



A FEW THINGS TO SAY ABOUT....

....PRESERVATION

by McF

"The sad thing is," said the man with the black beard as he addressed the audience, "is that Lakeland's mines and quarries are disappearing rapidly and it's time a group was formed to halt this decline, preserve what remains of our important industrial heritage. And I should add that this is a task of immediate urgency."

"But there already is a group committed to preserving Lakeland's mines and quarries," said a voice from the back of the room, "And I should add that I am a founder member."

"Ah yes," resumed the man with the black beard, "I acknowledge that you people of the Cumbria Amenity Trust are doing a splendid job exploring the mines and getting into places where nobody has been before, but frankly, what I'm interested in is preservation - preserving for posterity our important industrial heritage. And to be honest, you people aren't particularly interested in that sort of thing. Lakeland's ancient sites are rapidly disappearing, and I should know 'cause I've lived in Ambleside since 1981."

Before I proceed any further with this article I would just like to point out that the above is an extract from a discussion which took place at one of our monthly gatherings at the Farmers Arms. It is not word for word accurate for it was jotted down from memory - CAT funds being somewhat inflexible, tape-recorders for newsletter editors are not high on the list of essentials. However, allowing for the odd dialogical error, the gist of the conversation remains unaltered, it is, in essence, accurate enough.

And the gist of the conversation is this: the man with the black beard, who, during the course of the evening, expressed himself quite eloquently, is saying: Our mines and quarries need preserving and so far as I can see the Cumbria Amenity Trust is doing nothing about it.

Now I, for one, was particularly angry that evening and no doubt were a good many others, not least those who have attended work meets to haul pipes and timbers up to Hospital Level and mix concrete at Ding Dong. But looking back on this incident, things assume a different light. The man with the black beard had not launched himself into the discussion with the intention of sowing the seeds of animosity, on the contrary, it was his desire to gain our support for a museum project in Ambleside; the fact that he was totally unaware of our activities in the field of preservation reflects badly on US and not him, it is indicative of a severe breakdown in communications between CAT and other mining groups and individuals in the area.

For some time now CAT has had a reputation for being a 'hard' group, pioneering routes deep into the old mineworkings of England, Scotland, Wales and Eire. This aspect of our activities has been widely publicized, spreading our name on a national, as well as a local, basis. An article in 'High' magazine depicted us as intrepid explorers, hauling dinghies as we swam through the flooded levels and galleries of the Welsh slate mines; in the Cork Examiner we were introduced to the good people of Ireland as the mad English 'touring Eire the hard way'; the Westmorland Gazette, the Ulverston News, and the North Western Evening Mail, have, over the years, faithfully reported our exploits in the Coniston Copper Mines, Greenside, the slate quarries, the North Pennines, Patterdale, the Furness iron mines, and the Yorkshire Dales; the discovery of a vast new area of Top Level, in Coniston Copper Mines, received front page coverage in the Evening Mail, and the exploration of Cobblers' Hole not only made front page of the Barrow News Series but was the major story of the week. Articles in Lancashire Life, Cumbria, and Passport to Cumbria have all helped to spread the word.

Good publicity.

But there is another side to the coin. Some would argue that it is a more important side, that it has been neglected, that our commitments to Preservation have somehow fallen by the wayside, been mislaid in the eager rush to explore. To a certain extent this may be true; a quick glance at the meets list confirms

that work meets, as opposed to underground meets, are somewhat thin on the ground. There are several reasons why this is so: work meets invariably involve the purchasing of materials and equipment; preservation work is not cheap even if the labour is purely voluntary; another factor, and one which bides some pondering, is that an historical site, be it a mine, a quarry, related buildings and machinery, does not warrant 'preserving' unless its existence is threatened by some destructive force. It's easy to say that such and such a mine is an integral and important part of our industrial heritage and should be preserved for posterity, but unless that mine has been ear-marked for land reclamation, or has been designated a council tip, etc., there is little that can be done to ensure its perpetuation other than keeping a weather eye on it.

The Cumbria Amenity Trust has been pursuing an active policy of preservation since its inception in 1979. The man with the black beard may be excused for his ignorance; work meets involving the mixing of cement and the sawing of pit-props do not make front page scoops even in the Ulverston News, they do not make back page column-fillers, they are of no interest to the editorial staff and so are not publicized. An editor will only print material which he deems attractive to his readers; articles concerning the welding of pipes do not induce rapture into the hearts of the public, they are not likely to stimulate newspaper circulation, they are none-news, and that's how the cookie crumbles. And the consequences are that people form a distorted image of the Trust.

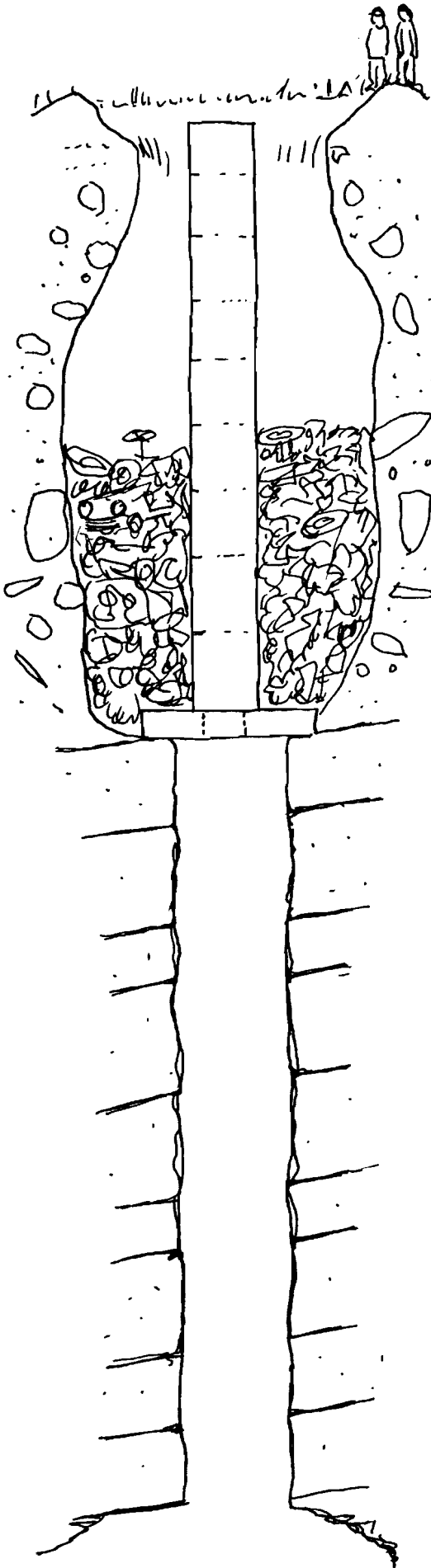
It's only fair to add that this Newsletter has, in the past, put an emphasis on exploratory activities and largely ignored, with the exception of the Ding Dong project, our labours to secure remnants of the Cumbrian mining industry which would otherwise have been lost. Time now to redress the situation.

The Trust was officially formed in September 1979; it had, in fact, existed as an informal group for several years prior to this, the original intention being to raise sufficient funds to purchase Henning Valley, an area of Lindal Moor rich in mining remains. The bid failed and the valley was sold to a local scrap dealer. The mining remains are still safe but the valley has become disfigured with the materialization of a scrap yard.

Our main, and longest running, project is of course the Ding Dong, that hundred-foot deep shaft close to the village of Marton, in the Furness iron field. A full account of the shaft-clearing process can be read in the Mine Explorer, written by Mark Wickenden who was the driving force and instigator. The entire shaft was blocked with scrap cars and dead sheep; it took two-and-a-half years of patient labour to reopen it. Work commenced in November 1979, the breakthrough occurring in April 1982. A year later, in April 1983, an ambitious engineering programme was set in motion, the aim of which was to prevent the subsidence of the Ding Dong shaft. The lower sixty feet of the shaft had been mined through massive beds of carboniferous limestone and was totally self-supporting, but the upper forty feet - almost certainly timbered at one time - was sunk through boulder-clay. It was this top section that was in danger of collapsing; each successive shower of rain washed away a tiny bit more of the boulder-clay walls, gradually sculpting the upper shaft into an unstable bell-pit. The plan was to lower an access pipe onto a ledge at the junction of the limestone and the boulder-clay, and to backfill the upper shaft, filling in the Ding Dong before it filled itself and sealed for ever what exploration has revealed to be Furness' most extensive mine system.

On the 23rd of April 1983 a work party cleared the limestone ledge of rocks and clay, and constructed a platform of steam engine boiler tubes (donated by the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway) and corrugated zinc sheets (donated by Tilcon, Stainton Quarry). Eight tons of concrete were poured onto the platform (three tons of chippings also donated by Tilcon), and re-enforcing mesh and bars were obtained from a variety of sources. A two-foot-square manhole was left in the concrete raft and over this was to be positioned the access pipe.

The pipe was installed in June 1984. It arrived at the site during the back end of 1983 in nine large sections, 36" diameter and 5/8" thick; we reckoned the heaviest section weighed about three-quarters of a ton. These sections were off-cuts from the pipeline which carries Irish Sea gas from the terminal at Barrow to the junction at Lupton near Kirkby Lonsdale, and were generously donated by British Gas and delivered to Marton free of charge by Murphys, the pipeline cont-



ractor. The sections were lowered down the shaft on a winch, borrowed from the L and H Railway, and welded together to form a forty-foot high tower of steel.

In January 1985 Mike Mitchell bolted a heavy steel grille onto the top of the tower, a safety precaution rather than a device to keep interested parties out. There is no lock on the grille at present; those wishing to descend the shaft would do well to take with them a selection of spanners.

The infilling operation, which is the final task, has been temporarily shelved because of the atrocious summer weather and the boggy condition of the field. All the old car bodies removed by Mark Wickenden have been thrown back down the shaft but there remains about twenty-five feet of space to fill before the ground can be levelled off and seeded. The original intention was to infill with spoil from the nearby Derby Pit but this idea was scrapped in favour of using old tyres collected from local garages.

So that's Ding Dong, the old B.45 Pit, well and truly secured and at relatively little expense, thanks to the generosity of British industry. CAT overheads for conservation work in 1983 amounted to £107.17, the majority of which was spent on sand and cement for the concrete raft. I have no figures available for 1984 though from memory can inform you that the hire of a 12 KV generator to power the welding sets came to £30, and welding rods were between £20 and £30.

The Ding Dong project was a success. Furness, during the nineteenth century, possessed the richest hæmatite ore field in the world; during the twentieth century it has witnessed the death of its mining industry and the implementation of land reclamation schemes which have erased vast areas of broken ground and many sites of historical interest. It is gratifying to know that one of its mines has been saved.

In 1982 an attempt was made to preserve Tytup Mine, scheduled to disappear beneath a corporation tip. Tytup Mine was discovered in the 1970s when Peter Burton descended a subsidence rift on the hill above Tytup Farm. It was a splendid mine, a fine example of a Furness hæmatite working, not too extensive, though packed with geological and historical features. The corporation refused to be swayed and the entrance rift was filled with domestic refuse; other workings lost beneath the same tip were Quarry Hole and Dismal Hole. Which just goes to show that you can't win them all.

One of CAT's earliest projects was the archæological dig at Top Dam, Greenside Mine, where members exhumed an early-nineteenth century buddle, a device for separating minute particles of galena from waste rock. The buddle was installed by the Greenside Mining Syndicate to process lead ore from the High Horse Level workings. In May 1980 a work party removed a deep layer of soil and turf from a shallow depression close to the cobbled area of the Top Dam dressing floors to reveal a circular tank,

two feet deep and thirteen feet in diameter, which was constructed of closely-fitting wooden planks, radiating from the centre of the tank rather after the fashion of the segments on a dartboard. This was the Greenside buddle; the floor was convex, the centre of the tank being several inches higher than the perimeter. Briefly, this is how it would have operated: pulverised veinstone from the crushing rollers, suspended in water, was fed along a launder to the centre of the buddle at a controlled rate; the liquid then trickled out across the convex boards, the heavy particles of galena settling close to the centre, the lighter waste being washed to the edges. Rotary paddles, which were pivoted at the centre of the tank, agitated the liquid and accelerated the process, washing the waste water and the finer minerals through a wooden conduit to the beck. The paddle mechanism was missing but to all intents and purposes the remainder of the buddle was intact, the wooden segments being in excellent condition. During the summer the county archivist visited the site to record all the relevant details and take photographs; the buddle was then reburied to prevent the woodwork drying and warping, a harsh measure but necessary if it was to be preserved.

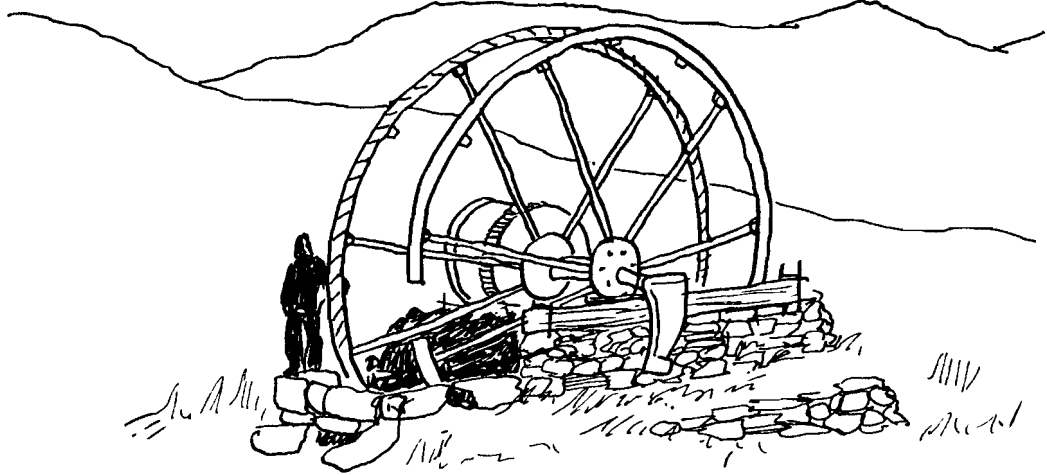
Over the past six years a deal of maintenance work has been carried out in the Coniston Copper Mines, primarily to preserve access to areas of the mines which would otherwise be lost, rather than to preserve the workings themselves. Timber frames have been installed in Grey Crag Level, immediately beyond the Gin Shaft, to hold back an unstable wall of deads which, if allowed to collapse, would seal off a sizable section of the mine and also put an end to the Paddy End through trip. In Hospital Level steel pipes have been positioned across a void in the sole of the tunnel, close to the Hospital Shaft, which has been growing steadily larger over the years. Now there is an immovable steel bridge and a fixed hand line, rendering access far safer. In 1982 the entrance to Fleming's Level was retimbered with treated wood - quite a tidy job too, may I add. The rusty oil drums, which had held the boulder clay at bay since the early 1970s, were removed and a shallow inclined shaft sunk into the level. Other maintenance and safety work which has been effected includes - timber platforms and shutterings in the Red Dell through trip, stemples at the top of the Paddy End through trip, and the positioning of permanent hand lines on all the dangerous boulder slopes.

As I have stated, at Coniston the main concern is preservation for access, but over in North Lancashire CAT is negotiating with the land owners of Warton Scar for the conservation of a series of ancient haematite workings, under threat of being bulldozed. Not wishing to tempt fate by counting chickens, I shall pass briefly over this topic, mentioning only that if we do get the go-ahead and receive permission to keep the mines open, the work programme will look something like this: retimbering dangerous section of the Crag Foot Mine entrance rift; re-fencing the collar of the Moss House Shaft; re-hanging and locking the gates on Moss House Mine and the Argonite Band Mine. It is not CAT policy to gate and lock mines, excluding the public from a heritage which should rightly be accessible to all, but this is one of the conditions laid down by the owner and must be adhered to if the site is to remain undisturbed. There are gates already on the two levels but over the years these have been allowed to fall into disrepair. The cost of the project should be minimal and the work not take longer than a couple of days - a small price to pay for the retention of a very old and very interesting mining site.

There are, at the present time, a number of conservation and maintenance projects being implemented which, although not initiated by the Cumbria Amenity Trust, are being undertaken by groups and individuals within the society. There has always been a certain amount of 'fringe' work going on, behind-the-scenes activity, fueled by enthusiasm and an appreciation for our industrial history. For many years now Eric Holland has been campaigning for the Furness iron mines' cause, fighting a succession of local authorities who have attempted, so far in vain, to turn Daylight Hole into an official refuse site. At the moment the threat of this taking place is again looming large with the land owner acquiring permission to tip in subsidence craters in the immediate vicinity. Another feather in Eric's cap is the retimbering of the Poaka Level, a 1,500' drainage tunnel which, driven in 1875 to take water pumped from the Lindal Moor mines, now carries the sewage of Marton to Poaka Beck.

In the mountains of North Wales Damian McCurdy has been busy at the

Cwm Ciprith Mine, high above the desolate valley of Nant Pennant. At Cwm Ciprith there is a waterwheel, still situated in its pit, and with all its attendant machinery - gear and braking apparatus, winding drum, and pump crank. This wheel pumped water and raised ore from a nearby shaft, where there is a balance-bob and



a rising main. It is a strangely haunting and evocative location, nothing has been disturbed since the mine closed in the distant past. CAT last visited Cwm Ciprith in 1983, a fell walking excursion to round off an Easter trip; it was a hard slog up the mountain but well worth every step. Damian has removed the trees which were growing in the walls of the wheel pit; the roots were tearing the masonry apart, slowly reducing the walls to rubble. The destructive process has been halted, for the present at least, and that's a hop and a jump in the right direction.

The biggest fringe operation on the go at the moment, and the project of three enterprising Cumberland members, Gordon Gilchrist, Andy Carter, and Chris Moore, is the opening up and securing of Waterblain Mine near The Hill, Millom. The initial exploration, through an entrance packed with the decomposing bodies of dead sheep, revealed a partially flooded hæmatite mine which promised scope for months of further exploration.

Waterblain Mine, so Gordon tells me, is unique to Cumbria in that it is the only mine in the Coniston Limestone. Several shafts were sunk, the deepest being nineteen fathoms, to extract hæmatite ore from the veins and pipes in which it was situated. The hæmatite ore, unlike that mined at nearby Hodbarrow and used primarily in the iron industry, was exploited for the manufacture of paint. Waterblain Mine closed in 1899, since then all the shafts have been filled with refuse.

Because the entrance was so unpleasant, permission to open one of the old shafts was aquired from the farmer. Clearing work commenced some time ago - starting at the foot of the shaft and working upwards - and already a connection with the surface has been established. The next step is to cap the shaft and fit a manhole cover for easy access.

The prospects of further exploration in Waterblain Mine received a definite boost recently, when the water level dropped dramatically and uncovered new workings. The water level always did fluctuate alarmingly for a mine, but this latest fall coincided with the diversion of a beck in Ghyll Scaur Quarry, lately reopened to work the andesitic tuffs for roadstone and aggregates. The mine was not the only thing affected by the beck diversion - the farmer's duck pond also lost its water. Let's hope those lads get the manhole cover on quick, before the farmer puts the blame on subsidence and fills the shaft again.

And to finish, just a few more words concerning that marathon exercise in preservation, the Ding Dong. This also started as an individual's project, one man's dig; Mark Wickenden it was who took up the challenge and was responsible for clearing a hundred feet of choked shaft. No easy task. Now the Ding Dong is safe; it is a monument to Preservation. And it just goes to show what a little perseverance, a little imagination, and a little hard labour, can achieve.

The Cover.

The cover picture on this issue is of Myles Kennedy, the last of the great dynasty of Furness Ironmasters. The firm of Kennedy Brothers was well known until the beginning of the Second World War as the owners of the exceptionally rich Roanhead Mines near Askam-in-Furness. They also were the part owners of the North Lonsdale Iron and Steel Works in Ulverston, on the site of the present Glaxo Pharmaceuticals factory, and in addition to this they were shareholders in many diverse local industries. The individual members of the Kennedy family were well known members of Ulverston society for nearly 100 years and filled many posts of honour such as M.P.'s, J.P.'s and Guardians of local school and hospital boards.

I am at present compiling a short history of the family and it's relevance to the Furness mining scene and would be grateful for any snippets of information, photographs, etc. could be sent to me (CDJ). This will be incorporated into a future edition of 'The Mine Explorer'.

The picture comes from a portrait which was given to me some years ago and has since been presented to the County Record Office in Barrow where it now hangs on the wall.

Helmets.

A recent article on safety helmets in industry stressed that solvents used in the manufacture of adhesives used in sticky tapes can have a considerable detrimental effect on polycarbonates used in the manufacture of helmets. Presumably this refers even more to the effects of paint. Fibre glass helmets will be less affected.

Get Knotted.

It is recommended that everyone who goes underground and especially those involved in S.R.T. have a basic arsenal of knots that they can tie. They are:

Figure of eight. The basic knot, can be used for virtually everything, easily untied.

Figure of nine. Similar to the above but much stronger.

Bowline. Strong, good for tying round natural belays.

Bowline on the Bight. Best for hauling others especially if in trouble, Y anchors.

Double Fishermans. Useful for joining ropes (ask Pete Fleming). Difficult to untie.

Figure of eight bend. Best way to join ropes.

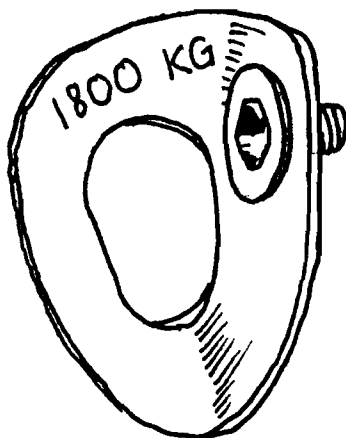
Tape knot. Use to join tapes for slings etc.

In addition to these there are others which should be known such as the Prussik knot, Butterfly knot and Capuchin Knot. There is no excuse for not knowing these or expecting others to know them for you. One day you may be on your own at the top of a pitch...

New Gear Review.

Hearts

These are new semi-permanent belays from Petzl. They come in two sizes, 8 mm and 10 mm and screw directly into a spit self-drilling anchor. If you opt for the 10 mm size you need an adaptor for the standard Petzl driver and of course 10 mm spits. They are made of stainless steel and have a SWL of 1800 Kg., the screw is an Allen stud in order that if the belay is needed as a permanent fitting then the stud hole can be filled with resin etc. to prevent unauthorised removal. If used in combination with a stainless steel maillon rapide they should last for a good many years. I think we will be seeing quite a few of these replacing old bolt hangers and crabs on the more popular routes especially in Coniston copper mines. Perhaps they will also replace the controversial red markings in the North Yorkshire caving area.



PETZL 'HEART' Permanent Belay

Laser.

Again from Petzl, this is a new lighting unit that combines electric and carbide illumination. The unit is helmet mounted and consists of a small electric lamp with a zoom lens operated by twisting the bezel with a battery pack on the back of the helmet to counter balance the weight. The carbide light has a small reflector and piezo spark ignition which is unaffected by water. This is an updated model, I have used its predecessor for some years and have found it to be excellent and this new model is an improvement. It isn't cheap however at around £24.00 and you still need a generator, the current Petzl model retailing at around £13.00. I hear that Petzl are working on a new wonder model generator with lots of new features. As you can see the above combination is still cheaper than an Oldham cell and should last for ever, the only expenditure being carbide and the occasional battery.

Peak.

This is a new product from Premiere (of 'stinkie' fame) and is aimed specifically at cavers. It is simply a caplamp which fits into the standard Oldham lamp bracket. It consists of a large reflector, a jet and flint ignition. You still need to buy a waist mounted generator but again this could be a better buy than an electric

cell especially if you don't go underground so much (bearing in mind that lead-acid batteries of the miners lamp variety need continual charging and flattening, filling with distilled water, etc). The Peak headset costs about £5.00 which with a generator (£13.00) makes a cheap beginners lamp. It's also handy for those friends you sometimes take along to show them the sights.

Maillon.

New from Petzl is a 'D' shaped Maillon Rapide. This is to replace the old Delta shaped one for holding the sit-harness together. The advantage is that it doesn't cause all the gear to bunch up in the top of the triangle which makes it sometimes difficult to untangle etc. when changing over. Available in steel or alloy.

Flask.

Not really new gear, more of a 1000 descent mine test. The Alladdin Stainless Steel Unbreakable Flask. Both myself and Mike Maher have used these for several years and really have found them to be almost indestructable. Mine has been thrown down pitches several times and has survived to tell the tale with nothing worse than the odd dint. There are two models the $3\frac{1}{2}$ cup and the $6\frac{1}{2}$ cup and there only real disadvantage lies in their weight (the smaller one is 3 lbs when full) and their cost (approximately 3 times that of the plastic and glass variety) but having said that, how long does an ordinary one last?

Electric Lamps

The Explorer. One of the newer sealed units it has a built-in charger which works off a car cigarette lighter. It weighs in at 1.2 Kg. (compared to an Oldham T3 at 2.3 Kg.) and is housed in an ABS box which I hope is stronger than the original Searcher housing of a few years ago. The makers claim 10 hours plus burning time for it on main beam (the lamp is a standard Oldham unit). The cost is £62.50 plus £10.50 for a mains charger. This compares with around £50.00 for an Oldham T3 plus £15.00 for a mains charger. The maker is Explorer Lamps, 16, Tiverton Drive, Burnley, Lancs.

Speleotechnics FX2. This is again a sealed Ni-Cad battery but this time a tough polythene type moulding. A head-piece of their own design is used fitted with an halogen bulb giving 10 plus hours of light on main beam. The unit weighs in at 1.2 Kg. This certainly looks the shape of things to come as long as it has the longevity. Costs are £48.99 for the basic lamp, Mains Charger £12.60 and a 12 volt vehicle charger, £5.60. Available from Speleo Technics, Victoria Mill, Mersey St., Longridge, Preston, Lancs.

Oldham T3. This is the latest miners lamp from the Manchester company and although the headset is unchanged the battery has. It is a see-through unit (so you can check the electrolyte) of lead-acid construction. New features include strengthened belt loops and one way breathers under the lid. This means they don't leak, well not much and they don't inhale water, a common fault of the earlier T type.

The main faults are their ability to exhale acid on gear, quite amusing when its a pair of underpants but less so when its S.R.T. rope, and their weight. However they have been around since Adam was a lad so second-hand bits are easy to come by and they do have the advantage of years of constant development. Most people get 12 hours plus from them (when new) and there are plenty of old ones around which rather suggests they last a long time. (I've got a 5 year old one that gives 9 hours light.) They cost about 50 quid but you can buy second hand ones from many caving shops, notably Inglesport and Caving Supplies. The charger costs anything from £15.00 upwards though anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of electronics can build their own.

All the above bits can be obtained from caving shops.

Whernside Manor.

Serious changes are proposed for the National Cave Training Centre at Dent and all the present instructor staff face redundancy. Following Ben Lyons' departure last year the new broom has certainly swept clean, so clean in fact that it seems to spell the end for the Manor as a centre of excellence of British caving. Many of the techniques we have learned in mining are as a direct result of work done at the Manor. It seems incredible that in a time when caving is taking off as a hobby and more people should be taught a proper awareness of the underground environment as the recent much publicised rescue of scouts from Diccan shows cuts are being considered.

Charabanc outing.

I have been underwhelmed by the response of folk wanting to go on the coach trip on the 9th November. I must have names before the first of October or I will have to call it off!

Journal No. 2.

In order to get this out for Christmas I MUST HAVE COPY FOR THE END OF OCTOBER so get writing now. There are lots of exciting articles in this next one and it's not going to have such a flimsy cover. But there is still plenty of room for that mine you've always meant to research and write up.

Welsh Treasure.

A report appeared in the recent Welsh Mines Newsletter that cavers have discovered a veritable treasure house of industrial remains some 260 ft. down Glog Fawr mine in Mid-Wales. I visited this mine two years ago and was amazed how much still stood from its working days. This rich mine was once worked by John Taylor and the drainage level was, as seems to be usual in Wales, called Level Fawr. Maybe its time CAT started visiting Wales again. I know Eric is keen for another boating trip in Rosydd/ Croesor.

Buddle off!

A small (8 ft.) waterwheel which originally drove the Brunton buddle in the N.

Pennines has been rescued from decay and brought to the Killhope Leadmining Museum.

Gated Mines.

Any members proposing to visit the mines around Alston Moor should be aware that they have been gated by the District Council very professionally. The only way that you can gain entry is to take two large adjustable spanners to the locking bolts. Please replace the bolts once you are in or you may find the bolts replaced with padlocks next time you visit. The gates are of excellent quality and should solve the age old problem of allowing access at the same time barring entrance to children, etc.

Competition.

Winner of last months caption competition is Ronnie Calvin R.M. with... " Who's going to tell Ann Danson we've burned her barbeque?".

More Books.

I havn't read these so they aren't really reviews. Again it's about the North Pennine Orefield, this time Westgarth Forsters "A Treatise on a section of the strata from Newcastle upon Tyne to Cross Fell." This is a reprint of the 1883 third edition and is due to be published in November at a cost of £15.00. Also available is Sopwiths "Mining District of Alston Moor..." at £12.50, Raistrick and Jennings' " ... Lead Mining in the Pennines", £15.00 and Hunts "Lead Miners of the Northern Pennines.", £15.00. They are all obtained from Embsay (see above for address).

Mine Gases.

A recent conversation pointed out that there were more dangerous gases flying around in mines than just methane, so here are some of them. They are all referred to as Damp, the name being derived from the German word 'dampf' which means fog or vapour.

Firedamp.

This is a mixture of explosive gases, principally carburetted hydrogen or methane. If there is a methane content of between 5.6 and 13.00 % in the air then the mixture is highly explosive.

Afterdamp

A mixture of gases left after an explosion. They are non-inflammable and are low in oxygen, consequently being dangerous due to high proportions of Carbon Monoxide.

Blackdamp or Chokedamp.

A mixture of Nitrogen and Carbon Dioxide caused by a breakdown of coal or timber. It is usually suffocating and can be lighter or heavier than air.

Stinkdamp.

Hydrogen Sulphide - a characteristic 'bad eggs' smell which is highly poisonous.

Whitedamp.

Carbon Monoxide, highly poisonous, usually associated with waste gases from an explosion.

Not all these gases are just found in coal mines and they can all be found in metal mines especially 'stinkdamp'. and 'chokedamp'. An acetylene lamp is not a good indicator of the presence of Carbon Dioxide as it can remain burning in an atmosphere where there is insufficient oxygen to sustain human life.

Middle Kinmont Mine, near Corney.

Albyn Austin.

NGR 118907 to 118905

This small mine is situated about 4 miles south of Ravenglass at about 350 ft. The workings are in 50 - 60 ft. high cliffs beside a stream roughly opposite and and Northwards of the old Middle Kinmont Farm.

There appears to be 2 N - S veins running parallel to the stream in the cliffs for about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile. There are 5 levels run in with tips and some evidence of surface collapses along the vein. There are also 2 hose whim circles and a stream diversion possibly for a waterwheel indicating that the workings went below the adits. A brief reference to this mine is given in the county histories and Directories and also in Smiths 1924 report for the Geological Survey on Iron Ore in the Lake District. These indicate it was worked in the 1840's to the 1860's and was the only major mine in the Corney Fells. There is evidence that the mine was worked by a spirited company from Kendal and also a Mr. Brogden. Dave Bridge has an advertisement in the Cumberland Pacquet of the 20th Sept. 1836 asking for a manager for the Corney Iron Mines Company's mines. Particulars could be obtained from Mr Hobson, a solicitor in Bootle.

I would be grateful if any members who have any knowledge of this mine would contact me.

Cross Fell Meet. 28.7.85. (C.J.)

7 members met up at the bottom of the fell road which runs up to the Radio Station on Great Dun Fell. We set off up and as seems to have been the norm with this summer the higher we got the worse the weather became. Where we parked you couldn't see more than 30 ft. thanks to the drizzle and mist. We set off walking to a compass attempting to find a number of levels near the Silverband Mine complex. We even had to resort to walking in a long line to find them. They were eventually discovered and all 3 needed a dig so not much luck there. The second part of the day was to have been spent tackling a shaft on the other side of the fell but we retreated as we thought we wouldn't be able to find it so it was left for another day. The rest of the day was spent assisting with a bat survey in the Hilton Mines on the nearby military firing range. Many items of general mining interest were noticed but the most striking thing was the horrendous damage done by mineral collectors who in their greed for specimens have pulled down pack walls and destroyed much of the incredible

miners workmanship. What started as a disaster turned out to be a good constructive day.

Hilton Mines nr. Appleby.

These mines are located in Scordale about 2 miles from Hilton village. The area is now on a military firing range and entry to the mines is forbidden not to say hazardous as live weapons training is carried out on the range.

There are six levels on the East of Scordale, the mines on the west being the Murton Mines. The lowest level is the Horse Level, now run in. The main level that the enormous spoil heaps come from is Wilsons Low Level, also run. Looking up from this level are several other levels only one of which is still open, Jacques level. This gives access to small flats and also provides an entrance to the extensive lower workings. Most of the workings are now in a very poor state of repair and progress is very slow due to the collapsed pack walls which have been dragged down by mineral hunters after specimens which once abounded in the mine.

The mines were worked by the London Lead Co. from 1824 to 1876, producing a total of 10,060 tons of lead concentrates. The mines were reopened by the Scordale Mining Company in 1896 with 70 tons of Witherite being produced in that year. They kept on until 1906 when the Brough Barytes Co. took over until 1912 when Scordale Barytes Ltd. took over and worked until 1919 when their plant was dismantled. Some work was done in 1930-39 by W. Wharton. It is thought that about 10,000 tons of Barytes were extracted from 1896 - 1939.

Several recent visits by myself and other revealed an important colony of long-eared bats which are resident in the winter months. The military commander is shortly to begin fitting these mines with bat gates which will spell the end for explorers and collectors alike. A great shame really, as these mines are certainly of interest.

Close to the Edge.

News is filtering through of new discoveries in the Alderley Edge mines but no details yet.

Survival.

It seems that the latest aid to staying alive down a mine is to carry a tube of toothpaste along. Recent reports in the national press state that some unfortunate 'fell' 20 ft. down a disused Cornish mineshaft, then dug himself an escape tunnel through soft sandstone to safety. This took him 4 days and during this time he lived off collected dripwater and a tube of toothpaste he just happened to have with him. He then staggered off to the local police station but was unable to relocate the scene of his triumph. The dig was supposed to have been completed with his bare hands. How much of this is truth and how much is journalistic licence I don't know but it all seems highly suspicious to me.

Bolting Controversy.

Over in caving country a row is brewing over the appearance of red bolts on most of

the major routes. They are an 8 mm spit ringed with red paint to show the best hang on a pitch. This has been done, say those responsible, to stop every new party using the cave from putting in a new bolt and therefore to stop lots of holes being drilled at pitch heads. Unfortunately the non-SRT brigade have taken great exception to this and while making great claims for the use of natural belays have been going around hacking out these bolts. This naturally leaves a big hole behind which looks unsightly to say the least. It would seem that if the folk who have hammered the bolts out were that interested in cave conservation then leaving holes behind is a funny way of showing it. I presume that these so called traditionalists never enter caves that have been artificially widened, opened, etc, by explosives. On a recent visit to Yordas Pot the 'red-heads' were very handy and gave a perfect hang. When I returned to the site a few days ago I was horrified to see the 'Luddites' had been at work and that some poor unfortunate was having to hang his rope in a very unsatisfactory, and possibly dangerous way.

Bolts or blots.

Whilst on the subject of bolts, how do you protect them against the ravages of time? Many of the bolts put in mines seem to have a limited lifespan due to water and grit slowly rusting and destroying them. Some of the bolts put in Coniston 4 years ago look decidedly unsafe. Too much grease on them can be positively harmful as this may create a hydraulic ram effect the next time a bolt is screwed into them. After insertion the spit should be given a light coating of a lithium grease and possibly an old bolt screwed in and left behind to protect the thread. Better than this are some small plastic caps which I have seen at Lyon Equipment, Dent. These screw into the spit and cannot be lost as they have a small piece of thread attached which is popped into the hole along side the spit before the wedge is hammered in. The bright colour is an aid to finding them next time. In view of the current bolting controversy it is a pity that they all seem to be red.

C.O.M.R.U.

The rescue practice season is upon us again and these will start in October. Anyone who is interested and would like to join in or who would just like to be a 'casualty' should contact the team leader, Mike Mitchell.

Gold in the hills.

Alastair Lings Y.C. recently returned 'doon sooth' from his exploring the wilds of Scotland in search of gold. He was white-haired, pure as the driven snow, mark you and gibbering of vast fortunes hidden beneath the heather-covered glens. He has certainly entered into the spirit of things and now sports a p.v.c. mini-kilt of the McCrae tartan and a black leatherette bonnet. After a day digging at Force Crag he leaped back into his Land Rover and disappeared in a cloud of diesel smoke shouting something about taking the high road.

Book Reviews.

Principles of Metal Mining - J.H.Collins F.G.S. ISBN 0 948079 00 2

This is a reprint of 1875 'basic text' for students of mining published by Mining Facsimilies which judging by the publishing address is something to do with N.M.R.S. It is a small pocket-sized book with a card cover. I think it is rather overpriced at £5.95 when you consider the price of our journal. The binding is awful and mine has started to fall to bits when the only thing I did with it is read it and look at the pictures. The contents are however excellent and the text reproduction is also good. It contains a great deal of material of interest to mine explorers on mining techniques and methods and it is quite readable. It contains a great many illustrations and these too are interesting. The final section is a series of self-test questions for mining students to ready themselves for examinations. It is quite enlightening to realize how few of them I could answer correctly, e.g., "Describe three forms of hammers used by miners, giving sketches and stating weights and dimensions." and "Make a sketch of a common "drawing lift" showing the situation of the "clack" and the doorpiece."

If you are interested in learning more of this great period of mining and can afford it, the book is a very worthwhile investment.

Geology of the North Pennine Orefield. Volume 2 Stainmore to Craven. - K.C.Dunham and A.A.Wilson ISBN 0 11 884284 6

Well, it's arrived at last, the definitive work on the mineral veins and workings of that part of the world. It is quite a big book and would not stand up to the rigours of field use as it come in soft covers and at £15.00 it's a bit dear to wreck. It is up to the usual high standard of B.G.S. publications and no doubt will become the bible on that area to all. It is cram-packed with a great deal of information and contains many maps, sections and a few photo's. Everything has map references so finding your way around should be no problem. To get the best from the book you should really buy the relevant geological maps to accompany it. Excellent value and essential when visiting that part of the North Pennines.

Both of the above are available from the Yorkshire Dales Railway Bookshop, Embsay, Skipton, N.Yorks.

The Fate of Jeremy Visick.

This is the perfect introduction to mining for your teenage kids. It tells the story of a schoolboy who becomes fascinated by the fate of a boy of his own age who perished in the Cornish Tin Mines in the last century when he discovers he is living in the same house as the boy and his family. The story is well researched and quite exciting with lots of twists and turns although sometimes the language and style is a bit adult. Good Value, published by Puffin at £1.25.

News from Industry.

Compiled by Alastair S. Lings.

S.W.England.

In 1984 member companies of the Cornish Chamber of Mines produced:

5047 tons of tin in concentrates

7159 " " Zinc " "

756 " " Copper " "

2580 Kg " Silver " "

147669 tons of Aggregates

2.25 Million tons of Clay (85 % for export)

In September the planning committee of Devon County Council will decide on Amax's new proposals for mining the Hemerdon Ball Tungsten and Tin orebody on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park.

Midlands.

The N.C.B. has proposed the development of a new mine in the S. Warwickshire coal-field. The project is expected to cost £400-£500 M. and give a planned output of 3 Mtons/year for 50 years.

Scotland.

Foster Yeoman Ltd. are spending £60 M. developing a new 'superquarry' at Glensanda near Fort William. The quarry should be operational by the end of 1986, and initially will produce 7.5 Mtons/year of granite, making it one of the biggest single quarries in the world. Broken rock is to be tipped down a shaft into underground bunkers and crushed in underground mills. The crushed aggregate is to be transported out of an adit to the loading dock, destined for the south of England.

Esso are at present drilling for Zinc near Dalmelly, Argyllshire.

Whin Sill.

This is quite often mentioned in many works related to mining and geology in the north of England. It is a hard basaltic sheet of dolerite formed in the Hercynian Orogeny, a period following the Carboniferous era some 295 - 270 million years ago. In the pennines the Whin Sill lies in a gentle half-dome at various levels parallel to the sedimentary rocks around it. There is not one Whin Sill but rather many appearing at many different horizons all over northern England. The name means 'hard rock' and miners regarded them as a quite normal part of the stratigraphy. Much of Hadrians Wall is built on an outcrop of the Whin Sill and the island of Lindisfarne is also formed from this.

Eire '86.

If you fancy a trip to the emerald isle in spring 1986 let CDJ know as soon as possible, or else you may miss out.

SUB TERRANEAN SOUVENIRS

by John and Joan Helme

Wearing sundress and sandals, lightweight trousers and short sleeved shirt and riding in an electric train with hundreds of other holiday makers from all over the world.....not the way CAT members usually enter a cave but the Postojna Caves aren't on our regular meets list!

During the last hundred-and-sixty-five years twenty-million people have toured these caves in the Karst area of Yugoslavia travelling by train for about two kilometres and then continuing on foot to marvel at the vast underground tunnels and caverns, the columns, stalactites and stalagmites, curtains and straws which have created massive architectural monuments and delicate filigree and fret-work in the twenty-three kilometres of limestone passages.

Skilful lighting reveals natural colours ranging from froth white to bitter brown and cider orange, thankfully avoiding the tawdry effect which less sensitively arranged coloured electric lights can produce.

There are touristy incongruities, of course - the underground cafe, toilets and souvenir shops, a ninety metre deep concert hall which claims to seat ten-thousand and has excellent acoustics, and the train which like a fairground ghost train rushes shrieking passengers into the cool, dank depths out of the bright, hot Slovan sunshine. But this evidence of civilised man is reduced to insignificance by the timeless grandeur and intimacy of nature's design.

In the underground river Pivka lives Proteus, a salamander without colour or eyes, surviving on the minimal food offered by this environment since Tertiary times, safe from all predators except man. A curious creature like a skinless lizard it lies trapped in a rocky pool to be gazed on by the hordes of visitors and bombarded by the worthless coins which some cannot resist throwing into anything resembling a wishing well.

German occupying forces who used the caves as a fuel store during the second world war found them less safe than they had anticipated for caving Partisans with an intimate knowledge of the long passages used less well known entrances to penetrate and blow up the store. More than a thousand barrels of fuel burned for a week leaving smoke blackened walls as evidence of their activities.

We emerged from this vast underworld with mixed feelings..... awestruck by the size and splendour of nature's creation, unhappy about man's intrusion and commercialism, and tantalised by glimpses of unlit passages, barred to tourists, penetrating even deeper in to the earth.

THERE'S MORE TO READ IN YOUR BRIGHT NEW

Newsletter

News Briefs

THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME at Whitehaven's Haig Pit, Cumbria's last deep coal mine, is running into trouble. The four new tunnels, presently being driven to prove coal reserves five miles out under the Irish Sea, have discovered nothing but a sixty-foot fault of solid rock.

Coal production ceased at Haig last summer when nearly six-hundred men were laid off. Since then the remaining hundred-and-sixty men have been working hard to develop new areas south of the old workings. The NCB had hoped to finance this work with the coal produced from the tunnels as they progressed, a possible two-thousand tons a week, but because of the geological problems as little as three-hundred-and-fifty tons per week has been brought out. The tunnels, which are 7'6" high and 12' wide should have been progressing at a hundred metres a week. But because of the hard rock they are progressing at a mere sixteen metres a week.

OUR MONTHLY SOCIAL EVENINGS will resume on the 11th of September and continue through the winter until the spring of 1986, at least. These events are held in the lounge bar of the Farmers Arms at Lowick, near Ulverston, on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of every month, and commence at 8:30pm. There is always some entertainment, usually a slide show, and plenty of time for socialising.

APOLGIES to those of you who were late in receiving your last edition of the Newsletter. We had a spot of bother at the printers. Word came back from the West Coast that there was no stiff blue card for the covers. The Newsletter is printed by a Sympathiser in a candle-lit Egremont garret, a rather shady character, by all accounts, who insists on remaining nameless (and who can blame him). Anyway, that's why your Newsletters were late - no posh looking and incredibly expensive stiff blue card for our new-look professionally-printed Newsletters. If this one is late reaching you, then no doubt we'll have to think up another excuse.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY and heartfelt sorrow goes out to Member Ken Battersby who recently lost a cherished micro-wave oven when a stray rock from a face blast demolished his weigh-bridge cabin at the recently reopened Ghyll Scaur Quarry. Member Battersby, a lover of curries and foreign dishes which smell a lot and are thoroughly unpalatable, is now obliged to consume lettuce sandwiches like the rest of us. In an interview conducted beneath a makeshift shelter of corrugated sheets and bin-liners Member Battersby said: "Actually, joking apart, it was a classic near miss. I'm bloody lucky to be here, and so's my tandoori. Now then, did I ever tell you about the time I ate a flask full of my sister-in-law's blue-tinted custard on the Isle of Man ferry....."

"CATACLYSMS" - Anagrams whose solutions may be found mainly within the current membership list or past newsletters. The person with the most answers correct will win a MAP - SIZE LLR. Answers to BENT BY THE TANKERS whose address may be obtained from the membership list. In the event of a tie the winning entry will be drawn from a hat.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) "I am a strutmunt." by Eric | 12) Shit! A half wetter bit. |
| 2) Finger me pelt. | 13) DANGER - Melee inside. |
| 3) O.C. Pringle is the Queen. | 14) React on warming. |
| 4) Hold! A clinger. | 15) Veld Unballed! |
| 5) Elvers Hole. | 16) Even clue to gully. |
| 6) This redd flat. | 17) Red Lez be prat. |
| 7) Train hammer. | 18) I stray on Enid. |
| 8) Raising a stall. | 19) Paid Neddy men. |
| 9) Ann M faced zeal. | 20) Pony plot. |
| 10) Hi! Scorn short jeep. | 21) I be mad ox. |
| 11) Monday I clone Megan Plencwhite. | |

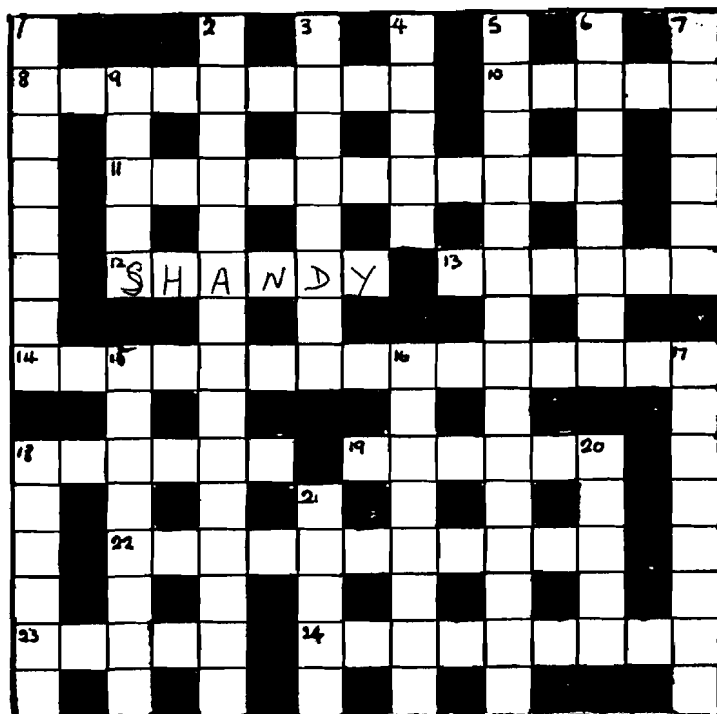
In a mine, in the dark, two men for a lark, they swore and they spouted pure dribble, and they rolled in the mud, spitting venom and blood, as they each strove to claim the same kibble.

Said one to the other: "Tha yance woz mi brother," said t'other: "By gock, tha duz quibble,"

"Gock sonnin," said t'first, "Tha heid Ah will burst, if tha duzzent let gaah o' yon kibble."

Now homeward they went, all bloody and spent, from fighting, from swearing, from graft, and their unsettled debt, unresolved, fueled regret.....for the kibble, which fell down the shaft.

* * * *



ANSWERS FOR PREVIOUS CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1,5 Cumbria Amenity Trust,
6 Holland, 8 Amateur, 10 Percy Pitprop,
11 Peril, 12 Breeching, 16 Isle of Man,
17 Ledge, 20 Fullers earth, 21 Quintet,
22 Peridot, 23 Stainton Cavern.

DOWN: 1 Closeness, 2 Malachite, 3 Mem-
ories, 4 No Tip, 7 Nape, 9 Stargazer,
13 Haematite, 14 Night Gown, 15 Effluent,
18 Esse, 19 Fault, 20 Fungi.

Crosswords compiled by Graham Atkinson.
SOME of the clues are mining/geology/etc
orientated.

Answers in the next edition of the
NEWSLETTER.

ACROSS

- 8 See men toil pointlessly to
break rock (9)
- 10 The atheist's heart is like
unto a barren wasteland (5)
- 11 Volcanic ash/water systems can
be, as well as non-drip paint.
Too obscure? Then hit about
ten love in Cancer, for
example (11)
- 12 "Quiet, Mr. Capp. You'll get
a drink." (6)
- 13 Irritation after points raised
by headmaster for punishment
(6)
- 14 Making score or breaking
Furness limestones, for
instance (3-7,5)
- 18 Iron control wielded as in
13 across (6)
- 19 & 7 Down Would its collapse
create work for the PM? (4,2,6)
- 22 Suspended partition above fault
(7,4)
- 23 To respond about part of the
play - this is misleading (5)
- 24 Approach master for tales about
working underground (5-4)

DOWN

- 1 Pencil-making plant in the Med.?
(8)
- 2 Calculated distance from land
settee might travel (9,6)
- 3 Despite his name, his attentions
are not always welcome (2-6)
- 4 They succeed these runners, we
hear (5)
- 5 Hydro-electricity (3,5,2,5)
- 6 Drug to reverse command after
North Circular (8)
- 7 See 19 across
- 9 My! The south is without eastern
legends (5)
- 15 Use land and grow natural
paraffin (5-3)
- 16 Lone gown on display for
illuminating advertisement (4,4)
- 17 Chloride of sodium deposits for
use by weary sailors (4,4)
- 18 See 20 down
- 20 These base untruths giving one a
sinking feeling when proving
unreliable (5,6)
- 21 Shrink back, or draw forward? (5)

Meets Review by McF

I've just had one of those weekends. One of which weekends?....you ask. One of those weekends which leaves you feeling like you've just rolled in from work on a wet Friday evening and suddenly realised that it's only Wednesday. It was almost a relief to return to work this morning and buckle down to some leisurely corrackin'. To say the least, it was an exhausting weekend - that mine manager up at Force Crag certainly knows how to wield the whip and squeeze the sweat out of his workers, the bloody-minded little fellow. But it was not the work which reduced your humble editor to the pale-faced wraith seen hobbling onto the quarry van this cold and mizzly Monday August morning, it was the Saturday night customs, banal practices, and unprecedented gastronomic adventures he was forced to endure whilst relaxing between shifts. Now my big mistake was to arrive at the mine a day early, innocently harbouring the thought that a pleasant night's camping in Coledale, preceded by a quiet drink with the mine owners, might prove spiritually refreshing. So at the end of the first shift we repaired to the village of Braithwaite. Mine Manager Blezard and Mine Secretary Danson announced that they were off to the theatre in Keswick to see an Alan Aikborn play.....and would anyone care to accompany them? Fearing that this might prove too spiritually refreshing I opted for the folk night in the Muckchuckers' Arms, where, surrounded by a migrant chapter of Hell's Angels, I was introduced to the local beers by Underground Manager Greenbank, Mine Engineer Sutcliffe, and Mine Resident Incompetent Barnes (Allerdale District champion corporation-lamp-post-kicker). After much supping and very little singing I returned to the mine and was treated to a supper of local delicacies, washed down with a fragrant blend of unrefined Turkish coffee and Balkan Sobranie, in the residential wing of the office block. All good tackle, thought I. But when the bloody generator chugged into life at 7:30 the next morning I was not too sure.

At 7:59 precisely, Sub Agent Calvin arrived in his rattly red car and ushered Underground Manager Greenbank and CAT Official Observer McFadzean into Zero Level with the pointed end of his charging stick, his intention being to unblock a barytes hopper which was jammed with large rocks. Half a stick of gelignite, strapped to the end of an alcatheine pipe and rammed up into the hopper, failed to have the desired effect and achieved little other than to fill the level with noxious fumes. Another two half sticks of gelignite later, the blockage was running but still pretty solid; a fourth charge might have shifted it but by this time the alcatheine pipe was too short, so Sub Agent Calvin issued us with crowbars and forced us down into the hopper from the stope above. In the dust and the impenetrable nitrous fumes we finally succeeded and managed to fill four tubs. At 2:30 pm, in the homely mine restaurant, the underground workers were treated to platefuls of the Greenbank Patent Hangover and Heartburn Restorative - chilli con carne, with fresh chillis, a sprinkling of cumin, "and kidney beans, aye, proper ones, not those soggy tinned buggers." Good traditional Cumbrian fare. Lucky I took some Rennies.

Yes, it was a hectic weekend, all systems were go. Many members turned up for the meet and a great deal of work was carried out. At the end of the day Manager Blezard conducted a tour through Zero and No.1 levels, leading CAT members single file through the billowing gelignite fumes and residual chilli con carne vapours, eyes streaming and lungs burning. But more about Force Crag later.....back now to where I left off in the last Newsletter....

I can't say much about the Nenthead meet because I was unable to attend it. However, I have since received masses of letters from up and down the county which may shed a glimmer of light on the subject. Here is a brief selection.

Sir, why is it that whenever we go to Nenthead we invariably end up tramping through boring old Smallcleugh? Surely the meet leader could exhibit a little imagination and take us somewhere new.

Disgruntled, Carlisle.

Sir, why is it that whenever we go to Nenthead we invariably end up tramping through boring old Rampgill? Surely the meet leader could exhibit a little imagination and take us somewhere new.

Disgruntled, Kendal.

Sir, why is it that whenever I go to Nenthead the landlady at Cherry Tree Cottage invariably gives me a thick ear for trying to charge my caving lamp under the bed? It's not as if the acid burns are visible when they are hidden beneath the posture springs.

Disgruntled meet leader,
Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway.

On the 22nd of June, seven members attempted to descend through the workings of the Knockmurton Iron Mines to the Cogra Moss Level, one of the major levels which linked the Knockmurton workings to the Kelton mines. This attempt was abandoned when the equipment ran out a-hundred-and-fifty feet down an internal shaft. It is understood that it is at least another fifty feet to the shaft bottom. Dashed hard lines. In fact the whole day was dogged with ill luck. Meet Leader Fleming's car broke down on the way to the mine, yes the duracel batteries finally gave up the ghost and he was obliged to ditch it in Cleator Moor, first covering it with straw and turves so that the locals wouldn't pinch the shiny bits. Poor old Fleming walked the remaining six miles and turned up just as the meet was drawing to a close. But he kept a brave face, and managed to joke about it afterwards. That's Peter - a laugh a minute.

After abandoning the shafts in No.9 Level and exploring the stopes in No.3 Vein the team entered some of the workings higher up the fell and broke into new ground, discovering clog prints on the floor, dozens of candles, and a broken wagon wheel. Lots of scope for further exploration, says Richard Hewer, who has visited these mines before and is rather a knowledgeable chap so far as mines are concerned. Next time we'll take more gear and perhaps an emergency set of Duracels.

Right, hands up those of you who intended to turn out for the Coniston camping weekend but didn't because at the last minute you couldn't find your tent pegs. Hang on while I count you all. Right then, hands down. Now answer this question. Do you know how many members actually camped out, how many of the faithful few forsook the Live Aid concert and braved the wind and rain for some stimulating socialising and a night beneath the open sky? You don't know? Then let me tell you. ONE. Yes, one! And who was the simple fellow? Bloody muggins here. Sucker McF.

Saturday always was a bad day for a meet; this particular specimen was no exception. There I stood, alone in the swirling drizzle, a solitary figure bent and dejected, blowing hot breath into cupped hands as the wind blasted ashes and cinders from the charred remains of Mr Johnson's holiday cottage. Such is life. At length I was joined by Mike Mitchell, Ian Matheson, and Peter Fleming. "Are you camping out tonight?" I asked eagerly. They shook their heads and turned away, casting sheepish glances at each other as they removed their toupees and took their Phyllosan. Things were looking grim. Things looked decidedly grimmer when Mitchell unloaded five lengths of scaffolding tube from the back of his rust-coloured white van and placed them in a pile with the tackle. "Maypole," he said blankly as the rain trickled down his bald head and dripped off his nose.

And so we spent the day in Paddy End, trying vainly to climb over a massive boulder choke in the Boxing Day Stopes on Top Level. It transpired that the maypole was just a shade too short; there it stood, swaying alarmingly, Fleming hanging on for dear life as it rattled and twanged, nuts and bolts bouncing off the stope walls as his vibrating knees shook them loose. "I'll fetch another length of pole tomorrow," said Mitchell. "Urghhhh," groaned everybody else. And that was Saturday.

Re-enforcements arrived on Sunday morning. Members present, besides Saturday's team, were Mark Wickenden, Chris Jones, Dennis Webb, Don Jones, Tim Clark, and Chris Crowder. With a fresh wind stirring the bracken, we set off up

the track with our extra length of scaffolding pole. Mr Johnson waved cheerfully as we passed, bidding us good morning from his airy open-plan living room and so obviously overjoyed at having just discovered three freshly-cooked potatoes in the spindly remains of his easy chair. Ah, it was a pleasant Sunday morning; birds were singing, church bells ringing, dumpers growling tunefully in Brandy Crag Quarry.

Down on Top Level we reassembled the maypole and managed to scramble on top of the boulder choke. Matheson and Webb reported that there was no way on, just a steep slope terminating in the top of the stope. So much for Top Level. We decided to return to the surface, have some dinner, and do some surveying in Levers Water Mine.

You must bear with me, for I'm afraid I'm going to have to be serious for a few sentences and adopt a less flippant attitude. Mine exploration is a dangerous activity, we all know that, we are all aware of the dangers and do our utmost to guard against them. To date we have been fortunate, no one has had a serious accident on a club meet - whether this is luck or good management, I know not. However, in Levers Water Mine Don Jones stumbled and fell headlong into a hole in the sole of the level, landing, luckily, on a stemple which saved him from a further fall of forty feet. Don broke his leg. It could have been worse, far worse. Accidents can and do happen, even the most careful and most proficient are prone, it's one of those things. Now, as it transpired, six of those present were also members of C.O.M.R.U., the mine rescue team. Mike Mitchell constructed a stretcher from some tape slings and two scaffolding poles, and within an hour Don was out in the sunshine. Good management that. In fact the rescue went very smoothly. Don was taken to hospital in Chris Jones' Land Rover, an experience which was probably more painful than the accident.

And that brings us full circle back to Force Crag. Before I hand you over to our foreign correspondent, Señor Calvino, for a detailed account of the work that was carried out, I would like to grasp the opportunity of slagging Member Murphy, millionaire, philanthropist, boy wonder, who manifested quite eerily from behind the curtains in the Muckchuckers' Arms and cadged a drink for himself and his girlfriend. Member Murphy, no newcomer to this column, is never slow to point out that the things I write about him are inaccurate to say the least. "This is the bloke who writes those awful lies about me," he said, as I was introduced to Jungle Jill, the wild-haired girl who was carrying all the baggage. Murphy had hitched all the way to Braithwaite with no food, no money, no tent pegs, and still managed to have a good time. Haven't learnt his secret yet, but as soon as I do, I'll let you know.



**CALVIN'S
COLUMN**

I was looking out of the window the other day, as I ate my jam butty and saw the wind and rain blowing the seagulls off the roof tops, when my thoughts went out to those devoted and fearless jam butty miners in the wilds of Coledale. If it was not for their unselfish efforts, working knee deep in oozing jam and marmalade we would not be able to enjoy our jam butties for tea.

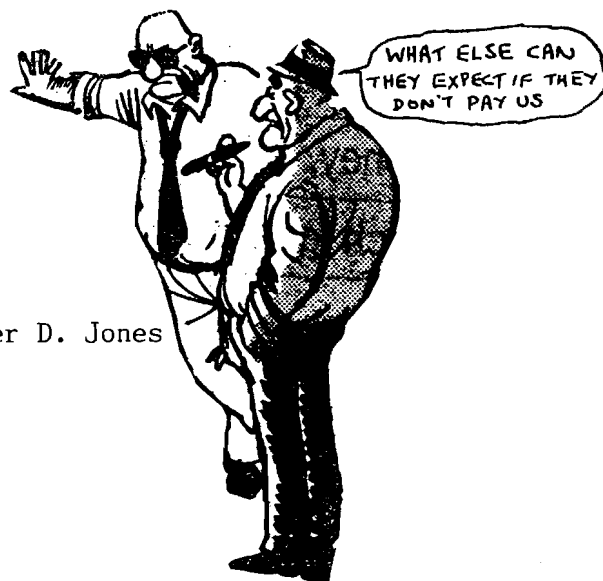
To specialise in jam butty mining one must be able to see the fruitful work that lies ahead, be able to check the specific gravity of the oozing jam mixture as it flows slowly out of the butties. A specialist will be able to stick to his work and will devote himself to the special knowledge of collecting specimens for export to Ireland. Special equipment for jam butty making

is required in your jam mill: preserving pans, slotted spoons, funnels, sieves, jars and jar covers. All this adds up to a large capital outlay so only the people with unlimited supplies of money, like the owners of Force Crag, should attempt this type of venture. The professional jam booty miner will have spent years studying in this type of mining at the Royal School of Jam Booty Mines, London.

CAT meet Force Crag Mine, Sunday August the 18th:- About twenty-two members turned up for the meet at Force Crag Labour Camp. Stompen Fuhrer Manager Blezard, known to his close friends as Bob-a-Job, got his soap box out and rising to his full height of 5ft addressed the bewildered CAT conscripts, then picked out the fittest and the ones who were in fear of him. "You will carry fence posts and barbed wire up to High Force Crag. You will not slack or get your lunch till you complete the fencing. I will be with you all the time watching for defectors and deserters." With that he got his rifle, and his killer guard dog Honey, out of his car. The only thing that was keeping the killer dog away from the CAT members was the piece of anchor chain on its collar, it looked like the same chain he keeps his wallet on. So a long line of bewildered sherpas started the long climb up to High Force. But miracles can happen even at Force Crag, for who should come along to save the forced-labour gang, none other than Biggles (Chris Jones), riding a motor cycle that looked like it had been made up from some old brass bedsteads and a mangle. This machine was equipped with two outriggers capable of carrying exocet missiles, or in this case fence posts. Then strapping the posts to his motorised bedstead he defied gravity and death, roaring up and down the track to High Force, thus saving the conscripts a lot of hard work. So with this joint effort, Stompen Fuhrer Blezard now has a high altitude punishment compound up at High Force. So beware you Doubting Thomas', don't knock his jam booty mine or you could be locked up there.

Goldfinger Lings came down from his prospecting in Scotland to join the meet and was flashing his gold nuggets about. This is the first time we've seen one chained to a black mac. It's for security reasons, so he says.

But this meet was not all fun for a great deal of work was carried out around Force Crag Mine, this day. CAT members completed a hard and wet job fencing off the old shafts high up on High Force Crag. A large drainage ditch was dug out from the new entrance to No.1 Level, past the old No.1 entrance, to the tip ends to stop water washing the tips down into the mill. Part of the office was painted out, new glass put in the windows, and a new ridge fitted to the roof. A fall was cleared 25 yards in Zero Level, and sides retimbered. A blocked hopper was cleared and a full round of holes was fired in the stope. So all in all CAT members put a right good shift in. Some members cleared a way through to the High Force levels from No.3 Level and had a through trip. Manager Blezard took a party to look around the punishment workings in Zero Level where they saw three deserters forced to work inside a jam booty hopper as their punishment for not going up to High Force with him. They have only one candle a week off him; he says they should eat more carrots then they would see better. By the way, he will supply the carrots cheap, or so he says.



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