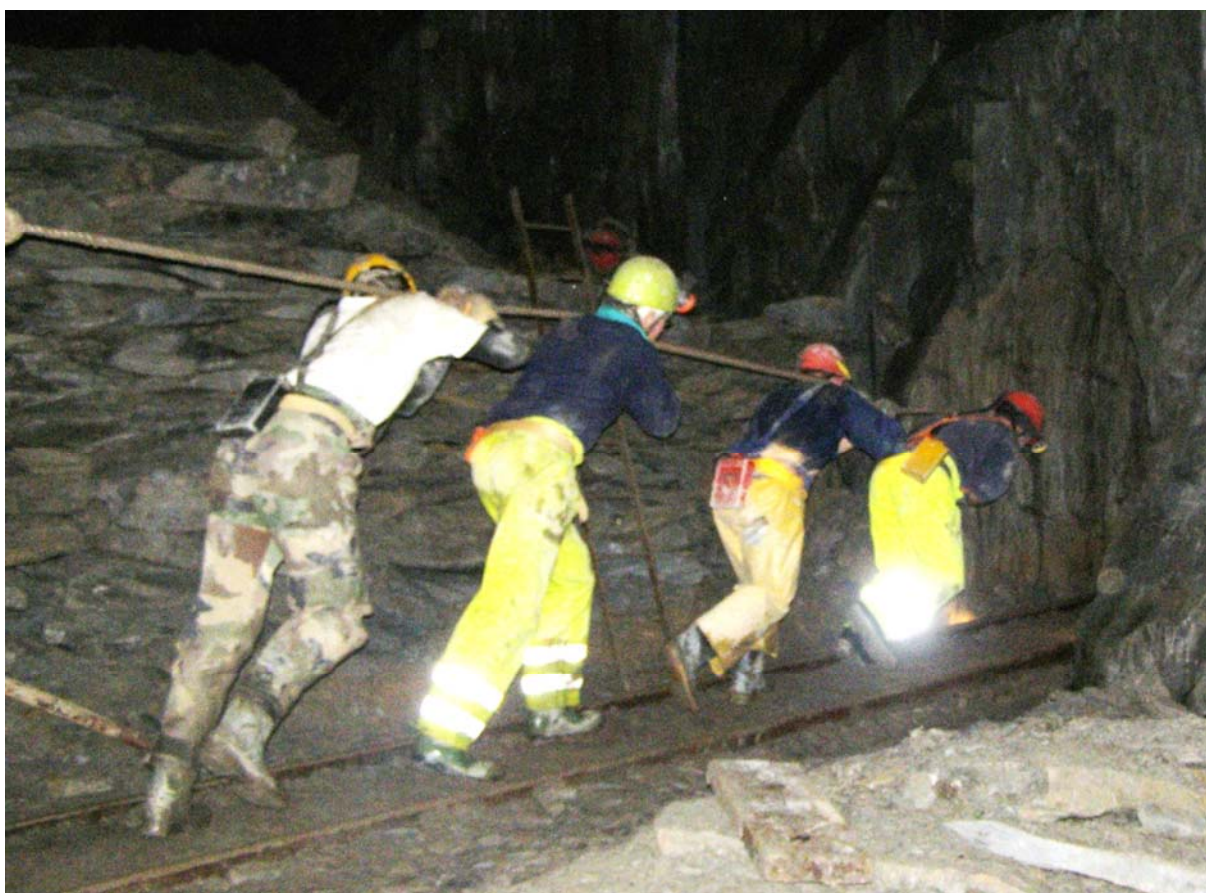


CAT

The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust
Mining History Society



Hoisting the skip, Tilberthwaite Horse Level.

Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society

Newsletter No 99, April 2010.

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Society Officers and Committee Members

Back cover

Editorial

Please note that the Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor has changed his email address. It is imatheson007@btinternet.com, or you can use membership@catmhs.org.uk

Membership

We would like to welcome Jeff Glover, who is a design engineer and member of MoLES. He led their Yewthwaite dig and would like to be involved with similar projects in CAT. He has already visited the Tilberthwaite dig and the team was impressed by his work.

2010 AGM & Dinner

Following popular acclaim for the Dinner last year, the Committee has made a repeat booking for Saturday December 11th 2010. A booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Meets: CHANGED MEET. Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th July. LLANBERIS. This meet was to have been to Tyn-y-Berth Slate Quarry, however our desire to return to the Clogwyn Goch Copper Mine is stronger. If the weather is bad we will visit Llanberis Copper Mine. In either event the grade is EXP. Jon Knowles 01484 860662. Meet in lay-by on A4086 between Llanberis and Nant Peris at NGR SH 598 587 at 10.00 am latest.

ADDITIONAL MEET Sunday 15th August. Tilberthwaite

A circular walk from Tilberthwaite looking at the workings at Tilberthwaite; Borlase Mine, Pave York Mine, Birk Fell, Long Crag Vein, Hawk Rigg and Dr Booth's Level. The route will follow old paths to Birk Hause on the side of Wetherlam above Greenburn and return by way of Blake Rigg to Tilberthwaite. Grade E. Hard hat and lamp needed if going underground. Meet 10.00am Tilberthwaite car park. Mark Scott 01229 466096.

RE-SCHEDULED MEET. Sunday 10th October. The Great Nenthead Traverse

Tony Holland will lead a further test of stamina. Starting at Capelcleugh the trip will pass through Smallcleugh, Capelcleugh High, Smallcleugh, Rampgill, Brownley Hill before exiting at Nentsberry Haggs. Since the trip involves prolonged immersion in water a wetsuit is essential. Grade S. Accommodation if required, is available at the Bunkhouse at £12.50 per night, but will need to be booked well in advance.

Sunday 19th September. Coldberry Mine.

Dave Young who is running this meet with Sheila has advised that in addition to the trip described in the Meets List it is possible to undertake a through trip which consists of a single 250' pitch and then a further pitch of 50' down a ladder and that this might appeal to the more energetic members. I confirmed that this sounded an excellent idea. Would those interested please advise Dave on 01833 631609.

Threlkeld mining Museum

The Threlkeld Mining Museum opened for Easter and had a busy time. The quarry railway is now operating. It is intended that for the time being it will be hauled by the steam locomotive at weekends and by diesel on weekdays. There is to be an official opening day on Sunday 23rd of May, 11.00am for 12.00am. All are invited.

Mike Davies-Shiel Collection

The CIHS are about to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to digitize Mike Davies-Shiel's slide collection and to make it accessible to the world at large. As part of the application they need to show that they are able to catalogue the slides before they are digitized. Volunteers are required to spend time at Kendal Record Office listing the notes Mike made on each slide. The work is expected to begin around September this year and they hope to be able to pay expenses. If you think you might help then contact the CIHS secretary, Helen Caldwell before April 24th. Email lowludderburn@btinternet.com phone 01539568428

New Cumbria Archives Centre (Carlisle), temporary closure for relocation

During the summer and autumn 2010, the Carlisle Record Office will move from The Castle to new purpose-built premises at Petteril Bank in south Carlisle. To facilitate the move, the Record Office in The Castle will shortly close to the public, and we will be making alternative service arrangements elsewhere for the duration of the move.

Building work is scheduled for completion in April 2010. We expect that it will take approximately 7 months to commission the new building, prepare the collections for the move, relocate to the new site, and set up the new service delivery. **The Record Office in The Castle will close on 29th April 2010 and we will reopen the new Cumbria Archives Centre (Carlisle) in January 2011.**

The new Cumbria Archives Centre (Carlisle) will provide first class facilities for researchers, much better than we can currently offer in The Castle. Updates about the move are regularly available on our website - http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/newrecoff/CROClatest_news.asp. Alternatively, if you would like us to contact you directly when we reopen, please email us to register your contact details.

NAMHO workshops

NAMHO (the National Association of Mining History Organisations) has begun a project, part funded by English Heritage over the next two years, to develop a Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries (Mining and Quarrying). As part of the first stage of that project NAMHO will be holding a series of seminar workshops across England; the first of which will be held at the Tamar Valley Centre, in Gunnislake, on 20 February. On 10th April there will be a second seminar at Snibston Discovery Park in Leicestershire, and the third will be at Carnforth Railway Station in Lancashire on 25th April.

The purpose of the seminars is to discuss the current state of knowledge for mining and quarrying archaeology in England. There will be three presentations on aspects of the archaeology over the course of the day with ample time for discussion and contributions from the floor. Would those interested in attending please contact the Project Director - Dr Peter Cloughton - by e-mail P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk or by 'phone 01437 532578.

Hext Sale

The whole of the contents of Holywath Coniston, the home of our late Vice President, Major W.B.Hext is to be auctioned by Tennants Auctioneers at Leyburn North Yorks, on the 8th May. Included in the sale are items of interest to our Society, copied from the catalogue as follows.

Lot No. 83 - The Coniston Copper Mines.

Letters of John Barratt, 1823-1834, manuscript letter copy book, bound in half morocco by Bernard C. Middleton. (Although Copper has been mined at Coniston since as early as 1800 BC, it was on a very small scale and in the late 18th century went into serious decline. In the 1830s John Barratt opened up the mines on an industrial scale, new deep shafts were sunk and the use of gunpowder brought about significant growth. The work-force rapidly increased from 20 men in 1820 to 5-600. A mineral line was opened in 1859 to carry the ore which had previously been boated down the lake. See lot 85).

Lot No. 84 - The Coniston Copper Mine.

Cost book No 2, 1838 - 43, folio accounts book, detailed manuscript entries, original reversed calf, 1851 letter to John Barratt regarding cobalt loosely inserted; A Cost Book for Threlkeld Mine, 1825-67, folio, half reversed calf; An unidentified mine account book, 1851-56 folio (worn and damp-stained;) with a small quantity of related papers and eight early 20th century photographs of Hodbarrow Mines (qty)

Lot No. 85 - Allen (David A.)

The Coniston Copper Mines, nd., typescript history, hand-coloured maps and plans, colour photographs, card covers.

I would be good if the collection could be kept together, kept locally and made available to researchers. However, this seems unlikely to happen as it appears that neither the CRO Barrow, the Ruskin Museum or the LDNPA have funds available

We have copies or photographs of everything in the three lots listed above except the Hodbarrow photos, so we have all the information contained in it, although it needs some work before we deposit it in our archive. I think that cost Book 2 is the most important item. As a research document it is easier to use than photographed pages and better information could be obtained by using the actual book. I think that we should try to acquire it. Since the catalogue was published it seems that more material has been found in unused parts of the Hext house, and it is important that we should at least know what there is. CATMHS hopes to have a representative to view the sale material at Leyburn and to attend the auction

I first became aware of the book of letters that comprises lot 83 several years ago. It was treasured by Major Hext and his wife, and they would not let it out of their house but did allow me full access to it. For a time I went to Holywath once a week on a Thursday, where I was made welcome and plied with refreshment and I transcribed all the letters having reference to the Coniston Coppermines. Once that was accomplished I decided to transcribe the remaining letters, which mainly relate to the mines at Grassington and

Strontian, but I didn't complete that task. Once digital photography became available Major Hext gave us permission to photograph the documents, and Mark Simpson and I copied all the documents in Lots 83 & 84, together with those held by the Ruskin Museum.

I then tried to enlist the help of CAT people to decipher batches of photographs. This met with some success and I am grateful to Lesley Aird, Margaret Fleming, Dave Bridge, John & Joan Helme for their help. Hope I haven't forgotten anyone! Subsequently I had an email from Mike Gill who expressed an interest in the letters, particularly those relating to the Grassington mines. I sent him a copy of our photographed material together with the incomplete transcriptions. After a couple of months or so I was grateful to receive a CD with all the transcriptions completed. Thanks Mike, I know it wasn't easy because the writing is very difficult. Recently I received an email from Mike to say that he hoped to write a paper on John Barratt and the Grassington Mines based upon information from the letters. Below is an outline of his forthcoming publication.

Ian Matheson

John Barratt and the Grassington Mines 1818-1834. Mike Gill.

This paper is based on progress reports on the Grassington mines which were written by John Barratt between 1824 and 18 and sent to John Taylor in London. They are part of a larger, bound collection of letters, written between 1824 and 1834, which were copied by Ian Matheson, of the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, by kind permission of their owner Major J.W.B. Hext. I, in turn, am grateful to Ian for letting me have copies of his photographs of the original letters.

For most of the period covered by the letters Barratt was based at Grassington, but he was also visiting and reporting on the Coniston copper mines, and other Lake District mines, for John Taylor. Ian Matheson has written about the letters concerning the Coniston copper mines, so this paper will restrict itself to events at Grassington. John Barratt came to Grassington around 1820 and moved to Coniston either in late 1833 or early 1834 when he was replaced by Stephen Eddy, whom Taylor moved from Lord Grosvenor's mines in Flintshire.

References

Matheson, I. "Letters of John Barratt, 1824-1834" Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, *The Mine Explorer*, Vol.V (2002), pp.73-79.

John Barratt (1796-1866) Married Ann Mason at Linton Church on August 2nd 1826 and had four children, Joseph, Ann, Catherine and John, to her while living at Grassington. As was common then, Ann died aged four.

Ann Mason was the daughter of Joseph Mason Snr, the last of the Grassington Barmasters, whose death, aged 61, was reported to Taylor by Barratt in October 1824. Her brother, Joseph Mason Jnr, went on to become part of the management of the Duke of Devonshire's mines, as well as being a partner in the Coniston and Tilberthwaite mines, in the Lake District, and the Cockhill Mine, at Greenhow Hill, and the Starbotton Smelting Company.

Minutes of the Lakeland Mining Forum – 16 November 2009

10.30 am Honister Slate Mine

Present: E Kingston (LDNPA) J Hodgson (LDNPA) P Webb (NT) J Malley (NT)
P Fleming (CAT) I Matheson (CAT) S Barker (CAT) M Mitchell (COMRU)
D Angus (MOLES) S Cresswell (MOLES) A Cameron .W Allison.

Apologies: J Lund (NT), G Standring (LDNPA), I Hebson (MOLES)

Matters arising from minutes of last meeting:

The Elterwater Quarry museum project is on hold.

A meeting at Potts Ghyll took place between IH, JH and GS.

The meeting on site at Yewthwaite is still to take place.

Glenridding TIC – a plan to put interpretation of Greenside Mine in the TIC is ongoing.

Rigg Head – NT still waiting for clarity from their Legal Services regarding the lease/ownership situation. The tipping has been reported to Natural England (NE), as it is within the SSSI.

Greenside – The issue of access from the Glencoyndale side still hasn't been resolved. JM to chase up with John Pring, the NT Property Manager.

There needs to be a sign inside the Glencoyne Level explaining there is no exit at the bottom without a key (although there is one there temporarily until the gate at Glencoyne is locked). There is no intention by the LDNPA to prevent access to the mine to CAT, in particular for routine maintenance. It is likely that CATs will be a key holder. If this is the case then CAT can also supervise other mining groups who would like to visit.

Coniston Copper Mines – LDNPA are waiting for a planning application from Philip Johnson regarding the development of the powder store.

Round ups:

CAT:

Horse Crag Level, Tilberthwaite – through the first section up to the main fall. Filter system on the beck is now in and working very well.

Bradyll Pier is now finished.

PF took two tours around the Coniston Coppermines for the Coniston Walking Festival weekend. Hoping to repeat them next year.

Silver Gill – an article by WA and Sam Murphy will be published in the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (CWAAS) Transactions next year.

United Utilities had said they would test the water at Silver Gill, unfortunately the person has been made redundant. So WA is looking at having the testing done through Carlisle City Council instead. The surveys have been undertaken by UCL and now awaiting results.

MoLES

Yewthwaite – problems with communication within MOLES as to when meets are taking place. JM and JL to visit soon for an update.

COMRU

Nothing to report.

Alastair Cameron

Preparing for a residential weekend to be held at Glaramara at the end of January. The theme on Saturday will be the Wad Mine at Seathwaite and will entail a talk by David Bridges and a visit to the site. The Pencil Museum, Keswick will also be involved. On Sunday the group will visit Honister Slate Mine. It is aimed at those with a general interest in Industrial history and if successful will be repeated.

AC and Anna Gray are hoping to publish a book called a 'Sense of Place', building on the sense of place articles that Anna wrote for Cumbria Tourism.

Castle Crag Survey – the group will be looking at Low and High House Woods in more detail in January, followed by the Bronze Age settlement at Lingy Bank in February. Also further research to be done on the numerous sledge tracks.

AC to contact LDNPA when he visits the Bronze Age site.

The Coniston Old Man website is being updated with all the information from the surveys. Honister – the projects have not progressed for a while. Hoping to pick them up again shortly.

Penny Rigg Mill – the Coniston Local History Group have nearly completed a survey of the site.

A cloud point scanner has been tried out underground in the Theatre at Honister. Unfortunately, it didn't work very well because of the damp conditions.

Warren Allison

The walk with the Caldbeck Commoners Association has been delayed until next summer.

The National Trust

Force Crag – a meeting with the Environment Agency's (EA) Area Manager, John Collins, took place. He was very supportive and has ensured movement for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The NT does not want to become liable for the water quality at Force Crag and the MOU will hopefully prevent that. A meeting regarding the MOU is set for early December and once this is in place, the NT can start work at Force Crag. They are hoping to re-visit all the consents in the New Year.

A first stage draft of a report from the EA on water quality monitoring has been produced. It is demonstrating Zinc and Cadmium discharge from Level One and Zinc from Level Three. The treatment will have to take into account diffuse water pollution. EA have also produced another report looking at options for water treatment on site. It is likely that there will be an initial trial of a temporary tank system on-site. It will have to deal with both the mine water discharge and diffuse water pollution.

The interpretation has now been replaced. The windows are being repaired this week and the lighting is going to be improved. The NT is eager to promote the site to the public and groups. Borrowdale school recently visited and the Vintage Motorcycle Group are visiting next year.

Greenside – there was a meeting to look at the contamination of water at Greenside. The water coming from the mine is not too much of a problem, it is the spoil area at High Horse Level which is the area of main concern. The EA are installing water monitoring points to look at this issue.

Wad Mines – a volunteer monitoring the condition of the site has reported that one of the marker stones has been damaged. The NT is going to assess the stones further before possibly looking at removing those which are intact and replacing them with fakes.

LDNPA

WHS – work on the nomination document is continuing. It will be completed by the end of December and will be going out to consultation shortly after.

Environment Land Management Scheme (ELMS) – the LDNPA has been working with Natural England to develop this service. Those landowners within the ESA scheme with two or more years left to run have been targeted to undertake environmental enhancement work as part of a Conservation Plan. In the past archaeological and historical features were only eligible for 80% funding, but this has changed within this scheme to 100%. Once the ESA scheme runs out it is being gradually replaced by Environmental Stewardship. This has 2 levels of entry, a basic one and Higher Level scheme, under which archaeological and historical features can receive 100% funding. We are trying to target archaeological sites (including mining) within both these schemes, in particular some of the Commons where Conservation Plans have never been attempted and where there are extensive mining remains. It is hoped that the LDNPA can act as an agent for the commons in order to get work off the ground. We are looking to undertake a number of conservation management plans, which will assess the sites and their condition and provide a schedule of works that are required. This information can then be used to undertake practical conservation work in the new Higher Level Stewardship schemes.

Carrock Fell Mine – All the relevant permissions have been received for the restoration of the portal. Work is ongoing with the EA to agree pollution prevention measures and it is likely the work will start in February.

Lakeland Mining Heritage – a business case for this project was brought to the meeting last year. The LDNPA are going to re-visit this document, review it in the light of the ELMS project and will bring it back to the next meeting.

AOB

AC raised the issue of scheduling for sites, in particular Penny Rigg Mill. There has been no scheduling of sites across England whilst Heritage Protection Reform was being discussed and proposals for a new system were being developed (a unified list of all Heritage Assets, including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments). Unfortunately, the Heritage Bill has now stalled and it is unlikely to go before Parliament in the next session. Scheduling has not re-started.

SB : NAMHO has been successful in their bid for a grant (£48,000) from English Heritage to develop a Research Framework for Mining and Quarrying. Phil Newman has been appointed as the project officer.

Next meeting 10.30 am Monday 12 or 19 April 2010 at National Trust Regional Office, Grasmere.

Dr Descender

"My friend keeps losing his gloves, especially half way up SRT pitches (taking photos), would safety pins be any good to prevent this, as I have run out of spare gloves?"

Mines Forum Meeting, 12th April

The most recent Mines Forum meeting was held at the National Trust offices, Grasmere.

As recorded in the minutes of the meeting held last November, the LDNPA has been working with Natural England to develop the Environment Land Management Scheme (ELMS). Eleanor Kingston, LDNPA Archaeologist, said that within this scheme archaeological and historical features can receive 100% funding. ELMS is now closed, but the LDNPA Archaeologists have obtained £15,000 from the scheme to fund two Conservation Management Plans, for Coniston Coppermines and Penny Rigg Mill. Once the plans are completed then they will form a basis for funding from the High Level Stewardship Nature Conservation Scheme. The management plans will be produced professionally by Archaeo Environment and will comprise a historical background report, a condition survey, and a program of works. Archeo Environment is expected to consult with local organizations such as CATMHS and should start work in May.

Carrock Mine. All permissions have been obtained and everything is in place for funding. English Heritage are favourable to fund but a management agreement is required. Natural England has donated £1500 towards the project conditional upon a geological survey being carried out. It is hoped that work can start by the end of this year.

Graham Standring, LDNPA ranger for the Caldbeck area reported that the November floods had caused damage to several mine sites in his area. A twelve foot gulley had been scoured to the west of the buildings at Force Crag by water coming out of Level 1. At Goldscope, High Snab dam had overtopped and scoured, causing damage to stonework and vegetation. Work was in hand to carry out repairs and to widen the spillway to reduce likelihood of a repeat. A gulley has been scoured into the spoil heap at the Wad mine, and there had also been damage to Yewthwaite mine.

The National Trust reported that a scoping report into mineral pollution at Force Crag had been carried out by Entec UK Ltd. Further field visits would be required. Apparently some three kilograms of zinc in solution are deposited each day into Coledale Beck, and this is only half of the total reaching Bassenthwaite Lake. Whilst some of this zinc comes from force Crag mine, the sources of the rest are not known. It seemed unclear how much zinc remained in Bassenthwaite Lake and how much was dispersed down river and into the sea

Alastair Cameron reported from Honister mine. The mineral side of the business is going well but apparently there has been a reduction in visitor numbers, probably due to the bad winter. Plans are in hand to install a zip wire from the top of Fleetwith Pike right down to the slate works. There have been updates to Coniston Old Man website, www.oldman.net

The next meeting will be at the National Trust office at Bow Barn, Borrowdale on 20th September

Tilberthwaite Dig

As reported in the February Newsletter, the November floods in Cumbria caused a setback to the Tilberthwaite dig. The adit was blocked with bags and loose spoil for the entire length of the packwall and the track leading up to the mine was washed out. Several visits were made to the site in order to evaluate the situation and to determine how best to deal with it.

It was decided that, having repaired the track, a tramway would be built to transport all the material from the blockage, estimated as being more than 100 tons, which will be deposited in the slate closehead near the entrance. This is the site of recent underground slate extraction by George Tarr, an operation which itself added to the history of the place.

John Brown reported in February: 'Since the November catastrophe, several visits have been made to Tilberthwaite Horse Crag Level with the first two visits being made before Christmas. These were spent repairing the track up to the mine to re-establish our route to convey materials by 4 x 4.



fitted to extend both ends. This was then back filled to create a dry level surface.

The last couple of visits have seen a substantial amount of rail being removed from its storage depot at Ash Fell Farm and it has been taken to the mine. Most of this rail has now been laid on a newly levelled track bed and has been advanced more than half way down the level towards the remains of the pack wall. A flat topped tub has been installed and is already in use removing debris and taking rail in for the track laying operation' JB

The weather has not been kind to us so far this winter, but we have been able to erect an aerial rope way in the Close Head to take the material deposited in the Level by the deluge to a tipping area at one end of the Close Head. A scaffold tower has been erected above the entrance into this area and this is to create a raised walkway for the person operating the skip on the aerial rope way. Excavations were carried out around the drain running across the Close Head to reveal a blockage and damage to the 9" pipe. This was repaired and additional pipe





In order to create as little disturbance as possible to the site, the waste will be deposited on top of a large pile of old spoil to the side of the closehead. To get it there the tower has been built of scaffolding, and the aerial ropeway established in the roof of the closehead, using existing wire cable and anchors. Material from the dig is then loaded onto the tram, wheeled back down the adit to the

closehead, tipped into a purpose made skip, hoisted to the top of the gantry, transferred to the aerial ropeway and then tipped where required. In order to keep everything neat and tidy a packwall has been built from waste slate to hide the tip. This method of disposal is designed to have as little disturbance and visual impact to the site as possible, and involves more time, energy and expense than the actual removal of material from the blockage.

The main digging team consists of John Brown, Pete Blezard, Colin Woolard, Andrew Woolard, Pete Sedgewick, and Warren Allison. Additional labour has been provided by Mark Simpson and Jeff Glover, whilst photography and moral support has been provided by Mike Mitchell, Clive Barrow and Ian Matheson.



At the time of writing (19th April) the system is working well and the team are shifting about ten tons of material at each visit and laying a new length of rail for next time. An optimistic estimate is that they are rather more than half way to the point reached by the dig when the floods came. However the debris slopes up to the roof at the inby end, so each succeeding shift, whilst removing the same amount of material, achieves a little less distance. IM.
Photos Mike Mitchell & Ian Matheson

New Ground at Paddy End

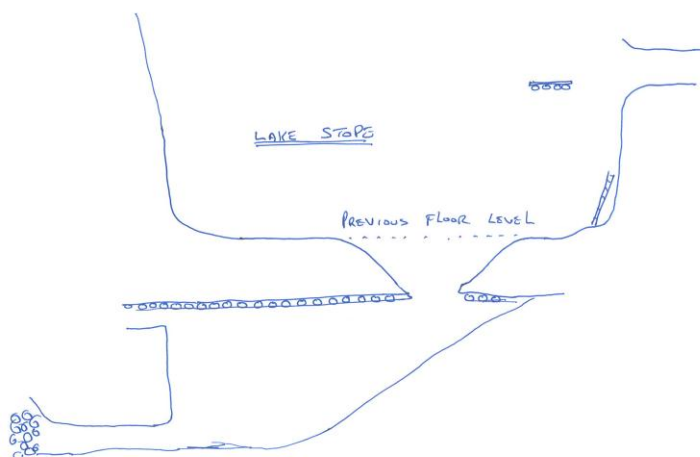
The heavy rain falls of November 2009 resulted in significant surface erosion in Coppermines Valley at Coniston. No such damage appears to have occurred in any underground part of the complex, however it was noticed in December that a mysterious hole seemed to have appeared in the floor of Lake Stope at Paddy End. It was not until the end of January that it was investigated.

Myself, Kate Tyler, Ian Hebson & Martin Willie arrived on Saturday 30th Jan 2010 to see where the hole led and determine whether it was the reason no water had been seen down there recently. After descending to what was previously thought to be the floor of Lake Stope, we could see that the hole was in fact very large indeed, much larger than appeared from the vantage point up on Top Level. Whether the sheer weight of water collecting in the stope had caused the hole is a matter of conjecture.

Looking down the hole, a rubble slope about 10ft below sloped steeply away. Once down on this rubble slope it was clear that what was thought to be the base of Lake Stope was actually the roof of a branch Middle Level traversing the length of the stope. The entire false floor of this Level had long ago collapsed, but its roof was still intact and looked to be in sound condition except for the section that had given way forming the hole. At the North Western extremity of the stope, Middle Level could be seen to continue in solid rock maybe 60ft or so above, and water was pouring forth down the stope footwall.



Following the rubble slope downwards led eventually to a very short section of level, with knee deep soft slimy mud almost the consistency of quicksand. The level was blocked by a fall of material but was draughting strongly. The water from Middle Level is collecting here and somehow draining away through the mud.



A return visit was made on 14th March 2010 to photograph the hole and investigate the base of the recently revealed part of Lake Stope. Descending down through the hole we could see remains of the rails that once traversed the length of the stope. We followed the base of the stope down to where



water collects in a short section of level where the shot holes reveal it was driven into the stope rather than out of it. The fairly shallow water in the level covered a couple of feet of thick glutinous mud that made for an 'interesting' waddle to the far, dry end.

After a short break for food & drink we started moving rocks in an attempt to clear a way forward. After an hour this became obviously futile with material falling down from above. We retreated back into the Lake Stope and decided that the way forward was to bolt up the stope footwall to reach Middle Level where it can clearly be seen about 60' above.

Roger Ramsden, Tony Holland.

Level at stope base

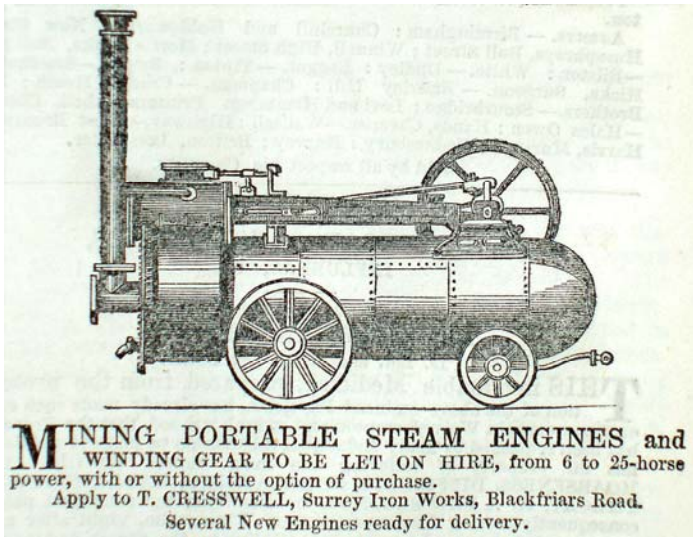


Looking up at Middle Level roof



Roger at work

Portable Steam Engines at Teeside Mine?

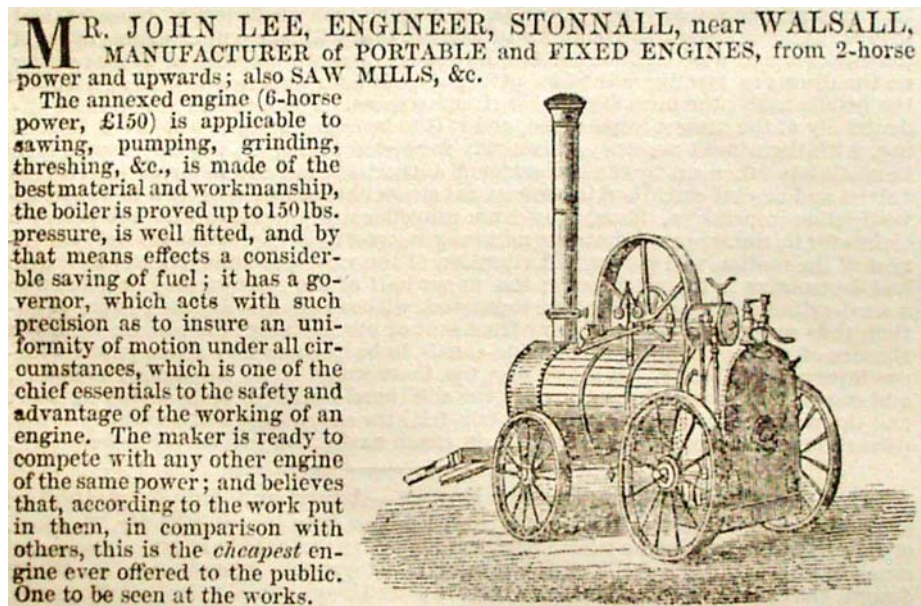


In my Teeside Mine meet report (NL94 Feb 2009) I asked if anyone had information on small steam engines that could have been used on such a remote site, suggesting dates c1850-60? No information was forthcoming. (yes, you forgot to get in touch about the filing cabinet full of information ...) Well I was in the Mining Institute one day and got into conversation with John Crompton, "They could have been portable steam engines, they were in use at that time" he

said, "Look in the Colliery Guardian (CG), you will probably find some information". Indeed there were adverts for portable engines in the CG, also in the Mining Journal (MJ) where I had been searching for Teeside Mine reports. Not proof positive, but as there is scant evidence to suggest permanent engines it is the most likely explanation to date. Further suggestions welcomed.

I would like to point out what a valuable resource the Nicholas Wood Library of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers is, and a super old room in which to study. The people are,

friendly, helpful and very knowledgeable and it is only £2 or may be £3 per visit. There is a web site www.mininginstitute.org.uk with good search facilities (view of an unbiased Geordie). My thanks to the NEIMME for permission to reproduce adverts from the CG and MJ.



Don Borthwick (Jan 2010)

Newspaper extracts from 1860 to 1918 relating mainly to Coniston Coppermines

As a result of many visits to Barrow Records Office, the following reports were extracted from The Ulverston Mirror and Furness Reflector and the Millom Gazette. Thanks must be given to Chris Moore, a former member of CAT who pointed me in the right direction with a list of dates to follow-up. Some accounts of accidents are very graphic and would not be printed in this way today.

It is hoped to follow this article in the future with similar ones relating to slate quarrying, iron mining and other related local subjects of interest.

Peter Fleming

Ulverston Mirror & Furness Reflector extracts:

3rd Nov. 1860

A fatal accident occurred at Coniston Mines yesterday week, a young man named Stephen Relph. The deceased was at work with his father, and were making ready for blasting. Some straws were required, and the deceased was descending from the place where they were working to get them, when he accidentally lost his footing, falling from the edge of the stage or “bunion” as it is called, and was so severely hurt by a large stone, or piece of loose rock, that he died the same night.

An inquest was held the following day before William Butler, Esq., Coroner, and a verdict of “accidental death” was returned.

24th November 1860

Accident on Wednesday last whilst Thomas White was engaged in his work as a miner at Coniston Copper Mines, the bunion upon which he stood gave way and precipitated him to a depth of 36’, although severely cut about the head and face, his wounds are not of a character likely to prove fatal.

April 20th 1861

An accident happened to a young man named Thomas Briggs, whilst working at Coniston Mine. It appears that whilst preparing a hole for blasting the charge prematurely exploded, and he was very much injured. It is feared he will lose both eyes.

March 8th 1862

Coniston – The yield from the coppermines has been very indifferent for some time past as compared with previous years, but a fresh vein has been opened out recently, and promises a supply which will, without doubt, renew the former activity of the workings, a state of things much to be desired.

June 14th 1862

Coniston – Most of your readers will have heard of Coniston Lake and its famed copper mines, which have been in existence many years, and are still as flourishing as ever, giving employment to between 500 and 600 individuals. About 27 years ago, a few of the miners started a friendly society at the Rising Sun Inn, Dickson Ground, calling itself the Independent Order of Mechanics. After it had been in existence a few years, it became so prosperous that they opened two other lodges in the village, one at the Ship Inn, the other at the Black Bull; and since then they have opened several branches in the District of Furness, all of which have been of incalculable benefit.

October 25th 1862

The Old Copper House at Coniston Hall has been blown down in a storm.

Extract from Ulverston Mirror and Furness Reflector, May 20th 1865

Inquest at Coniston - An inquest was held on Wednesday last, before Wm. Butler, Esq., coroner, at the Ship Inn, Coniston, on view of the body of William Duggan, a copper ore miner, who resided at Piper Hall, Church Coniston, and who died on Tuesday last, from the effects of injuries received whilst working in Kernel Level of the Coniston Copper Mines. It appears the deceased was working in a level by himself, and others were working in levels above and below him, and about a quarter to two o'clock the other men heard a fall of stuff, and the deceased shout. They went to his assistance, and found him lying on the floor of the level with a quantity of ore and other material pressing upon him, though he was not covered. The deceased requested the men to take him out, which they did. He became insensible before he was got out of the level. He complained of his back and leg, one arm was also hurt, and his hand torn. It was thought he had been about half way up the working, picking down ore, and had fallen down with the stuff two or three yards. He was conveyed home, and died the same day. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

24 March 1866

Shocking mining accident. On Thursday week a horrible and fatal accident happened to a miner named Thomas Richardson at Coniston Copper Mines. He was drawing the pricker, after stemming a blast, when the shot went off and killed him on the spot. His head being literally blown off and his brains scattered about in all directions. He was 45 years of age and has left a widow and eight children.

5 December 1868

Accident at Coniston Mines: On Monday last two men, named Miles Barrett and Lancelot Holm, were at work in the mines, Holm was making ready for blasting and had put the powder in and just begun to stemp a hole when it exploded.

The men were both very much burnt about their faces, and have a great many cuts on different parts of their bodies. There is no fear of their speedy recovery.

11 December 1869

Notice: Joseph Barratt, deceased. All persons having any claims against the estate of Joseph Barratt, late of Holywath, Coniston, in the County of Lancaster, Esq., deceased, are requested forthwith to send the particulars thereof to us, and all persons indebted to the estate are requested forthwith to pay to us the amount of their respected debts.

Moser, Arnold, and Moser
Solicitors, Kendal, 7th December 1869

8th April 1871

On Wednesday night a sad accident happened at the Coniston Mines. William Richards, a young Cornishman aged 21, whilst engaged in blasting, was struck by a shot, and received such injuries on the head that few hopes were entertained at the time of writing of his recovery.

June 15th 1878

Coniston Copper Mines. We are sorry to report the partial closing of the Coniston Copper Mines, which will throw out of employment a considerable number of men.

General commercial depression and the low price of the ore are the only reasons assigned for the stop. We trust that brighter days will speedily dawn.

14 May 1881

(In the deaths column)

On May 8th at his residence Holly Howe, Coniston, Lancashire, William Barratt, JP, aged 64 years.

1 November 1884

The Coppermines

These mines are to be closed, all hands having received notice to be closed.

Friday July 16 1897

Ulpha Copper Mine

The machinery and plant used in the working of this mine have been removed, and there seems to be very little likelihood of mining operations being renewed for some time to come. Several good consignments of spar were forwarded to St Helens, but the distance from the railway being about four miles, the charges for carting were high and ruinous.

The Commonwood Slate Quarry is also at a standstill, and although the slate produced was pronounced to be good, yet the same reason assigned in the non-success of the copper mines is attributed to the present state at the slate quarry. Of recent months the slate trade has received an impetus; the demand for North country slate, and the prices being greatly improved, and were it not for the cost of putting on rail which acts strongly to prejudice of a competitive trade, there could be no doubt but that both mine and quarry would be operative.

Friday Jan 30th 1903

Important discovery of copper at Coniston.

A new lode of copper has been discovered at Wetherlam, between Coniston and Tilberthwaite. The Coniston Mining Syndicate are carrying motive power for rock drills over a distance of nearly eight thousand feet. In years gone by Coniston was famous as a copper producing centre, and the latest discovered lode, with modern appliances for reaching it, is expected to give new life to the industry. The lode on Wetherlam is twelve inches thick and is a rich metal.

Friday July 15th 1904

The 'Copper Diviner' experiment at Coniston

Exhibition by the apparatus.

In beautifully fine weather on Saturday a party of mining representatives visited Coniston on the joint invitation of Coniston Copper Mining Syndicate and the Electrical Ore Finding Company for the purpose of journeying to the Tilberthwaite side of Wetherlam to witness experiments in ore discovery, through a portion of the famous Yewdale Valley, into the valley of Tilberthwaite. At the falls a climb of several hundred feet was necessary. However, the side of Wetherlam, wherein three lodes of copper ore are known to exist, was finally reached, and the company present then included Messrs. C.E. Day, BSc, and Mr Warsop, M.I.M.E. of Coniston Mining Syndicate, Messrs. Anderson (Chairman), Williams (electrician) and Dawson (geologist) of the Electrical Ore Finding Company; Mr D Laws (mining manager of the Barrow Hematite and Steel Company), Mr Oliver Kirk, (Messrs Kirk Bros., Ltd., ironworkers, Workington), Mr A. Wilson (Thorntwaite Lead Mines, Keswick), Mr I. M. Mann (mining engineer, Whitehaven, Mr List and Mr Rackly (Millom and Askam Iron Co.), Mr Marshall Steveirs (late manager of Manchester Ship Canal), Mr W. H. Collier (director of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal), Mr P. J. Fawcus (Manchester and London), Mr Buchanan (Barrow), etc.

Friday December 1st 1905

Coniston Copper Mines withdrawn from the Market.

At the Sun Hotel, Coniston on Tuesday afternoon, a fairly large company of gentlemen from Coniston, Keswick, Barrow and Ulverston, assembled for the sale of the residue of the leases of the

Coniston Copper Mines, situated on Coniston Old Man and Wetherlam and extending over six to seven square miles.

Mr Pearson Postlethwaite explained that the sale was a unique one in that district, but he believed that there were still good prospects for the copper working industry at Coniston. He explained that in recent years the workings had been fitted with up to date machinery, and in addition to the copper workings, there had been established concrete, tile and sand manufactories.

A bid of £1000 was made by Mr Coward, of Coniston, for the whole of the workings, but there was no advance, and the lot was withdrawn.

It may be mentioned that the old copper workings produced about £720,000 worth of copper from 1832 to 1882 and the average percentage of copper obtained was from 10 to 12½ percent.

At the present workings there is 11 to 15 percent of copper, and it is believed that the industry which has made Coniston famous will again flourish.

Friday April 6th 1906

Under "SALES AND WANTS" Column

WANTED – two experienced copper miners – Apply, 11 to 3, to Copper Mines Office, Coniston.

Friday January 18th 1907

CUMBERLAND MINERALS

Valuable finds of ore near Coniston

Considerable development has recently been made in the immediate neighbourhood of the Coniston range of mountains in prospecting for minerals, and a company which was formed within the last two or three years, has already found at least two strong veins of copper.

Negotiations are now proceeding with probable purchasers of the company's rights, with a view to developing thoroughly the veins, and making a further search for minerals. The present company has searching rights over an area of between 2000 and 3000 acres, and within the past few months such valuable minerals as cobalt, plumbago, copper, silver and lead have been found by the company; and close to the famous Tilberthwaite Ghyll (which comes within this area) a find of lead and silver has now been made, the analysis of which shows over 50 percent of silver per ton*. One of the veins of copper referred to has been traced for full two miles, and in the second case the vein has been located for a distance of at least one mile. It would, therefore, seem that the field is rich in minerals of many kinds, and that the original prospectors are likely to find their enterprise a very good paying one indeed.

The district has for over 100 years been known as rich in copper, and workings for this mineral have been carried on for many years, but evidently a more thorough development than any hitherto attempted will be made in the near future.

*This must be a mistake.

Friday November 13th 1908

Under column headed "Old Memories", entered under the date December 19th 1853

Fatal Accident at Coniston Coppermines

On Friday a shocking accident occurred at the above place to a miner named Edward Halliday, 38 years of age. According to the evidence given by his partner, at the time the accident happened, deceased was in the act of stemming a hole, previous to firing, when the shot prematurely exploded, blowing out the stemming, etc., which came in contact with deceased's head, and caused instant death. Deceased had a brother killed in July last, who was a partner to a person named John Wilson, who was killed about three months ago. Deceased's wife had a brother killed at the mines

and two others severely injured; one is Wm. Gregg (well known in the district as “Old Fudge”) who has only one leg, one arm, and one eye. At the inquest held on Monday a verdict of “accidental death” was returned. Deceased has left a widow and three children.

Friday December 4th 1908

LAKELAND MINERALS

Proposed operations in the District of Coniston

There are particular evidences that a very extensive movement is afoot with regard to the winning of the various valuable metals to be found in and about the Coniston district of Lake Land. Copper has been worked for many years past, but there has never been a very pronounced margin of profit in the venture, but with the introduction of electrolytic processes, the copper industry in this locality is likely to be revitalised; and it is very certain that, given fair facilities, the industry will be of considerable importance to the district.

Iron, lead, silver, zinc, copper and even gold have already been found, and there is evidence which leads engineers to believe that lignite will also probably be found when the workings are established. The lodes of copper are very frequent, and valuable, and the difficulties of working them are about to be overcome in an entirely unique way. The operations of the new company, which is in the process of formation, cover some 7000 acres, and one of the most prominent features of their projected ventures is reclaiming of copper by the electrolytic process from the extensive dumps of ore mined in past years, and which experts compute at some 300,000 tons, of which assays have been made showing 2½ percent of copper. It is estimated that, after paying all expenses, this “waste” material will, when treated, realise some £150,000.

The operations of the new company embrace Coniston, Tilberthwaite, Greenburn, Pike o’ Blisco, and adjacent land, and the hope is expressed that the venture will find employment for a large number of hands. The water power at hand on the property will probably be sufficient for all purposes.

Millom Gazette – September 27th 1912

Death of Mr JWH Barratt of Coniston

Mr J.W.H. Barratt, J.P., died at Coniston on Thursday. He was in residence at Holywath, and although it was known that he was not in the best of health, his end came with painful surprise to the inhabitants of the Lakes village.

Mr Barratt who was 61 years of age, was connected with many institutions in the village and surrounding country. He had been a County Magistrate since 1887. He was also interested in the Hodbarrow Mining Company.

Friday October 11th 1912

Coniston Mines

Iron and Copper in the Lake District, a New Enterprise

The Lake District will possibly be one of the chief mining districts of the country within the next few years, says the “Standard”. Products are already on foot to open up rich veins of copper and of iron ore which have been discovered near Coniston. The prospecting, which has been undertaken this summer, has shown that a considerable amount of unworked copper lies in the hills.

“Coniston village will be the geographical centre of this new enterprise, and the residents already contemplate the possibility of an industrial future. Some years ago the copper mines which had been worked in Coniston Old Man were closed down because the veins were supposed to have

been thoroughly tapped. The employment which had been given to four or five hundred men, boys, and girls lapsed, and Coniston's interests became purely local again. Now, however, the news of the DISCOVERY OF FURTHER COPPER "LODES" Has stirred up the memory of those more prosperous days. Various points of view are being expressed, but on the whole the district looks forward to a new industrial development. The more leisured residents, of course, regret the possibility that the beauty of some of the mountains will be deteriorated by mining dumps and shafts, and there is strong opposition from the angling interests. When copper was previously worked the streams ran discoloured into Coniston Lake, and no char, or, indeed, very few fish of any kind survived the pollution of the lake waters.

Copper and iron ore are the two minerals which it is chiefly hoped to extract. The area upon which copper has been found comprises 7,450 acres. It lies round the south-west side of Coniston Old Man, Tilberthwaite, and Greenburn. One of the prospectors told a representative that Greenburn, above Tilberthwaite, yielded some very good specimens of copper this year. One lode, known as "Hellen's Lode," in this neighbourhood, he said, is visible in outcrop for about two and a half miles, and the percentage of its copper is twenty. It is quite untouched. The new enterprise hopes to make use of virgin ground near those OLD COPPER MINES that are passed on the way up Coniston Old Man. There is a good deal of work to be done there, and it is proposed to extract copper from the dumps of ore which the previous miners threw up. At least £710,000 worth of copper has already been taken up and sold from there, but the work was unfinished. I believe however, that one of the chief ideas is to crush and treat the dumps, and to extract the latent copper. There are some 300,000 tons of this dumped ore, containing from 1.50 per cent. of copper to 3.5 per cent. Some time ago we applied a new process to a parcel of ore and sold it at £62 5s. per ton, and the result of this has very naturally encouraged us to continue our prospecting, and it is possible that work will begin very soon on this portion of the copper again. In the river bed and in the streams there are hundreds of tons of copper slimes from which over one per cent. of copper could be recovered. The new lodes that have been found are several miles long and from two feet to six feet wide, containing an average of 8 per cent of copper. These would naturally give the highest percentage, but even in the dumps there is the PROSPECT OF AN INDUSTRY. It is the electrolytic treatment of copper ores which has really given a stimulus to the English copper industry again"

The discovery of iron ore is likely to prove just as important. The area in which it has been traced covers 1,300 acres along a saddleback near Wrynose Pass. This saddleback runs between Pike o'Blisco and Cold Pike, and croppings about 50ft. wide are visible for upwards of 2,500 feet from north to south. The east bank of Red Tarn is especially rich in the ore. The ore occurs in the form of lumps of hematite, massive or crystallised, enclosed in the rock of the district. It is calculated that a very large body or vein of the hematite containing ore of fine quality exists some way down. Meanwhile, the few trenchings which have been made have revealed a body of ore about 6ft to 8ft in depth. Most of the hematite lumps weigh between 10 lb and 100lb, and the deposit opened up contains about 36 per cent of iron. The project of working this vein or deposit has gone so far that an aerial mountain railway from Coniston Station to the property – a distance of nearly five miles – is already being considered. Several ore mines are working in the neighbourhood of the Lake District without any considerable disfiguration of the landscape, and the Pike O'Blisco mine would only be extending the industry of the neighbourhood. Lead, silver, and zinc have also been opened up recently, but they have not as yet been found in quantities sufficient to form an industry.

Millom Gazette November 29th 1912

We learn from a reliable source that negotiations between promoters of the new company and the Lord of the Manor have just been satisfactorily completed, and that preliminary operation are likely to be commenced within a few weeks. It is understood that the putting in order of the disused workmen's cottages at the mines will be first proceeded with, and that the extraction of the copper

from the extensive spoil heaps by the electrolytic process will probably be among the earliest of the operations of the Company.

Millom Gazette March 17th 1916

Good News for Coniston

Restarting of the Copper Mines

There is, thanks to the private energy of a few inhabitants, every hope that the bleak outlook for Coniston is to be removed, for the copper mines are about to restart. On Tuesday, the new Manager, Mr J. F. Calderwood arrived, and it was known that from forty to fifty men were required. The French syndicate who had just successfully commenced an electrolytic process of ore separation when war broke out, is still to work the concern on its reopening, and it is likely that in addition to winning the copper metal from the ore further work will be spent on it to prepare it for use on the shells at munitions works. There is ample power and electric lights at the mines, and happily this reopening happens when some local quarries were about to cease operations owing to war slump conditions.

Millom Gazette Friday 31st March 1916

Coniston Copper Works

For several days the men of the copper mines have been employed cleaning the machinery, repairing belts, etc. This week the mill has been running continuously. The men at night work a thirteen hours shift, and those on days eleven hours. There are over a dozen men engaged. Many others have entered their names on the waiting list, and it is expected that several of these will shortly be given work. The manager is Mr J. J. Calderwood, who has an extensive experience of mining in England and other countries.

Millom Gazette April 26th 1918

CONISTON COPPERMINES RESTARTED. The copper mines at Coniston, which have lain idle for many months, were restarted on Monday last by a new Company, who took over the existing plant.

A bit of light relief:

To finish on a lighter note – these three jokes were spotted in The Ulverston Mirror, May 14th 1881

“I would rather vote for a long-eared donkey than for you” said an independent voter to Hugh Ferrigar, on election day. “Oh, come now, you ought not to allow yourself to be influenced by family ties”, responded the candidate. The voter has been puzzling his head ever since to find out why they laughed.

Small brother: “Where did you get that candy from, Annie?” – Small sister: “Mother gave it to me” – S.B.: Ah, she always gives you more than me.” S.S.: “Never mind; she is going to put mustard plasters on us when we go to bed tonight, and I’ll ask her to let you have the biggest.”

A conceited man, noted for his lack of good looks, pompously said: I have three children who are the very image of myself.” – “How I pity the youngest!” exclaimed a person standing by, - “Why is that?” asked the conceited man. – “Because it is the one that will probably have to resemble you the longest.”

Richard R Kelly and the Unfinished Ledger

Introduction

In 1975, Mr Wile, who owned the Backbarrow furnace site, deposited a mass of paperwork in Cumbria Records Office, Barrow. Catalogued as BDB2, the papers mainly relate to the Charcoal Iron Company, but some records come from their predecessor, Harrison Ainslie. One such volume is a letterbook from the Melfort Gunpowder Company. The company was established in 1853 as a division of Harrison Ainslie. As well as building the gunpowder works, they built a series of magazines. Those at Queensferry, Headen Haw and Poaka were built in 1853; another was built at Dudley.

The ledger is 13 ½ “x 10 ½ “ The end papers and the edges of the volume are marbled. Of about 760 pages, only 130 were used and page 130 was glued to the facing page. Any letter to or from the works was copied to a letterbook if it might be needed later. The volume covers the period 13th June 1859 to 15th February 1860. To understand the relationship between manager of Melfort, the manager of Bonawe and head office at Newland House, one needs to know some family history.

The Roper family

John Roper joined the Backbarrow Company as chief agent in 1761 and later became the sole manager. With Richard Roper, he bought a 1/16th share in the company in 1809, but the Backbarrow Company was dissolved in 1818.

Richard Roper was born in 1781. In 1820, Harrison Ainslie bought the Backbarrow ironworks and Richard Roper was named as a partner with 2/16ths of the company. He had become a shipowner in 1812 when he bought two shares in the 31 ton¹ sloop *Peggy* of Lancaster. Other shareholders in the vessel included William Roper and Michael Knott. Richard inherited 4 shares in the 82 ton *Trader* from Robert Roper and in 1826 owned 54 shares in the 82 ton galliot *Ann*. Over a period of 50 years, he owned part or all of at least 27 wooden sailing ships, all under 90 tons. Nearly all of these were bought new from Ulverston builders. Although he gave his occupation as ironmaster and lived for a time at Newland House, his main business was as shipowner and shipping agent.

Richard Roper had 7 children:

Thomas, born 1806 took over his father's interests. When he bought 8 shares in the 38 ton flat *Mary*, in 1838, he gave his occupation as shipowner, though as far as I can tell, this was his first vessel. He continued to buy and manage ships for Harrison Ainslie.

Mary was born in 1809 and married Alexander Kelly. They had 3 children, Hannah, Mary and Richard Roper Kelly, who was born in 1834.

James, born 1812, became a share broker in Liverpool.

Isabella and Richard were born 1816. Richard became a solicitor in Kirkby Lonsdale

Margaret and Ellen were born in 1825. Margaret married Mr Potter.

Mary Kelly died at Boghouse, Bonawe in February 1845 at the age of 37. Her daughters may have been brought up by their grandparents, as they were at Beckside, Ulverston at the time of the 1851 census.

¹ All tonnages are net register tons, a unit of cargo space. Very roughly, a 50 ton schooner could carry 100 tons of heavy cargo. All shares in ships were 1/64ths.

In 1859, Richard Roper was living at Gawithfield, (SD 307812). Thomas had taken over his duties as shipowner. Alexander Kelly was manager of Bonawe Furnace. Richard Roper Kelly, aged 25 was manager of the Melfort gunpowder works and about to take delivery of the 50 ton schooner *Kelpie* of Glasgow.

The letters

The letters were copied to the letterbook by the clerk, William Murray. Some were written by John Sinclair, manager of the company store. The remainder were written by RR Kelly, or by William Murray on his orders.

The letters show that the Melfort works was a considerable organisation with an international network of contacts and agents. They made a large range of powders, glazed and unglazed, coarse to triple fine. All the charcoal for the works was produced on site in retorts². (This may have been essential to prevent explosions caused by stones or grit in the process.) Saltpetre was refined on site and one letter implies that sulphur was distilled on site, as they had sulphur waste to sell. The barrels were assembled on site using imported staves, one shipment of which came from America.

The letters written by John Sinclair were shopping lists and included a large range of groceries, hardware and stationary. Tobacco and pipes were prominent, alcohol was absent. Tea was bought by the chest. Sugar was bought by the jince³. Dipped candles were a regular item, sometimes with a request that one box should be sent by the next steamer. Mints and lozenges were popular. Other items on the list were flour, rice, oats (by the boll), canary seed, hemp seed, pot barley, cheeses (by the dozen), treacle (by the puncheon), butter, (by the firkin) and a saw for cutting up beef and mutton. Mr Sinclair's letters had to be countersigned by William Murray and RR Kelly. Other orders associated with feeding the workforce include 6 balls of strong twine for rolling hams, cork and twine for salmon nets, and occasionally a sheep.

Mr Kelly seems to have been rather short tempered, as shown by this example, which seems to be about a mobile crane:

Melfort 23rd Nov 1859

Messrs A & H Smith & Coy

Gentlemen

Your a/c by last post had not a little astonished me. When Mr Smith was here, I have a very firm belief that it was £10 and not £20 that Mr Smith said he would make a carriage for us at & including in that sum the axles for the wheels. I may be wrong in this impression, but it was my belief that such were the terms, & now I find £27. 17s charged instead of £10 is not very pleasant. The 2 axles that you sent are two most outrageous affairs & it takes 2 of our horses to move this weighty affair with 40 tons instead of as we wanted 5 tons, and we have often carried more than 5 tons at a time on 2 axles that wd not both together weigh quite half of one of yours. You charged £1. 15.

² Airtight charcoal cylinders, from which by-products of combustion, e.g. tar, were extracted were developed for government factories in the late 18th century by Richard Watson, Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge and absentee bishop of Llandaff, who lived at Windermere.

³ The handwriting is difficult, jince is most likely spelling. A jince of sugar cost 51/- when a barrel of gunpowder cost 59/-,

6 for wood & fitting the boiler on vessel deck, the wood wd be about 8/- in value if whole and new, certainly not more than 10/- & it is high to charge the difference for merely fitting said wood to the boiler, work which one of our joiners wd do for 4/- or less, including fitting it to deck boiler.

Could you take back the axles? And give a pair of about half the strength and weight or rather less, in fact nearly 1/4 wd be quite sufficient for 7 tons weight, I wd buy 2 axles that wd carry 7 tons for £2 or less any day, finished off, & to pay the enormous price & half kill our horses with the bargain, does not please us. You offered to give us fittings for a crane to carry 5 tons. The lowest sum you offered was considerably more than double what I got it done at from another Glasgow firm & the iron and everything about is good, as I tried it & am quite satisfied that it is capable of lifting 15 to 20 tons without breaking anything as it now stands on our pier. I am certainly very far fm being satisfied with all this & it will teach me to be more ready to get our things from others. I enclose your cheque for £104. 9. 11d being the full amount of your a/c.

Yours truly
signed R R Kelly

The only informality comes in a final demand:

Melfort Gunpowder Works 16th June 1859
Archibald Dalgliesh Esq

Glenmore
Dear Sir,

I sent a request for payment from you of coals & powder some time ago which has not been sent and we shall thank you to remit within a week. What very dry weather we have. I hope rain will come to prevent further harm.

(Signed) R R Kelly

Yours Truly

The degree of harm was implied in a later letter:

£2. 19. 0d

Melfort 13th July 1859

Received from Mr Malcolm Sinclair, Sheep Island, Lismore, per the hands of Mr John Sinclair, store keeper here, the sum of two pounds nineteen shillings stg being the price of 1 cwt powder. We regret much that Mr Sinclair should want this powder so long but from the want of water and the explosion which took place here, it could not be helped. We shall be glad to attend to further orders.

Per R R Kelly
Wm Murray

When the *Kelpie* sailed for Melfort on 28th September 1859, there is no hint that it was a maiden voyage or that RR Kelly was the owner:

Messrs Allan & Mann
1859

Melfort 26 Sepr

Gentlemen,

If Captain Neil Robertson of the “Kelpie” wants a cargo of Common Red Bricks please let him have what he wants of these.

And oblige

PS

The “Kelpie” is to take 5 tons fire clay she brings bricks or not.

Wm Murray

Yours truly

per whether

R R Kelly

The gunpowder works was built of stone, but they used a lot of brick, firebrick and fireclay from Allan & Mann. Allan & Mann bricks, stamped exactly like those at Melfort have been found at Frank pit.

When there is a shipment for Bonawe, there is no indication that RR Kelly is writing to his father and the letter is signed by the clerk:

Melfort Gunpowder Works 12th Sept 1859

Alex^r Kelly

Bonaw

The “Mary Kelly” left here yesterday for Bonaw (to call at Easdale with powder and for slates) with 1300 Welsh slate, 3 doz charcoal bags, left here lately by the “Ellen & Sarah, 2 barrels & 1 bag flour, 40 empty bags, her own and the “Earl’s” coals excepting about ten tons left in the “Earl” for ballast.

Yours respectfully

per R R Kelly

Wm Murray

RR Kelly repeatedly stated that the Melfort Gunpowder Co and Harrison Ainslie were one and the same company, but his agents were ready to exploit any differences. Any of three disputes could have caused the book to be needed as evidence. John H Swan ran up a debt of £1,100 which he claimed was an error in his books. “One of the Newland Company and one of their office gentlemen” came to Melfort to settle matters; they would need to see JH Swan’s accounts. Blackburn, Son & Co chartered the *Kandy* to deliver staves, allegedly by permission from Newland. Newland denied replying to the telegram. Blackburn, Son & Co twice threatened the Melfort Co with damages from “an unseen company” and the dispute was placed in the hands of Messrs Strang, Yaille & Keydon.

That may explain why the book came to Newland, it does not explain why page 130 should be hidden. The conservator, Brenda Dregbro, took the volume back to Carlisle to view the page with the aid of a light table. She found orders to the master of *Kelpie* that he should keep the hatches open to keep the alder plants cool and a warning to Alexander Kelly that the *Ellen & Sarah* would soon arrive with coals.

Ships mentioned in the letterbook

The vessel most often referred to was the unnamed “first steamer to Oban”. Other unnamed vessels were the “fish steamer” which took powder to Londonderry and the “Ballachulish packet”, which delivered Mr Lockhart’s powder.

Earl of Glasgow, Kelpie, Melfort and Dora seem to be under Mr Kelly's orders, as he wrote directly to the Master.

Earl of Glasgow was unusual in that she was bought second hand, and in that the registration states that her shares were held on behalf of Harrison Ainslie. The 35 ton sloop was built at Lairg in 1843. She was registered at Irvine until she ran aground on Walney in 1852. Her owner, J W Clark sold the wreck to the shipbuilders Richard and William Ashburner, and after repairs, she was sold to Thomas Duckworth, fisherman and James Park, farmer. They sold her to Thomas Roper in 1853. The register says that she was owned by Thomas Roper, Benson Harrison and Montagu Ainslie, on behalf of Harrison, Ainslie, Roper & Co, Iron manufacturers. It also names Thomas Roper as her master from 14th June to 3rd August 1853. The fact that the company bought a small sloop at the time they were building the Melfort gunpowder works would suggest that she was bought specifically for the works. The vessels used at Melfort were generally smaller than their 80 ton ore carriers sailing from Ulverston. This may have been to allow them to use the Crinan canal. Another reason for using small vessels would be that they were delivering small but urgent parcels of powder, usually less than 5 tons. *Earl of Glasgow* delivered powder to Ballachulish, but her usual run was to Glasgow, often to meet a deep sea vessel at Tail of the Bank⁴, then calling at Mesrs McIntyre, 65 Jamaica St, (stevedores and agents?) to pick up stores for John Sinclair. The only occasion when she was fully loaded was when she was ordered to take a cargo of common red bricks from Allan & Mann and two barrels of black lead (graphite, for glazing the powder).

Kelpie was a 50 ton schooner built in 1859 at Port Glasgow and registered in the name of Richard Roper Kelly. At 61.6 ft long and 17.3 ft beam, she was well within the limits of the Crinan canal (88ft x 20ft). On her maiden voyage, she brought 40 gallons of best colza oil, 5 charcoal cylinders and assorted ironmongery, 5 tons of fireclay and enough common red brick to fill the vessel, from 65 Jamaica St. She took 25 tons of powder to Newcastle and brought another shipment of bricks from Allan & Mann, but although she made many passages to Glasgow, the letterbook does not tell much of what she carried. It records small items such as bagging cloth, duster cloth, a circular saw to be repaired, Guttapercha soles and heels, black lead, alder saplings and items for the company store, but these items would not make a load.

Harrison Ainslie had a schooner named *Dora*. She was 53 tons, built in 1834 and owned by Richard Roper, Benson Harrison and Henry Ainslie, but the master named in the letterbook, John Parker, is not named in the registration so it might be a different vessel. *Dora* brought two shipments of charcoal wood from Londonderry as well as taking 2 tons of tower proof powder to Govan. The tower proof powder was described as best sporting powder and valued at £350 per ton.

Melfort was a 36 ton sloop built at Chester in 1856. Benson Harrison held 40 shares, the rest were held by Montagu Ainslie and Thomas Roper. As well as the usual powder to Glasgow, returning with stores, she took 20 tons of powder to Newport and carried sulphur, staves and 4 beams. The largest was 39ft by 1ft 4in square and Mr Kelly reminded the captain that it was wanted for a particular purpose and it must not be cut.

⁴ A deep water anchorage off Greenock

The 77 ton schooner *Mary Kelly* was launched in 1841. Her owners were Richard Roper, Montagu Ainslie and Benson Harrison. She carried 10 tons of powder to Easdale, as well as the Welsh slate, etc for Bonawe.

Ellen & Sarah was a 53 ton schooner built for Richard Roper in 1837. Her first visit to Melfort is mentioned only in passing. On a second occasion she took coal to Bonawe.

Two sloops and two schooners were not enough for the traffic. Mr Kelly asked McIntyres to charter a vessel to carry 100 tons of bricks and 13 tons of charcoal cylinders. The letter was written on 15th November and the vessel was to leave on the 21st. Bagging cloth and dull black lead were ordered to catch the sailing and two bricklayers were offered work. The chartered vessel had not arrived on the 25th; Mr Kelly wrote that the bricklayers would be idle unless the vessel arrived immediately. £31 was paid to the Dumbarton Steamboat Office for the freight of bricks, etc on the *James Third*.

Agnes & Mary brought charcoal wood from Ardshead and left to load propwood from the Isle of Man. She is only mentioned because her owner wrote to ask her whereabouts.

Christiana Turner took powder to Ballachulish twice.

Kandy was chartered by agents twice and each cargo was disputed. Blackburn, Son & Co loaded her with staves at 65 Jamaica St. Mr Kelly did not want the staves, had not ordered them, had not authorised them to charter a vessel, and when the staves were counted, there were only 2360, 40 less than invoiced, and 40 of those were 1 ft short. John H Swann invoiced for 883 empty barrels and delivered 805.

Jane delivered 5 cwt of powder to Greenock to be forwarded to Londonderry by steamer. She loaded at 65 Jamaica St, but we are only told that she did not deliver the expected black lead.

Elizabeth brought charcoal wood, sawn wood and staves from Londonderry. When she brought staves from Jamaica St, Mr Kelly complained to Blackburn, Son & Co that she was slow in loading.

James 3rd, *Agnes & Mary*, *Christiana Turner* and *Kandy* are not in Lloyds register, 1859. *Jane* and *Elizabeth* are untraceable for the opposite reason. There are 2 pages of *Jane*'s and 3 pages of *Elizabeth*'s. If they are in the register, it would be hard to tell which vessel carried the staves. There is no reason to suppose that the two references each to *Jane* and *Elizabeth* apply to the same vessel.

Cairngorm of Glasgow was a 1025 ton sailing ship owned by Potter & Co. She took powder to Melbourne.

Dream was another ship, 1107 tons, built in Quebec, registered in Glasgow and owned by Potter & Co. The *Earl of Glasgow* had strict instructions to meet her at tail of the bank with 5 tons of powder for Melbourne.

Mayola was a 400 ton barque, built in Belfast in 1856 and registered at Liverpool. Her owner and master was W Porter. She took 200 barrels of powder from Newport to Penang.

The *Earl of Glasgow* loaded 5 tons of powder for *Silistria*. Lloyds register has 7 deep sea vessels named *Silistria* but only the 702 ton iron steamer loaded on the Clyde. She was built in Dumbarton in 1856, registered at Constantinople, owned by "Tksh Gov" and sailing for the Mediterranean.

Melfort loaded 5 tons of powder to meet *Venillia* at tail of the bank. A 594 ton ship with that name loaded on the Clyde for Savannah. She was built in 1858 at Miramichi, New Brunswick, registered at Miramichi and owned by Frazer & Co.

Afterword

Richard Roper died in January 1860. He left furniture, plate, linen, china and wine to his daughter Margaret Potter. An estate at Bootle which included the Sun Inn was left to his son in law, Alexander Kelly of Bonawe, and his son, Richard Roper of Kirkby Lonsdale. His daughter Isabella Roper inherited an estate at Martindale and his daughter Ellen Roper inherited an estate at Greenhills, Ulverston. The balance of his estate, which included 1/8 of Harrison Ainslie and the schooner *Ellen & Sarah* passed to his sons, Thomas, James and Richard. The schooner was sold in 1868 and foundered in 1882.

Lorn Furnace at Bonawe closed in 1876.

The Melfort gunpowder works closed in 1874.

RR Kelly died at West Dulwich in August 1886 at the age of 52.

Earl of Glasgow was sold in September 1866. She was registered in Glasgow and Caernafon before she foundered off Milford Haven in 1881.

Kelpie was sold in August 1869. The registration was transferred to Greenock in 1879.

Dora of Ulverston was sold in September 1861 and lost off Holyhead in May 1862.

Melfort was sold in 1875 and wrecked in 1888.

Mary Kelly was sold in 1865 and re-registered at Cork.

Thomas Roper died intestate in 1874. The Roper Estate Act will be the subject of another article.

Acknowledgements

This was written with considerable help in deciphering and interpreting the letterbook from Alan Crocker, and from John Helme in working out the Roper family history.

References

Melfort Letterbook, BDB2/20 at CRO, Barrow. A copy will be sent to the CAT archives.

A Fell, The early iron industry of Furness and District.

1851 census, researched online by J Helme.

Death notices, Liverpool Mercury, Mar 7 1845.

Roper papers at LRO, Preston, DDX.

Richard Roper's will, DDX 723/8 at LRO, Preston.

Glasgow shipping registers at Mitchell library, Glasgow.

Lloyds register, 1859.

A Crocker, Melfort Gunpowder Mills, Argyll: A Letter Book of 1859-60 Scottish Business & Industrial History, Vol 26, series 2, 2010.

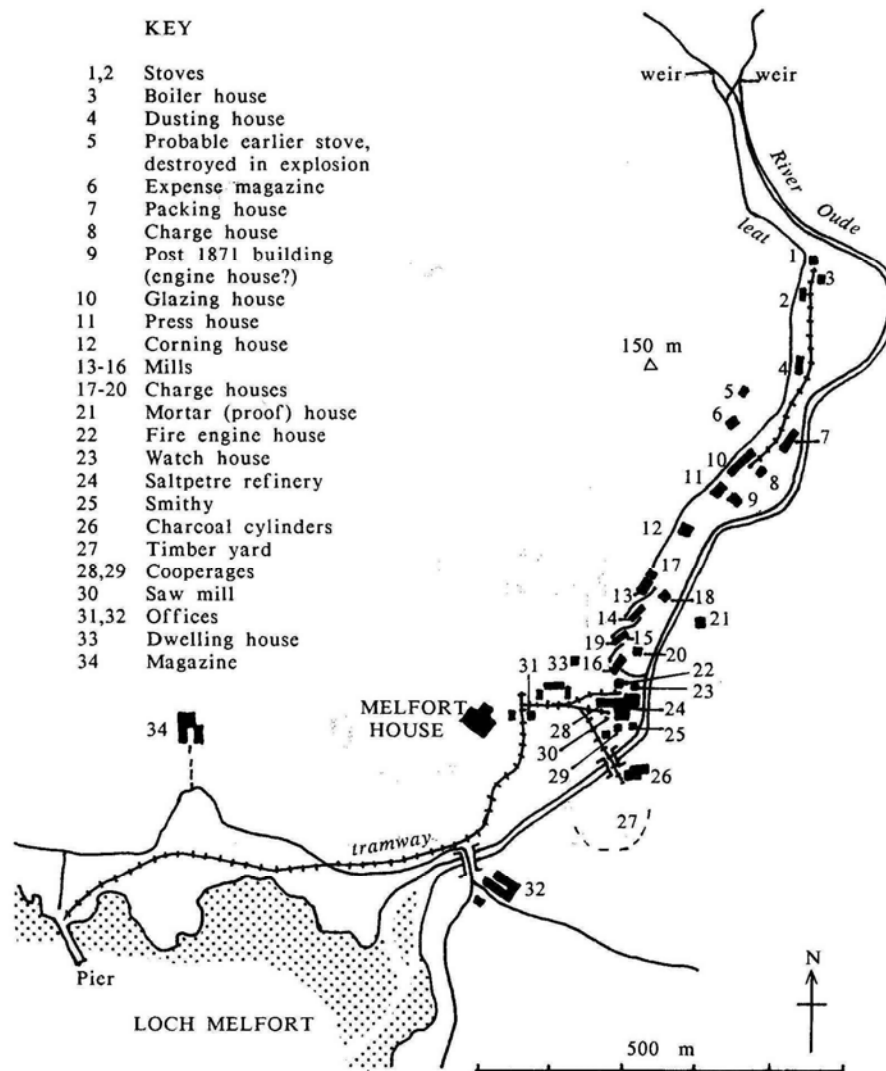


Figure 2. Sketch plan of the Melfort powder works, Argyll, in the 1870s. Buildings except 5 and 9 are identified from the 1st edition 25" O.S. Map.

Plan of Melfort works from "Gunpowder Mills Gazetteer" reproduced by permission of Glenys Crocker

£15 REWARD.
THE MAGAZINE belonging to the Melfort Gunpowder Company was Broken into on Sunday night, the 7th instant, and five cwt. of Powder stolen therefrom. The above Reward will be paid to any Person giving such information as shall result in the conviction of the offenders.—Apply to Mr. W. N. Lorton, Queen's Cross, Dudley, Agent to the above Company; or to Superintendent Burton.

From Birmingham Daily Post,
 July 16 1861.

Editor's note: I have a yacht which I keep at Loch Feochan, near Oban. When I received Peter Sandbach's article I was interested to see what remains of the Melfort Gunpowder works and made it the object of my first cruise of the year.



Melfort pier, looking west down Loch Melfort



The lower part of the gunpowder works has become a holiday complex. The pier and harbour are now part of the Melfort Hotel, and shown above, no's 24 and 25 on the plan, the saltpetre refinery and smithy, have been turned into apartments.

Further up the valley there are quite a lot of remains, many of which can be identified from the Gunpowder Mills gazetteer plan. The course of both tramways can be seen and the leat, though dry, is generally in quite good condition.



The leat, looking upstream between No's 2 and 4 on the plan.



No 12 on the plan

Possibly the post 1871 building. However, two openings, the window which can be seen and a doorway into the lower level seem to have been altered and are faced with red bricks stamped Allan & Mann, Glasgow. A consignment of these bricks is mentioned above delivered 1859. The building is long and very narrow with two floors.



This is all the standing remains of the mills, 13 – 16, although their foundations and the water course can be identified

Thought to be the corning house,

A farewell visit to the Thames and the Coromandel, New Zealand

There were two areas I wanted to cover before Eileen and I departed from New Zealand for good. One was the West Coast of South Island, exploring the areas around the Denniston (coal) Incline and a final visit to Thames. The latter to film a gold working, the previous images having mysteriously disappeared from my hard drive. Still suffering from a throat virus I was not in the best state of fitness. I thought I would take things a little easier and visit a couple of levels in the Moanataiari Valley in Thames by way of a route that placed me in full view of the natives. So, in glorious sunshine and disguised as a LBT photographer I brazenly hobbled into the bush walking a hundred yards up to the level rather than the usual mile up the next valley, over the ridge and back down the Moanataiari Valley.

It wasn't necessary! The natives were out fishing and the self sufficiency guy living in an old bus with two ferocious dogs had gone! On the same site were two settling ponds from which a rough road had been cut through the bush onto the summit of the lower slope of Messenger Hill, and several deep cuttings had been driven along the ridge. Well, what do you know? Could this be the start of mining again? The locals I spoke to afterwards were shy in answering! It could in fact be for a new home(s).

Over a year had passed since my last visit and the old tramway had all but disappeared in a tangle of brambles, bushes and saplings; new fluorescent markers were evident, pinned to the rock banking wall, and I became suspicious. I arrived pretty exhausted at the level entrance. The previous week had been quite wet; although dry outside and no water in the creek, the first sixty feet along the level was flooded. The Wetas had gone on jolly-days, perhaps it was the odour from the potent sand fly/mosquito repellent I was wearing, smelling of Citronella and Sweet Almond oil. I wasn't attracting any females either!

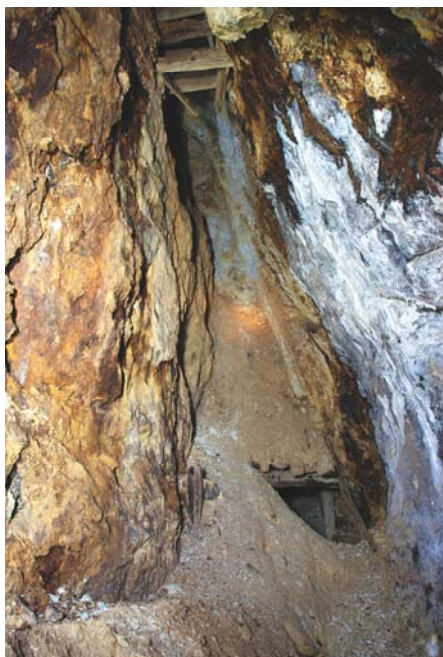
I tackled up, donning on my anti-Weta suit (just in case they were ganging up for an attack further in the level) and I set off, immediately crossing a five foot wide open stoped lead/silver vein, (quite visible further up the valley), twenty feet further on I crossed another eight foot wide back-filled stope. It was hard going, slurring my way through the bright orange sticky mud. The Wetas, spiders and centipedes had disappeared, amazing!

After three hundred feet the level swelled out into the large stope of the 1870's gold mine. (None of the local historians are sure of the mine's name. If the internal stope rises to the surface it could be Lion Shaft and the level would then be named Point Russell Level which is part of the Moanataiari Mine, this is as near as we can get). The level had cut into the Golden Age Reef and exposed a rich area of gold bearing sugary quartz. Recent fluorescent spray markers were clearly visible, though there had been some falls as one of the markers was on the floor. The stope rose vertically for some fifty feet or so, loose planks bridged the narrow void supporting rotten douk. Closer inspection of the photographs revealed the stope rising high and away behind the approaching level. The roof lowered to about twenty feet above the floor and in the middle a small roughly constructed eighteen inch square wooden hopper ascended high through the vein and I suspect into the upper workings. Ahead the area had been well stoped out with stemples placed at regular intervals.



A 'horse' of sorts separated the stope from the next section along the level in-bye, the heavily timbered sets and side lagging prevented soft rotten waste from entering the level, unfortunately this had given way on the right hand side and the fines had rushed into the level

A few feet further on the head pieces had also dropped, collapsing the level. It appeared that a huge amount of waste had slithered down from the upper back of the horse through a stoping into the area. As the standing and hanging walls appeared to be in reasonable ground I can only assume that the waste had run from large stopes ahead of the 'horse'. These must be quite large.



A partially filled shaft lay across the width of the working; about ten feet down were numerous timbers, waste and rotten decomposing rock. On the left hand side of the shaft there were remains of timbers supporting rotten waste, this felt firm and I tentatively crossed over it and made my way into the start of the timber sets. I felt the retaining side planks; they were soft and rotten, only the timber ends appeared sound. Obviously with the collapse of the level it was not safe to continue, even worse, my film of this area was out of focus!

I returned and carefully inspected some of the timber by the shaft, I found that it had rotted away leaving a bark like trail across the floor. Near the lip of the shaft I noticed several notches cut into the walls, these had been cut in order to support some substantial timbers above the original head height. This left me pondering; nearby were supports for air lines. The shaft was about eight feet square but I felt that at about ten feet below adit level the

Gold stope in Moanataiari Valley

shaft appeared to reduce, the rubble only allowed a glimpse but I felt that the final size was somewhere nearer four feet square. I dare not climb down in case the rubble gave way. In the end I came to the conclusion that the shaft was a drawing winze and that possibly a winch had been sited on or above the deck. Certainly something substantial was mounted in this area judging by the size of the receiving pockets in the walls. I was quite surprised how oxidised was the state of the exposed vein, though I could see no trace of gold.

I recalled reading about William Mitchell, who as a lad collected 'heavy' waste from the tips of the levels in this valley, often finding pieces containing odd spots of gold for which his father gave him a penny. One day, from a point only a couple hundred of feet below the level, a miner tipped out waste. In the midst of this was a small ball containing shining strings of gold; his father gave him a shilling! (1870's)

Having largely finished filming I was once again aware of a distant humming sound, could it be a 'knocker', an old miner coming to visit and advise? No, it was a b*****y Queen Wasp coming to sting. Once again I was performing an ancient Maori tribal dance whilst trying to lose the wasp who was equally, quite interested in my LED cap lamp. I turned all the lights out, there was silence followed by a quiet bump! I'm sure that was the wasp flying head first into the wall! I switched the light to the red flashing LED lights (I bet you are quite impressed!) this totally confused the wasp – and me too. So in that confusion, I packed up as fast as I could and escaped leaving the wasp flying around in circles whilst I popped on a dim emergency light and fled. Obviously the repellent didn't apply to wasps!

I emerged into bright sunlight; all my strength had deserted me. I walked slowly up to two other levels that had run, gave up and set off back down the valley to the Golden Crown Mine, where Eileen had parked. All signs of the great Moanataiari and Caledonian Mines have gone; indeed one or two of the signboards had vanished too. Wake up DoC you are losing your industrial heritage! At this point I should mention that the DoC attitude towards mine exploration is quite basic, the warning signs are there. If you ignore them then any

consequences are your responsibility, it's up to you. A little similar to the UK in the 1960s – Ah! Those halcyon days!

After throwing away my bright orange fell boots I retreated to the public toilets, where I washed my legs and removed as much orange ochre as I could (and I still looked like Donald Duck). The toilets changed colour to 'Mella Yella'. We retired to the Thames Hauraki Pump house. It was open and great things had been happening. The THP society is in the process of making a reproduction of the two compound condensing engines. At the moment they have made and placed in position from timber and plywood, the spur wheel, fly wheel and gearing. These have been painted to the original colours. They are very impressive.



The Queen of Beauty Mine was acquired at the turn of the century and an effort was started to drain the goldfield to a depth of 2000 feet. The shaft was widened in stages to a depth of 750 feet; it was then proposed to sink to 1000 feet. 1020 feet was reached and drives taken off. There were numerous problems due to water bursting through under pressure and the presence of carbon dioxide gas, eventually the workings were flooded out. The venture was abandoned and eventually the compound steam engines were sold to a firm in Auckland. The huge quadrants outside are really impressive and the working scale model of the whole pumping station is in itself well worth viewing. A lot of work has been put in since my last visit. Had I lived in Thames, I would have been heavily involved in the project, a worthy cause. Part of the Pelton wheel generating system is being overhauled and will be replaced.

My host, John, is the local mine explorer, very handy too, most of the locals know him and as a result he can enter private land without any trespass problems. He systematically searches through areas of the local bush searching for old trials and workings. He showed me photographs of five head stamps, Berdan pans, winches and compressors, frame works, mercury flasks, wagons and other items hidden in the bush and away from the tracks, being in such a position as to evade the scrap man. He offered to take me for a trip in late February to show me his finds and some of the workings, stopes and hoppers. Unfortunately I'm elsewhere so I won't be able to make the trip (and not fit enough).

John also indicated where I would find other levels nearby (ones I have been looking for); these adits are turned at angle to the stream so not easily seen, I know, I have passed the area without finding anything. We said good bye to Thames. When I pop my clogs, my ashes will be scattered above the war memorial, on the hillside right in the middle of where the miners worked, wonderful!

We travelled over Coromandel and down the east coast. I revisited the Broken Hills Battery, now well and truly in the undergrowth. The Martha Mine open pit is giving up the last of its gold. The Cornish Engine house that was slowly collapsing into the shaft has now been moved bodily half a mile to a new site at the top end of town. I missed the mine tour by half an hour, ah well sometime in the future – I hope!

Further Information.

Thames Hauraki Pumping Plant. Thames Goldfield Information Series No 15. ISBN 0-9582096-4-2

Last Great Effort. Thames Goldfield Information Series No 33. ISBN 0-9582406-2-0

Also. <http://www.jeffpylenz.com/LOCAL%20Early%20NZ%20postcards%20-%20Ref/pho...>

Richard E. Hewer February 2010.

Book Review "The Metalliferous Mines of Cartmel and South Lonsdale", Max Moseley

Published in January 2010 by the Northern Mine Research Society as number 89 in the British Mining Series. This Society was formed in 1960, with a slightly different title and aims, the Northern Cavern and Mines Research Society. It is a very readable and informative A5 size book of 105 pages with a cover photograph of the chimney at Jenny Brown's point and inside some maps and black and white photographs.

Chapter headings include : Introduction, Geology and Mineralogy, History, Copper and other Non Ferrous Metals, Haematite and a Catalogue of Industrial Archaeology Sites. Relevant references and notes are included at each chapter end. Details are also given of the mining companies involved, Society of Mines Royal, Warton Crag Silverdale and Leighton Mining Company, Warton and Silverdale Mining Company and Warton Mining and Colour Company Limited.

The ores were found either as small pockets infilled in faults and cavities or as larger veins, however none of the deposits approached the size of those available in Furness. The small deposits, usually outcropping at the surface or exposed in the sea cliffs, and often identified by romantic names such as Red Bank, Red Hills, Red Rake, Fairy Holes Shafts, Dog Holes etc. were soon exploited and now only the red staining remains. The larger deposits are centred around Warton Crag and are probably much better known with some ore remaining. Several mines existed, with much more practical names, Lower Mine, Higher Mine and Crag Foot Mine, locally referred to as the "paint mines" from the use of the high quality haematite as a pigment.

CATMHS or was it CAT, visited the Warton Crag sites a number of times in the late 80's and early 90's until the novelty of crawling through narrow passages on a bed of thick, clawing and gooey red sludge wore off, even if the stains didn't. Details of known sites and grid references are given and many can be visited from the excellent coastal path which runs south west from Arncliffe towards Silverdale. The CATMHS library has a copy but the books can be obtained from Barbara Sutcliffe, The Old Manse, 93, Halifax road, Nelson. Lancs. BB9 0EQ, price £12 + £1 for postage.

John Helme.

Rare books sought

Barry Hunt is trying to trace a couple of publications which are not held by the British Library, viz.

Brock, J.R. (1958) The History of the Greenhow - Grassington Lead Mining Field.
Ireland, R.J. (1984) Lead Mining on Anglezarke.

He says 'The first of these is listed on p.45 of Burt and Waites "Bibliography of the History of British Metal Mining" but I don't know of anyone who has ever seen it! I would be interested to know if any CAT members have seen or hold either of these publications. You could contact me via e-mail [zunt@hotmail.co.uk] or by 'phone [01282 692880] or by post at 22 Mayfair Road, Nelson, Lancs. BB9 8JP.'

CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

Committee Meeting held on the 24th February 2010 at the BMSC Hut at Coniston, starting at 6.00pm.

Agenda.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Apologies for absence | 2 Minutes of the last meeting |
| 3 Matters arising | 4 Secretary's Report |
| 5 Treasurer's Report | 6 Membership Sec. & Newsletter Reports |
| 7 Meets | 8 RA forms |
| 9 Publications | 10 Library |
| 11 New projects | 12 Publicity Officer |
| 13 Coniston Coppermines & Quarries | 14 GPS |
| 15 Mines Forum meeting | 16 Any other business |
| 17 Date and venue next meeting | |

Present: W Allison (WA), J. Aird (JA), S. Barker (SB), I. Matheson (IM), J. Brown (JB), P. Fleming (PF), T. Holland (TH), M. Scott (MSc), M. Simpson (MS).

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm. 9 committee members attended. The committee welcomed Warren to his first meeting as Chairman.

1 Apologies for absence from: M. Mitchell (MM) & C. Woollard (CW).

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the committee meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November had been previously circulated to members. The planned January committee meeting had to be cancelled due to heavy snow. JA asked that the name Eagle Crag be replaced by the name Tilberthwaite (Item 7 second line), this amendment completed it was **PROPOSED** by JA and **SECONDED** by IM that the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings. This was carried unanimously.

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 Item 7 SB had contacted R. Ramsden who would lead the Goldscope meet for the PDMHS visit, if he was back from holiday. JA had contacted the J. Knowles who was organising the other trips.
- 3.2 Item 16.5 JA reported that we were now linked to Aditnow.
- 3.3 Item from recent AGM - Chris Cowdery finds the meets list enticing, but should we consider a wider circulation to encourage new members. When he first joined it was the sport/exploration aspect which attracted him, but now he was also becoming more interested in the history. Mark Waite thought a society name change should be considered (this could only be done at next AGM). Alan Westall explained why the name was chosen in the first place. Both these items to be considered at the next committee meeting.

The committee considered suggestions made by members and could see no advantage in changing the Society's name (thank you to those who sent suggestions). As the name cannot be changed till next AGM, the committee are still open to suggestions. It was thought that changes (emphasising the exploration aspect) to the website may encourage younger members to join us. More links to other groups was suggested. Please send ideas to Chris Cowdery.

4 Secretary's Report

- 4.1 Letter from Swarthmoor Hall History Group, Ulverston. They are researching the Hall and would appreciate any information or help.
- 4.2 Invitation to MOLES open day on 7th March and list of Ian's walks in 2010.
- 4.3 NAMHO Conference to be held in Gloucester 4/6 June - Booking forms are now available on the NAMHO website.
- 4.4 NAMHO Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries. A seminar will be held 25th April at Carnforth Station. Several members said they would attend.

5 Treasurer's Report

JA had circulated the balance sheet to committee members covering the period from 3rd November to the 24th February. Income was from: subscriptions, donations, Gift Aid reclaim and publications. Expenditure on: Rydal Hall weekend, BCA PLI NL, travel expenses & printing leaflets. The 30th Anniversary event at Rydal Hall had made £8 profit. The Treasurer wished the committee to approve his expenses of £142.47, Approval **PROPOSED** SB, **SECONDED** JB, all in favour. The current a/c stood at £16522.79 and the Scottish Widow a/c at £365.31. IM asked for approval to replace folders and buy archival quality storage material for the Furness Survey project. All agreed

Newland Furnace project, JA reported that the bridging loan had been repaid by the Newland Furnace Trust.

6 Membership Secretary & Newsletter Editor's Reports

IM reported that 82 members had renewed their subs (+5 honorary), 8 members had not renewed.

Next NL will be in April. Deadline for items is mid March. PF expressed our thanks to Ian for his work producing the NL's.

7 Meets Report

The cancelled January meet will be run in August.

8 RA Forms

SB to contact A. Cameron regarding RA form for the 14th March meet.

9 Publications

9.1 SB to contact A. Cameron regarding LMH and ask him to send the CD's to MS who will assess them.

9.2 IM had carried out our annual book stocktaking. There were still a lot of copies of Slate from Coniston to sell. PF asked permission to try to sell copies at wholesale price to the discount book shop in Bowness on Windermere. All agreed.

9.3 It was decided to set up an online payment system.

10 Library

SB had received a report from the Archivist (it had been circulated to the committee): A list of recent additions to the Library/Archive had been printed in the last newsletter. There have been two more sessions at JRM sorting and photographing mine plans. The virus checker on the CAT laptop was discussed, as it was only used for cataloguing library items, it was decided not to update the virus checker. Thanks were expressed to DB for his report.

11 New Projects

11.1 Carrock Fell Mine – JB reported that all approvals were in place. An updated costing of materials is now almost complete and will be presented to Eleanor Kingston, to enable her to source funding before the work to restore the portal can commence. It is hoped work will start when the weather improves. See full report.

11.2 Silver Gill – WA reported that an environmental impact assessment is required by the Lake District National Park Authority as part of the permission to pump out the flooded shaft in New Stohn. Advice was sought from Peter Bardsley at the Environment Agency and would consist of sampling the water at various places; he also offered advice on the legislation regarding pumping volumes and what would be needed to prevent silt etc from entering the water courses.

United Utilities had offered to test the samples free of charge however due to personnel changes at the company this offer is no longer available. However Nottingham University have just started a 12 month water sampling programme at Greenside Mine on behalf of the various organisations involved in determining what contamination there is to the water from the site.

The University has offered to come to Silver Gill Mine as had Peter Bardsley to determine what would be required to complete the Environmental Impact Assessment and this is being set up in the near future.

Still waiting for the report from University College London on the ground radar work carried out in August 2009.

11.3 Tilberthwaite Horse Crag Level – JB reported that since the catastrophic floods in November several visits have been made to repair the track to the mine. Rail has been

laid from the working area underground and a raised walkway constructed to enable waste material to be removed. See full report.

11.4 Penny Rigg Mill - Some damage done in the flood. Nothing else to report.

11.5 Sebastian Level – to be next year's project.

11.6 Force Crag – JA had received a scoping report from ENTEC. This report had been produced for the purpose of providing background information to the Force Crag Mine site, and for reviewing the hydrological and hydrochemical processes in the vicinity of the site. A further field visit should be planned once the full scoping assessment has been completed. This field visit will inform the further feasibility study, particularly with the view to designing engineering options to minimise the diffuse pollution. JA would write and ask if a representative of CATMHS could attend the visit.

12 Publicity Officer

MSc had taken the info boards to the LDNPA Archaeology Conference and is hoping to set up a display at Lindal in Furness Village Hall. The boards need updating, he will collect pictures etc.

Mark Waite had asked for some CATMHS publicity leaflets (these also need updating).

13 Coniston Mines & Quarries

A report had been circulated regarding recent flood damage at Coniston Coppermines. John Hodgson had been informed. The list to be discussed at the next Mines Forum meeting.

PF reported he had received £50 from the organisers of the 2009 Coniston Walking Festival. This year's festival would be held on 26/27 June.

TH reported that on a recent trip into the Coniston Mines, a large hole had appeared in the area opposite Lake Stope and that it was now possible to access the bottom of the stope

MSc had attended a LDNPA meeting where footpaths in the Levers Water Beck and Thriddle Incline area were discussed. This subject to be brought up at the next Mines Forum.

PF reported that his article Coniston Coppermines Rediscovered had been submitted to Aditnow by Jeff Wilkinson.

14 GPS

MS has the GPS, DB the laptop.

15 Mines Forum Meeting

Next meeting: 12th April at 2pm at Nat. Trust Office in Grasmere. To be discussed: Pennyrigg Mill, flood damage at Coniston Coppermines, Paths around Levers Water Beck. Ask if it is permissible to send MF minutes to the CAT committee members.

16 Any Other Business

16.1 IM had been contacted by Rudy Devriese, who had a collection of VMCo. Mine plans to pass on to the CAT Archive. TH will collect them.

16.2 WA reported that EH and the North Pennine AONB are to do conservation work at Whitesike Mine, Nenthead.

16.3 The 30th Anniversary event at Rydal Hall was discussed; all agreed it had been a great success. Thanks were expressed to Mike Mitchell for the arrangements and to Ian Matheson for producing the excellent 30th anniversary newsletter. Where to hold the next AGM and dinner was discussed. JA would contact Rydal Hall to discuss terms.

17 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

This to be held on **Tuesday** 11th May at the BMSC Hut, Coniston at 6.00 pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm. SB 28/02/2010

CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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