

# CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER No. 33 - DECEMBER 1992

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MOEL FERNA SLATE MINES  
NORTH WALES

*Photo : Ian Knowles*

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*Season's greetings  
and best wishes  
for the  
New Year.*





UNIVERSITY OF EXETER PRESS

# **THE MINES OF FLINTSHIRE AND DENBIGHSHIRE**

**Metalliferous and Associated Minerals 1845-1913**

**Roger Burt, Peter Waite and Raymond Burnley**

Paperback, 210 x 146 mm, 199 pages

ISBN: 0 85989 371 5

Provisional price: £12.95, proposed publication date: Summer 1992

Series: *The Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom, 1845-1913 No. 10*

*The market:* Specialists and those interested in the history of mining in the United Kingdom.

*The book* is the tenth volume in the continuing series *The Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom, 1845-1913* and continues the coverage of central and north Wales. It gives details of the output, ownership, management and employment at several hundred mines, mainly around the lead districts of Halkyn and Minera mountains. The data provides an invaluable aid to the interpretation of surviving site remains and the book's use as a field guide is facilitated by the addition of modern Ordnance Survey Grid References. The only volume currently to be available on this nationally important mining area, it provides a brief overview of the development of metal mining from the eighteenth century to modern times and essential material for future research.

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Copies can be obtained from Dr R. Burt, Department of Economic History, Amory Building, University of Exeter, Devon, EX4 4RJ for £13.00 inc. p&p. Orders of five copies or more will receive a 35% discount but incur a postage charge. When ordering, please make cheques payable to Dr R. Burt.

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# Surrender plans drawn up

THE LEAD mining industry was once a major employer in parts of the Yorkshire Dales before prices collapsed in the 1880s.

The area was — with the North Pennines, the Peak District and Shropshire — one of four main lead mining centres in England and it is seen as important that the survival of the industry's remnants should be assured.

The national park authority is involved in a combination of investigation and consolidation. Work to consolidate the remains of the Old Gang smelt mill, in Swaledale, is underway this year to ensure that what has survived for the last 100 years should continue to do so.

Similar activity is taking place on the peat store at Grinton's smelt mill. Small scale excavation and recording work will be going on at Surrender, another of the Swaledale mines, while, on Grassington Moor, in the south of the park, this summer will see preparatory work in anticipation of consolidation work on relics there.

In all, the authority is spending more than £50,000 this year on site protection works and more cash could be forthcoming from English Heritage. Sites likely to benefit in the future will include Gunnerside Gill, in Swaledale, where the diversity of remains

## Charcoal furnace work complete

THE LAKE District National Park Authority has completed its consolidation work on Duddon Iron Furnace, to preserve an important part of the area's industrial heritage.

Built in 1736-37 and worked until 1867, the furnace was designated an Ancient Monument in 1963 and now survives as one of the finest of its kind in Britain.

The early iron industry needed locations where basic raw materials and sources of power were easily accessible.

Duddon offered an abundance of rich iron ore in the Low Furness area, sufficient coppice woodland to produce large quantities of charcoal, and water power to help create the draught to raise furnace temperatures.

By the 18th century, coke had superseded charcoal as the main fuel for iron-smelting and so the rural furnaces were gradually closed in favour of new blast furnaces in the emerging industrial areas of the North.

Left to nature and forgotten for more than 100 years, all that remained in its

attractive setting in Duddon Woods was the furnace itself, the huge charcoal stores, the iron ore store and the derelict houses of the workers.

Having secured a 50-year lease in 1981, the park authority has carried out archaeological excavations and consolidation work, with advice and grant aid from English Heritage. Approximately £60,000 has been spent on the site over the last ten years and, in line with national archaeological policies, the furnace has been "consolidated as found" rather than rebuilt or restored.

make it the fifth Dales site considered to be of national significance.

Both Old Gang and Surrender mines are close to rights of way and enjoy informal public access.

The authority has also launched a project to encourage the conservation and consolidation of features of local historic interest, and the remains of some of many lime kilns which once dotted the area are among monuments to be targeted.

Robert White, archaeologist, said there were probably nearly 1,000 kilns in the park, of which the most dramatic example is the vast Hoffman continuous process kiln alongside the Settle-Carlisle railway at Langcliffe, near Settle.

More typical were the many field kilns, built in the 18th and 19th centuries to meet the growing demand for lime to apply to the land and for use in the building trade.

The authority hopes local groups will identify kilns in need of conservation and consolidation so that some of them can benefit from the new scheme.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK NEWSLETTER

## Rescue bid for ironstone site

THE North York Moors National Park Authority is hoping to raise more than £300,000 for consolidation work on the remains of the Rosedale ironstone industry.

Graham Lee, Archaeological Conservation Officer, said: "The Rosedale remains are nationally important and one of the calcining kilns at the East Mines complex is the only known example of its type."

"The relics of the 19th century ironstone industry in Rosedale represent an important part of the industrial heritage of the North-East," he added.

"Rosedale itself lies to the south of the main industrial area, which was focused on the Cleveland Hills, but because of its isolated location the area has never been redeveloped and now provides the best example of an ironstone mining landscape."

A recent survey of the most important structural features at the East Mines has revealed that, although the calcining kilns and ventilation chimney have suffered partial collapse, the major causes of the decay have been weathering and groundwater movement. The foundations, however, appear to be sound.

Work commenced on the North Kilns towards the end of 1991. These are called iron kilns because the kiln compartment was a massive wrought iron construction supported within the stone bay and buttress walls.

This initial work aimed to solve the ground water problems and to prepare the structure for the main conservation work programmed for summer 1992.

The programme will involve devising a permanent support for the remaining high-level firebrick lining visible on the back and side walls of the surviving kiln bay.

It is hoped that English Heritage will grant aid 50 per cent of the work.

## Mine's a new experience!

WORK has just finished on an imaginative scheme of land reclamation in Gwydyr Forest in the Snowdonia National Park.

The forest is a popular destination for visitors to the eastern part of the national park and its owner, the Forestry Enterprise, plans to designate it a Forest Park next year. The forest has a long history of mining and there are a number of derelict lead and zinc mines of great archaeological interest.

A number of plants have also developed tolerance to the high levels of metals in the soils, while the mines provide a sanctuary for bats. A programme of work at the Hafna-Nant Uchaf/Cyffty lead and zinc mines has combined safety improvements with the preservation of plant and animal habitats and conservation of the area's mining history.

### Erosion

The project, funded by the Welsh Development Agency, saw a joint effort by the national park authority, the Forestry Enterprise, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Welsh Mines Society, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, and consulting engineers.

The reclamation programme was designed to stop the erosion by wind and water of deposits of fine material, often containing high levels of lead and zinc.

A close working partnership ensured that the reclamation did not mean the loss of valuable natural and archaeological features, and ingenious solutions were

found to many challenges. The Environmental Advisory Unit of Liverpool University advised on ecological work and transplanted orchids from areas where earth-moving was required. The unit also carried out trials to find suitable grasses for revegetation.

A number of dangerous shafts have been capped while still allowing access for bats. Streams have been lined and diverted to prevent further erosion of mine spoil.

The mines are of great industrial archaeological interest, and demonstrate the evolution of mining and processing technology. Throughout the scheme, features of interest have been excavated and recorded by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, and remedial work carried out to preserve certain structures.

In the future, footpaths will guide visitors safely through the reclaimed areas, where the history and working methods of the mines will be interpreted.

There are also extensive old mine workings, including gold mines, in Coed y Brenin, another Forest Park in the south of the national park.

Here, following archaeological excavation by the park authority, the site of the Glasdir copper mine, closed in 1914, has been cleared of overgrowth and stabilised.

The dramatic remains of the mill, where patent copper concentration processes were introduced, may be seen, as well as the routes of the tramway, leats and the generator house.

The Glasdir Copper Trail has been introduced over the last year, enabling visitors to follow a waymarked path with viewpoints and interpretative plaques.

# In the UNDERWAYS of ARRAS

## Amazing Memorials of Vain Sacrifice

by The Editor

*THE following word picture of the quiet, deserted tunnellings at Arras, where a few months before men had toiled in high hopes that thousands of warriors would pour through to victory, was written by the Editor for "The War Illustrated" when these hopes had been quenched and naught but ghosts were tenants. The Underways still endure as memorials of vain sacrifices*

**S**URPRISE, the soul of wit, is the soul of many other things in peace and war. It is also the acid that "bites in" the etching of a scene on the memory. Nothing will ever erase from mine the first impression of the underways of Arras, and when I went back again to explore those wonder-works of British labour the surprise of my first visit overmastered in my mind the actuality of the second.

The first time I found myself walking in underground Arras I was experiencing the sensation of a new thing, a secret thing, of which no vague hint had been bruited about in rumour's whispering galleries. When I went again, Sir Douglas Haig had meanwhile let all the world into his secret, since its need had passed. Even so, I doubt if all the world is much the wiser, as in his famous dispatch of January 1918 the Field-Marshal had to dismiss in a sentence an achievement worthy of a volume.

**M**y first acquaintance with the Arras tunnels had every element of surprise. Our guide that day was a grave Highlander, an elderly staff major whose long service in the thick of the battles had deepened the native melancholy of the Gael, leaving him still a kindly, gentle soul, with a quiet, reserved humour, which may have suggested to him the manner of our introduction. In a deserted avenue he stopped our car and, dismounting, gave to me and my companion each a candle, saying we should need these where we were going. I was reminded of the guide to the catacombs of Rome with his handful of tapers. Our little candles were to throw their beams upon works as wonderful and not unlike the catacombs.

In the middle of the weedy, rubble-strewn grass that occupied the space between the two roadways of the wide avenue, once so trim, we come to an opening in the ground and follow the major down the wide and easy steps as if we might be going to take train

on some rough-finished "Tube." Presently the need of the candles appears, the darkness enclosing us before we have reached the bottom of the steps. So with candles flickering we continue, now thirty feet or so below the level of the avenue.

Well, a tunnel is a tunnel, and little is there to distinguish one from another, save that some are semi-circular and some are square. Beyond these varieties it is a matter of dimension and the character of the soil that determine their individuality. This of Arras is

after the manner of the familiar pit gallery, its top clearing the head of the average man by a foot or so, and it is wide enough for two to walk abreast. It is hewn from the stratum of soft, porous stone that underlies the fields of Artois, and crops out here and there in boss and hummock. The countless chisel-marks left by the willing hands engaged in this titanic hewing are eloquent of the mighty labour that went on here for eighteen toil-filled months until the hour had struck for the Battle of Arras.

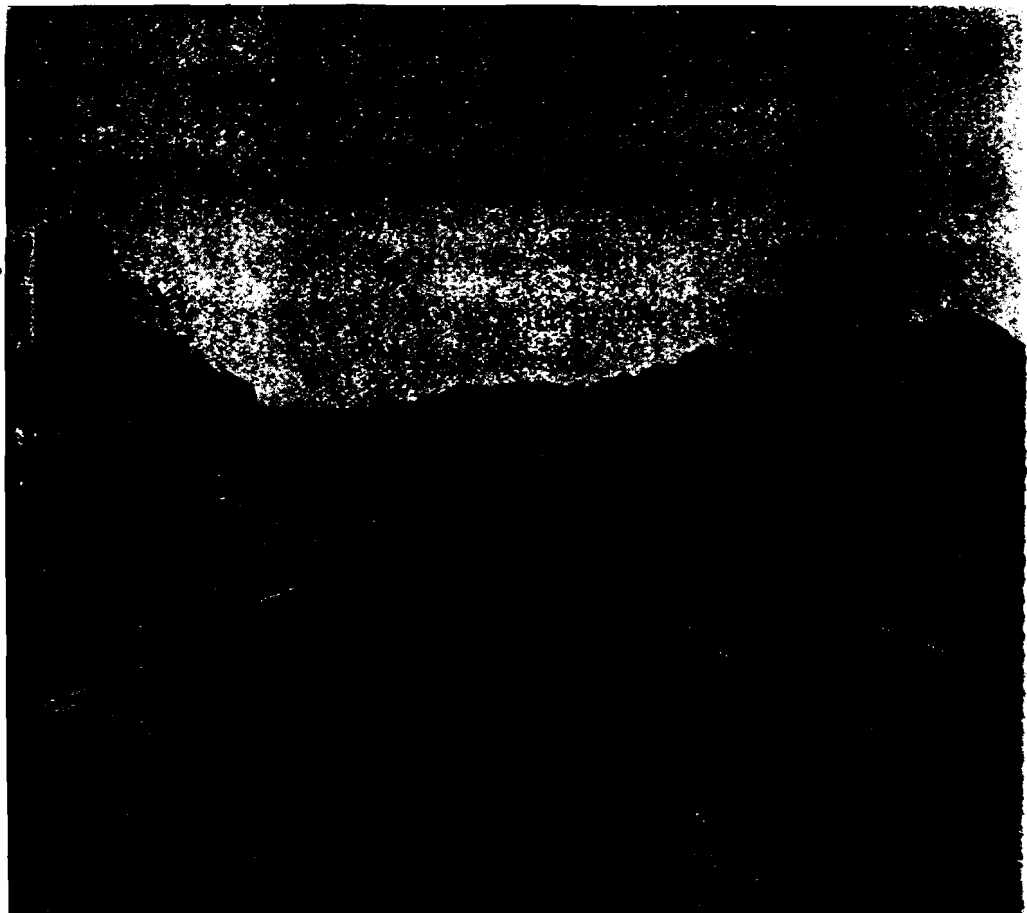
Along the first hundred yards of the tunnel the mind of the visitor was busied chiefly in noting the splendid workmanship. With a fine suggestion of enduring strength, stout pine logs stand rigidly erect at every few feet, supporting the heavy cross timbers of the roof. They give one a feeling that this under-way has been made to last for ever. Suddenly the major calls to us to look out, as there has been a heavy roof-fall, and the ground is heaped high with the stony debris. We realize swiftly that "ever" is a long time, and Nature has a habit of letting her rocks crumble and decay.

Now and then we come to a point

### UP FROM THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH

The amazing extent of the underways of Arras needed a network of light railways far below the ground to carry away the soft, porous rock through which the workings were cut. Here are some of the trucks employed. They are low enough to go forward when the workings were but a few feet deep. On the right of the photograph can be seen one of the tractors used to draw them. On the left, above a heap of rubbish, is a notice that obviously has been honoured only in the breach: "No articles of any description to be dumped here."

Imperial War Museum



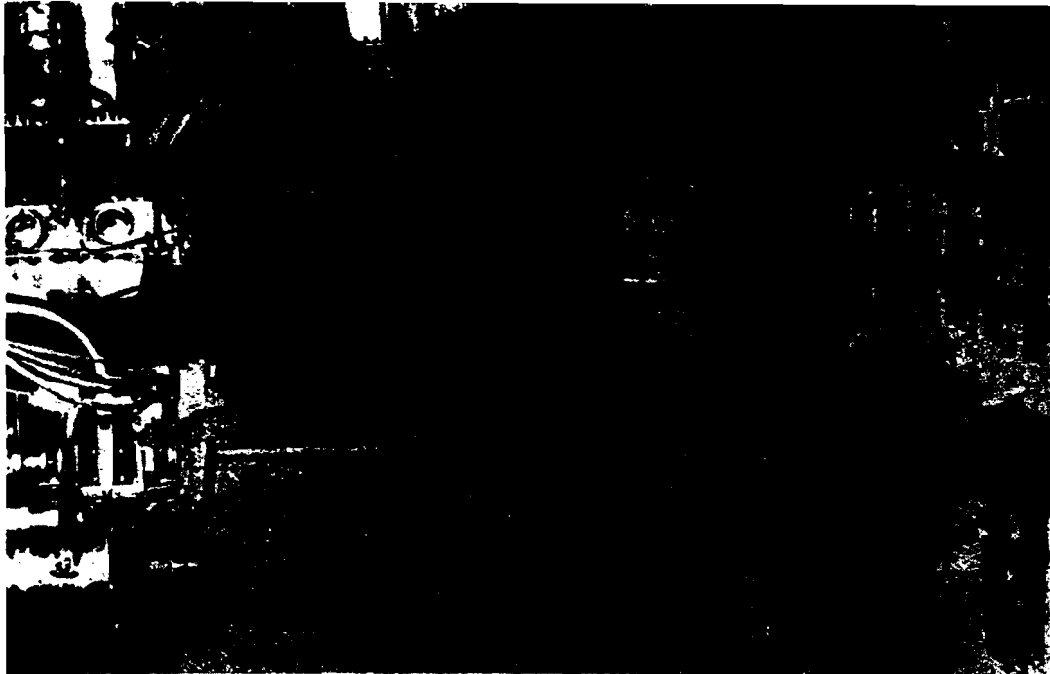
where water drips through, and in all such parts sooner or later there will be roof-falls. These oozy places but serve to make more remarkable the general dryness of the underway, and the atmosphere carries no foulness, as air-shafts are frequent, and high above we can see the sky through them.

As hundred yards of our subterranean progress are added to hundreds, the impression of the extensiveness of these underways deepens; we pass junctions where cross-ways intersect the main tunnel we are following; "Glasgow," "Manchester," and many another name of home are revealed on signposts by the gleam of our candles; vast cavernous recesses loom weirdly dark and still, like grottos in the gorges of the Tarn, explored by candlelight lang syne.

Voices are heard, lights appear down one of these sideways, and, our guide piloting us in that direction, we come upon a labour gang winding up the electric cables which were used for lighting this underworld when the great enterprise they were designed for was still in being. We had noticed many smoked and grease-smearcd patches on the walls where tallow flares had lighted the workers before the electricians with their magic wires and bulbs had come upon the scene, and candles were serving again when the miles of wiring and the thousands of little lamps were being gathered up now that the great "show" was over.

A WONDERFUL sight it must have been in those long preparatory months when by day and night the ever-lengthening tunnels were thronged with perspiring soldier-workmen, hewing down the stone, sending the thousands of tons of it which they cut away back in little buggies drawn by electric motors along the miniature railway whose terminus was every day a little nearer the forward trenches east of Arras. Down in these underways labour would go on as steadily as in the railway tunnelling of London Town, though houses would be crashing into ruin, and great holes opening in the roads above when the Boche shells were bursting in Arras and its suburbs.

I often wondered if this aspect of the war, its unimagined triumphs of manual labour, would ever be adequately recorded. The energy used up in the making of such engineering marvels as this subterranean city, and all the unchronicled preparations for the great battles, was so stupendous that no estimate of it could be made comprehensible. London itself might have been rebuilt by it. Surely houses for all the poor our islands will ever know could have been made by it.



#### LIGHTING UP THE UNDERWORLD

The two photographs in this page show scenes in the underways of Arras when the workers with their tallow flares had gone and the electricians "with their magic wires and bulbs had come upon the scene." The electrical installation which, as related in this chapter, was installed in 1917, was renewed in 1918 in preparation for the expected German offensive. The top photograph is of one of the two generating stations of the second installation, while the lower one shows part of the quarters of the Australian Engineers who took over the tunnels at the end of the war.

*Imperial War Museum*

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### END OF A CAVALRY CHARGE

For the first time since High Wood during the battle of the Somme, cavalry were in action at the taking of Monchy-le-Preux on April 11, 1917. They helped towards victory, but at a terrible cost, as described in Chapter 198. Above is the scene at Monchy on May 30, 1917. A few shattered buildings still stand, and the field of battle is littered with the dead bodies of the cavalry's horses caught by the German guns.

*Imperial War Museum*

And yet this mammoth store of the nation's energy was given freely and without stint that the nation might endure and overcome its mortal enemy among the races of man.

The purpose of the underways of Arras was to save the lives of soldiers. From the earliest days of the war the enemy had been able to cling to a trench system in the outward eastern suburbs of the town, and in places there no more than the cellarage of a suburban house separated the antagonists. There were streets down which the Boche could stream his machine-gun bullets, and trenches and wire entanglements were made where the *petite bourgeoisie* had once lived in peaceful comfort. The Arras battle of April 1917 was planned to thrust the foe away from his lair, to sweep him backward on his base at Cambrai; and the slaughter of the British in an enterprise so perilous, owing to the exposed nature of the terrain and the German field defences, would have been too great a price to pay for victory.

Fortunately, Arras abounds in splendid cellars, many of them as strong as old church crypts, and there is a system of underground quarries in the eastern suburbs. So these tunnels were built to link up cellars and quarries, and thus an immense underground city was constructed, in whose electric-lighted highways and byways not merely a regiment or two, but an army corps, could be sheltered and moved up to the trenches in the open country eastward, whither the tunnels were driven.

How well they served their purpose may be judged from Sir Douglas Haig's

official description of the opening of the Arras battle.

After a three weeks' bombardment the general attack was launched at 5.30 a.m. on April 9, under cover of a most effective artillery barrage. Closely following a tornado of our shell fire, our gallant infantry poured like a flood across the German lines, overwhelming the enemy's garrisons. Within forty minutes of the opening of the battle, practically the whole of the German front-line system on the front attacked had been stormed and taken.

WHEN the German third line and Monchy-le-Preux, five miles east of Arras, had been taken with the aid of cavalry and the Tanks two days later, the battle of Arras was already drawing to a close. Those glorious "forty minutes" of the opening attack had been made possible by the long and laborious burrowing in underground Arras. Eighteen months of ceaseless toil had gone to the making of the underways; for six weeks only the military movements in and through them continued, and forty minutes was really the time in which the harvest of all that stupendous toil was garnered.

The fact that a year and a half went in the making of these underways tells us something about the inconceivable magnitude of modern military movements. The hour of Arras battle struck at 5.30 a.m. on April 9, 1917, so that it was already being planned in the autumn of 1915. In other words, while thoughtless optimists were babbling about the war being over before its second Christmas, "or at latest next spring," the British Staff was wisely planning a

battle—but one of many then foreseen—for eighteen months later.

The battle of Arras was really being fought in those long months of underground preparation; the chisel-marks along the tunnel walls are the records of so many little blows contributory to the great achievement of those three April days of 1917. And the secrecy with which the making of this subterranean city of shelter, these underways for immense bodies of troops to issue safely on the actual field of battle, was carried through, is no less worthy of remembering, when we are being regaled with admiring tales of the Germans' genius for organization and their ingenuity in field fortifications.

So ran my thoughts during my visits to the underways of Arras, where, although we wandered about until our candles guttered, we explored no more than a corner of this strange undertown.

ON my first visit we regained the daylight by climbing some forty feet up a rough wooden ladder fastened flat against the dripping wall of an airshaft, and found ourselves blinking amid a great collection of "dud" shells and those queer trench-mortar bombs, with long handles like sledge-hammers, which had been sent over by Fritz without doing a ha'p'orth of damage. We were in a distant quarter of the town from the avenue where we descended.

When I revisited the scene we entered a little battered house and went down a trapdoor in its cellar into the underways, coming out again, after our exploration, through the kitchen of another house. There were many such entrances and exits, and now that Arras is restored to peaceful days, what possibilities of romantic and criminal adventure might not arise from these cellar doors that lead into this weird and widespread city of the underworld!

## LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

### NOTES ON THE MEETING OF THE MINING FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 1992 AT BROCKHOLE.

PRESENT:	P Davies	LDNP
	A Lowe	LDNP
	P Fleming	Cumbria Amenity Trust
	C Lane	Lakeland Mines & Quarries Trust
	M Mitchell	Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit
	H Owen-John	English Heritage
	I Tyler	Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society
	D Sharman	Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an approach to problems occurring on sites where there are important remains to be looked after, i.e. Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Those of immediate concern were Greenside Mines, Coniston Coppermines and Hoggett Gill.

Some of the problems were unauthorised access underground, theft of artifacts, unauthorised digging/excavation, mineral collecting and extraction. It was necessary to take stock of the remains, particularly on scheduled sites, and prepare appropriate management objectives, e.g. to meet safety requirements, interpretation, improvements or restrictions to access must all be considered. The group had been convened to hopefully devise a code of conduct and management plans. Representatives of other organisations might be involved at a later stage.

It was reported that Philip Claris, the Archaeological Advisor for the National trust, was unable to be present at the meeting but would like to be invited to future discussions.

The National Park Authority was interested in looking after industrial/archaeological remains which are part of the landscape, but unless a mine, say, was scheduled as an ancient monument, there was no control over its demolition.

Examples of important buildings which had been lost in recent years were quoted. To clarify the situation, Mr Owen John outlined the differing emphasis in legislation regarding "Listed Buildings" and "Scheduled Ancient Monuments".

Ancient Monument legislation posed a number of problems in dealing with Industrial Archaeological sites:

a) It was normally dealing with very extensive sites, i.e. whole landscapes. There was conflict in the provision that could be put in place under the 1979 Ancient Monuments Act and Town and Country Planning Legislation (Listed Buildings).

b) Industrial Archaeology sites could be of interest from differing points of view, i.e. as SSSI, mineral interests, etc.

c) No one could undertake damaging work on a scheduled ancient monument without the consent of the Secretary of State for the National Heritage, who would automatically consult English Heritage on proposals to dig, disturb the surface, flood, or carry out restoration work. However, legislation did not give the power to halt natural deterioration, or force anyone to manage a site in a particular way. In extreme cases however, the power existed to gain entry to a site for the -



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Mines Forum  
16/6/92

purposes of recording and undertaking certain works.

There were relatively few Scheduled sites in the Lake District, although there was an extensive area at Nenthead, outside the National Park.

A Monuments Protection programme exercise is being carried out, based on information stored in the County Sites and Monuments record. The information was quite good and provided a reliable base for deciding whether sites should be included in legislation, or should be deleted from the list.

However, the emphasis was now moving towards considering individual examples, i.e. lead, copper mining, etc., taking specialist advice on the sites to try and assess which were the most important sites and how they should be protected. David Cranstone (Newcastle) would undertake the preliminary work and would consult with local people on the ground whose local knowledge would help to identify prime sites; those which were of national, regional and local importance. Hopefully a list would be devised of those sites which would best be scheduled, listed or protected in other ways.

Representatives of CAT asked whether there was no way to speed up the process, as many valuable buildings had been lost over the last 10 years due to lack of conservation work. Many recommendations had been passed on to English Heritage without result. Could local legislation not be introduced to prevent such losses? Mr Owen-John replied that it was not possible to have local designation of specific sites. Legislation for statutory protection remained at national level. Designation must be recommended by English Heritage and agreed by the Secretary of State.

In general one must be careful about having buildings listed/scheduled and putting actual conservation work in hand. If there was a particular case for a building which was of very considerable importance which was threatened by the sort of action that would require Scheduled Monument Consent, English Heritage might be able to have a look at it, but it was a very difficult thing to obtain a scheduling notice for one site.

Local representatives felt it would be better for those who had the knowledge and expertise put some preliminary work into preserving valuable building before attempting to have them scheduled. Mr Owen-John was against this as he felt that inappropriate conservation measures (for instance using unsuitable materials) could do more long term damage than the natural process of decay.

Local representatives found this attitude very frustrating and enquired what chance there was of improving the situation. Mr Owen-John replied that Industrial Archaeology from being the "poor relation" now had a much higher profile as far as English Heritage and government were concerned. The will and understanding to improve the situation now existed and special regard was being paid to Industrial Archaeology as part of the Monument Protection programme. It was hoped to work closely with other people and organisations to implement positive conservation programmes with benefit of specialist advice.

Mines Forum meeting  
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A Lowe felt that the group's future meetings would be important as a means of "flagging-up" potential problems on individual sites. New planning guidelines existed for dealing with proposals affecting sites on the Sites and Monuments Record; for instance archaeological features must be taken into account when building operations were being considered.

Discussion then turned to specific sites e.g. Greenside and Coniston, and whether damage could be avoided by interpretation or sensitive signing, asking people not to walk over certain areas.

English Heritage would be happy to provide specialist advice for sites which may not be scheduled, if staff time and resources permitted. It would be for organisations such as CAT to negotiate with the owner of the site.

A Lowe suggested that the Mines Forum should meet regularly to report on work which was of national/regional importance and should form an overall conservation policy on mining and industrial archaeological sites. He hoped to work closely with the bodies represented at the meeting to avoid problems.

H Owen John said that the knowledge and experience of the "men on the ground" could be of great value to English Heritage. A good way to pass information in was through the Industrial Archaeology panels of the Council for British Archaeology.

A Lowe further reported that the NPA grant-aided projects undertaken by, for example, Lancaster University, and might also be able to provide some funding for work undertaken by CAT and MOLES, i.e. by supplying materials or assisting with the production of photographic records, or producing leaflets.

English Heritage had power to allocate money for work on Ancient Monument sites under two sections of the relevant legislation.

Section 17 for Management agreements with tenants/farmers, regarding stocking levels., etc., on a 5 year basis, not tied to legally protected sites.

Section 24 covered larger packages of grant aid and gave power to assist in recording archaeological and special programmes of repair, conservation and management to approx. 40% of the total cost.

Section 30 grants were sometimes better for sites where some of the buildings may be listed.

P Davies hoped that the NPA was now taking a more positive attitude to groups such as CAT and MOLES. A management plan had been drawn up for Caldbeck Commons, where problems had been encountered with mineral extraction and he felt that groups had been unfairly "lumped together". The Authority had not appreciated exactly what the activities of the groups were. It was important to have a Code of Conduct and be aware of the activities of CAT, MOLES etc. for example what they wanted to do at Roughton Gill and how they were going to do it. How

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many organisations was the NPA dealing with? Were the organisations in agreement with each other? He had two applications from CAT and MOLES for the re-opening of Lucy Tongue level at Greenside, for instance. M Mitchell explained that his group's application had been intended as support for the application made by MOLES. They felt it important from a Mine Rescue point of view to have a second exit from the mining complex, and that opening up Lucy Tongue would add greatly to the interest in that particular area of the workings. Adequate arrangements would be made to prevent unauthorised access to the level and it would not be possible for inexperienced visitors to gain access from the present Glencoyne entrance to Lucy Tongue.

P Davies replied that provided adequate safety arrangements could be made during work in progress and that appropriate public liability insurance covered was provided, he saw no reason why the application should not progress. It was emphasised that notices requiring the public to contact the National Park authority for permission to gain access to the complex should be posted and that similar information should be available from Information Centres and be circulated through the groups' Newsletters and the "Descent" publication.

With regard to the removal of artifacts from sites, P Davies said that in the case of National Park Authority land, provided extensive and accurate records were kept, including photographic records, and made available to the authority, with the opportunity for the authority to make use of exhibits for its own purposes, he thought that permission could be given for artifacts to be stored and displayed by the organisations undertaking the work.

However, in the case of sites over which English Heritage had jurisdiction, e.g. Greenside, no artifacts whatsoever were to be removed from site. They should be recorded, photographed and left in situ.

It was pointed out that NAMHO (National Association of Mining History Organisations) Code of Practice recommended taking artifacts away and sending them to a museum. There was a fear that small artifacts left in situ would only be removed by the general public and thus be lost.

English Heritage felt that by removing artifacts, surrounding evidence would be lost. Much better to leave things where they were, later perhaps to be studied using rapidly improving archaeological techniques. No digging or ground disturbance either over or underground, should take place. If a situation was reached where it became apparent that work was taking place which should not take place, English Heritage could look in conjunction with the Board at preventing public access.

MOLES felt it was not possible to carefully police all these sites to prevent material from being lost, and would prefer to have a reasonable dispensation to work underground. In one particular site, artifacts and evidence had been photographed and left in situ, but was likely to be destroyed by the next heavy rain and therefore would be lost if immediate action was not taken.

P Davies thought that work on Caldbeck Commons might be an exception to the general rule, and repeated that so long as he knew what work was being undertaken and by whom, and what was happening to the material extracted, he would be quite happy.

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16/6/92**

H Owen-John said that it was as important to collect the oral history relating to the sites as the actual artifacts, some of which could disintegrate very rapidly if removed from site unless kept under very carefully controlled conditions.

CAT and MOLES representatives however, were convinced that they had the expertise to deal properly with these artifacts and had been doing this sort of work for the past 30 years. They would be happy to agree to the National Park authority seeing whatever was found. The NPA could then decide whether to retain the items or hand them back to the finders.

The meeting felt that specific locations could be discussed at future meetings, and that if particular problems arose they could be resolved.

Discussion then ensued on the work undertaken by the Royal Commission survey at Greenside Mines, which had tried to set the scene and outline on which to hang objectives/exploration/conservation and consolidation. There was a need to identify problems and agree appropriate action. A Lowe said the maps would be made into working plans with descriptive text and that copies could be made available to CAT and MOLES for comment. Contact could also be made with people who had actually worked in the mines on the site. The subsequent management plan would be based on the results of the Royal Commission's survey.

Members of groups such as CAT and Moles could become the eyes and ears of English Heritage and the NPA and report back on problems which arose. Hopefully if matters were urgent grant aid could be provided to enable action to be taken. Manpower and expertise could be provided to carry out work.

It was agreed that meetings of the Mines Forum would in future be held twice yearly and that minutes of the present meeting would be circulated to other interested groups. This would help to give a much higher profile to what each side was doing and by working together they could help to conserve the area. It was hoped that there would be something positive to work on at each meeting, for example and up-date of progress on the Greenside complex.

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place towards the end of the year at the Mining Museum at Caldbeck and be followed by a visit to Roughton Gill in the afternoon.

Circ: NPA; CAT; MOLES; COMRU; English Heritage; Lakeland Mines and Quarries Trust; Council for British Archaeology, (for the NW Industrial Archaeology Panel); P Claris, Archaeological Advisor, National Trust.

Date of circulation: 22/7/92

Mines1/am

# LAXEY MINES RESEARCH GROUP

Please reply to:

11, WESTERN AVE,  
BALLABROOIE,  
DOUGLAS,  
ISLE OF MAN.

5-9-92

## N.A.M.H.O. CONFERENCE 93'.

Dear NAMHO Member,

Now that we are in the month of September and nearing Christmas, we are left with a little over seven months before the next Biennial conference and still a great deal to do. The majority of planning and organising has been done with more or less only fill in detail to finalise on. We are now in a position to release further information along with booking forms which it is hoped you can include in your next newsletter. The conference is to be held at the Manx Museum, Douglas, on the Isle Of Man, from the 23rd to the 26th of April 1993. Details on the Friday night registration will be sent out with confirmation of booking. The Saturday night function will involve a ride from Douglas to Laxey on a Manx Electric Railway tram plus a one minute walk from Laxey station to the glen gardens pavilion for the meal and entertainment. There will be a return tram ride. The weekend will host a series of repeated trips both above and below ground to cater for all. Details on field trips and booking forms will be sent after a conference booking has been made. We have decided not to bother with a theme for the conference, but still require speakers for lectures and seminars. Talks can be on any subject at all. Do you have a group project, old engines, water power, minerals, digs, restoration, overseas or mining in general, lets hear from you.

### COSTS: (1992 Prices)

Isle Of Man Steam Packet. Phone: 0624 661661.

Passenger fares: £46.00 return per adult and £23.00 return per child.

Vehicle fares: £96.00 return up to 3.9 mts long,  
£112.00 return up to 4.9 mts long,

Discounts are offered on group travel of ten or more passengers. Please note: Advance booking is essential to guarantee the sailing of your choice and reservations must be made for all passengers including infants. Under fives travel free.

Manx airlines. Phone: 0624 824313.

Passenger return fares

Blackpool. £94.00. Liverpool, £74.00 fare cracker. Cardiff, £130.00.

Birmingham, £116.00, Luton, £115.00, London, £160.00.

## **NAMHO Field Meet Ironbridge Gorge**

**Saturday 27th June 1992**

**Meet Leader Ivor J. Brown**

A very rapidly conducted tour around the cradle of the Industrial revolution, once crammed with mines, furnace and mills. The area under consideration consists of a two mile stretch of the Seven Gorge between Coalbrookdale and Coalpost.

Our first stop was at the Museum of the River to look at a spectacular 40 ft model of the gorge as it was in 1796. Now to look for the remains on the surface.

We were lead up the steep sides of the gorge, these were caused by erosion of the Silurian Limestone and Coal Measures which form the general sequence of the rock strata.

Outcrops of economic minerals eg coal, fireclays, limestone, ironstone and sandstone occur and were mined over the centuries. Some of the workings are still discernible as quarries, adits and shafts, but few are accessible. Our leader had been exploring the mining remains for many years and had many a good tale to tell. He showed us one adit entrance now used as a garage, where he had emerged surprising an old gentleman working on his car. Not a word was spoken but the next time he passed that way it had been securely blocked.

Our route included the remains of the Bedlam Furnaces built in 1757 in blast till 1830 and ended with the only underground visit of the day, to the tar tunnel.

This tunnel was constructed in 1787 for drainage, transportation and ventilation purposes. It was rediscovered in 1964 after an extensive search, in the cellar of a private house. A very interesting meet packed with information, more of which can be read in Ivor J. Brown's article in the Industrial Archaeology Review Vol. III Spring 1979

CONFERENCE 93'cont'd

All travel arrangements must be made with either the Isle Of Man Steam Packet Company or Manx Airlines directly and not through the conference organisers.

We recommend booking at least six weeks in advance with the Steam Packet if you intend to bring a vehicle. Cost can be kept down by grouping up and sharing vehicles, eg. look for numbers to fill a mini bus.

The conference fee is £8.00 per person, children under five, free  
The saturday night is £10.00 per person, children under five ,free.

The prices given for travel are those of 1992 and are intended only as a guide, some prices may not increase at all during 1993.

A map of Douglas will be sent with forms for field trips, other maps will be included in conference packs.

The conference forms may be photocopied and can be used for single or group bookings.

For further information, Please contact me on: 0624-674702.

Rachel Robertson. Conference organiser.

## HONISTER NEWS

One or two things have been happening at Honister recently which members may be interested in. For several weeks MOLES have been working on the restoration of the Kimberley external incline winding drum which was in danger of collapsing. The work has involved building up the outer buttress which holds one side of the drum shaft. While this was going on the drum was supported by rope. Green slate has been used for the work and the result is a credit to all who were involved. Further work is required, but at least the structure is now safe from collapse.

A bad roof-fall at the head of the Kimberley internal incline has resulted in a considerable amount of damage to the motor house at the incline head. There is also a report that mine explorers were nearby at the time and heard the collapse occur! Those who know Honister will remember that the motor house is the one which, over the years, has accumulated a considerable amount of artistic graffiti and prose on the inner walls. Some of the writings appear to be a working log of the incline and include such famous phrases as "cable's knackered, new one on order" and "job's bugged, laid off today". The electric motor and gearing which powered the incline appear to have escaped damage.

Someone has been playing around with the equipment on the Honister internal incline. During a recent visit by a party from CAT it was noticed that the incline carrier trolley had been placed back on the rails and is now only prevented from crashing to the bottom of the incline by the incline cable. About ten years ago Messrs Cameron, Nethery and Vaughan spent all morning struggling to get the carrier off the rails to protect it from damage. We are not sure who has carried out the task but the obvious thing to do is to strap a section of timber securely across the incline rails just below the lower wheels.

It can be reported that the through-trip at Honister is still open, but only just! A few more blocks have fallen from the roof in the chamber off levels 10 to 12 and there is just a chance that we may be able to get into the sealed chamber off level 8. Meanwhile, back at the Hause, the buildings are looking as if they may not survive the winter. Quite a bit of slate has already been stolen from the roofs of some of the older buildings.

## DON'T FORGET THE FOLLOWING MEETS:

November 22nd – Greenside Lead Mine, a surface and underground trip designed for all the family. No doubt Mike Mitchell will explain to everyone exactly how the entrance to the Lucy Tongue Level is to be dug out (if it hasn't already happened). Contact Mark Simpson 05242 41920.

November 29th – a project meet back at the Honister area when Dubbs Quarry and some rarely visited slate workings just below the summit of Haystacks will be inspected. Contact Alastair Cameron 0386 750494.

December 6th – Dave Bridge is leading an exploratory meet in the area of South Shaft off Middle Level at Coniston Coppermines.

Contact Dave 0946 822484

December 12th – Annual Dinner & AGM at Coniston. See you all there.



The Moel Ferna Slate Mine - Glynwd North Wales  
Jon Knowles

This large mine is situated approximately two miles South-West of Glyndyirddwy ( SJ 125398 ), which lies on the A5 between Llangollen and Corwen. The mine is without doubt the largest slate mine outside of the main slate mining towns of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Corris and, indeed, is larger than many of the mines in those towns. C.A.T. members Jon Knowles and Peter Hay are currently undertaking a complete exploration and survey of the mine.

With a very minor exception all extraction was carried out underground with workings on 7 floors, No.1 being the lowest. The mine is 16 chambers wide at its widest point. Work commenced in the mid 19th century and continued until closure in 1960 when all the adits were blown in. Output from the mine was taken down the Deeside Tramway to the railway at Glyndyirddwy. The mine is reputed to have made large profits which is surprising since the rock, although better than that found at some of the neighbouring mines, is poor by Welsh standards.

There are currently two entrances into the mine. The ground has run-in behind the floor 4 adit, and a small hole passes through the rail and between overloaded roof timbers, before dropping down into the level. From this level it is then necessary to either climb down to floor 3 or cross a 45' long timber bridge which crosses a chamber 46' above the floor. The bridge is not as daunting as it sounds since there are a number of chains supporting it from the roof, however feet should be carefully placed above the main beams and not solely on the planking, especially at the inner end where all the planking has fallen away !. Alternatively further up the hillside a 25' ventilation shaft gives access to the floor 5 adit.

Once inside the mine conditions are generally very good with only 18" of water in the extremities of floor 1, although there is evidence that this floor floods completely after heavy rain. There are very few roof rails except where pillars have been robbed.

Due to the very shallow dip of the slate vein, approximately 10 degrees to the horizontal, the chambers ( closeheads ) are extremely long. The length is hard to visualize but 450' per floor is not unusual, this gives a continuous chamber up to 1800' long when the workings on all floors are included.

Interesting artefacts include the aforementioned bridge, numerous hand winches, some wooden strap rail, a large hand pump, two inclines complete with winding drums and a very unusual timber roof support which is constructed in the form of a crib. This support has clearly never had to support anything other than its own weight since its construction defies a number of mechanical engineering principles.

To date the five lowest floors have been fully explored, although a few areas need to be revisited. The abandonment plan has been found to be accurate with the exception that a small area has been omitted which, as you would expect, is the most complex area of the mine !. This area not only contains some of the earliest workings but two of the five ventilation shafts and part of the present day drainage route through the mine. Regretably some of the secrets that this area holds will probably never be known since it is largely filled with waste rock, tipped in from above. Though I suppose if a mine gave up all its secrets what would there be left to speculate about !.

## Dig This

H.V.1. Rediscovered

A.Thomas

Underground in Furness book one lists a 'Tunnel H.V.1.' (Henning Valley One). U.I. Furness book two of 1967 describes this mine tunnel as being lost, this was due to the bulldozing operations conducted by British Steel in the lower valley area in the mid 60's. Upon collaring the author himself, Eric G. (for Guru) Holland, at the april social meet, he slipped on a black eye patch, usheathed a rusty cutlass, and announced that " .... the booty lies at the foot of the old tree which stands betwixt Wood Pit and Whitriggs Horse level, and 50 paces South of the latter."

This tree was known to us, we believed, though it now stands as a long dead and stark landmark, and accordingly we assembled here on the afternoon of Sat 18/4/92 to tackle what was obviously going to be only a ten minute dig. At the foot of the tree existed a handbasin sized depression, and digging into this proved there to be a vertical 'pipe' of loose material, all of which tended to confirm that this was indeed "the tree". Four hours of digging and a 4 foot deep hole with no bedrock in sight though, left us in no doubt that we would have to return with shoring materials at some later point when we were not so fully engaged on other projects.

About this time we were all getting heavily involved in the build up to the B30 brush cut, but in order to boost our confidence about the dig Paul undertook to conduct the main man to the dig and note his comments. We were indeed encouraged when Hincaster's own answer to the Vatican's Pope John Paul, the exalted High Priest of Furness L'Abbé du Erique L'Holland, duly sprinkled the site liberally from a special phial of Whitriggs Holy water, and blessed the pit and all who dug there. To the best of his recollections, he said, this was the spot to dig.

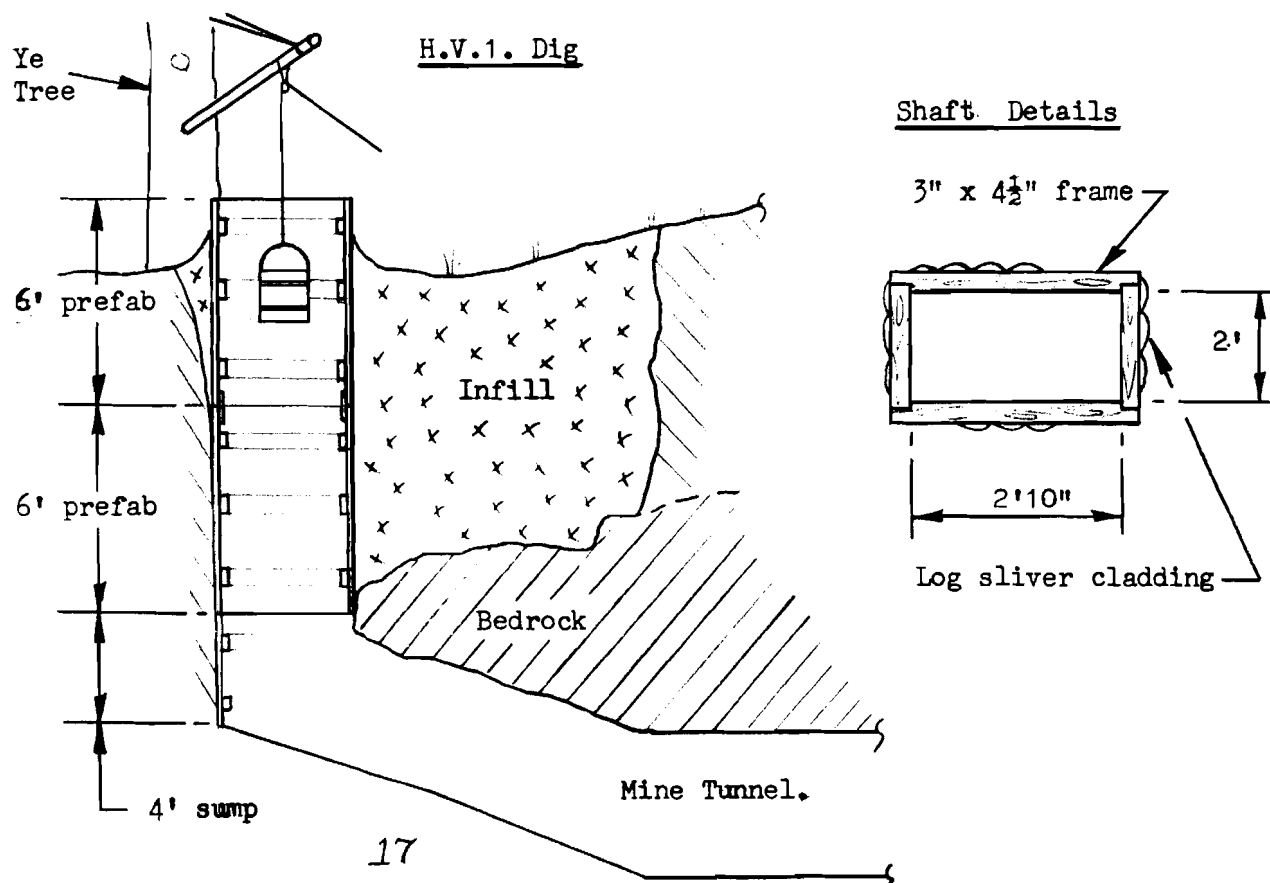
Over the next few weeks, as I said, we were busy doing evening brush cuts, and we were astonished on several occasions to see Paul turning up for these from the wrong direction. Instead of coming downhill to the sidings he was coming uphill having just done a couple of hours alone at H.V.1. dig. By the time of the third such occasion, the rest of the team had rightly diagnosed Paul as being a victim of 'Dig Fever', and we resolved to give him some technical and moral support before his condition declined to the pityfull critical stage of 'Delerium Solo Widgins '. Thus it was then that in the fourth week of June we fenced off the claim, slapped a lifting jib boom to the tree, and started the job on a proper several night a week basis.

Temporarilly timbering the sides as we descended, we dug down for about 8 feet until we uncovered decayed branches and an old piece of wire cable ..... obviously this was the depth to which the area had been buried

by the bulldozing operations. Digging forward (into the hill) from this point, we came across a bedrock lip. It was late when we got to this point, and had to leave off for the night, but we were in high hopes of getting in on the next meet. It was discouraging then to dig down this lip only to find it bottomed out on a bedrock floor about a foot below. Obviously we were now too far uphill and were standing on the bedrock roof, if you like, of the mine level. By Friday 10th of July, we had trenched the pit downhill to a point where we were able to uncover a second bedrock lip down which Peter was able to thrust his spade up to the handle. Here we go, we thought, and at 4.30 pm on Sunday 12th July we were in and jubilantly declaring H.V.1. tunnel to be H.I.V. positive.

The mine tunnel runs roughly parrallel to Whitriggs horse level for about 100 metres to a point where it is blocked by a roof fall. Timber rails course along its length, similar to those in Grey Crag level, Coniston, and in places the iron flat bar rail cap remains in situ . Pretty calcite formations and sparklies generally adourn the mine ..... the sugar gour cascades and the calcited pick marks being my favourites. What is puzzling is that though this level is intimated on the 1913 map, it is nowhere evident on the 1889 o.s., yet surely the wooden rails and triangular shot holes proclaim this to be an older level.

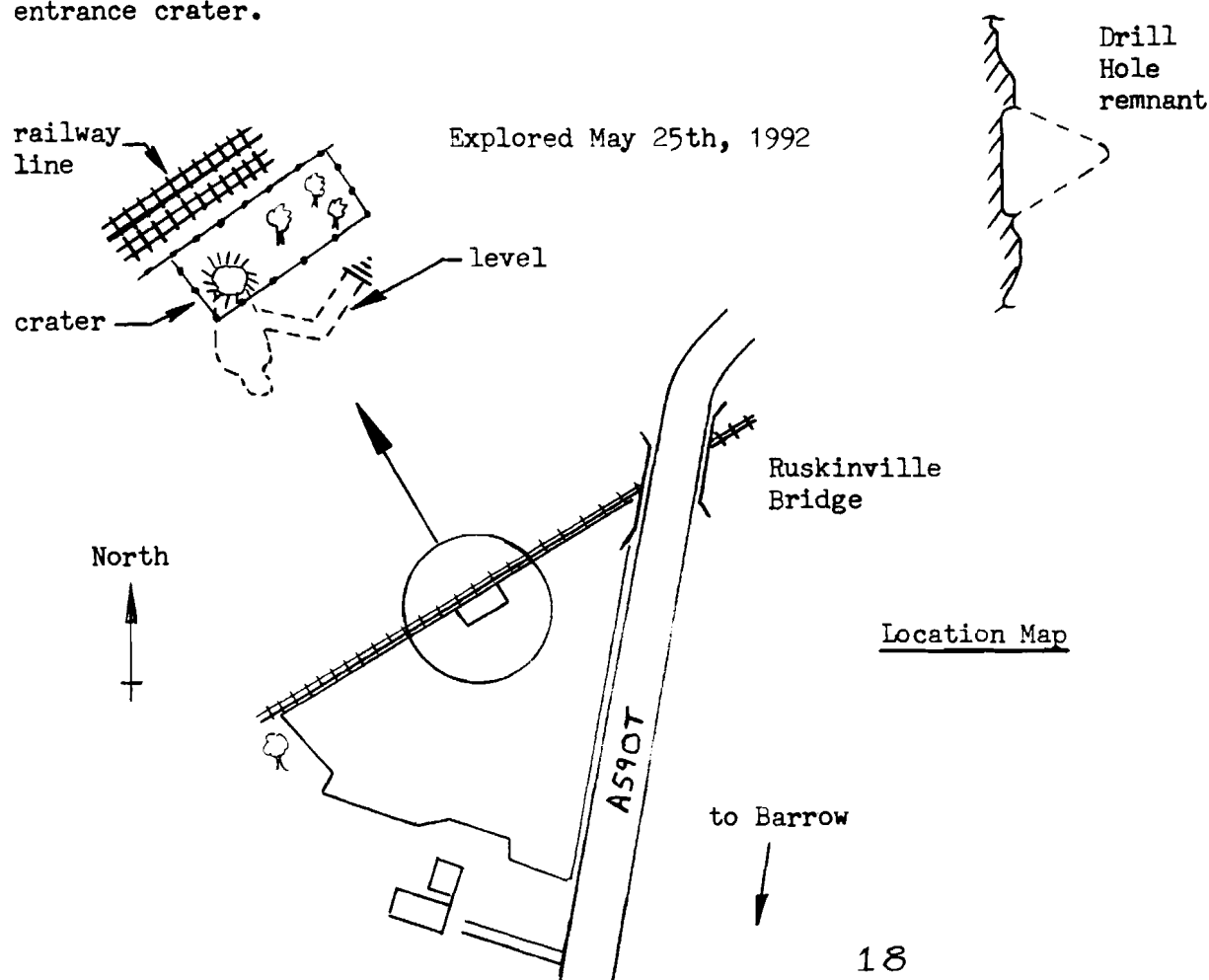
The mine entrance has now been secured by a 12 foot timbered shaft which descends to the level mouth. This smart timber work was built in two prefabricated box sections which were 'stacked' in the pit as the back filling proceeded. In compliance with the landowners general requirements, the shaft will be gated, and a key will be available on request from any of the Furness team.



Mine shaft at Ruskinville, N.G.R. SD 2240 7335

This little hole was first drawn to our attention by Claus, Rolphs brother. Rolph dangled himself down the entrance crater on a piece of rope and confirmed that it was worth coming back sometime with helmets and lights. Subsequent inspection of the pit suggested that this had once been a mine shaft. The shaft had now collapsed and you can now enter a collapse cavity which remains in the boulder clay. This cavity descends down a cone of subsequent infill to a small chamber about 20 ft down. On the way back out Rolph spotted a little hole through which he thought he could see a passage leading off. I had a look and expressed grave doubt, whereupon Rolph did a frantic 10 minute dig and promptly proved me wrong. The level led for about 10 ft to a 70 degree left turn, and then ran for about another 10 ft before terminating in a roof fall which had timbers projecting.

Predominantly driven in boulder clay, only the left hand wall (going in) appeared to be solid bedrock, and having inspected this thoroughly we managed to find, near the corner, only one fragment of a drill hole. This mine is not shown on either the 1889 or the 1913 O.S. maps, and it appears not to register in Underground in Furness 1 or 2, so this solitary drill mark may be the only clue to the era of this level. The sketch shows the section of the hole, and is suggestive of a triangular form ie, pre rotative drilling gear. The direction of the hole was away from the shaft, or entrance crater.



## CHURCHILL AND THE COAL MINERS

In these days of massive cuts within the coal industry the time when the industry was one of the country's greatest employers seems remote. But early this century, when conditions down the pit still left much to be desired, there were one million coal miners. The struggle then was not for survival but for better working conditions and in 1901 a champion of that cause appeared on the political scene. His name was Winston Churchill.

In 1899 during the Boer War Churchill had been war correspondent for the "Morning Post" and his internment as a prisoner of war at Pretoria and subsequent escape from prison are well known. It happened during his impressionable early years and there is no doubt that the experience left its mark. For instance the loss of freedom irked him greatly and, according to Randolph Churchill, he felt he had some affinity with the life of a prisoner. Consequently his prison reforms which he introduced in 1910 as Home Secretary were far reaching. His escape also had its effect.

The story goes that after leaving the prison he managed to board an empty coal wagon of a night train heading east towards Delagoa Bay in Portuguese East Africa, quitted the train at dawn, and at nightfall lost in the veldt headed for the only light he saw. This happened to be the house of John Howard, manager of the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay Collieries at Witbank. Howard was of British descent and of course sympathetic towards Churchill, but he had recently assumed Transvaal citizenship and realised the gravity of harbouring an escaped prisoner of such international standing. Before sunrise he called in a few close friends, including a miner named Joe McKenna and the mine captain Joe McKendrey, and they decided to hide Churchill at the bottom of the pit in a stable recently constructed for ponies. Churchill gives a graphic description: "Down we shot into the bowels of the earth. At the bottom of the mine were the two Scottish miners with lanterns and a big bundle which afterwards proved to be a mattress and blankets. We walked for some time through the pitchy labyrinth, with frequent turns, twists, and alterations of level, and finally stopped in a short chamber where the air was cool and fresh. Here my guide set down his bundle, and Mr Howard handed me a couple of candles, a bottle of whisky, and a box of cigars." (One of the candles was later eaten by rats). He was also given a chicken and supplied with books to read. Eventually they smuggled him on to a train and hiding amongst bales of wool he managed to reach the border and the port of Lourenco Marques. By December 23rd, eleven days after his escape, he entered Durban to a hero's welcome. Thanks to the Whitehaven News it has recently come to light that the two 'Scottish' miners were in fact from Cleator Moor.

Not only did the escape episode provide Churchill with material for the lecture tours which he organised to help fund the early years of his parliamentary career, but the hospitality that he received from the miners at Witbank and his experience underground were not forgotten. In 1908 while president of the Board of Trade he made his views on the working hours of the coal miner clear in winding up a debate on the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill: "No one is to be pitied for having to work hard, for nature has contrived a special reward for the man who works hard. It gives him an extra relish, which enables him to gather in a brief space from simple pleasures a satisfaction in search of which the social idler wanders vainly through the twenty-four hours. But this reward, so precious in itself, is snatched away from the man who has won it, if the hours of his labour be

too severe to leave any time for him to enjoy what he has won." He was also greatly concerned about safety in the coal mines and as Home Secretary he introduced a Mines Accidents Bill in 1910 which required provision to be made in mines for appliances for rescue work, first aid training, etc. But it was after two major mining disasters - one at Wellington Pit in Whitehaven on May 11th 1910 when a firedamp explosion took 136 lives, and in the same year an explosion of coal dust at Hulton in Lancashire in which 344 miners died - that he carried through the revolutionary Coal Mines Act of 1911. This Act, based on the findings of a Royal Commission first set up in 1906, laid down an elaborate code of regulations to govern the certification of managers and control the appointment of firemen, examiners and deputies. It expanded the existing "general rules" into a scientific and exhaustive series of regulations. It secured amongst other things more stringent inspection of mines, precautions against gas and coal dust (including searching miners for matches), and provision of pit head baths. Above all it endeavoured to protect the miner from any deleterious effect upon his health resulting from the conditions in which he worked. A particular provision was also made to lessen cruelty to pit ponies. In all the new Act extended the earlier Coal Mines Act of 1887 to no less than 127 sections and it is hard to believe that even in the face of the recent pit disasters the intensive effort that Churchill put into improving the miners' lot was not to some extent related to his previous wartime experience, as were his prison reforms.

But there was an element of fate in the timing of Churchill's escape from Pretoria. After several frustrating days in the officers' prison quarters, in a building called the Staats Model School, and after appealing in vain to Louis de Souza, Transvaal Secretary for War, claiming that he was a non-combatant and therefore they had no right to hold him prisoner (he had been captured while assisting British troops when an armoured train in which he was travelling had been ambushed and derailed by the Boers) Churchill persuaded two of the officers, Capt Haldane and 'Lieutenant' A Brockie, to include him in an escape attempt which the two had been planning together. By December 10th the bad news of British defeats at Stormberg and then Magersfontein gave this enterprise a degree of urgency, and there was a further reason why the attempt should be hurried up. On December 7th two privates of the 18th Hussars who had been acting as cooks and servants to the officers from tents within the School compound had managed to climb the high fence behind the latrines at the back of the building while the guards' backs were turned and had disappeared. As a result security at the prison was expected to be tightened and in Haldane's own words "The escape of these men made one feel that no time was to be lost". Their plan was put into action on 12th December but only Churchill managed to get away. As fate would have it, unknown to him Commandant-General Joubert, Commander-in-Chief of the Boer forces, had that day already telegraphed F W Reitz, State Secretary of the Transvaal, agreeing to his release. It is more than likely that by the 13th Churchill would have been allowed to walk free.

Of the two servants who got away on December 7th (both of whom were recaptured) one, Pte Cahill, continued with the 18th Hussars and was wounded in the First World War. The other left a personal record in the form of a diary. His name was Pte David Bridge and he happens to have been the writer's grandfather. The way he was recaptured and for almost a day mistaken by the authorities for Winston Churchill is another story.

Dave Bridge

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FIRST  
PRIZE

Strike  
it  
Rich

# RUSTY TOOL COMPETITION !!

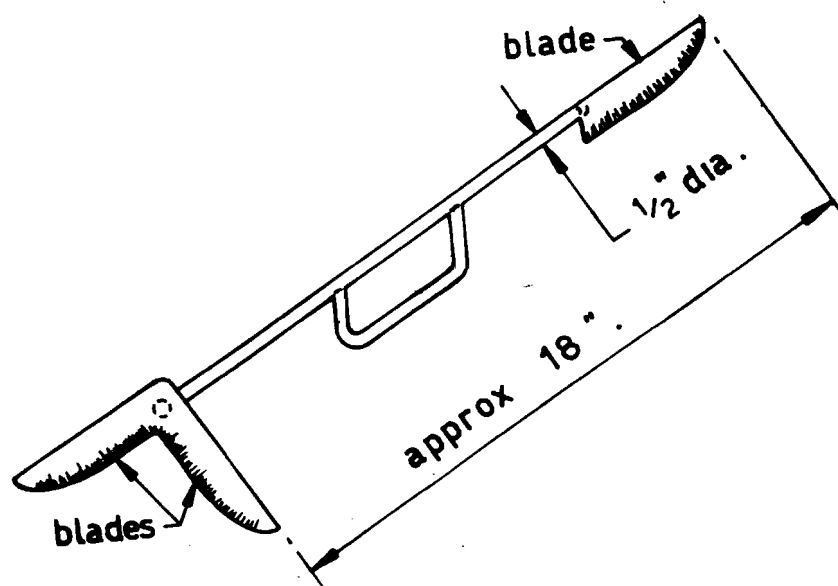
over £1  
in consolation prizes

\$20,000  
DISTRIBUTION  
THIS WEEK

And at last , on a slightly lighter note , a breathtakingly stupendous 1st from CATMHS promotions Ltd , we proudly present THE rusty tool competition ! Whats YOURS called ???

Yes folks , its time to win £££s in this hard hitting , no nonsense , rusty-as-i-dont-know-what BIG money competition , all you have to do is

NAME THAT TOOL !!!



So if you want to win sheets and sheets of dosh just like they do on Sale Of The Century , (well , the price of a pint anyway) and you've seen anything which bears the remotest resemblance to this device , simply communicate the correct name and purpose of this "mystery Welsh miners implement" to your humble **stamp** lickin' name and addressin' Membership Secretary (who hasnt got the slightest clue on any of these counts) , and quote the distinctive catchphrase " I know what your rusty tool is called , its ..... , i claim my'free pint." So get thinking NOW and beat the rush before i'm absolutely underwhelmed



With incorrect entries !!

But seriously now all you Arthur Negus-with-a-caplamp types , if you know anything at all about the origins of this ellusively named rust eaten forged steel miners implement , then dont hold back . The first and only time that i ever encountered one , happened to be the occasion of a CAT easter meet some four or five years ago in Wales . Alastair Lings , Ann Danson , and myself were in the process of undertaking a wetsuited and very aqueous assualt of the flooded lower stopes of Vigra gold mine ( SH 663192 ) near Bontddu in Mid Wales , when this object was discovered . My only conclusion so far towards deriving any explanation as to its purpose came from the location that i found it - laying on a pile of now very rotten , but unbarked and unused roughly cut to length timbers . Would it be correct to assume that its purpose was for dressing bark and knots from stemples ? and if so , was the use of such a tool common to all mining fields , or was this a unique " one off " made by the mines blacksmith for a particular individual ?

The sketch is drawn entirely from memory , since the artefact was left in situ , to remain in its correct historical context and authentic surroundings for all like minded true mine explorers / industrial historians ( that we all aspire to be ) to interpret , appreciate , and leave in peace for the benefit of the next set of interested and studious eyes , hopefully for decades to come .

So if you know its name , then let me in to the secret , and a free pint could soon be winging its way through the post 1st class just for you !!

A.S.

HAPPY B 30 DAY.

Meet report, B30 sidings, May 3rd 1992.

Present.

P.Timewell	C.Jones
J.Helme	T.Tucker
R.Mallinson	I. & M.Mathieson + kids.
A & S & I C.P.Thomas	M.Simpson + kids.
D.Robson	A.Westall
R.Fischer	M.Dobie
C.Fischer (guest)	

Here was an opportunity, at last, to make a start on exposing one of Furness's principal mining landmarks, the B30 shaft head and mineral siding complex. Alan, in the 'Iron Moor', describes B30 shaft as being the hub of a great wheel of mining activity, and the significance of this site perhaps justifies our special attention.

What we had decided to do was to take the programmed Whitriggs meet which, due to allegations that Iron mines are dirty, we reasoned that no - one would turn up for anyway ; and in its place have a surface work meet to clear the dense jungle like foliage which currently veiled the B 30 site. We'd had a few tentative stabs at this almost impenetrable under-growth in the weeks prior to the meet, but what we obviously needed was a full blown work meet to make any serious progress.

The day started off with a good show of strength, and the receding jungle left us with mountainous piles of brushwood as we struggled to raise a bonfire which would consume the green and sappy timber. Partway through the morning, Chris Jones questioned whether our deforestation activities would now lead to a natural disaster of Steinbeck proportions, as the shrubless valley could now revert to a dustbowl, forcing the inhabitants of Marton and Lindal to flee the land which once sustained them. " The Grapes of Wrath ", prompted someone. " The Grapes of Henning Valley ", suggested another. Finally it was agreed that the title of the forthcoming disaster novel would be " The Grapes of Whitrriggs Bottom ",..... clearly we were now only a lateral shift away from discussing minor medical afflictions, despite the absence of Dr Phil Merrin whom, it was alleged , was seldom to be seen on work meets. ( The reader will hopefully understand your reporter's desire to distance himself from such slanderous assertions, whilst acknowledging the meet leaders onerous responsibility to dutifully report all that transpired ..... thus do I merely record what was done, seen, and heard.)

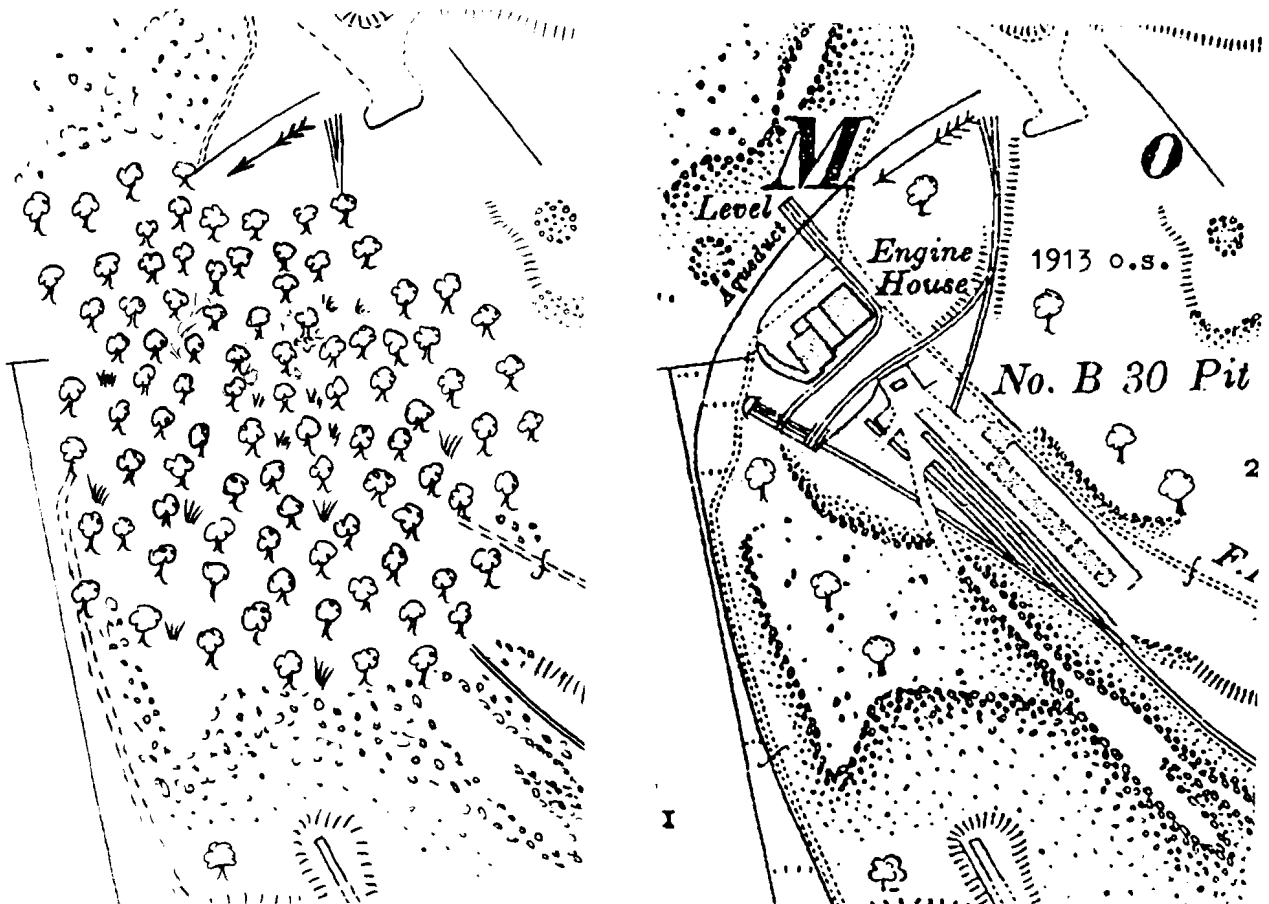
Shortly after this, Max Dobie turned up, and laid to rest for once and for all those spitefull rumours which suggested that he was a work shy, short term stayer. Max was on site for approximately 7-minutes before announcing he was going caving, and off he went taking Chris and Trevor with him.

(Max has since made amends by assisting us on several evening meets) (contd....)

Chris later acknowledged responsibility for this conflicting programme of events. This was a revelation to me, for members may remember an article in N/Letter No 19 written by a Dr Samuel Stemple (This is Chris's Nom De Plume), the subject of which was a very academically sounding dissertation on Avoidance Strategies Supplied by Older Lazy Explorer Syndrome, .... or A.S.S.O.L.E.S. I had previously assumed Chris to be simply the archivist and documentor of this sordid affliction. Only now did the full implication hit me, namely that he was the actual inventor, reseacher, developer and test pilot for this hideous malady. Thus is the secret exposed.

One member present was one I had not seen since we first met in Hospital level, Coniston, in 1986. You obviously need a fast shutter speed to catch this bloke on film, and especially today as Robert flew around the place with his chainsaw. From the air it must have looked like the wake of a passing ship as he cut a great swath through the scrub, and down in the rail bed, Rolph and his brother Conrad looked ready to start a private timber company, with great log piles neatly stacked around.

The B30 brushcut, before and after.



As the brush front crept up towards the shaft head in the late afternoon, our unbridled anticipation knew no bounds. Would we break through the dense screen of foliage to find a squad of early 1900's miners who, like those

Japanese soldiers isolated on Pacific islands after the second World war, would tell us that they didn't know it was all over now. As the last thicket came crashing down, we were amazed to see two old timers standing there. A closer look however showed this to be Alan Westall telling John Helme that he couldn't stop long, as he had 7 tons of best quality Whitriggs blast ore to cart down to Ulverston canal head before nightfall.

B30 Shafthead and sidings.

A sketch by S.C-P-T based on a photograph circa 1907.



Since this official workmeet, we have spent most Wednesday and Friday evenings continuing this clearance programme, and much of this later activity has been enthusiastically supported by Eric Holland and Martin Maher, and I reckon its a good indication of a worthwhile job if you can get these two out on a regular basis. Martin's olympic freestyle chainsaw method has to be seen to be believed, and is worthy of special recognition, henceforth he shall be known in F.M.A. circles as ' Flymo Maher '.

Having previously only seen fragmented glimpses of this complex through the dense undergrowth, it is now particularly rewarding to be able to view the whole site from the Eastern platform end right up to the B36 level project. Both John and Eric commented on how the place hasn't been so visible since they were lads, and with the whole vista on view in a sweeping glance, it is now possible to appreciate the scale, relationship, and role, of the various structures, not least the engine house which, once almost invisible, is now unclocked for study.

The intention is to use the meet at the end of July to further progress the restorative work here. Again we'll be needing some brush cutting, and also we'll need 3 or 4 expert drystone wallers to restore the platform wall which has turned to rubble in a few places. Rolph, and his brother Claus, spent an afternoon archeologising in the shaft head well, and unearthed an interesting array of hold down studs. These studs appear to have secured large wooden baulks laid horizontally across the shaft head, and which may have formed the chassis, or base, for the timber headframe. This shaft well will obviously require careful hand excavation if we're not to destroy the archeological evidence that may exist here, so on the coming work meet we'll be wanting to erect fencing and a hoisting jib preparatory to this dig. Please come along with digging, walling, brush cutting gear, and help us on this pleasant surface workmeet.

A. C-P-Thomas.

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#### NOTES FROM THE LAKELAND MINES AND QUARRIES TRUST

Work is progressing on the museum site at Threlkeld but delays with DoE grant application has delayed the work such that the site will not be open to the paying public until 1993. The basis of the display is equipment that has been removed from the Force Crag Mine.

As a result of an initiative by the National Parks Planning Authority, the Mines and Quarries Committee has been formed. The committee consists of representatives from English Heritage, NPA, LMQT, CAT and MOLES and the objective is to develop a scheme of access and control for mining sites in Lakeland and to make comments on planning applications which involve a mine or quarry site in the area.

A proposal has been made to by CAT and MOLES to re-open the Lucy Level at Greenside Mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### UNDERGROUD WINE BAR TO CLOSE

Batchelors Wine Bar, situated in the sand mines under London Road, Reigate, is soon to close. A compulsory purchase order has been placed by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council who wish to fill it in as a safety precaution because it runs under the road. This is yet another Reigate site that is to be lost.

WCMS

## Pylon Pot.

Meet report, 20th May, 1992.

### Present.

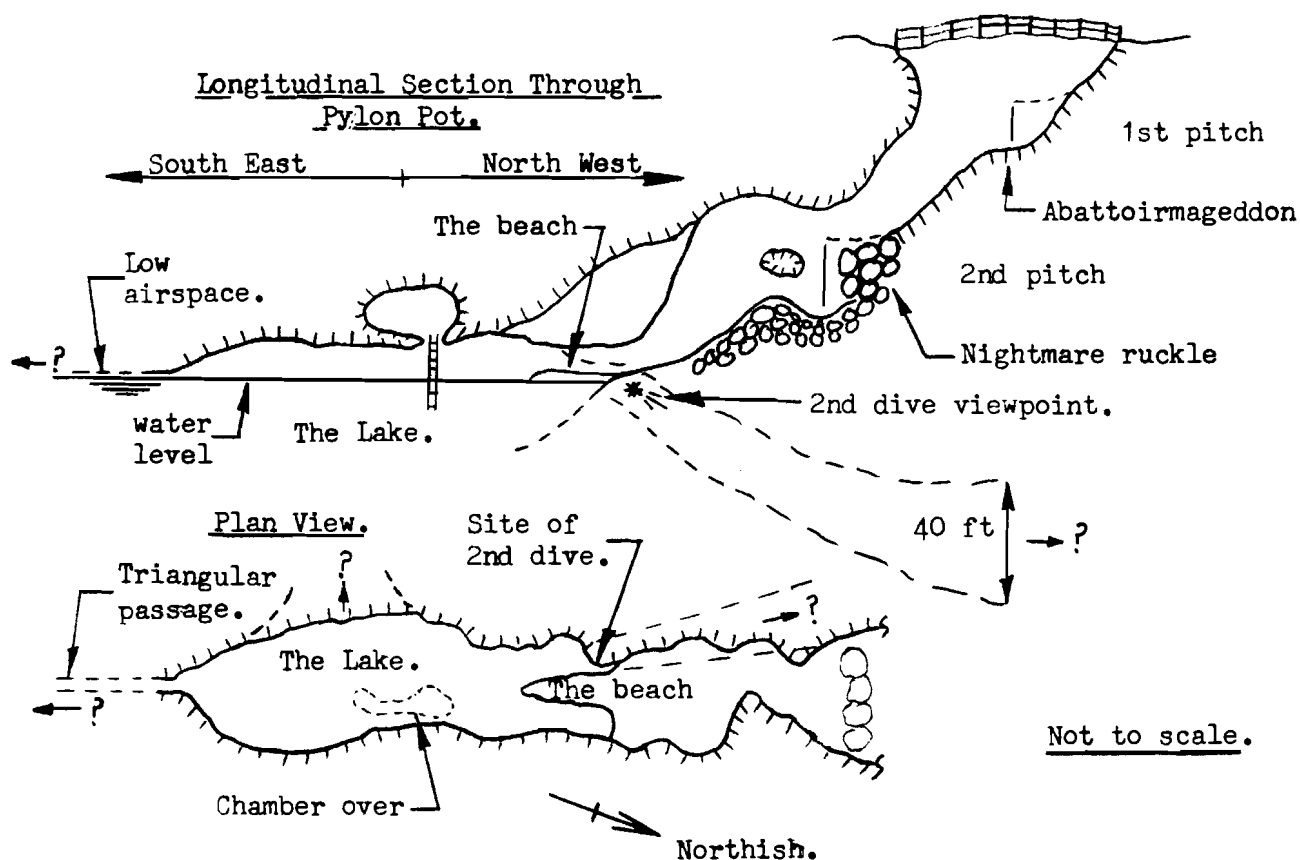
J. Helme  
P. Timewell  
P. Merrin

C. Jones  
T. Tucker  
Tom (guest)

A. Thomas.

This mine should really be known as the Alum pot, or Marble Steps of Furness. In the cool shadows of the classic pot hole like entrance rift, with its rich adournment of green shrubbery streaming into the depths below, one could easily believe oneself to be in one of the caves of Mulu, the only thing missing being the atmospheric swish of the moorland beck as it splashes down the entrance shaft. The ambience is more than restored however, by the gurgling pitter patter of rotten sheeps entrails, as they trickle merrily down the entrance chamber slope.

The purpose of this trip had originally been to show people round, and to check whether the water level of the lake had dropped since our last visit in February. Tales of this cool, clear blue lake had reached Trevor's ears, and various influences had been on at him since sufficient to get his blood up enough to come equipped for a dive. It's quite astonishing the weight of tackle required to allow a single man mini bottle dive, but having shot a couple of bolts in on the second pitch, we finally assembled on the beach as Trevor geared up.



Looking across the lake (south east) from the beach, a ladder arose from the waters to meet the ceiling in the approx mid point of the lake chamber, and at the far side of the chamber we could just make out what appeared to be a flooded triangular passage leading on, with minimal air space. Trevor cast off and firstly swam to the far side to see if this passage was a goer. Reporting back almost immediately, he declared that the passage had potential but he would need a double side mount instead of his current single backmount, (this apparently is air bottle jargon) and a buddy back up, before taking it on. Swimming back, he climbed the ladder and dissapointed us all by proving this most promising feature to be nothing more than the way into a small, blind chamber.

Trevor now turned his attention to the South Western portion of the lake. So far, we hadn't actually seen any real diving activity, and as Trev circled face down scanning the lake bottom, as if seeking some prey upon which to descend, the patience of one of the onlookers snapped. " Come on Tucker you wastrel, dive, dive, dive " came the imperious command from the beach. At this point our attention was attracted by the nearby scrabble of rocks as Phil's brother in law Tom, leapt to his feet and ran around shouting " Don't panic, I'm paid to do this, this is my job, now where's the bloody ballast tank vent valve handwheels ! ". In astonishment we looked to Phil, who calmly explained that Tom is a submariner on leave from his 'T' class sub, and this was merely an example of professional naval reflex discipline asserting its iron grip. Tom finally simmered down when it was explained that the sub was now on an even trim at periscope depth, and that the Bosun was watching the bubble.

Our diver surfaced just off the starboard bow, and explained that in the region of where he had been circling, the lake was about 25 ft deep, and down there was a hole which appeared to be about 40 ft deeper still.

Finally, Trevor inspected a patch of deep water earlier spotted by Phil. You could almost hear Trev's exclamation of "Bloody Hell" through the intervening water, and he quickly returned to tell us the news. From his viewpoint (see section) he had found himself looking down a long boulder strewn slope into a large water filled void. The floor, roof and walls all opened out considerably, he reported, and this stope followed the steeply dipping trend (ie, hading down to westward) of the rest of the mine.

Again, with no safety backup, a full exploration was not conducted, but with no visible end on at least two leads (triangular passage and the big stope) a return trip is planned.

## MEET REPORT

Force Crag Mine. June 7th 1992

This was a combined meet commencing with a work project at the lower mine followed by a through trip from High Force Level to No 3 Level.

The fourteen or so members who turned out were first called upon to play their part in mining history and dismantle the New Coledale Mining Company's tramway leading from the recently abandoned No 0 Level. By lunchtime several lengths of track had been lifted and it was not until 2pm, in the heat of the day, that the party set off for High Force Mine, some choosing the the "Burma Road" and others preferring the steep short-cut up the gully behind No 3 Level, a route once used by miners to No 4 Level. By this time the two ladies, tempted by the good weather, had disappeared in the direction of Eel Crag.

The first part of the underground descent through that section of the workings flooded during the bad winter of 1947 has noticeably deteriorated in recent years. There has been a major collapse at the crosscut/vein intersection (now securely by-passed thanks to the efforts of MOLE) and the ladderway to the east of the crosscut now involves a short abseil pitch. The alternative ladderway in the main haulage shaft at the end of the crosscut has for some years been in an advanced state of collapse. Four of the end-tipping wooden ore tubs which were in use prior to 1947 are still standing in High Force Level and flat trucks found in one of the sub-levels may have been those used for transporting kibbles of barytes ore to the haulage shaft.

The party gathered in the 80 ft level to photograph the large kibble still to be found there and then descended the "mini" incline driven by McKechnie Brothers Ltd in 1960 to link the top of the La Porte incline with the upper workings, the intention being to drain the upper mine and provide an ore pass. A tubular steel sledge used for transporting gear up the La Porte incline can still be seen in the so-called 1100 ft level which runs from the top of that incline. Here the party divided, the sun seekers making a rapid exit via the La Porte incline and No 3 Level while the more curious explored the 1100 ft level. A splinter group briefly revisited the 80 ft level of the upper workings using the 100 ft ladderway which shares a rise with a 12 inch diameter pipe installed to harness water from the upper mine to assist in the process of slushing ore down the La Porte incline.

On the way out the party inspected what remains of the slushing mechanism and contemplated a future abseil descent of the 200 ft vertical ore pass (ie the Big Rise) which drops to No 3 Level from about half way down the La Porte incline. The counterbalance for the heavy trap door covering this shaft, once a significant feature, is now missing.

Before leaving the site two members of the party explored No 1 level (normally kept locked) while others made use of what they thought might be their last opportunity to inspect the New Coledale Mining Co's ore treatment plant.

Dave Bridge



## MEET REPORT

### Iron Mines of Ennerdale, August 2nd 1992

Present:- Paul Timewell, Sheila Barker, Roger Ramsden and his son, Mark Simpson and his daughter

Despite an unfavourable weather forecast a small group gathered at the forestry car park near the foot of Ennerdale Water with the intention of walking the fells to the south of the lake to inspect the sites of several Victorian haematite workings, most of which are collapsed. They extend from the western shoulder of Grike to the slopes of Lingmell beyond the head of the lake and exploited iron ore veins in both the Skiddaw Slates and the Ennerdale Granophyre. None produced the yields anticipated from the substantial deposits discovered at Knockmurton and Kelton across the valley.

Starting at the site of Cammell and Co's Main Drift in the forest to the west of Crag Farm House where the large volume of spoil indicates the extent of the driving here, much of it through barren ground, the party headed for Crag Fell taking in the site of Red Gill Level with its well constructed stone hut about 200 ft above Main Drift. A deviation was made to look at the pinnacles above Anglers' Crag and take some photographs, and then Revelin Crag was climbed via a gully which followed the line of a thin haematite vein to the summit. Trials seen on this side of Crag Fell (eg Anglers' Crag Level and Revelin Drift) are thought to have been made between 1873 and 1896.

Next en route were the sites of three levels on the eastern slopes of Crag Fell worked by Richard Eaton in 1881. These tried a NW-SE vein which is thought to extend for several miles along the south side of the lake. The lower of these levels, at about 1300 ft, apparently yielded 50 tons of ore and was reworked by Cammell and Co in 1896 when it was known as the Pennington Drift. The level is again open and partially drained. Below are the remains of a tiny workmen's hut complete with fireplace and chimney and it is possible to follow the line of the vein down to Red Beck where there are two earlier workings known as Old Crag Fell Mine. Some time was spent in this area interpreting the ground features. A few yards to the east the site (or proposed site) of a building posed a further puzzle as unused bricks fired at Lord Lonsdale's brickworks were discovered beneath the turf. Further on, beyond the boundary wall which runs down beside Boathow Crag, two more workings on the same vein were found.

Two members of the party had to return to their car at this point while the remainder continued along the crest of Iron Crag, now partly in cloud, with the intention of visiting Iron Crag Mine situated in rough terrain at about 1250 ft on the steep fellside west of Silvercove Beck. It is said that in 1864 a single adventurer was carting ore from this lonely working to the nearest railway station - presumably Rowrah which by that time was served by the Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Junction Railway. In later years 500 tons of ore are reported to have been extracted, but judging by the inaccessibility of the mine and lack of approach road this figure would appear to be an exaggeration.

On the return journey the site of an ancient bloomery was spotted on the lakeside track at a point almost directly below the Anglers' Crag Level (NY 102148), unmistakable by the black vitreous slag which had been exposed by erosion of the track. As there is no watercourse in the vicinity the hearths here must have been hand worked and therefore more primitive than those at the better known site across the lake beside Smithy Beck. The party finally reached the car park at about 5.30pm and applauded Mark's seven year old daughter who not only had survived the ten mile course but seemed ready for a repeat performance.

Dave Bridge

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### The Cumbria Local History Federation

A new local history organisation for Cumbria is now in embryo and will be holding its first meeting in Ambleside on 17th October

But what is a local history federation? Well, such organisations have long been found in many other counties and perform a quite separate function but complementary function to local history and special interest societies - and to archaeological and antiquarian societies. In particular the new Federation will aim to provide a means for liaising between all these various organisations (24 and many individuals have already subscribed). It can offer a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, and a framework for mutual support between societies. The Federation will aim to organise occasional conferences and thus provide an educational service for individual society members.

The main contact with members will be a journal which should be circulated four times a year. The first two issues have contained profiles of local history societies and personalities, reviews of publications of local history or local interest and information on national organisations and sources for research. It will also contain a diary of events of local history interest - society events, conferences, courses - and much more.

The Federation is something which many active local historians in Cumbria have been waiting for. Do try and come to our first meeting - 2 pm, 17th October at Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside. Speakers will be David Hayns from the British Association for Local History and Dr J D Marshall of Lancaster University. 50 pence at the door to include a cup of tea.

# CASHWELL

The Cash Burn rises within a spit of the summit of Cross Fell in the Northern Pennines. It runs north through some of the most remote country in England to join the South Tyne river at Leadgate near Alston. The source of the Cash Burn is at Cashwell at an altitude of 2200ft. Cashwell is a wild place where winter storms can appear ferocious and, at times quite devastating.

Close to the source of the Cash Burn are the remains of the Cashwell Mine. The main mining area is based round the Cashwell Vein which runs north-east / south-west and was worked for lead at several points along its length. Parallel but further north are the Cornriggs and the Cashburn Veins.

Although there is considerable interest for the mining historian at Cashwell, little interpretation has been carried out in recent years. For a number of months a trip by Cumbria Amenlty Trust has been planned with the intention of carrying out as much interpretation as possible of the surface and underground remains. The trip took place on September 27th 1992.

The morning of Sunday September 27th was fine and sunny. The village of Garrigill looked splendid with the golden autumn colours and the only people who were up and about were a few small boys throwing sticks up into conker trees. The CAT party were all assembled by 10am and ready to go. There were twelve members in all and, more importantly, two four wheel drive vehicles (owned by Chris Jones and Alastair Lings) and the amazing Citroen belonging to Brian Marshall which was to out-perform both of them. It took no time to transport all members and all their equipment up to Cashwell, saving a good two hours of hard walking.

The Cashwell vein is apparent for nearly two miles. It is strongly mineralised with fluorite. Near the south-west extremity of the vein is the Slatesyke workings and at the north-west end are the Doukburn Mines. But the main workings are at Cashwell mid-way along the vein. From a short way down the Cash Burn near the remains of the old mill, the Mill Level ran for about 1000ft before intersecting the vein and then turning right to run for about 2000ft along the vein. The CAT party inspected the level but it was found to be blocked about 300ft from adit. Still further down the burn close to the site of the old dressing floors is the entrance to the Cashwell Level. Formerly this ran for 1700ft to intersect the vein but now is blocked after about 100ft. The two remaining principal levels have their adits on the vein. At the Cashwell itself, Little's Level ran into the vein for 2600ft but is now blocked just 30ft in from the entrance. About 500yards SW along the vein Cross Fell High Level formerly ran for about 850ft but now, like all the rest, is blocked about 40ft in.

There are at least nine shafts on the Cashwell Vein in the vicinity of the mine. All are now well capped. Formerly shafts were capped with a combination of wooden boards and stone slabs. Most of these have collapsed and the remains lie at the shaft bottom. More recently dome-shaped cages constructed from galvanised mild-steel have been fitted. These are faced with stone giving the final structure the appearance of a stone bee-hive. By carefully removing the stones and bending the bars to one side it is possible for a slim mine explorer to gain access and descend the shaft on a rope. All the shafts descended by the CAT party on the Cashwell vein were found to be blind at the bottom. Having returned to the surface the bars were carefully bent back and the stones replaced as they had been found.

The surface remains were also viewed by the party. In the vicinity are the remains of three hushes, a smelt mill and dressing floors. It is reported that a hydraulic engine worked an engine shaft on the Cashwell Level although no remains exist of any machinery.

Away from the Cashwell Vein a group of CAT members decided to inspect a remote shaft. After removing the cap Peter Fleming was sent down to inspect. After 20 minutes we began to wonder where he had got to and after 40 minutes we were getting rather worried. Eventually he returned. He had found a tunnel running both ways from the bottom. One direction ended in deep water after some distance while the opposite ran into stopes. From a side tunnel shafts descended further and they appeared to be dry. This area will receive further attention from CAT in the future.

The day ended with a sporting descent by messrs Fleming and Cameron of a 95ft. shaft right beside the Pennine Way track after which we returned to Garrigill to face the long journey home.