack' is a tool used for a) stemming shot-holes, b) capping fuses, c) sharpening drills, d) mucking-out levels, e) laying rails.
- 12 The first four words of the hit song 'Working in a coal-mine' are.....
- 13 An old name for black powder is a) jack, b) snap, c) soot, d) dog, e) cat.

- 14 The last coal-mine to produce coal in West Cumberland was a) Wellington Pit, b) Outfields Pit, c) Clifton Pit, d) Oughterside Pit, e) Camerton and Wood Drift, f) Walkmil Pit, g) Haig Pit, h) Brayton Knowe Pit, i) Allhallows Pit.
- 15 The first successful beam engine was powered by a) low-pressure steam, b) high-pressure steam, c) atmospheric pressure, d) hydraulic pressure.
- 16 Which famous author wrote a vivid and memorable description of a working coal-mine whilst visiting Wigan in the 1930s?
- 17 Isak, the Norwegian peasant farmer, discovered brown and blue minerals on the moors above his homestead. Who told Isak's story? Was it a) Hermann Hesse, b) Emile Zola, c) J.P. Donleavy, d) Knut Hamsun, e) Henrik Ibsen.
- 18 Which expeditionary leader perished in the Mines of Moria? a) Durin, b) Gimli, c) Thorin Oakenshield, d) Balin, e) Gloin.
- 19 Which 19th century author tangled with the drunken colliers of Wrexham? Was it a) George Borrow, b) James Hogg, c) John Bolton, d) R.L. Stevenson.
- 20 A Tulley is a hammer for a) riving slate, b) dressing slate, c) docking slate.
- 21 An industrial dispute which lasted three years (1900-1903) devastated the Welsh town of Bethesda, caused riots in the streets, saw the militia brought in to disband pickets, was the focal-point of massive trade union fund-raising, and was the subject of mass rallies organised by Keir Hardy - was centred at which Welsh slate quarry? Was it a) Dinorwic, b) Oakley, c) Penrhyn, d) Llechwedd, e) Manod, f) Cwm Orthin, g) Croesor.
- 22 The parallel motion mechanism which allowed for the side-ways movement of a rigid piston rod coupled to the beam of a beam engine was invented by a) Watt, b) Heslop, c) Newcomen, d) Pickard.
- 23 The first steam pumping engines were installed at mines during the reign of a) Queen Elizabeth, b) Queen Anne, c) Queen Victoria.
- 24 A Big-eight is a) a knot, b) a chocolate bar, c) an abseiling aid.
- 26 What was mined at Grimes Graves?
- 27 What was mined high on Pike o' Stickle?
- 28 What was mined at Tyndrum?
- 29 The tiny mining village of Allihies, west Cork in Eire, was the scene of a novel entitled 'Hungry Hill'. The authoress was.....?
- 30 Lady Godiva once said: "If I had a decent change of overalls I'd have a crack at the Smallcleugh/Rampgill through-trip." True or false?
- 31 'Cordtex' detonating fuse has an explosive velocity of a) 6ft per minute, b) 6 miles per minute, c) 2½ft per second, d) 6,500ft per second.
- 32 Dynamite was invented by a) Fleming, b) Nobel, c) Guy Fawkes, d) Telford.
- 33 To make their clogs more comfortable the old men would often stuff them with a) wool, b) tallow, c) willow leaves, d) duck down, e) straw, f) crusts.
- 34 I am looking forward to the next edition of the newsletter because.....

**BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST**

The printing of the BLACK LIST of meet leaders - who have not submitted an account of their meets to the Meets Secretary for inclusion in the Log Book - in the last newsletter, prompted a mixed response. However, only Dave Blundell was shamed into putting pen to paper, the remainder uttered feeble excuses ranging from "To be honest I thought I'd done all mine," to "Well I keep meaning to get round to it but I haven't really had the chance." Not good enough. It is important we keep records of where we've been and what we've done. So this time we'll go one step further.....

Yes folks, here we have the meet leaders' hit parade. And at No.1 we have none other than the Chairman himself, Peter Fleming, with four meets to write up, closely followed at No.2 by Secretary Holland, Chris Jones, Alan Westall, and Mike Mitchell. 'Ows about that then, guys and galls.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Peter Fleming -  | Yew Crag Quarries/Dale Head Coppermine 1/5/83<br>Alston trip 18-19/6/83<br>Nenthead weekend 23-24/6/84<br>Back Strings 19/8/84 |
| Chris D. Jones - | Marchon visit 15/7/83<br>Tilberthwaite Shaft 21/8/83<br>Arkengarthdale 9/9/84  |
| Eric Holland -   | Wales '83. Cwmystwyth and Nantpennant.<br>Lancaster Hole/Easgill 20/3/83<br>Warton Crag Mine 27/5/84                           |
| Alan Westall -   | Yewthwaite Mine 20/2/83<br>Old Man Quarries 21/1/84<br>Coniston Coppermines 19/8/84  |
| Mike Mitchell -  | Coniston Coppermines 15/5/83<br>Brandy Bottle Incline/Hard Level 4/9/83<br>Sir Francis Level 8/9/84                            |
| Martin Maher -   | Bar Pot 1/4/84<br>Nenthead 27-28/10/84   |
| Mark Wickenden - | Taylor's Level dig 26/12/83  |
| Ewan Cameron -   | Easter '84   |
| Geoff Cram -     | Kinniside Mine 16/7/83   |

"A meet leader should complete a full, but not necessarily long, report of the activities and achievements at the conclusion of the meet. The report should be headed by the location/mine site, date, and leader's name. The information should contain details of any new areas entered by "forced exploration" i.e. digging, climbing, or descending; whether any surveying or photography was done and by whom. A record should be made of any artifacts found and if removed record who did so. An indication of the number of members and guests attending should also be given."

---

Percy Pitprop says: People who do it in the mud are liable to come to a sticky end.

Percy Pitprop says: A man with a beard who often is jeered for his age and decrepit physique,  
has feelings like you and sometimes gets blue  
but found he was past it last week!

Percy Pitprop says: Is a new four-wheel drive the best for social climbing?

---

# MEETS REVIEW

by McF

It was a cold and blustery morning. The wind moaned through the cleft of Honister Pass, rattling the gutters on the Youth Hostel and flapping the torn and tattered remains of Ewan Cameron's trousers. "How did you rip your pants?" I asked, as the Scot stood there with his white knees pointing in the direction of the Scawfell Bar, faded denim streamers fluttering horizontally behind him. "Ach, Ah wis fixin' the office roof at Force Crag Mine when I caught them on a nail." "I hope they paid you compensation," said I, knowing what a dastardly and underhanded crew the new owners were. "Not a penny," said he. I shook my head sadly and advised him to see a soliciter, at the same time handing him the address of Eric Holland's tailor.

The meet was at Dale Head Coppermine and necessitated a healthy hike from the Honister car park over the top of the fell to the mine. Once there we set about pushing the middle level - opened on a previous visit - by digging through a fall at the foot of a rise. We broke into about 300ft of passages which by their appearance had not been disturbed since the mine closed; there were wooden rails on the floor of the main tunnel and miners' clog prints in the mud. The tunnel ended at another collapse, venting quite considerably, at the foot of either another rise or a stope.

On the 7th of October a dozen or so members turned out at Greenside Mine for exploration work on the Low Horse Level. This meet has already been dealt with in another article so I shall say no more. Though I would like to apologise to the people who were present on the meet but not named in the article. Several new members came along - I could tell they were new members because they were smiling. C.A.T. is expanding so fast these days, it's impossible to recall all the names and faces.

27th and 28th of October was the weekend of the Nenthead trip. As always there was a good turnout, rather better than anticipated for several members were obliged to sleep on the floor of Cherrytree Cottage (I would like to explain here, it being a convenient opportunity, that the reason for crowding was not over-booking on either C.A.T.'s or Helen's part, but the fault of a minority of members who wrongly assumed they could turn up and claim a bed whenever they liked. Apologies to those who booked in advance and were obliged to sleep on the floor. This situation will not arise again.).

Anyway, on Saturday a group entered the Firestone Level under the leadership of Martin Maher (car-wrecker and scourge of the A 590), descended a 50ft shaft and found themselves in a tunnel heading in the direction of Rampgill Mine. On following this tunnel, which was very badly shattered, they discovered two shafts in the floor about 100ft apart. After abandoning an attempt to abseil down the first shaft, where Martin disturbed two tons of loose rock, they had a crack at the other but the rope was 20ft short of the bottom. Hard luck. But the day was a success for a deal of new ground was covered. Also that day Richard Hewer took a party into Haggs Mine but details of that expedition have not filtered through to this office.

On Sunday Peter Fleming led a party into Smallcleugh Mine in search of new territory. Now before I proceed any further I'm afraid I'm going to have to apologise yet again (record number of apologies ever printed in any publication excluding the Ulverston News) because in the last review I wrongly stated that Peter had failed in his second bid to locate some little-known workings in Smallcleugh; in fact Peter DID locate the workings in question. He drew my attention to this reporting error one night in the Bay Horse by claspings his hands about my neck and shaking me violently till my tongue turned blue and my specs fell off. Thank God he didn't lose his temper. Anyway, yet again Fleming led a party into the mine nobody ever goes in and discovered even more new territory (new to C.A.T.) somewhere to the left of the Ballroom Flats. After clambering over collapses and wading through deep water the team found a partitioned shaft which, Fleming assumes, drops down into Rampgill Mine (now that's very interesting for I recall one of



our early trips into Rampgill when Jonesy and myself waded through chest-deep water for what seemed like many hundreds of feet and found a partitioned shaft rising above us. Could this be the same shaft? Only time will tell). So Sunday was deemed a success also, and this time the entrance hadn't been walled up while the team was underground.

And that leaves us with the Forest of Bowland, a little-known mining area (and now we know why) in the Lancashire Pennines. Mike Maher it was who led us through the wild tributary valleys of Ribblesdale to the ancient site of Brennand Mine, on the banks of the River Brennand. Lead and silver had been worked here as long ago as 1630 but the mine was in production only sporadically over the centuries. The entrance portal and the two shafts higher up the hill collapsed many years ago, so we had a good walk on the moors to locate the shaft positions, and took pictures of the waterwheel pit and other interesting features. Mike told us that an attempt to reopen the adit level by a firm called BP Minerals was abandoned some months back. Only two men participated in this project and their tools were shovels and a wheelbarrow.



'BUT WE'VE TIME FOR ANOTHER PIAT YET,' PLEADED MAHER, EXCITEDLY.

At lunch time, acting on the advice of our meet leader, we repaired to a rather pricy establishment called the Parkers Arms, where the more affluent members of our group indulged in duck pate and home-made broth. The less affluent members (I think I was the only one) made do with cold bacon and gristle sandwiches in the back of Jonesy's new Fisher Price van. At about 1:30 we managed to prise Maher from the side of the bar and remove the Guinness glass from his hand with industrial thinners. Then, in the cold and wintry afternoon, we set off in search of our second pinnacle of unsurpassed worldly pleasure - Ashnott Mine.

"Follow me and drink the wine of adventure," cried Maher - or something which sounded like that - as he slorrapped off through a farm yard, knee-deep in mire, old raggerly dairy cows raising their tails as he passed. The mine entrance was on a hill behind the farm; we glanced back and observed the farmer chasing his livestock, which had scattered when Dave Blundell leapt out of his car.

Ashnott Mine falls into that category of workings which can best be described in the sentence: once visited, never forgotten. I possess no actual records of its history, though have strong suspicions it was worked by a band of hyper-active midgets in the dark and distant days of the 18th century. The upper workings, through which we descended, ascended, crawled, somersaulted, and looped the loop, were a maze of tunnels and rises which were more akin to a natural cave system than an abandoned lead mine. The average tunnel height was 3ft; there were no 'levels' as such, just chambers connected by short lengths of passage or tiny windows, all on different horizons.

The lower workings were less ramified. There was a lengthy level (the middle level of the mine) which sumped with water before it reached daylight. And was it muddy? How those dirty little midgets put up with it I'll never know. There was also a drainage level which entered the mine from the banks of a nearby beck. We didn't have a look up it for night overtook us, and high winds and sleet dampened our enthusiasm.

---

THE EDITORS WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS

