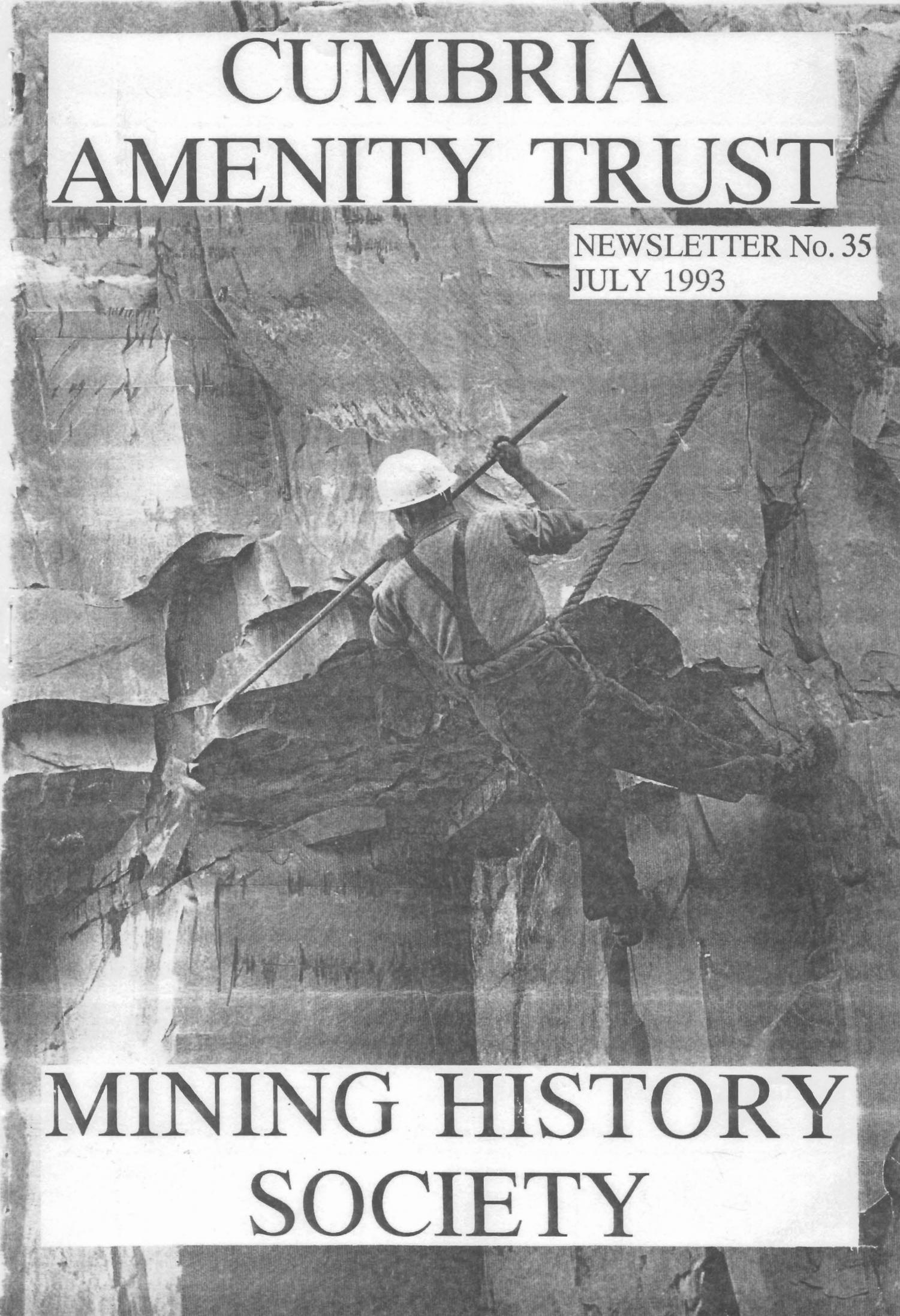


# CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 35  
JULY 1993



# MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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Front Cover:- Jack " Whacker" Tailforth. one of Coniston's finest rock-men, at work on the face at Broughton Moor in the 1970's.

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CATMHS Meets July 1 to October 1

- July 4 Eskdale Iron - Mainly surface with optional SRT  
Meet Dalegarth Station G.R.172007 at 10.30
- 18 Caldbeck Fells - Mainly surface  
Phone Mark Simpson 05242 41920
- 28 Evening meet - Restoration workmeet at Coniston
- Aug 1 Meet postponed - To August 29
- 22 Swaledale- Brandybottle Incline /Hardlevel (very wet)  
Meet at Punchbowl-Low Row 10.30
- 29 Furness iron - I.A.Survey  
Meet Ding Dong Lay-Bye Lindal at 10.00
- Sept 5 Borrowdale Slate See next news-sheet
- 25/26 Nenthead Area Weekend meet - see next news-sheet

**Please note:-** The next meets meeting to decide the meets from October to March 30 1994 will take place at Coniston sometime during the last fortnight in September.

All can come, and if you are able to translate your ideas into action, so much the better. If you cannot come, let either myself or any of the committee know about what you would like to see happen.

Adverse comments will be noted, if for no other reason it shows that someone out there is interested enough to make a contribution to their society's affairs.

Mark Simpson  
Meets Secretary

The Furness Iron Survey will always welcome your help and is an on going project. Contact Anton on 0229 835951 or any of the Furness Team.

### New Members

We are pleased to welcome two more new members to the Society

Brian Birkett.	from	Chester
Mike Forsdyke.	from	Wilton, Egremont.

THE DIG IS ON

Meet report, B30 Shaft head, March 7th 1993.

Present.

P. Timewell	J. Knowles	I. & M. Mathieson + kids.
J. Helme	J. Crammond	A. C-P-Thomas. M.L.
A. Sibbald	R. Fischer	S. C-P-Thomas.
P. Sandbach	D. Barker	I. C-P-Thomas.
D. Robson	S. Barker	
D. Bowers	R. Barker	

Fencing material, logs and posts were dismantled and brought up from the now completed shaft of H.V.1 and was used to build a corral-type rustic cow defence around the B30 shaft head. Several gates were included to allow easy access and barbed wire was affixed around the top of the fence.

A derrick was then erected, made from scaffolding poles with wire stays, and a hand cranked winch which hoisted the custom built kibble, made previously during a wet winter.

Work progressed quickly with the many hands available and the raising of the first load was achieved, filling the wheelbarrow with a single lift.

A few members cleared some more brushwood from the sidings and Paul Timewell got a good fire going.

All in all, it was a very good turnout with 19 members participating. Our thanks to everyone and especially to John Knowles who came all the way from Bradford to join us.

WET! WET! WET!

Meet report, B30 shaft head, April 25th 1993.

Present.

M. Simpson.	A. C-P-Thomas.	P. Sandbach.
H. Simpson.	S. C-P-Thomas.	D. Robson.
P. Timewell.	I. C-P-Thomas.	

We came, we saw, we went away! To cut a long story short, it rained so hard we called the meet off and went for a cup of coffee courtesy of Pat & Paul Timewell.

Mark Simpson and Daughter had come up all the way from Ingleton and no one was prepared to wallow in the sticky red mud of Henning Valley.

## ODIN MINE - CASTLETON

This was the first day of the CAT weekend trip to the Peak District as guests of the PDMHS. Members Mark Simpson, Anton Thomas, Peter Hay, Sheila Barker, Paul Timewill and the Author, met Paul Chandler, our leader, at Speedwell at 10.30 before the short drive round to the mine.

Odin is an interesting lead mine ( any mine with a Knowles shaft must be good ) of great antiquity having first been worked before 1280 and possibly long before this but there is no documentary evidence to support this. It is not proposed to detail the History or Mineralogy of the mine since these are both covered in detail in "Odin Mine by T.D.Ford & J.H.Rieuwerts" published as Volume 6 No. 4 of the Bulletin of the PDMHS.

The mine is accessed via a narrow cleft in the Odin Gorge, the most expedient method being to climb the prominent tree trunk in the cleft. A 10' fixed ladder gives direct access to the Little Shaft Vein. The mine is typically Peak District, I.E. muddy, and due to its antiquity only the minimum of non ore bearing material has been removed making the workings compact. After approximately 170' the level suddenly stepped up 20', this step being climbed on a VERY GREASY rope. At the top of the step the level continued downward and across a 70' deep hole which was carefully crossed, until the pitch was reached. The descent was a mere 30' down the vein which is only about 18" wide at this point, and not vertical, so it would have been difficult to fall even if you'd wanted to. At the bottom of the pitch two routes led on; to the left a further pitch of 125' led to deeper workings which were not visited; whilst to the right the route dropped down to lead eventually to the Cartgate Chamber. On route we marveled at the stone stemples which had been used to roof the level prior to placing deads on top and also at the extravagance of these Derbyshire folk who use ornate table legs as stemples.

The Cartgate Chamber is one large chamber approximately 200' long and about 60' high and up to 15' wide. As is common in Derbyshire the lower workings have broken into natural cavities in the rock. What makes the chamber interesting is that the entire roof is stone arched and it looks as solid today as it must have looked when it was put up. Whilst in the chamber meets secretary Simpson disappeared only to then re-appear on a small ledge part way up the chamber before muttering about a dangerous rock ( This sounds familiar ) which was soon down amongst us. On completion of photographing the group returned to grass by the same route.

After lunch the group walked into Castleton to visit the Peakshole Sough which is situated immediately below the entrance to Peak Cavern. As might be expected we received a number of surprised glances from tourists in Castleton in our muddy oversuits and we returned envious glances since the sun was hot and shorts and T-shirts seemed a much better idea than a furry suit.

The Sough was driven between 1770-84 to unwater veins lying west of the gorge and judging by the difficulty experienced in opening the gate is not frequently visited. The Sough is notable in two respects, firstly it contains a number of thin stalactites and secondly contains a nice cartgate where a timber floor has been constructed above the floor of the level presumably to maintain a route above water, this being protected to prevent deterioration. The Sough passes through the Wall Shaft Mine which is accessed by two fixed steel ladders. This mine is again very old and again the passages are very tight. At the top of the shaft Paul Chandler pointed out an interesting level and advised us to take a look although he didn't come himself - those who had been with Paul before knew that this would mean a tight crawl over awkward rocks, and they were right. After much grovelling about, including a slope covered with the remains of glass bottles which was not explored, and a crawl so tight that you had to do it on your side, the route ended in a fall though it would be passable by digging.

Saturday night was spent at a hostelry in Ashford which due to the fact that most people driving proved uneventful. We then retired to Magpie Cottage for the night. As is the case in any but the sleeping arrangements were communal and the story goes ( I was asleep ) that Anton through Sheila out of bed. Now this might be unusual but surely not a SCANDAL I here you say, re-read the list of attendee's my friends !.

Jon Knowles

### Old Millclose Mine -- Derbyshire May 9th

On Sunday CATMHS members Mark Simpson, Sheila Barker, Anton Thomas, Paul Timewell, Jon Knowles, Peter Hay and Alistair Cameron (with family), arrived at 10.00 outside the PDMHS museum at Matlock Bath, and on Paul Chandler's tour leader arrival, we made our way to the mine site which was not far from Wensley, a village about 3 miles away. The plan of action was to abseil down Shale Shaft at one end of the workings and make our way through the mine to Sleeper shaft where we would be winched out.

Old Millclose mine consists of a maze of what used to be ore bearing pipes, flats and veins plus a few natural caverns for good measure, all in limestone strata which dip gently northwards. The various beds of limestone being separated by bands of lava and clay wayboards which affected the mineralisation and the way the mining was carried out. Lead mining itself, seems positively to have been carried out from the late 1600's onwards, but earlier working cannot be ruled out. As this mine is part of a complex of other mines in this area the task of unravelling its history does not look to be an easy one.

The thing that makes this mine special is, that when mining activity moved north and finished at New Millclose Mine, the place was just abandoned, and many artifacts and wall inscriptions are still to be seen. The freshness of the writing has to be seen to be believed, considering that some of them are 200 years old, and that, is the reason why access is strictly controlled.

The members of the Old Millclose Project Group have been at the task of exploring, recording, surveying, for over 10 years and the total passage length is over 12 miles and still going. We were shown about one fifth of this.

The party assembled at the entrance shaft along with members of the Masson Caving Group and PDMHS, all were warned that, if anyone was silly enough to wander off and get lost, they were to stay put and wait to be found. After a bit of difficulty about opening the grating over the shaft, we all descended the 120 ft to the chamber at the bottom where we split into two parties and the trip began. It was 11.00 when we went in, grass was not seen again until 7.00, and it was all go inbetween. (Lunch was taken on the run - very un-CAT like.)

After 10 minutes most of us had no idea where we were, but I am told that, we went to the Old Millclose sough, and had a look at some wooden launders, then to the bottom of Millclose Stoop Shaft. We proceeded via the Powder Horn Series (so called because of a powder horn that can be seen there), up through the mine to the forge at the bottom of Smithy Shaft. On the way we were shown an old method of shaft capping - cut down a tree, shove it down the hole and then pile stone and stuff on the top and forget it. In this case the tree could still be seen and the fact that it was still there was put down to it being calcified in.

At the forge site was a forge complete with bellows and odd bits of ironwork. The fumes were allowed to disperse into the workings overhead. The main feature of this area however are the names and dates written into patches of candle black or chipped on to the walls and one case written beautifully onto some flattened mud on a cavern side. The name of the Taylor Family being commonly inscribed. You really did have to be careful that you did not disturb some artifact or tread on the fairy rings. Not far way was a small rock shelf by a passage which had the remains of a sack with tool nearby and other bits, you could even see the marks of the guy's backside.

After we left the forge area we made our way to the exit shaft and were shown more features such as a stone air duct starting in one cavern and ending in another not far away, for what purpose and when, no-one there knew. Then there was the stone aqueduct in another chamber only say 3ft high and 9ins wide at the top curving across from where some water was dripping down to some unknown destination. These are just a few of the things that we saw, other members in the party will doubtless bring to mind others.

The exit shaft was gratefully reached and the fact that we would not have to prusick out was appreciated. This particular area of the mine was the only part that was really wet and muddy, the rest had been nearly all dry and with our efforts in working our way through the many passages and holes, very warm. We did not seem to have to wait long, the winch making a 3mins turn-round on the 120ft shaft.

Standing on the top, the caverns below seemed a world away, still, it was early evening and the thought of a long drive home did not encourage lingering, so I thanked our hosts and quickly made over to the cars, changed and departed.

My thanks to the Old Millclose Project Group and Operation Mole, also to Paul Chandler of Masson Caving Group /PDMHS.

A report is in course of preparation but no publication date has been given. How the place was surveyed would make interesting reading. Apparently a BCRA Grade 5 is claimed which has been locked to attainable shafts, the tops of which have been tied in by theodolite to O.S. Datum points. All the information has been put on a computer data base with the help of the Cambourne School of Mines, so now a 3D model has been obtained, which has been a great help in improving the accuracy of individual underground traverses and with misclosures.

Directly relevant information on Old Millclose is a bit thin on the ground but the references below may be of use.

Bulletin of the Peak District Mines Historical Society:-  
Vol 8 No 2 Autumn 1981 - The Development of Mining and Drainage in the Wensley, Winster and Elton Areas -- R.H. Rieuwerts.  
The article has a comprehensive reference section.

The Mine that died - A History of Millclose Mine  
By Lynn Willies, Harry Parker, Keith Gregory, Published 1989

Mark Simpson  
May 1993

P.S. Jeff Wilkinson and David Parsons were also present on this meet.

## NAMHO Conference Isle of Man April 1993

The eighth biennial NAMHO Conference was the 23rd to 26th of April 1993, and a number of CAT members attended. Some arrived in Douglas, Isle of Man, where the conference was held, on the Friday before it opened, and spent the day visiting the slate workings on the island at Glen Rushan, Tholt-y-Wil, and South Barrule. The last is still at work. Though shrouded in fog, the chimney-like structure which was the base of a windmill was found and examined. If anyone knows of a similar structure used as a power source in the slate industry, or of any information about the one at South Barrule, the writer would be glad to hear about it.

The conference opened at the Manx Museum in Douglas on Saturday morning, and after a welcome by the Director and the showing of the short film 'The Story of Mann' which outlines the island's history, a two-day programme of talks on mining subjects from all over Great Britain commenced. For those who could not resist the call of this beautiful island, there was the alternative of visits to mine sites for the remainder of Saturday, and all day Sunday and Monday. In association with Manx Heritage, the conference was hosted by the Laxey Mines Research Group, whose members led and looked after those going on field trips. The visited were -Beckwiths lead mine with its leaning chimney and ochreous adit, -Laxey lead mine, -and the copper workings on Bradda Head near Port Erin.

At Laxey, not only were we shown over the surface remains, but also conducted underground to see the water pressure engine which powered the man engine. Several members also descended the man engine shaft to visit the accessible parts of the main adit and see the balance bob which worked there, as well as some spectacular flowstone. The Lady Isabella wheel was working, complete with its full run of flat rods over the viaduct to the surface balance bob, a most impressive sight.

North and South Bradda copper mines are entered from the beach on either side of Bradda head and required a careful descent of the 400 ft cliff twice, once in the morning and again in the afternoon to visit South Bradda. The climb from the beach gave those present a healthy appetite for lunch, the minibus provided by the Laxey Mines Group enabling some participants to sample the fleshpots of Port Erin. The trip was indicated as only for the physically fit, and even those who were out of condition were certainly fit by the end of the afternoon. The weather was glorious and the scenery breathtaking, so the mines and the mineral specimens were rather in the nature of icing on the cake.

During the whole of the conference the hosts provided a courtesy minibus enabling those who had no transport to get to the sites of visits, and as the weekend progressed it became almost a taxi service, so thoughtful were our hosts. On the Saturday evening a dinner took place at Laxey, reached from Douglas by a special tram on the Manx Electric Railway which this year celebrates its centenary. As the tram growled its way out of Douglas and up to Onchan Head, the view over the bay in the evening sunshine was compared favourably by one traveller to the Bay of Naples and the whole trip to Laxey was, for transport enthusiasts, one of the highlights of their visit.

After a dinner and ceillidh (no speeches) it was time for yet another `first` for most of us : a moonlight ride on the Manx Electric arriving in Douglas after midnight. As the trams do not often run at night, several motorists on the road which adjoins the track had cause to wonder if that last drink had actually been one too many, causing them to have midnight visions.

Several CAT members were able to stay on after the end of the conference, and to celebrate its resounding success Pete Geddes and Rachel Robertson, who had done much to bring that about, gave a barbeque at their house on Monday evening where we were made welcome. In the detailed information pack provided for the conference there were some details of other mine sites on the Isle of Man, yet still more being revealed during the evening. Your reporter and Jon Knowles spent the next few days visiting a round dozen of these, large and small, and even managed to fit in a trip on the Snaefell Mountain Railway and the Isle of Man Steam Railway, 1993 being the Year of Railways on the Island. The impromptu SRT course held on the footbridge over the main road at the Bungalow, and a tree at Beckwiths mine, provided both useful practice and considerable mirth, all part of a glorious week. Our hosts left us wanting for nothing, even arranging a week of brilliant sunshine. If you have never visited the Isle of Man, it can be recommended, and you can be sure of `open house` of the the mines if you first contact the Laxey Mines Research Group.

Peter Hay

21st March 1993

Coniston

A descent through the Paddy End workings from Brow Stope to Grey Crag Level had not previously been attempted in one go and the event proved popular, some fifteen people turning up for the occasion. Amongst these were four newcomers from the Egremont area on their first `caving` trip. They joined a separate party through the more popular part of the route, ie from the Crater down to Grey Crag Level.

The total descent from Brow Stope involved ten rope pitches plus MAG's traverse. It was decided that the two groups should move independently, both pulling ropes through from Arete Chamber downwards, while Mike and Clive volunteered to stay behind and de-rig the Brow Stope section from Levers Water Mine. The Brow Stope party included CAT members Denis and Val Jackson from Monmouth and was led by Pete and Ian (who had to leave after MAG's traverse for a life saving session in the swimming baths). En route they inspected the ramifications of Top Level extension and finally emerged from Hospital Level after some 500ft of abseiling to find the `B` party tucking into a large home made fruit cake to celebrate their first underground descent.

A good day was had by all and it was encouraging to see more new faces at Coniston. Let's hope this trend continues.



## WELSH SLATE WEEKEND

The Mountains of Snowdonia are extremely popular with mountain walkers the views from the summits extend down the coast towards Mid-Wales, across the Lleyn Peninsula and out to sea. One particular group of mountains are the Moelwyns, above the Dwyryd and Croesor valleys. Although the Moelwyns fall steeply away on three sides ( see map ), to the north they are connected by an area of high ground to Moel Druman and central Snowdonia. To the west of this high area, Cwm Croesor falls away. To the east is Cwmorthin. On this high Bwlch, the Rhosydd mill and barracks are situated at an altitude of 1500ft. It is a remote, wet and windy area where men lived and worked for much of their lives. Further west, round the shoulder of Moelwyn Mawr, the Croesor workings are situated in a spectacular high Cwm. On the opposite side of the mountain, in Cwmorthin, are the extensive remains of the Cwmorthin Slate Mine.

All these workings lie abandoned and silent. The CAT Easter trip was intended to be an extensive exploration of Cwmorthin and also an attempt to complete the underground connection between Croesor and Rhosydd. The following is a detailed account of the trip.

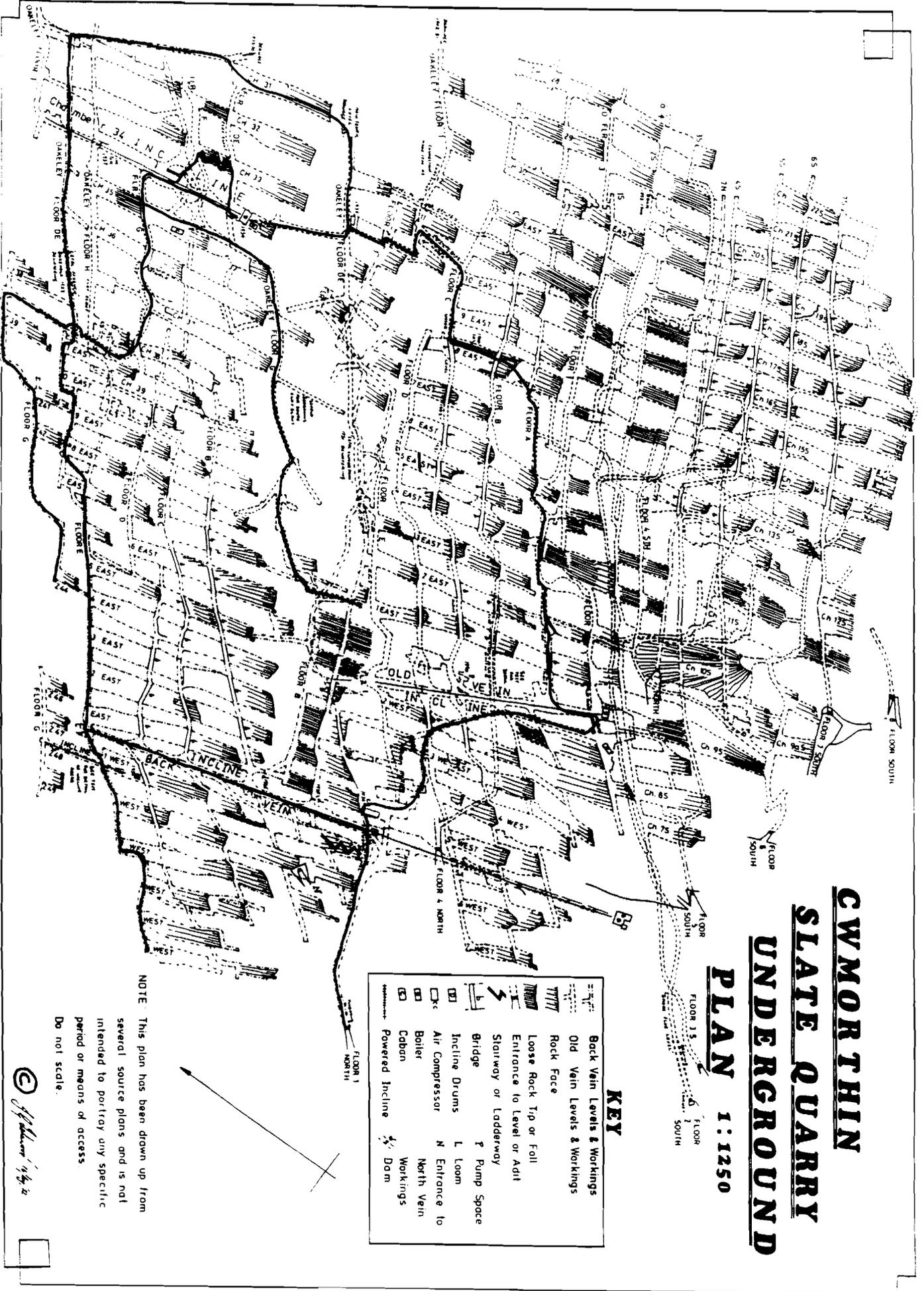
Those present were Dave Blundell, Paul Timewell, Ian Matheson, Mark Simpson, C-P-T's ( Full Team ) and Jon Knowles M.L.. In addition on the Sunday we were joined by Chris Jones, Sheila Barker, & Alastair Cameron M.L.

We assembled on Saturday at Cwmorthin Falls and awaited the arrival of a red Fiesta. Anton had been into Blaenau to get a needle, presumably needing a fix before the days exertions. Surprisingly for a Bank Holiday weekend in Wales the weather was good and we were soon at the Cwmorthin Mill. On arrival the meet leader was a little surprised to find that the mine was again being worked on the surface, however permission to go underground was freely given on the understanding that you went at your own risk.

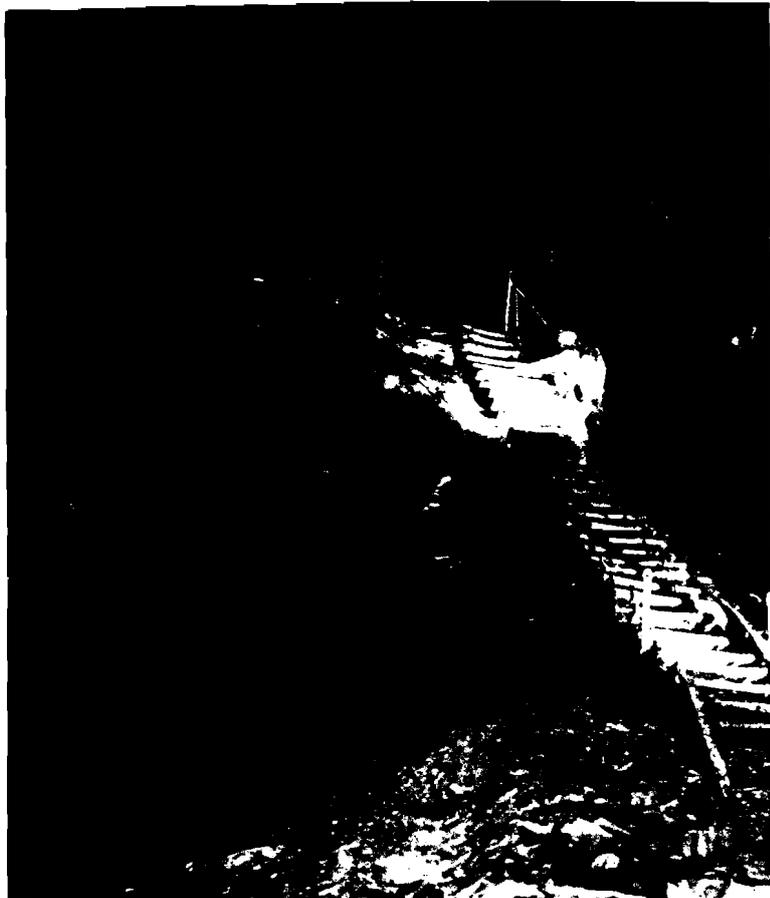
The mine was entered via the adit on floor 1 north ( see plan ) and the back vein incline was reached and descended to floor E. During the descent one member, who shall remain nameless but suffice to say he lives in Ingleton, decided that a barrell of snowcem on the incline MIGHT present a hazard and thought it would be safer to roll this to the bottom. During its descent the barrell spilled some of its contents thus filling the air in the vicinity with a white powder !. The opportunity was also taken to look at the impressive staircase which climbs



Cwmorthin - Back Vein incline



chamber 1 west from floor C to floor 1. This was installed due to repeated accidents caused by miners being hit by waggons whilst walking on the incline. On arrival at floor E we quickly proceeded to chamber 1 west, the depth of the water preventing dawdling, to see the superb remains of the E-G incline headgear which includes an electric motor driven winch complete with sheave frame.



Cwmorthin - Stairway Chamber 1 West

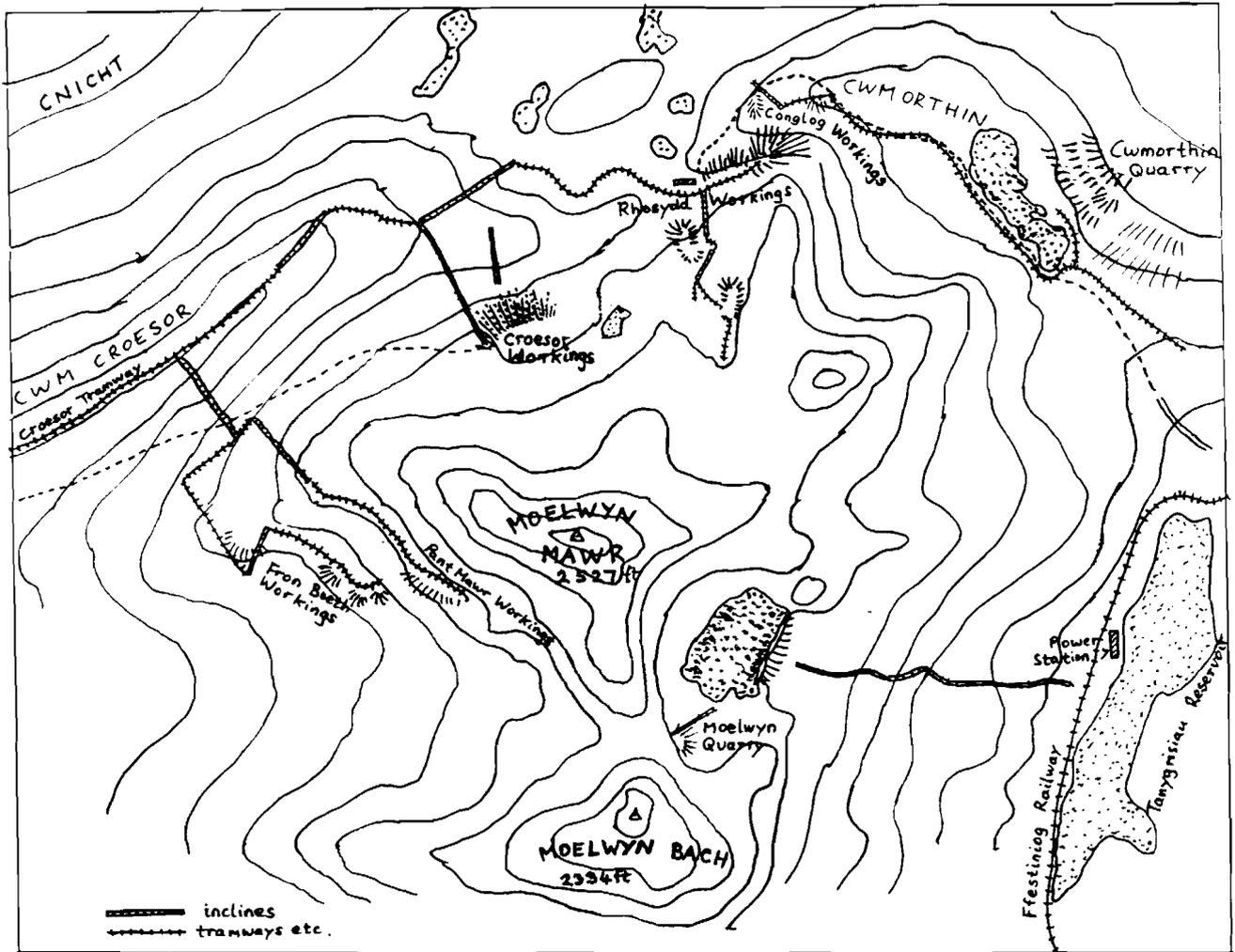
to store water but to maintain access over the water a wooden footway was installed on horizontal steel bars. The timber boarding has long since disappeared and only the bars remain. Floor A was attained via the long stairway in chamber 8 east after which it was only necessary to follow floor A until the crawl into the old vein incline was reached whereupon we ascended to floor 1 and followed the Old Vein to Back Vein connecting level back to the adit.

Saturday night was spent at the Grapes in Maentwrog ( please see Anton for correct Welsh pronunciation of this and other Welsh names ) where the Sunday trip was discussed in detail and whilst there was great interest in seeing if the Croesor to Rhostryd trough trip was possible the number of volunteers was zero. The meet leader consoled himself with the thought that at least Alastair would be down tomorrow and he would be bound to do it !. Saturday night also produced the most horrible spectacle of the weekend - yes, a big thank you to Sheila Thomas for her display of manners in the Grapes. If thats what giving up smoking does to you I'm thankfull I never started.

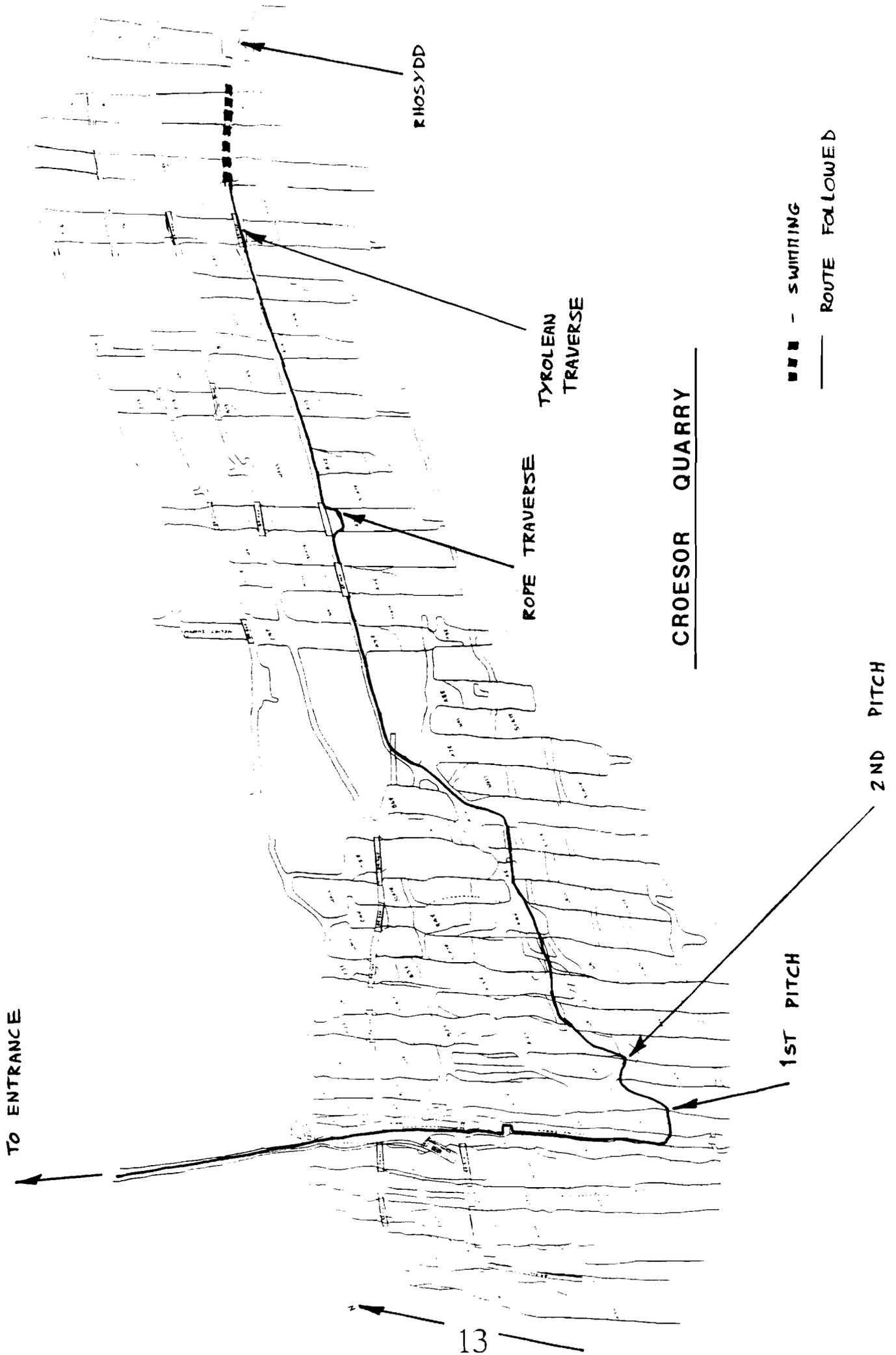
Sunday dawned grey with light rain. On arrival at Tan-y-grisiau, Antons car was loaded with as much kit as possible and was then driven round to Croesor ( Crow-e-saw in Anton speak ) by road whilst the remainder of the group walked up via Rhostryd. On arrival at the remains of the Croesor mill no time was wasted in getting underground as it was now damp and cold. On arrival at the incline foot a few older members were heard reminiscing about the days when you could go below adit level as well as above. Actually you can still go below but you would need diving kit to do it !, - I assume that this is what Chris was talking about when later in the day he muttered about losing his bottle.

The incline was speedily ascended to floor D where a grating prevents access to the ventilation shaft. The hole through the wall into chamber 1 was obvious but the same could not be said for a suitable anchor point save for a very unsatisfactory looking length of rail held down by a couple of blocks. Undaunted, a bolt was fixed into the wall with the grating used as a backup. The rope was protected over the sharp slate edge using a protector and a large polythene

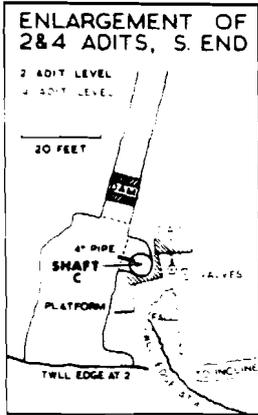
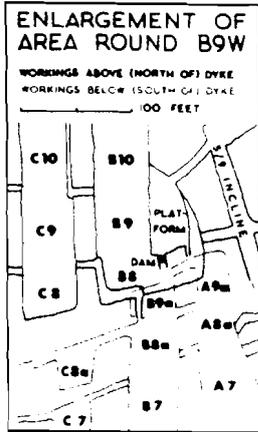
The group progressed along floor E, occasionally stopping to marvel at the size of the chambers stretching up into the darkness, some of which rise over 200'. In chamber 11 east the Oakeley workings were reached, but all attempts to locate a way through to Oakeley "proper" met with failure. Chamber 31 contains a small caban where lunch was taken. After lunch the chamber 34 incline was descended to water level, all water from Cwmorthin now exits through the Oakeley workings. After retracing our steps to floor G the rabbit warren of workings on this level were then fully explored which succeeded in confusing everybody, including the meet leader, though he did'n't show it but merely muttered about a new fall blocking the way. On arrival back on floor DE the roofing shaft behind the compressor room was ascended to Oakeley floor 1 at which point Cwmorthins equivalent of a hurdles course was followed. This consists of a level which originally had a low dam



Cwmorthin Chamber 1 West Incline Winder

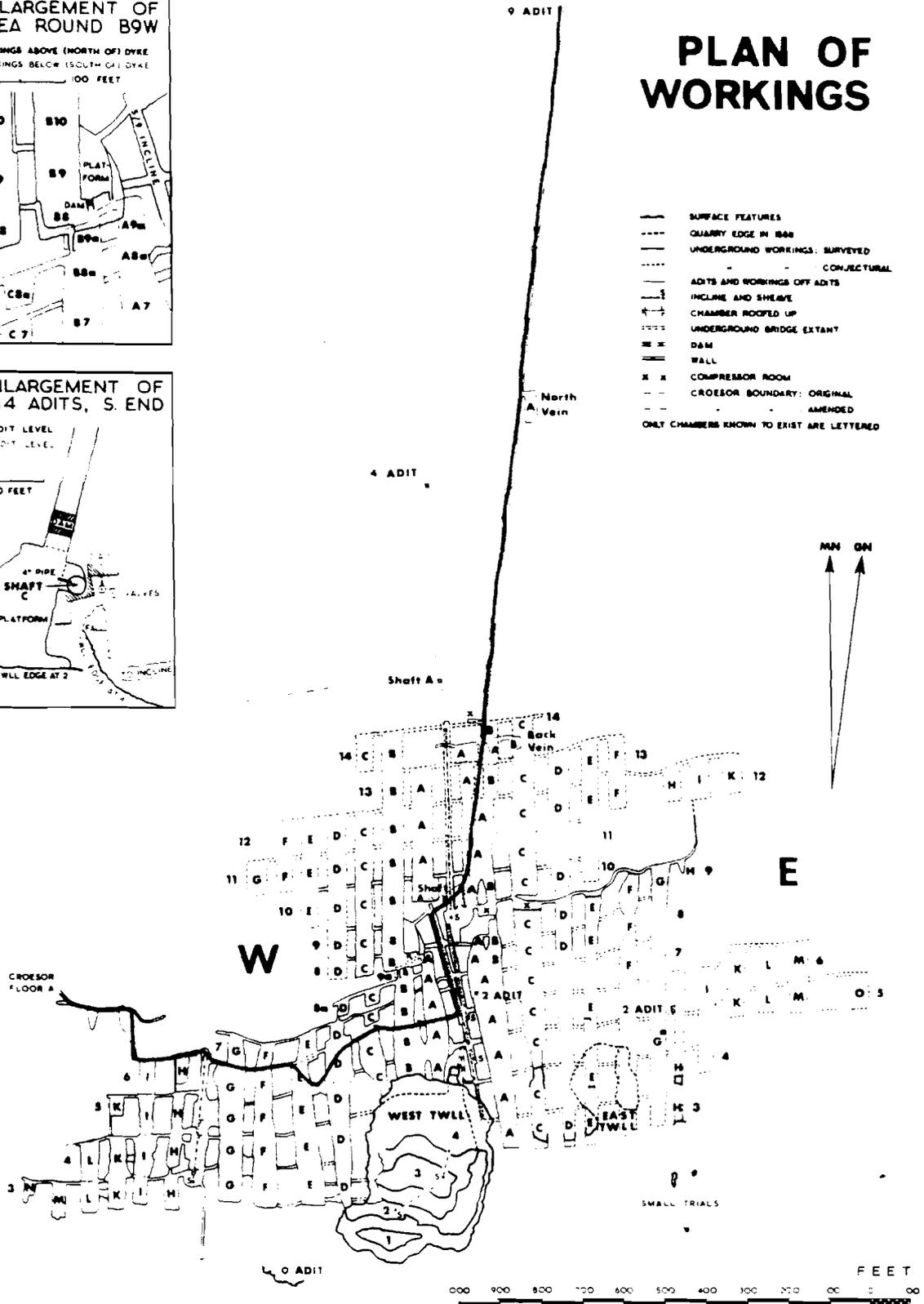


# RHOSYDD QUARRY



## PLAN OF WORKINGS

- SURFACE FEATURES
- - - QUARRY EDGE IN 1848
- UNDERGROUND WORKINGS: SURVEYED
- - - CONJECTURAL
- ADITS AND WORKINGS OFF ADITS
- INCLINE AND SHELVE
- CHAMBER ROOFED UP
- UNDERGROUND BRIDGE EXTANT
- ≡≡≡ DAM
- ≡≡≡ WALL
- ≡≡≡ COMPRESSOR ROOM
- - - CROSSER BOUNDARY: ORIGINAL
- - - AMENDED
- ONLY CHAMBERS KNOWN TO EXIST ARE LETTERED



The above is taken from "Rhosydd Slate Quarry by M.J.T.Lewis & J.H.Denton" with whom the copyright remains.

sheet which lay nearby. At the point it was noticed that a number of people were NOT doing their SRT kit and saying things like "we'll see you at the other end" one of these being joint meet leader Cameron.

Alastair Cameron adds . . . . One by one we watched our colleagues and friends disappear into the frightening black void of Croesor D1E chamber. It was difficult to grasp the scale at first - even the most powerful cap-lamps would not reach the floor, roof or opposite walls. When all were safely down we prepared to return down the incline and exit the system, but before we left we looked out across the black vastness to spot, a long way away, two tiny points of light moving across the chamber floor. Chamber D1E was colossal. We learn't later that the floor area was extremely unstable ( buggers the floor what about the walls and roof ! - J.K. ). Some of the huge blocks on the chamber floor looked as if they had dropped off only yesterday.

We made our way out. The Croesor incline roof is still covered from soot from the old Robey flue. The lower section, just above the adit level, is now difficult of passage because of the remains of the haulage winding system. We splashed along the 450yd level where electric locos once ran and out through the access grill to the drizzle of a Welsh mountainside. There were a few walkers around all of whom chose to ignore our friendly "good afternoon" ( miserable buggers ). Following old slaters paths and pack-horse routes we made our way round the side of Moelwyn Mawr to the remains of the Rhosydd Mill and Barracks.

The No.9 adit at Rhosydd is 2220ft long and the longest in the Ffestiniog area. The plan was to get ourselves into Rhosydd, make our way through the system and, hopefully find the top of the roofing shafts that link into Croesor. We would then go as far as we could without swimming, fix the ropes and await the party coming through. There were rather a lot of "what ifs" for my liking. What would happen if the route was blocked and they had to return the way they had come ? I had more or less decided that 6pm would be the longest we would wait. It was a long drive back to Coniston.

No.9 adit ends near to the foot of the 9 to 5 incline. It was two years since I was last there and time does funny things to the memory. We ascended the incline to floor 6 which we located without problem. We then traversed this floor ( see plan ) to chamber D6W ( Explanation of notation, D=fourth chamber from incline, 6=floor 6, W=West fo incline ) where the level is blocked by a collapsed bridge in E6W. The way here is to ascend chamber D6W to a point where one can pass through a hole in the pillar into E6W which is then descended down to a point beyond the collapsed bridge.

We continued on our way through the system, past the fascinating remains of the 6 to 3 incline and the stepped chamber, until we reached chamber I6W. This is the furthest extent of Rhosydd and from this chamber we descended the roofing shafts down into Croesor floor A. About 70yd along floor A the way is blocked by a totally collapsed bridge across a large flooded chamber. This is Croesor A18E and A19E and we were now standing on the edge of a 25ft drop into the water. Below the water level the old plan shows chambers B18E, C18E, and D18E all of which are connected giving a total depth of water of approximately 150ft. Once, from our ledge, a suspended bridge ran across to the opposite side, about 120ft away. All that now remains are the rods hanging from the ceiling to which the bridge was attached. It was here that we were to wait the other group and the chances of us ever meeting up seemed, at that moment, very remote ( they were - JK ).

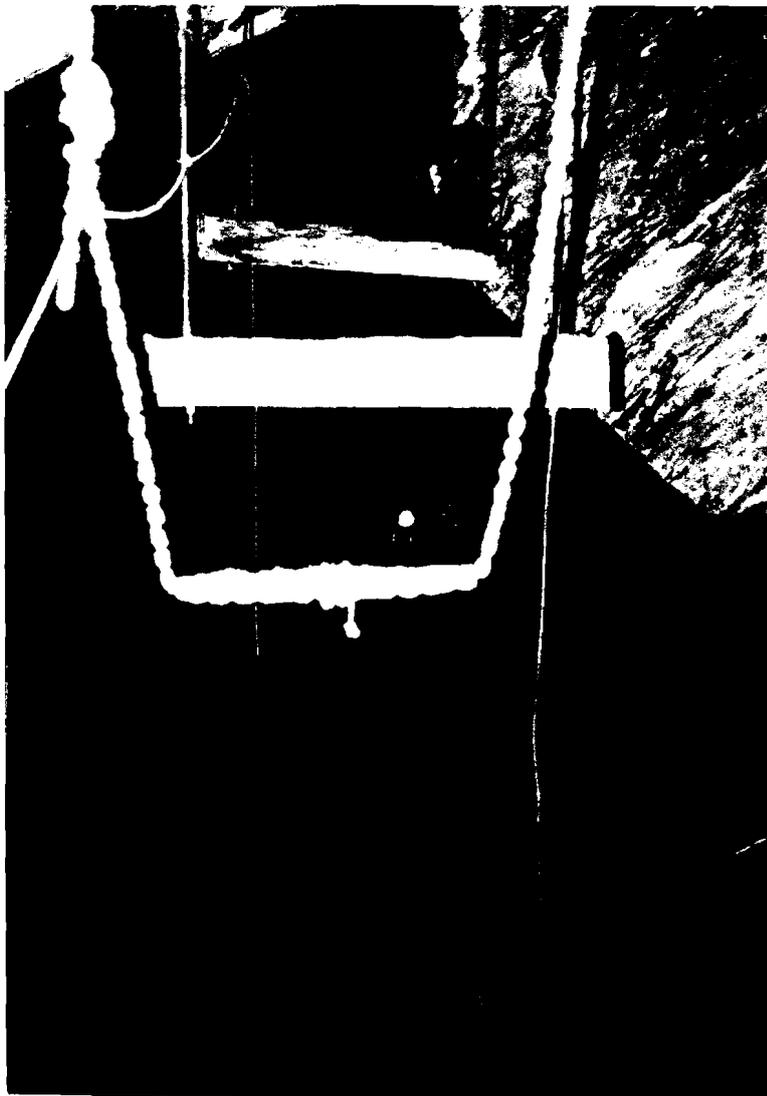
We shouted across the chamber. Unbelievably, our shout was answered. We didn't realise it, but at that moment Chris Jones was doing his Indiana bit with the tyrolean traverse in the next chamber along. Eventually we saw the party standing on the ledge on the far side of the chamber.

Five of us descended ( approx 65' ) into the shattered wastes of chamber 1 which is definately not the place to spend a night due to there having been massive falls from the roof and walls. The falls are so extensive that the levels in this chamber do not in any way correspond with any of the other floors in the mine. After a short exploration a window into chamber 2 was noticed with a belay and rope in situ on the next pitch. This rope had a large cut through the full circumference of the sheeth and WAS NOT used. Chris started down the pitch ( approx 75' ) first to much muttering of "I don't like this at all". It was soon apparent that two rebelay's were required if abrasion was to be avoided and rather than spend a lot of time bolting a ladder was used to rebelay too - sure makes taking out your cows tail easy. Being fourth down the pitch I arrived at water level, floor A, to find Chris about to start swimming. I advised that there would be plenty of time for that sort of thing later - how true my words turned out to be. After exploration a short rope and hole through a fall were discovered, which dropped down into the level.

The route was followed along the level and through a number of chambers until an extremely nasty timber bridge was discovered. It was at this point that Anton and Mark decided that the pleasure of carrying on living easily made up the loss of not seeing any more of the mine, this left Chris Jones, Ian Matheson and me.

Chris crossed the 40' timber structure first and during his crossing two planks fell off the bridge and into the water below. It was at this point that Chris first mentioned an unusual medical complaint known as W.A.S.... Once Chris reached terra-firma he encouraged Ian and I during our crossings by hurling rocks into the water below, at which point we asked him not to, or similar words to the same effect. The next obstacle was a VERY slack rope along a chamber wall in A11E which was JUST long enough to prevent your feet from dangling in the water below.

Then things really started to get interesting, after walking through chambers A12E-A15E we were presented with a Tyrolean traverse in A16E. At this point the desirability of continuing was discussed at length and I for one was definitely for going back but the majority of the group thought !, it better to go on especially when lights and voices could be heard from the group awaiting our arrival in Rhosydd. Hard man Jones again went first and reached the intermediate timber baulk without incident, however when he climbed onto the baulk to pass the knot on the rope large pieces immediately began to fall from the baulk and the supporting steelwork. At this point Chris reported another severe attack of W.A.S.. The meet leader enquired as to what the problem was, since this was surely an easy Welsh slate mine and must be straightforward compared with the



rigours of say Coniston - the reply is left to the readers imagination. Ian crossed without incident but when I climbed up the rope towards the rock on the far side a section of one of the old bridge supports started to fall towards my head but was fortunately grabbed by Ian before it had the opportunity to damage itself on my hard skull. After this all it was necessary to do was cross chambers A17E and A18E plus the missing pillar between them.

At this point the level is approx 25' above the water level and the area to be crossed was approx 40 yards wide although it was not easy to see the end of the water from the level due to the curvature of the ceiling. Fortunately lights could be seen and more importantly voices heard. Jones again led the way and abseiled straight down into the water and found a cord which spanned the chamber and proved a usefull aid to crossing. Once Chris had reached the far side, to much shouting from all concerned - save those who still had to do it !, it was decided to pull the tackle sacks across. As the first sack was pulled across on the cord it snagged on an old

Croesor - Swimming



Croesor - Chris Jones in Chamber A16E

chain hanging down from the roof which promptly fell down across the cord pulling it under the water. The language uttered at this point is fortunately not remembered though the general sentiment was displeasure. The only option open to us was for Ian to swim across pulling up the cord as he went until he found the chain and was able to lift it off the cord.

As soon as Ian landed the author wasted no time in abseiling down into the water and encountered his first problem - how to take off a figure of 8 underwater ?. Once free from the rope Chris offered to pull me across on the cord which seemed a great idea. Unfortunately about 30' out the cord suddenly tightened around my arms and legs and I was slowly being pulled underwater !, I having failed to realise that on entering the water I had passed through at least one loop in the cord. My only option was to swim back to the start, to horrified shouts of "HE'S GOING BACK" from the far side, where I could hang onto the rock face and untangle my arms, legs and battery from the cord. After this I was pulled quickly across, though not quickly enough to water ski, and climbed up the ladder on the far side to meet the remainder of the party.

*Alastair adds . . . . Once all were safely across, we didn't allow them to hang about and got out the whip. There was no time to waste and we were a long way from the completion of the through trip. A rapid climb up the roofing shafts into Rhosydd, along level 6, down the incline and finally along the No.9 adit and back out to day for the walk back down the valley. On the way a few members of the party detoured to look at the recently drained Conclog slate workings. By 6.00pm we were all back at the cars preparing for the drive home.*

So after 10 years of trying CAT finally accomplished the Croesor to Rhosydd through trip. The earliest attempts were made by Eric Holland, Max Dobie and crew and are described in newsletter No.3..

Final thought - maybe Grade D wasn't quite fair. . . .

Jon Knowles

Postscript. There are now plans afoot to work again at Rhosydd with access being from the Croesor side. Although the plans are unlikely to be approved anybody who wants to view the workings is advised to do so in the near future in case approval is given.

## \* PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION \*

On making enquiries relating to the Relic Survey of Furness, I have recently learned from the Enquiry Officer at the National Photographic Musium, Bradford, that colour film ( not slide film ) is as good as black and white for archival permanency. As colour depicts materials, etc, better, it is greatly preferred as long as a reputable make is used such as FUJI and KODAK.

One of the greatest causes of deterioration in photographs are the chemicals used in developing. Commercial developers will only give prints a token wash of a few seconds. Washing the prints for 20 - 60 mins will tripple the life expectancy, making them last for 60 - 70 years and negatives twice this long, providing they are stored correctly.

As being cool and dry slows down any chemical reaction and prevents the growth of mould, the Enquiry Officer recommends prints and negatives to be stored separately in acid-free paper and sealed in plastic bags in a refrigerator! Not very practical in the average family home, but he did suggest an alternative if necessary, that of a cool, dark, moist-free environment, away from radiators, will do nicely if there is no room amongst the bacon and lettuce!

Seriously though, I was rather surprised at this information, especially as I had already bought a black and white film in anticipation, believing it to be the best choice. Ah well - now I know better and I thought other people might find this information interesting too.

Sheila C - P - Thomas.

# Doctor Descender

Dear Doctor

I have recently been diagnosed as suffering from a disease called W.A.S. but I don't know what this means please could you advise. I recently had a very nasty attack on a recent trip to Wales.

Anon, Bell Hill

Dear Mr Jones

I shall call you Mr Jones since you refer to Wales in you letter. W.A.S. or winking asshole syndrome to give it its full name ( loss of bottle - in common parlance ) is a nasty complaint which often afflicts people who are suddenly exposed to large mines as opposed to muddy brown holes in Furness. The symptoms at their most extreme involve a sudden total loss of control over your bowels particularly at times, of what a normal person would perceive as, mild danger. Regretably there is no cure except a larger bottle which makes it less easy to lose.

Having recently seen your case notes I see that you suffered from a severe dose of C.O.C. or Captain Oates Condition in the early eighties and it is likely that the two ailments may be connected - I am currently looking into this at the sanatorium.

Dear Doctor

I am trying to give up smoking but I have this irresistable craving to smoke any dog end I find - even in public places. Please help.

Mrs. £\$%\*(£ - \*&'%\$ - £\$%\*£, Barrow

Dear Mrs. Tripple-Barrelled-Name

I am sure that this ailment can be very embarassing particularly if, for example, you were in a pub in Maentwrog at the time. The condition requires regular bathing in a muddy brown greasy ointment ( chemical name B30.MUD ) which I have available for a small consideration. This should be rubbed well into the skin daily.

Medical complaints ?, embarassing disorders ?, strange maladies - write in complete confidence, enclosing a cheque for £5 payable to Jon Knowles ( who has generously agreed to handle the administrative side leaving the Doctor free to concentate on his research ), at : 6 Ferncroft, Hightown, Liversedge, W.Yorks, WF15 8DT.

\*\*\*\*\*

A new award ? : After the Wales weekend I got to thinking that, considering the events which took place ,especially the sight of Chris,Ian and Jon making their way across a wooden bridge which was only there by force of habit(This structure being over water n`hundred feet deep .in a chamber the walls of which were precipitous to the waters edge),some form of award should be given to nominated people who boldly go to places where lesser mortals fear to go.This excercise being conducted in the cause of underground exploration.

IRON BALLS - Say, about the size of, maybe a golf ball ,two in number,made of iron,attached to a chain,of such length,that can be worn round the neck of recipient,who will be known as iron balls ???.

Problem :-has anyone got any suitable Balls, and chain?

Just a suggestion.Mark Simpson.

# **RAILWAYS REMEMBERED:**

## **THE RAILWAYS OF THE LAKE DISTRICT**

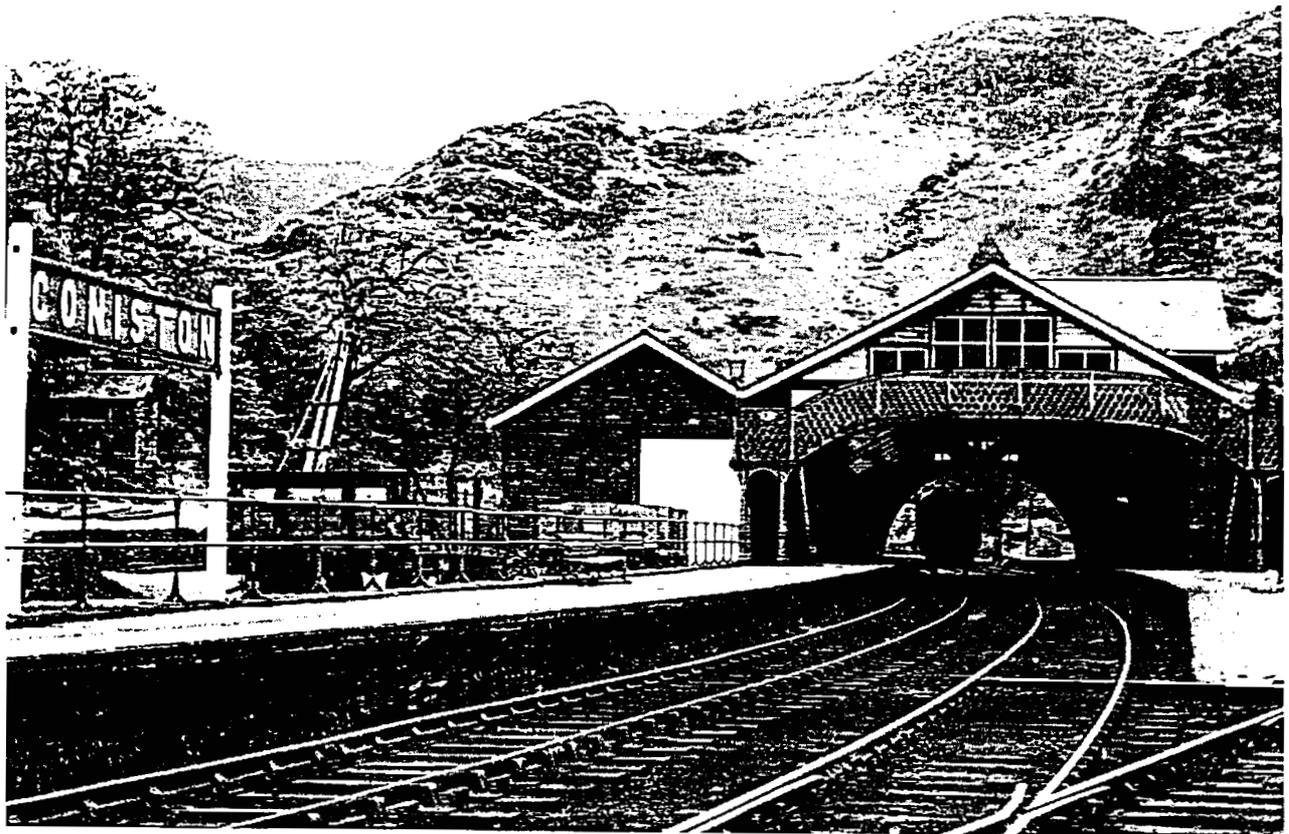
**By Frank Heap**

The railways in the Lake District were built, initially, to facilitate the carrying of iron and other metal ores and coal. Tourism was a secondary consideration when a railway network was being planned. It very soon became obvious that interest in holidays in remote areas of the British Isles was growing within the middle and upper classes. People were beginning to show more interest in the Scottish Highlands, in Wales and in the Lake District. As this interest grew it began to affect the development of the railway system in the Lake District.

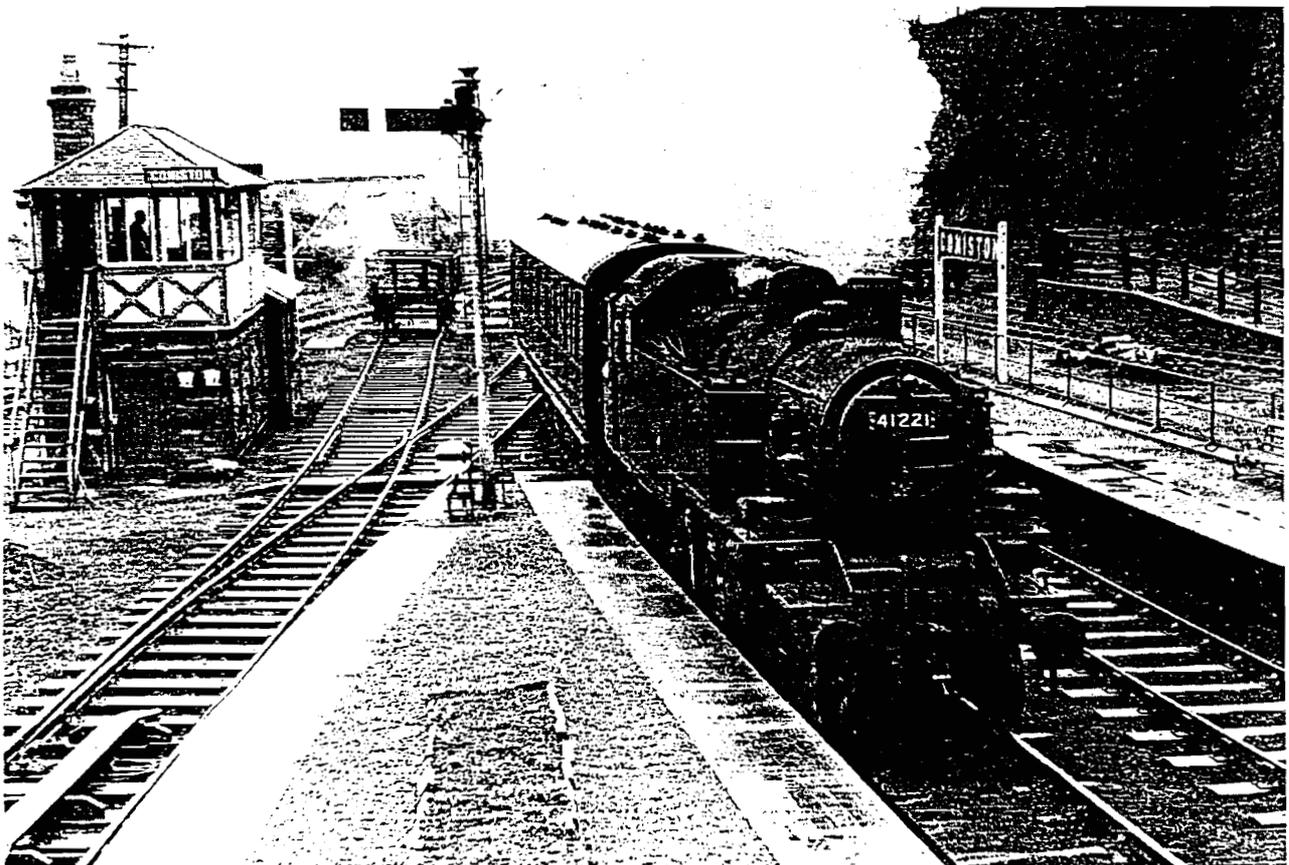
The first railway which indirectly served the Lake District was the Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway, which was opened in 1840. From Lancaster, where the railway then terminated, horse-drawn coaches were provided to transport passengers in a north-westerly direction into the Lake District, where a system of minor roads had already been established. In 1846 the extension northwards from Lancaster to Carlisle was opened and thus effectively linked the Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway with the Maryport and Carlisle Railway. The Furness Railway Company reached Ulverston by 1854 and completed the link, via Carnforth, with Lancaster in 1857. This growth of the network virtually encircled the area known as the Lake District. The Kendal and Windermere Railway opened a branch from the Lancaster and Carlisle line, through Burneside and Kendal on 20th April, 1847, to reach a small hamlet called Birthwaite. As the hamlet grew and prospered it became known as Windermere, famous for its huge natural Lake which already had four steamers operating between Waterhead at the northern end to Newby Bridge on the river Leven at the southern end. At that time, there were two rival companies operating the steamboats, – the Windermere Steam Yacht Company and the Windermere Iron Steamboat Company. The two companies amalgamated in May 1858 to form the Windermere United Steam Yacht Company.

Concurrent to this activity the Furness Railway Company were showing considerable interest in the traffic potential generated by the copper mines at Coniston, which were at the peak of their activity in mid-nineteen century. In 1855, 300 tons of copper ore per month was being extracted and somewhat laboriously carted to Foxfield, on the Furness line, where it was loaded into railway wagons. The Coniston Railway Act, which received Royal Assent on 10th August 1857, authorised the construction of a single-track railway through Broughton, Woodland and Torver to Coniston. The line was opened to passengers on 18th June, 1859, but the final section from Coniston to Coppermines Wharf, at the end of the road from the copper mines, was not completed until 1860. The line climbed almost continuously with a maximum gradient of 1 in 49. The architectural style of Coniston station was particularly interesting. It had a sort of Swiss cottage look about it, which was extremely eye-catching when viewed against its magnificent mountain backdrop. The original layout included two platforms, which were later extended and augmented by a third platform in 1888 following increasing passenger loadings, consisting mainly of tourists, which the line hosted in the first thirty years of operation. The facilities at Coniston included a coal yard, cattle landing, goods shed and crane, engine shed and turntable.

Although steamer services on Lake Windermere had commenced as early as the 1840's, it was not until the early 1870's that they were taken over by the Furness Railway



*Coniston station and platforms, 1st June, 1958. (Photo: P.A. Wilding).*



*Ivatt 2-6-4T no. 41221 approaching Coniston on 17th May, 1958. (Photo: K.J. Norman collection).*

Company. On Coniston the picture was somewhat different. Only a few months after the opening of the Coniston Branch, the company provided a steamer service on the lake. The craft, named the "Gondola", actually resembled a Venetian gondola, and was initially registered in the name of Furness Company Director, James Ramsden, since, at that time, the railway company had no authority to operate steam powered vessels on the lake. The official launching of this first steamer was on 1st December, 1859. The necessary powers to operate a steamer were obtained by the company in the form of the Furness Railway (Steamboats) Act of 1872. The passenger loadings increased steadily, from 14,264 passengers in 1897 rising to 22,445 passengers by 1906, and thus provided sufficient justification for the commissioning of a second vessel, "Lady of the Lake", which was launched in 1908 having been built by John Thornicroft of Southampton.

By 1861, the link between the Furness line and the South Durham and Lancashire Union Railway, through Barnard Castle and Kirkby Stephen, connecting with the Lancaster and Carlisle at Tebay, was complete. The line through West Cumberland was then to follow. The first stage from Kirkby Stephen on the South Durham and Lancaster Union, to a junction with the Lancaster-Carlisle at Clifton and Lowther was opened for mineral traffic in 1862. Considerable natural obstacles blocked the path of the second stage of the route, a line from West Cumberland to Penrith. The Maryport and Carlisle Railway backed a line through Caldbeck, which lay at the foot of fells rich in coal and the mineral ores of copper, lead and silver. Lack of any settlements on route resulted in it being rejected in favour of the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway Company's planned route. Their route included some 130 bridges and several rock cuttings. The first sod was cut in May 1862 and the line was complete and open for mineral traffic by November, 1864, and for passengers the following January. From Cockermouth, the route headed almost due east, through Embleton, to the northern tip of Bassenthwaite Lake, after which it followed the western shore of the lake before crossing the marshy land north of Derwentwater and on to Keswick. Keswick housed the headquarters of the C K & P which



*Cockermouth station in Edwardian days. (Photo: K.J. Norman collection).*

never actually ran its own trains but leased the line to other companies. From Keswick the line began a long climb of almost 8 miles before entering the Greta gorge. From there, the line climbed 400 feet before reaching Troutbeck, crossing the 400 foot long, 12-arch viaduct at Mosedale, the largest piece of engineering on the line. The summit of the line was reached just beyond Troutbeck followed by a steep drop to Penrith, which was negotiated by means of a horse-shoe shaped curve. At Penrith the junction with the main line was built in the form of an inverted V and a triangle of lines was built, in order to avoid the mineral traffic having to reverse.

The Furness Railway, meanwhile, were working on plans to build a branch line alongside the river Leven from the southern end of Lake Windermere at Newby Bridge, to Plumpton Junction, on the Furness coast line, near Ulverston. The Act of Parliament which authorised construction of the railway between Greenodd and Newby Bridge received Royal Assent in 1866. Construction began with the cutting of the first sod on 22nd November, 1866, but it continued in earnest early the following year. The upper part of the line was difficult to engineer because of the large amount of rock cutting which was to prove necessary and the construction of two tunnels and several longish stretches of embankment which involved considerable amounts of stone being quarried and transported. Although the line was quite heavily engineered, its route was extremely scenic and thus attractive to tourists, whilst, at the same time, it provided access to the gunpowder mills at Blackbeck and Low Wood, a cotton mill and iron works at Backbarrow and a thriving bobbin mill near Newby Bridge. As construction progressed it was decided to extend the route to Lakeside, where a deep-water quay could be provided, which avoided the need for steamboats having to negotiate the difficult northern section of the river Leven. The line was opened on 1st June, 1869, and the first train left Barrow behind Furness Railway Company locomotive number 21, a Sharp Stewart 2-2-2 tank, resplendent in Indian Red and lavishly decorated with evergreens, flowers, banners, union jacks – all topped with the Prince of Wales feathers.

Lakeside and the intermediate stations at Greenodd and Haverthwaite were constructed in standard Furness Railway Company design with patent white bricks from Leeds and decorative Flemish Bonding in yellow brick with horizontal bands of black stretchers.

Lakeside station was the most impressive structure with two platforms, which were 745 and 205 feet in length, and which ran parallel with a 633 feet pier. There was an impressive station building which, complete with tower, was constructed at right angles to the lake. It included a Palm Court style restaurant and refreshment room, built at first storey height above the decorative veranda, thereby providing a superb view across the lake. Facilities at Lakeside included a goods shed, water tower and turntable. The branch was double track as far as Greenodd and single track thereafter.

By the early 1860's there were no fewer than eleven separate companies working railways in the area. This was simplified to some extent in 1866 when the London and North Western absorbed both the Cockermouth and Workington and the Whitehaven Junction, thereby gaining control of traffic between Whitehaven, Cockermouth, Workington and Maryport. In the late 1860's and the 1870's the area was hit by a depression caused mainly by a decrease in the world price of mineral ores such as haematite, from which iron is extracted. During the period between 1870 and 1894 the combined shipment of local ore from Barrow and Carnforth fell from 400,000 to 37,000 tons. The directors of the Furness Railway approached both the London and North Western and the Midland Railway Companies to see if they would buy the lines, but both declined. A further blow was delivered by the closure of the copper mines at Coniston in 1889. The area began to switch its trade to coal and, by 1895, the under-sea workings near Whitehaven were yielding half a million tons a year. The prosperity of the coal industry was to last well into the twentieth century. It is hardly surprising then that the railway companies should increasingly turn their attention to attracting trade through tourism. As early as 1846 the Fleetwood-Piel service was bringing tourists to Furness Abbey. One of the more interesting ventures of the time was the combined tour from Fleetwood to Barrow to entice Blackpool holidaymakers to visit the Lake District. The service began in 1901 using the paddle steamer "Lady Evelyn" which carried almost thirty thousand passengers in its first year. A typical tour costing 7s.d. (just over 37p) left Blackpool Talbot Road station at 10.00 am for Fleetwood, where it connected with other traffic from Manchester, Bolton and Blackburn. From there, a ferry crossed the bay to Barrow taking just 75 minutes. From Barrow, the train left Ramsden Dock station for Lakeside, arriving at 12.50 pm just in time for lunch, which could be taken at the restaurant to the accompaniment of the band. After lunch, the journey up to Waterhead by Swift, Tern, or one of the other steamers, took a little over an hour. Coniston was reached by coach at 4.45 pm, where there was ample time for tea before the train left Coniston for the journey back to Ramsden Dock. The entire outing drew to a close when the train finally arrived back at Talbot Road at 8.47 pm.

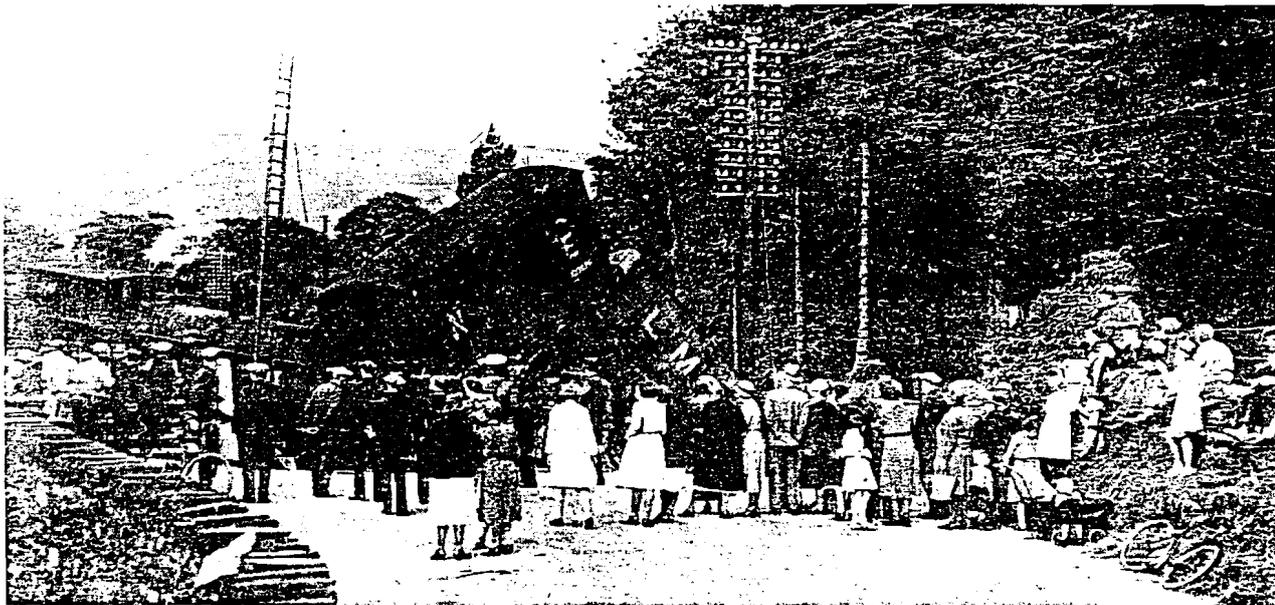
The Grouping of railways came in January 1923 and the majority of lines in West Cumbria became part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. This was intended to put an end to wasteful competition, but, in doing so, it alienated local feeling and pride. Sweeping withdrawals followed in the 1930's as competition from buses started to take its toll. Many local passenger services were cut or routes closed to regular passenger traffic altogether. The economic resurgence of the late 1930's and, to some extent, the second World War, helped to provide some stability for the next two decades. Steamers on Coniston ceased in 1939, the "Gondola" being converted into a houseboat and "Lady of the Lake" being broken up. Passenger traffic on the Coniston branch declined steadily, and closure to passengers took place from 6th October, 1958. Freight continued meanwhile, and was regularly hauled by a Barrow 3F 0-6-0 tank. The branch finally closed to all traffic on 30th April, 1962, and the track was quickly lifted. The subsequent story of the "Gondola" is an interesting one. She survived as a houseboat until a storm in the winter of 1963-4, when she suffered severe damage. Her interior fittings were retained, and the hull was submerged. In 1977, she was refloated and refurbished by the National Trust and from 1980 she has been in service on Lake Coniston.

Grange to Kendal passenger trains were withdrawn from 4th May 1942, and the track between Arnside and Hincaster junction was subsequently lifted, and the bridge decks and viaducts demolished. After the war, the Ulverston to Lakeside passenger service was operated on a summer-only basis, with the Windermere steamer services resuming



*Foxfield station looking towards Barrow with Coniston branch line approaching from left, August, 1958. (Photo: A.L. Headech).*

in 1946. The direct spur at Leven junction, which enabled trains to run from Lancaster to Lakeside, was lifted for the final time in 1952, having been reinstated during the war.



*Beck gunpowder train after overrunning the buffer stops at Haverthwaite on 15th July, 1932. (Photo: K.J. Norman collection).*

In 1948 came nationalisation which had little noticeable effect on the services in the Lakes. The maroon colour scheme of the LMS was gradually replaced by the familiar red and cream of British Railways. Traffic was still extremely busy on the Lakeside line in the fifties. The timetable of 1956 shows that for 10s 6d. (52p), it was possible to join an excursion at Lancaster, travel to Lakeside by train, from Lakeside to Ambleside and then Bowness by steamer, catching a return train from the former LNWR station at Windermere. The future of the Lakeside branch seemed secure and, indeed, heavy engineering in the form of replacement of all the sleepers on the line took place in the early 1960's. In October 1964 it was announced that the line would close to passengers, and, following the usual

Transport Users' Consultative Committee enquiry at Ulverston, during which considerable numbers of objectors were heard, the line closed to passengers from 6th September, 1965. Goods traffic survived for another nineteen months and freight services were completely withdrawn from 24th April, 1967. The upper section of the branch was subsequently saved by the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway Society. There was disagreement within that organisation about future plans for the southern section and, regrettably, it was eventually agreed not to pursue it. Following delivery of stock to the preservation society, the southern section from Haverthwaite to Plumpton junction was lifted in 1971, leaving the upper section stranded from the B.R. network.

The Workington-Keswick-Penrith line survived intact until 18th April 1966 when all trains west of Keswick ceased running. The people of Keswick fought a long battle to keep their rail service and this led to refusal of consent for closure of the section to Penrith. The remaining stretch of line, which had been double track from Threlkeld to Penruddock, was singled and the run round loops at Keswick were removed, making the branch effectively a long siding. Its future seemed secure, but, in 1971, British Rail applied again for consent to close what little remained. This time consent was given and the line was finally closed to all traffic from 6th March, 1972. Had it stayed open for a few more years it would have probably survived to this day.

The only line to remain which serves the Lake District is the branch from Oxenholme to Windermere. Windermere station is a shadow of its former self with only a single line and buffer stop. The station buildings have been retained but have been converted to form a supermarket. Excursion traffic does not use the branch because there is no run-round facility at Windermere. Entry to the single track branch is now controlled by the Power Signalling Box at Carlisle as are all the signals and level crossings. Traffic is still fairly brisk in the summer and the winter traffic remains reasonably healthy due to increasing use by commuters.

Railways Remembered is reproduced by kind permission of Mr Frank Heap, who is a member of the East Lancashire Railway.



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## News Abstracts.

Quarry one step nearer:—The controversial proposal by Redlands Aggregates for a £30 million coastal super-quarry at Lingerbay in South Harris should be approved, according to a report by the Western Isles Council planning officials. The application, described as the largest mineral planning application in the U.K., would create one of the biggest man-made holes in the world. It would eventually become a sea loch. The company plans to extract 600 million tonnes of anorthosite over 60 years.—**Scotsman 21:5:93**

Go Batty for Bat Week — Today marks the start of National Bat Week which runs until 5th June. The objective of the week is to raise public awareness of bats and bat conservation. The Westmorland and Furness bat group which carries out bat conservation work in the upper Eden area, is undertaking a number of projects as part of the week's activities. This year the group will be staging bat surveys on South Stainmore and out on the Warcop Training area. The group are involved in discussions with the Ministry of Defence over improvements to a mine on their land for bats, and they will also be visiting mines destined for capping on Crossfell to look at sites which need special grills to allow the bats access

**Cumberland & Westmorland Herald 29:5:93**

Miners pledge to preserve fragile life at beauty spot. — Plans to mine an area in Perthshire reflect high consideration and care for the environment, the international manager of the MI Great Britain company hoping to extract minerals, told a public inquiry yesterday. The company wants to excavate six million tonnes of barytes ore for the North Sea oil industry from the Duntanlich Hills north of Aberfeldy for the next 30 years. The area, bounded by the Tay and Tummel valleys, is a National Scenic Area, an official designation to protect areas of fragile beauty and environment from development. The mining of the ore would be underground only with no surface mining, there would be no waste tips and the waste rock would be used for road building. The economics of transporting ore by rail were not competitive **The Scotsman 13:5:93**

Sick Claims Former West Cumbrian miners affected by serious chest diseases may share in a £100m government compensation handout.

**Evening Mail 5:4:93**

£10,000 for mineral map— Cumbria County councillors are to spend £10,000 on a new map of mineral deposits in the county. The map will form part of the county's Minerals and Waste Local Plan which must be submitted to the government by 1996. **Evening Mail 6:4:1993**

Rail heritage at risk— A piece of Furness industrial heritage will disappear if plans for a new house in Lindal get the go ahead. This development involves the demolition of an abutment of a former railway bridge at the site. The bridge carried one of the many former mineral railways linking the iron mines around Lindal with the main line.

Hit the trail to find our wilder west. - Barrow-in Furness, recognised for its connections with shipbuilding and other heavy industries is also a good area for walking, wildlife, scenery and history. South Furness Environmental Project was formed in 1990 as a joint venture between Barrow Borough Council and the Countryside Commission to carry out work clearing and re-establishing Public Rights of Way. Easter 1993 will see all 97 kilometres of paths open and signposted.

A circular theme walk around Barrow, the Haematite trail, also opens this Easter. It is designed to highlight the mining industry upon which Barrow was built. The walk is divided into loop routes which connect with most built up areas of the borough. The route is waymarked so watch out for a white disk displaying a picture of mine head gear.

**Barrow Evening Mail 1:4:93**

Mines restoration 'out of character' Restoration work to a historic Lake District industrial site has caused extensive harm to the ancient monument, but the owner seems unaware of it, says a Department of the Environment inspector John Waldron who confirmed enforcement notices by the Lake District Planning Board requiring the extension to the powder store to be demolished within nine months and the use of the carpenters shop as self-catering accommodation to cease in six months.

**Westmorland Gazette 16:4:93**

*Editors Note:- Mr Johnson is to appeal to the High Court over the decision requiring him to convert the carpenters shop back to a field study centre.*

#### **Spreading the Word - Slide talks in Cumbria.**

Aspects of the CATMHS book "Beneath the Lakeland Fells" were highlighted during a show of slides presented by Mike Mitchell and Ian Matheson at the Countryside Theatre in Bowness on the 20th May. This was one of a series of illustrated talks organised by the Lake District National Park. -- *Dave Bridge*

#### **Spreading the Word- C.I.H.S. visit to Honister.**

On Sunday 16th May Messrs. Blundell, Timewell and Knowles conducted a group from the Cumbria Industrial History Society, through Honister. The group initially started at 25 people but was soon whittled down to 18, was taken on a full tour of the workings. Starting at the road end entrance the Kimberly Vein was ascended to the top where the winder house has fallen, due to what appears to be old age rather than a rock fall. After lunch, which I took with a club member who appeared to be wearing Oxy-acetylene cutting gear on his head, and a couple more defections, the group then ascended the Honister Incline to its summit before progressing out onto the external incline and up to the top of the fell. For a group with almost zero underground experience they did remarkably well and all stated that they had enjoyed the trip.

*Jon Knowles.*

# DUSTING ALONG THE BOOKSHELF.....

WATER IN MINES AND MINE PUMPS. By John Sinclair. 1958.

C.A.T. Library no. MT 51.

John Sinclair, Professor of mining, University Collage, Cardiff, formally Managing Director at Hutton Colliery Co., Lancs.

This book first deals with the sources of water in mines and the dangers which it may occasion. Pipes and fittings are dealt with next and then, successively, reciprocating and centrifugal pumps for mines. Pumps for special purposes at Collieries are then considered.

This is an interesting book with a lot of explanatory drawings and manages to explicate thoroughly the workings of each type of pump and its use. Although it was meant for undergraduates reading mining at universities, it is also of some use to all those interested in mining and coal mines.

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RAILWAYS OF CUMBERIA. By Peter W. Robinson. 1985.

C.A.T. Library no, AI 7.

This is a book for the railway enthusiast, although there are a few enticing old photographs of mines, for example, Palláflat iron ore mine at Bigrigg, Beckemet, and a good one of wagons descending the rope-worked Howgill Brake from Haig Colliery, Whitehaven. Photographs date from 1860 through to 1979 and are very good but there is not much text. A good quick read and is informative enough to catch your interest.

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MINES OF DARTMOOR AND THE TAMAR VALLEY. After 1913. 1992.

By Northern Mine Research Society. British Mining Volume no. 44.

C.A.T. Library no, MG 88.

Brilliant book, full of excellent photographs and drawings and well put together. A thoroughly good read. What else can I say? Get it out of the library and read it for yourselves.

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We have a lot of interesting good books in the C.A.T. library and they are there for you to read;

So, if you wish to borrow,  
then come down to Barrow  
and enlighten yourselves,  
with a browse through the shelves.

Sheila C - F- Thomas.

## HONISTER UP-DATE

As there has been little in the newsletter / news-sheet recently about the Honister workings, the editor felt that an up-date would be useful. We have made quite a few visits to the site this year for various reasons including to obtain data for the forthcoming much enlarged reprint of the Honister Guide. In January we took a large party from the Barrow Mountaineering Club round and I was very thankful for the help given by CAT and MOLES members who turned up. In particular, Ted Finigan from MOLES did a splendid job coaxing some of the more veteran mountaineers up through the difficult ground in E18 Level. It was a very enjoyable day with light-hearted banter that only BMSC can provide. Having ascended the system, we walked to the top of Fleetwith, just so they could say they had scaled a peak!

During the winter gales some damage was caused to the processing buildings at the Hause. The main door on the north-east side was blown in and this meant that, for a few weeks, anyone could wander through the sheds. Fortunately the door has been repaired and the building is now secure. There is also some concern at the number of people with little interest in mining history who are gaining access to the workings. Alan Dowson of Keswick, who has the dubious responsibility for care and maintenance, has tried several times to weld up the gate at the Main Road entrance to the mine. The sooner it is made completely secure, the better.

Although we haven't had a CAT trip there this year, a project meet is planned for the beginning of August. This will secure the carrier trolley once and for all and also allow some exploration on E7 & 8 and also E15 up to the top.

In May a few members of CAT played host to the Cumberland Industrial History Society. We had to muster the troops at the last minute because someone (!) had forgotten the date and consequently I was unable to be there. The group went up and down the Kimberley Incline and then moved over to the Honister incline which they ascended right to the top of the crag.

Later in May a small group visited the crag to investigate the crag face where some remains of workings from the 1700's may yet be awaiting discovery. When records first became available in the 1750's, mining as well as quarrying was quite advanced. Old photographs show the hand-sledging routes on the face quite clearly and some appeared to come from areas we had not accessed previously from the inclines. The trip was a success and we found two levels running in from the face at very inaccessible points. Both were extremely old. Much more work needs to be done here and we may need to hold a project meet for those with mountaineering experience to try and explore further.

The new guide should be out this summer. As before it will be a CAT publication and proceeds will go to the Society. The previous one was printed and stapled entirely by Peter and Margaret Fleming to whom I am extremely grateful. They also did much of the distribution. The way it's going, this one is going to be much larger!!

A D Cameron

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

JOHN RUSKIN MUSEUM, CONISTON, 10th MAY 1993

I attended the meeting which was arranged with Mrs Val Beswick of L & R Consultants, who is preparing a report on the future development of the Conlston Museum. As with most local issues, it was poorly attended. This meant that discussion on what local feeling was towards the museum could not take place.

Mrs Beswick outlined her view on the choices for the museum. These were:-

1. Stay as it is.
2. Close down
3. Redevelopment and improve in stages

All present agreed that option 3 was the only constructive way to go, although money would be the final stumbling block.

I pointed out that the C.A.T. mining exhibition at Easter had been a success and that a lot of local people had commented that they would like to see a permanent display of Conlston Mining History. I commented that C.A.T. was keen to have a permanent home for the exhibition and would help in any way they could to set one up.

It was agreed to send out a questionnaire in the June issue of the parish newsletter asking local people what they wanted to happen to the museum.

Mrs Beswick said she had a questionnaire with her and one of the questions was "Do you want a museum of John Ruskin in Conlston?".

I commented that local people would probably not bother to fill in that sort of question and I suggested the following wording, "Would you like to see the Ruskin Museum enlarged, improved and incorporating Conlston's mining and local history, etc?". This seemed to be well received. Mrs Beswick said her report would be finished sometime in July.

At the end of the day it will be the Parish Council who will make the final decision, because they own the museum on behalf of the local community.

*Jeff Wilkinson*

The Editor will print any members letters, but reserves the right to amend if necessary.