

CAT

The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust
Mining History Society



Carrock Mine – Photo by Jeremy Hunt

Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society

Newsletter No 132, August 2018

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Society Officers and Committee Members

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Membership

We welcome these new members:

Lindsay Harrison, from High Newton, in Furness.

Lindsay has extensive knowledge of the Furness mining area and was a past member of CAT, being a committee member in the 1980's. He is a Volunteer Guided Walk leader and archaeology volunteer with the LNDP

Ian Willis, from Duns, near Berwick on Tweed

Anne Crisp from London

Kevin Crisp, from Borrowdale.

Graduated in Mining Engineering. Career spent in precious metals ranging from mining to refining. Former Chairman of the London Bullion Market Association.

Phil Pattinson, from Whickham, Northumberland.

Peter Hay

Members from the south-east and those with an interest in Mid and North Wales will be saddened to know that Peter Hay died peacefully at the age of 85 on the 7th June.

I first met Peter in the late 1980's and it was him that introduced me to vertical exploration, although I quickly moved on from his electron ladders and hemp ropes! He was one of life's characters and approached most things he did with the zeal of the religious convert. When he got older and the tougher trips became too much, he took up mineral collecting in a big way. When I first met him he was keen to get into every mine in North and Mid Wales and whilst some will have escaped him he did have a pretty good go.

Prior to his interest in mines he had been very interested in railways, a passion that continued to the end, and he is credited with writing 11 railway books, together with one on Isambard Kingdom Brunel, although I think he also acted as a "ghost writer" for some less gifted authors.

Peter was a tremendous raconteur often regaling people with tales from, his time in the Navy, when he worked at the Ministry of Transport, or his numerous underground adventures.

Like all characters he had some adventures over the years. His most notorious must have been when he and his younger son fell down a shaft at Minllyn Slate Mine and both sustained broken bones. Crawling out on hands and knees through deep water, into darkness in the depths of winter, they were fortunately able to call for help and were rescued by helicopter. This has been quite a well-kept secret until now but, since it is on Peter's Wikipedia entry, the story can be told.

On another occasion when a group of us from CAT first descended the big shaft at Croesor, and I am fairly sure we were the first to do it, he produced a Petzl stop and asked how it should be used and after a brief explanation went down the 325' shaft on it.

Whilst his Wikipedia entry provides details of what must have been a privileged background, at one time he drove an old Reliant Robin. It struggled to keep up with motorway speeds but gave plenty of time for shaving, although it's off road performance was poor!

Peter had the "gift of the gab" and talked his way into many mines. I remember going down Boulby Potash Mine with him many years ago when you could still do things like this in exchange for a couple bottles of whisky. On another occasion, when walking back in full underground gear from a lead mine underneath a metal processing plant in Derbyshire, which we knew was on private property, we saw coming towards us four men in full PPE including full face visors. This did not look good and I must admit to taking shorter strides at this point so that Peter ended up in front. Before the guys could say anything Peter walked up to the first and said "I'm getting to old for this" and after a very low key dressing down we were on our way with our finders the most disappointed since they had hoped to spend the entire morning, rather than just 30 minutes, looking for us.

Before the days of LED lights many people, including Peter had self-made high power lights using belt mounted lead acid batteries and hand held lights bought from Halfords and the like. Peter's was permanently connected by cables which seemed to get him caught up in any tight spot at which point "that bloody light" came echoing down the passage.

He was one of the most regular participants on the Industrial Archaeology course held annually at Plas Tan-y-bwlch which has been recording the remains of the Welsh Slate Industry for the last 48 years with Peter having attended 34 of them.

Our thoughts at this time are with his family.

Jon Knowles

Further details of his life can be found at:-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Thomas_Hay

Dr Sam Murphy

Sam sadly passed away on Saturday 16th June after a long illness. Sam was born during a snow storm at a cottage behind Wythburn Church, on what is now the car park. He was an academic, having been a lecturer in Metallurgy at Aston University for many years and had also been involved in research for many companies, such as the automotive industry, as well as being a world expert in zinc.

I met Sam over 20 years ago when CATMHS were digging on the Lucy Level, just before he published "Grey Gold", the definitive history of Greenside Mine. In the same year we finally broke through to Smiths Shaft. He said that he had wished he had waited a few more months before publishing the book, as it would have made a fitting end to it.

Our friendship grew, as, along with Richard Smith, we started a serious piece of research into Silver Gill Mine on the Caldbeck Fells. We both had a suspicion that the main German mine on those fells (which was the largest of all their mines in the Lakes) was in Silver Gill and not Roughtongill, as all past historians had put it.

Although he was not a member of our Society, along with other members of CATMHS we spent months surveying the whole of Silver Gill and round into Roughtongill to enable us to accurately plot the various workings. Sam said that he had a Theodolite we could use, forgetting to tell us it was an old-fashioned brass one which was extremely heavy; however we did produce an accurate plan of the area.

With this work and the research that Sam and Richard had done in the archives, coupled with our knowledge of the ground, we were able to locate the middle (Emanuel) level of the three German workings. The LDNPA allowed CATMHS to dig out the entrance completely and gate it, which was done in a single day, the door having been previously fabricated from a template after first getting into the level.

The clearing of the backfilling led to the discovery of what was, until recently, the oldest known wooden trackway in Europe, dating to the German period, and the discovery of a wooden hand shovel dated to 1120-1200. In 2008, I was asked to present a paper to the Fourth Early International Railway Conference at University College London on this discovery, which the National Railway Museum in York consider to be the birth of the railway.

The discoveries at Silver Gill led Sam, Richard and myself to publishing the research in the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society Transactions titled: *"The lost German mines at Caldbeck 2001"* and *"The German mines of Caldbeck and the discovery of an early primitive wagonway 2010"*. This made Silver Gill Mine of international importance; quite a legacy to leave.

CATMHS was listed in the credits, both in the publications and also at the conference.

Sam and Richard Smith also carried out research into early bale (smelting) sites, some dating back to the medieval period, both in the Lake District at Calebreck, near Caldbeck, (dated 1020-1200) and in the Pennines, much of this being published in the Northern Mine Journals.

I always remember Sam as being a kind, gentle man who always had time for your questions and I learnt so much from him regarding how to publish and reference a paper. He will be sorely missed, but he is in a better place now given his illness. Warren Allison.

Changing the structure of the Society

CATMHS is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and from its formation it is what is known as an Unincorporated Charitable Association. This means the charity isn't a legal body in its own right, so it can't enter into contracts in its own name. In effect it is the trustees (the committee members) who are CATMHS, and if anyone wants to contract with the Society, take an action against it, or make a claim, then it is the Trustees individually and/or collectively who are personally liable to the full extent of their wealth. If there are no Trustees, then CATMHS effectively no longer exists.

The Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is a relatively new legal structure designed specifically and only for charities. The CIO structure is proving extremely popular with small to medium sized charities because it offers limited liability protection to Trustees. Most new charities are adopting this structure and many older charities (even village halls) are choosing to convert to a CIO.

The advantages of a CIO are that the Trustees are no longer personally liable so long as they act responsibly and legally. Any action or claim against the Society is dealt with by CATMHS itself as a body and it is only its own assets that are at risk. The Trustees personal assets are not at risk, unlike at present. The Trustees still need to act in a responsible manner, and if they wilfully act irresponsibly, or breach their fiduciary duties (such as acting in a fraudulent or illegal manner, or allow CATMHS to take on financial responsibilities that the Trustees know it cannot fulfil), then individual Trustees can still in some rare circumstances be held personally liable to pay a penalty.

If CATMHS converted to a CIO it would have a new legal governing document (or constitution) that follows a prescribed format for an association of CIO's, set down by the Charity Commission. Much of the current constitution would be incorporated into the new one, which also would bring our constitution up to date with current legislation. The Societies name would stay the same, but the current bank account would have to change to allow the change to be made.

Members would not notice any difference, but it would ensure that the Trustees (committee members) would not be held personally liable (except in very rare occasions).

However, the proposed change would have to be agreed by the membership at a meeting, and more information will be sent to each individual member, including the proposed new constitution.

If any member has a question about the proposed change, could please they let the Secretary know.

Warren Allison

Coniston Copper Project

A celebration of the completion of the Lottery funded Coniston Copper Project took place in Coppermines Valley on 24th May.

On a beautiful sunny day about 50 people met outside Coniston Coppermines YHA. Most were volunteers who have been involved in the Project, but amongst them were Eleanor Kingston, LDNPA Archaeologist, Richard Leafe, LDNPA CEO, Lisa Keyes, Minerva Heritage. and Phillip Johnson, who owns the Bonsor Upper Dressing floor site. Andrew Davidson, Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage, said that the Coniston Copper Mine would now be taken of the 'at risk' register.





After an introduction by Eleanor, pupils from Coniston school gave a presentation about their involvement in the project, and then unveiled the large interpretation structure, which is situated opposite the YHA building. Richard Leafe spoke about the success of the project, congratulating all concerned, and Phillip Johnson invited everyone to tour the works and his newly opened Heritage Centre.

Then there was a story telling session in Phillip's barn, followed by refreshments outside. Ian Matheson.



Richard Leafe addressing the group. Eleanor Kingston and pupils from Coniston school looking on

John Muir Trust walk to Greenside Mine- 12th May

It has been reported in a past newsletter that the John Muir Trust has taken a lease on Glenridding Common, but not the scheduled part of Greenside Mine.

Colin Woollard and I have had a site visit with Pete Barron, who is their ranger for the common, to ensure their management plan considers the archaeological remains. At the time I suggested that perhaps their members might want to have a surface walk to the mine at their AGM, which was being held in Glenridding Public Hall, which they took up, and it was one of four different trips arranged for the day.

Nearly 30 of the Trust members assembled outside the hall, and as we walked up through Glenridding I described how the village had developed while the mine was working, and without it the village would not be as it is today, and included the effect on the parish when the mine closed, as there was a huge depopulation as people moved away for work.

Arriving at the mine, I used old photographs and plans to describe the site and its history. It is fair to say that none of the people had any idea of how big and important the mine was and it's impact on the local area. This walk has certainly helped the John Muir Trust gain a better understanding of the common and has cemented CATMHS relationship with a new organisation which could bring much mutual benefit to both parties, especially if the John Muir Trust can help to conserve the remains on the common which supported Greenside, such as the leats, No 1 Power House, the remains at Brown Cove Mine, etc.

Warren Allison

Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society Walk to Coniston Copper Mines- 7th July

Eleanor Kingston (LDNPA Archaeologist) who has played a pivotal role in the Coniston Copper Project asked if I would help with a walk she was doing for CWAAS to show the conservation work that the project had done and the interpretation panels that had been discreetly installed at various locations.

We met nine members of the society at the Ruskin Museum on a beautiful sunny day, which was less than we had anticipated, but England were playing that afternoon in the World Cup, so perhaps it was to be expected.

Arriving at the hydro intake, we described the site and what the project had accomplished, then walked towards the YHA to examine the Lower and Upper Bonsor mills, before walking up to the Paddy End Mill, where we had lunch. From here we walked long the leat to the Red Dell workings, looking at the area around the New Engine shaft/Thriddle incline, before moving to the Old Engine shaft and back down the track, passing Bonsor East shaft before arriving back at the Ruskin Museum after a very enjoyable day.

Warren Allison



Looking at the interpretation panels outside the YHA

Mines Forum, 26th June

Present: Eleanor Kingston (LDNPA), John Malley (NT), Liz Withey (Environment Agency), Alastair Cameron (Honister Quarry), Warren Allison, Mark Simpson & Ian Matheson (CATMHS).

Updates:

Tilberthwaite - The report for the survey of Tilberthwaite mine carried out by volunteers as part of the Coniston Copper Project is due out shortly, as is the booklet compiled from volunteer's research projects. The NT is seeking a new tenant for Tilberthwaite Farm. The successful applicant is expected to have sympathy for the industrial heritage of the area.

Threlkeld - Work is ongoing with the Coal Board to address mine pollution at Threlkeld. Mark Simpson has carried out a drone survey of Gate Gill valley and had been concerned by water going through tips and erosion of land by water. There is a need to divert and restore water courses.

Honister - The Alastair Cameron and Liz Withey book on Honister slate mine is expected to be published at the end of August. A book launch at the quarry is expected.

A new audio visual presentation for visitors is a success. Another, organised by Donald Angus, is to be developed, with an emphasis on working practices and mining techniques.

The internal counter-balanced incline, which was installed circa 1925, is in need of stabilisation. Both the carrier and the counterweight are still in place.



The carrier and counterweight, photographed circa 1990. IM

At Yew Crag, work continues regarding the possible scheduling of the inclines. Alastair Cameron has been trying to source historic maps, but it appears that none were made by the Ordnance Survey. He is investigating aerial surveys carried out in 1947. Eleanor Kingston offered to provide co-ordinates for features shown on an existing Royal Commission plan.

There is a new manager at Elterwater Quarry, and another at Broughton Moor Quarry, which is working again after being mothballed. Peat Field quarry at Tilberthwaite may have a new leaseholder.

Greenside - Warren Allison has led a walk for the John Muir Trust at Greenside. Another is planned with Pete Barron later this month. The John Muir Trust, which have leased the area, is considering restoring some of the leats to carry water again in order to reduce the amount of water flowing down the fellside. An interpretation panel is to be revised and restored.

Further to the success of the Coniston Copper Project, and once work there has finished, an HLF bid is envisaged for a Greenside Project to address both drainage of the site and conservation of the mining remains. A private individual is proposing to set up a Heritage Centre at Greenside and there are concerns that this might complicate matters. Some local inhabitants are worried that such developments could lead to an unwanted increase of visitors.

A talk has been arranged for 24th September at Threlkeld village Hall to inform locals about actions at Gategill.

Coniston Coppermines

The Environment Agency is trying to organise a survey of the tips at Coniston to assess stability and water penetration. This is a requirement of the Mines & Quarries Act, and apparently is a responsibility of the County Council

Force Crag

The National Trust has funding for a conservation management plan to be prepared.

Level 0 is discharging water from the Crown hole.

Entry has been forced into No 1 Level, apparently using bolt croppers.

There has been an illegal dig adjacent to No 3 Level.

Wadd mine

Warren reported that Colin Woolard has done a lot of research into the history of the Wadd Mine. A publication of some sort would be appreciated.

Roughton Gill/Silver Gill

Mark Simpson and Mike Mitchell are to carry out a drone survey of the area.

Coniston Copper Project

A celebration of the completion of the project was held in Coppermines Valley on 24th May. There is still some finishing off to do. There are some interpretation panels to be installed, work on Deep Level portal has been partially done and the proposed footbridge below Deep Level is still being considered.

Publication is awaited of three reports on the project. A free Walking Guide has been produced and is available at several outlets in Coniston.

An exhibition is to be installed at the Ruskin Museum and more information is to be added to the website www.conistoncopper.co.uk

Other business - Mark Simpson expressed a concern that old buildings at Elterwater and Kirkstone quarries might be lost due to development or lack of interest. He suggested that at least they should be recorded before it becomes too late.

The next Mines Forum will be in Borrowdale on 16th October. IM

Duddon evening meet, 25th April

Present: P Sandbach, D Robson and dog.

This was a very short walk through the woods to trace the course of the leat and to view the remains of the weir. Some repairs have been made to the charcoal barns where a lintel had broken, but the furnace is still closed to visitors. It looks as though their corbelling at the blowing entrance is coming loose.

Edward Wadham only mentioned the furnace twice:

'4 April 1854. Set John Nelson's book straight at Newland. Came home & went with Ainslie to Duddon Furnace, he got larking with the girl at the Inn & we accordingly got stuck there for the night having missed the train.'

'19 April 1901. In office till 10.30 – By the 10.40 train to Broughton and drove thence up the Duddon Valley to Seathwaite to inspect the line of the pipes for the proposed new Waterworks for Barrow – saw the two lower Weirs – got some tea and Ham & Eggs at Newfield – on the return journey – visited the old Duddon Furnace and Forge, found them in a state of ruin – the Waterwheel (undershot) rotten and broken to pieces – the Mill-race all practically abandoned and the power – even at its best very small – there being very little fall in the Mill-race – Home by the 4.57 train from Broughton –Beautiful Spring day'.



The leat system in February 1889. The date would suggest that the plan was made in connection with the Barrow corporation water bill, when the company secured compensation for the water they no longer used. See NL 82.

Peter Sandbach.

Great Orme, 22nd April

Michael Oddie, Mark Hatton, Carl Barrow, Kevin Timmins, Steve Sim, Charlie and Sue Fowler, Julian Cruickshank, Chris Buckingham, Garry Parsons, Michael Pringle.



Eleven CATMHS members assembled at the scenic shoreline of the Conwy Sands by Llandudno. After a brief visit down the promenade to the amenities we all changed into our underground gear, much to the amusement of the passing holiday makers.

Dave and Steve were from the Great Orme Exploration Society, Dave was to escort us underground while Steve took Chris off to look at other

parts of this mine. The Great Orme mines date back to the Bronze Age and have been slowly revealing themselves to explorers over the last 28 years. There are still areas to be explored and is so far the largest prehistoric mine discovered in the world!

We entered the mine by the main drainage adit which has been comprehensively secured with 600mm concrete drainage pipes for a length of 500 yards. This involves a wet crawl or a “surf” on a homemade skateboard. These are harder than you think to get down the pipe in a straight line and I fell out with mine and crawled instead!



At the end of the pipe there was a slight miscommunication as four of us, including the leader, jumped in a canoe for the next 500 yards of waist deep water. The remaining group was under the impression the boat was returning and waited calmly at the water's edge. Like the Titanic this boat was a one-way trip, so the remaining group eventually and reluctantly lowered themselves into the water and followed the front running dry group. Ha ha!

The group, now reunited, was then treated to a maze of tunnels, hand chipped shafts, large stoped areas, ladders, ropes, free climbs and all other sorts of highly entertaining exploration fun. Exploration done we all crawled or surfed out the drainage adit, where the gate was locked until the next time this lovely mine will be visited. Thanks goes to Dave and Steve for leading.

Michael Oddie

Coniston Slate Quarries meet 6th May 2018

Present: Alistair Cameron (ML), Warren Allison, Abigail Mann, Maureen Fleming, Liz Withey, Steve Cove, Michael Pringle, Julian Cruickshank, Richard Parry, Kevin Timmins, Nigel Addy, Robert Kerr and Ian Willis.

We met at the Walna Scar car park at 9.15am on a beautiful day, sun shining, not a cloud in the sky and hot. The carpark was virtually full by then, but we got everyone sorted. Alistair did a brief talk about what the day would consist of and we then set off up the Walna Scar road, and after about half a mile we turned off and started up the track to Brossen Stone Quarry, sometimes also called Bursting Stone Quarry.

After half a mile, Alistair became unwell and had to turn around and go home. The rest of us slowly made our way to the quarry, which was apparently worked between 1820 and 1840, re-opening in 1959, but it is currently closed. Having walked through the quarry, we skirted round the top and made our way to Spion Kop Quarry, worked up to 1940, where we had a look at the huge closehead with an incline inside. There was lots of photography going on, but not easy due to the high temperatures outside, meaning there was a lot of moisture in the closehead.

We moved onto the middle of the three Moss Head workings, which finally closed in 1959, and had a look at the huge closehead which goes up through to High Moss Head and into Spion Kop. The remains around Moss Head are impressive with the aerial ropeway still much in evidence. Low Moss Head was the last underground working we visited, before we came back out into the sun and started to walk down through Smith Bank (worked 1500? to 1840), Fisher Bank (1888 to approx. 1940), finally arriving at Saddlestones Main Bank (1888 to approx. 1945) and Low Bank (1902 to 1945).



The loading platform and drum house at Moss Head



The view from the brake cabin



One of the pylons which still lie about the area.



Air operated winch



Sheave wheel behind the brake cabin



Looking down onto the Saddlestone workings



Remains inside the Saddlestone saw shed



Winch outside the Saddlestone saw shed.

What is amazing about these quarries is the sheer size, although not on the scale of the Welsh Quarries, but they *are* remote, difficult to get the slate down to Coniston, and are amongst the largest in the Lake District.

The remains in this area are fascinating, from the ruined buildings, engine beds for the saws, and for me, the remains of the aerial flight from the Moss Head workings down to the road. The cables are still lying on the ground, and we had a long discussion about how the flight was built and especially hauling the cables up.

We slowly walked along the road back to the cars having had a very enjoyable day. It was at this point I had a really good chat with Ian Willis, who had worked as a miner at Redburn (1978-1979), Cambokeels (1986-1987), and Groverake/Frazer Hush mines (1987-1990) in Weardale, in the North Pennines. His father had worked at Stottsburn, Whiteheaps and Groverake mines in the 1960's, again in Weardale.

Warren Allison

Headen Haw, 16 May 2018

Present: P Sandbach, J Wignall and 2 dogs.



Barrow skyline from Headen Haw

The reason for revisiting the back side of Barrow was an architect's drawing of the magazine on Headen Haw. It shows that a considerable amount of ornamentation was put into the building, and it is headed Furness Railway Company. Unfortunately the Dock Museum did not give me permission to publish the drawing, so I cannot use it here. In 1853 Harrison Ainslie built a gunpowder works at Melfort, bought the sloop "Earl of Glasgow" second hand and established a series of magazines including this one and another at the top of Lindal Moor. The magazine was in use until 1876 and it may be that the Railway Company used it later.

Since the last visit the metal fairies, arsonists, trail bikers and fly tippers have had the paper works to themselves and the site of the rope works has also been demolished, but it was peaceful walking across the mudflats. We did not stay long on the island for fear of disturbing the nesting ducks, but it was clear that the gales of recent winters had left the remains of the building unrecognisable.

We watched the sunset over Cavendish Dock and threw a stick into the dock to get some of the mud off the dogs. A fresh cloud of smoke rose from the ruins of the paper works. CAT members did well to stay away from this walk, but at least the allotments are still thriving.



Headen Haw

(This is a re-print of the previous meet to Headen Haw on 8th July 2008. It appears that on both occasions the visitors were not impressed! Ed.)

Present: P Fleming, D Robson, I Matheson, E King, D Benham, T Holland, A Bryson, P Sandbach and dog.

When this walk was planned, the official reason for dragging CAT members round the back side of Barrow was to view what remains of the Stank branch, then a broad incline, clearly visible from the last surviving bridge at Roose, down to the junction with the main line at Salthouse Mills. The branch was opened in 1873, and operated by the Furness Railway until the First World War. On the day we found the track reduced to a narrow footpath. Most of it was fenced off, and the fence coated in grease on the inside for anyone trying to look over.



1958 OS map showing the gasworks and Salthouse Mills. The Stank Branch runs to the top right corner.

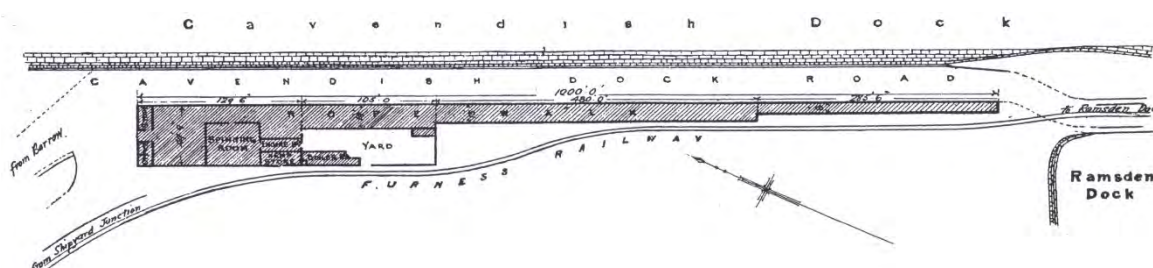
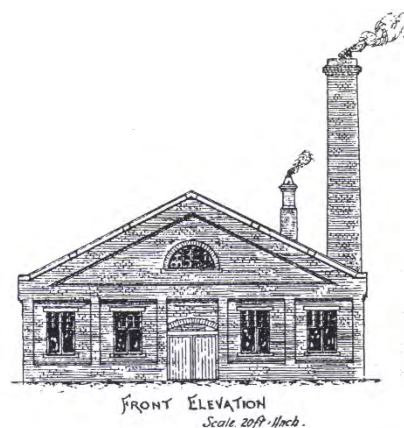
If you google Carl Kellner, you get some very strange results. Freemasonry, Indian yogis, Rosticrucianism, sexual magic and alchemy among them. Can this be the man who held the patents for the Castner-Kellner process (the basis of ICI's Runcorn works) and the sulphite process? That seems to be the case. Before his discovery, paper was made from rags. In 1882 Carl Kellner patented a method of pressure cooking wood chips with calcium sulphite to dissolve out the lignin, leaving relatively pure cellulose fibres, suitable for paper making.

Captain Edward Partington developed the process at Glossop before establishing the Barrow Chemical Wood Pulp Co in 1887. When the paper making machines were installed in 1892, it became part of the Kellner Partington paper pulp Co, a multinational corporation which included the Borregaard mills in Sweden. The name was changed to the Barrow Paper Mills Ltd in 1919. When the mills closed in 1972, the works became Barrow Business Park. It was a good place to go if you needed a girder shot blasting, a fibreglass roof, a second hand car part

or some sheet metal work, but when the speculators promised that the site could be turned into high class housing, the vandals and arsonists were allowed to move in. Even now, with the mills burnt out and partly demolished, there are people working on old cars late into the evening, and some examples of fancy Victorian brickwork to be seen. It is also used by television programmes attempting to show Barrow as an industrial wasteland.

We turned away from the railway and headed for Walney Channel, but on reaching the sea wall, I found that a group of mine explorers were afraid of mud. Had I used that excuse in the Horse Level, dig 3 reversed, it could have saved a lot of heartache and a washing machine. So we stayed on firm ground, and looked at Headen Haw from the shore.

We continued along the sea wall to the green crane. Three patrol boats built for Brunei are still laid up in Ramsden Dock. Opposite them in Cavendish Dock there are a few piles marking the site of the airship shed. The only airship built here was short-lived. Airship 1 was completed in 1911 and broke its back on launching. Between the two docks, there is a row of buildings which started life as a rope works. Messrs G T Lee & Co.'s new steam ropery appears in a 1900 guide to Barrow, in which they say that they are the only rope makers in Furness and that rope making has been established in Barrow for over 40 years. That suggests that G T Lee & Co see themselves as successors to the Barrow & Ulverston Rope Co, a company owned by Harrison Ainslie.



The New Steam Ropery, from "A Guide to the Seaports on the Furness Railway", 1900

Cavendish dock is shallow, the entrance, when it existed, was narrow and as far as I know, no cargo was ever handled here. The dock has served as a timber pond and as a cooling pond for two generations of power stations. It is a good site for birdwatching, but the grebes and egrets were elsewhere. We returned by almost the same route, passing the sewerage works to get the full flavour of this part of Barrow.

An unofficial reason for the walk was to view the informal architecture in the allotments. Sheds and greenhouses should be made from imagination and things found on the beach. Many wonderful examples were observed.

References:

CATMHS Journal 3, Peter Holmes

The next CWAAS transactions will have detailed account of gunpowder shipped from Melfort and carted from Headen Haw to Poaka.

A guide to the seaports on the Furness Railway, 1900.

Rigg Head Quarry Meet- 20th May

Present; Warren Allison (ML), Mark Hatton, Michael Bill Oddie, Stephe Cove, Dave Hughes, Bob Mayow, Julian Cruickshank, Magnus McIntosh and Steve Sim.

These relatively large quarries are located just above Rosthwaite and are on the route to Dale Head at the top of the Newlands Valley, they have long been in the ownership of the Leyland family who worked them until closure in the 1930's. Very little has been written about these workings, which are rarely visited.

On a beautiful sunny day, the intention was to meet at the Village Hall car park, but this was fenced off for a fund-raising event in aid of Borrowdale primary school, so we parked in the National Trust car park next door, where some, who were members of the Trust had forgotten their membership card and ended up having to pay for the privilege to park. Mark gave a brief introduction into what the day would consist of, and we started up the road. It wasn't long before Mark was nearly out of sight, while the rest of us sauntered along taking in the delights of the area.

Arriving at the quarries, which were worked mainly as underground closeheads, it was clear that two different slate bands had been worked. We decided to start at the lower of the southern slate band workings, work our way to the top and then come back down the workings on the second slate band.

The lower working



The lower level soon ran into a closehead with rail and compressed air pipes still in place. The next workings visited were behind the what is now a climbing hut where you enter through the debris thrown there by the occupants of the hut over many years, but we soon entered a Matt Spedding tunnel. These are remarkable in the way they have been built. Part way down the level, the roof had become unsafe and was being held up by nothing much, but the large closehead beyond can be entered by going to the level above and coming down through the closehead.



Next to the climbing hut are the remnants of what appears to have been some sort of aerial ropeway which transferred the slate down to the road coming up from Grange.



The entrance above the climbing hut which leads into a large closehead



At the entrance to this level graffiti has been carved into the rock "R G Wilson 1858"



Looking up to the upper workings.



Remains of what appear to be riving sheds.

Slowly moving up to the upper workings, we paused to find the copper level which had been driven for a short distance just off the slate band. It is relatively small in size and its age is unknown but appears to be of some antiquity. It was around this time we decided to stop for lunch, taking in the sun and the beautiful view down the valley. Michael decided to go into the top working; the entrance to it is not the best and it comes down to the horizon we had stopped at, to see if we could make voice contact. We could hear him, but there was too much ground cover to be able to dig the collapsed entrance out.

We then walked round to the second slate band which has several ruined buildings and closeheads which were visited.



In amongst one of the buildings was another piece of graffiti "Wm Tyson Hunt 1870"

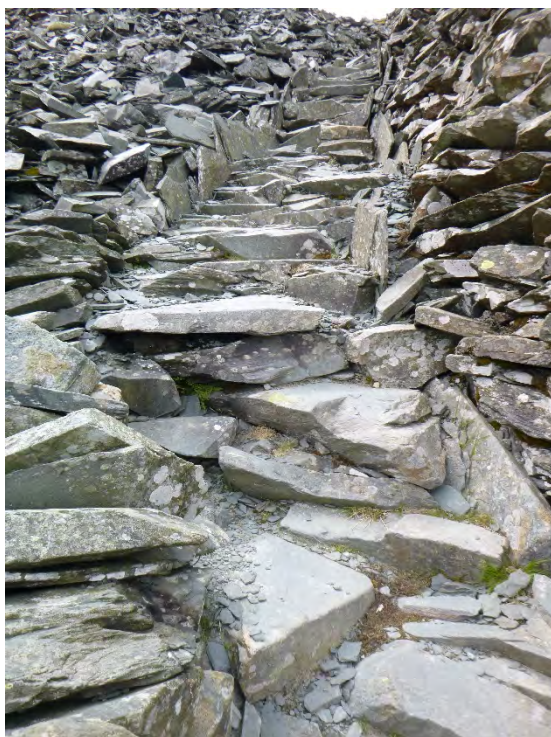
One of the buildings has probably one of the best examples of a fireplace and storage cupboards any where in the Lakes which sadly is becoming infilled with debris. The slate from these workings is also of a totally different colour to the first slate band.



Stopping for a break on the way down, people commented they had not been on such a relaxing club meet before, but Mark was itching to move on. As we descended the spoil heaps, we came down the most remarkable stone-built staircase that I have ever seen.

Arriving back at the bottom of the workings it was decided to send Mark on ahead to get the cream teas and other refreshments organised for our return to the village hall. On arriving at the hall, the fund-raising event was starting to finish, but we managed to get a mixture of sausage rolls, cream teas and liquid refreshments, and having borrowed chairs from the hall were consumed in the car park, which brought a superb day to an end.

Warren Allison



Hudgillburn, 24th June

John Brown (meet leader) Warren Allison (2nd in command) Michael Oddie, Mark Hatton, Carl Barrow, Charlie and Sue Fowler, Liz Withey, Derek Mitchell, Nick Green, Michael Pringle, Rosemary Vidler.

Twelve enthusiastic souls assembled at Nenthead Car Park on a lovely sunny day awaiting the day's underground delights. It was like Peter Kay's Car Share as we all dived into various vehicles and headed in convoy a mile down the road to the campsite and mine entrance.

Hudgill Burn Mine is a little special, as in 1816 the miners broke into the largest linear maze cave in the country which has been surveyed at 13.24km long! More on that later!

Hudgill was worked from 1814 to 1870 producing 55,520 tonnes of lead concentrates of which 370g of silver per tonne was extracted (far higher than others in the area).

The other astonishing feature of this mine is the amazing effort of the CATMHS digging team that finally managed to reopen the mine after a four year project! The team consisted of John Brown, William Snaith, Colin Woollard, Pete Sedgewicke with project leader Sheila Barker.

John opened the portal gate and we all collected our safety tokens to count the number in the mine. During this time, it was noticed the efforts of the CAT teams work, the first 'barrelled' attempt could be clearly seen. The volume of spoil that had to be removed. The substantial gate, with reinforced concrete, keep unwanted visitors out. A great engineering effort by all involved!



We continued down the level admiring the shafts, clog and hoof prints and various formations before we squeezed through a small section leading to ladders; (I still can't work out how they got those 20-foot aluminium ladders into place, maybe they were slightly more 'bendy' on install day) this led to the famous Maze Cave. On entering this after being in man made tunnels, the difference is extraordinary and very impressive. We followed John down the main passage admiring the Victorian graffiti written in what looks like soot on all the walls. This 'soot' is in fact highly zinc-sorbed birnessite-type phyllomanganate with a structure and zinc content that approaches chalcophanite. (or so it says on the internet!!! Ha)

Apparently, the miners used to take Victorian 'thrill' seekers into the cave for a small fee and hence the graffiti that can be seen very clearly written in the 'soot'

Once all the group had assembled in a large cavern in the maze, the front runners headed back into the level for some 'off piste' exploring, where scrambling and climbing up anything that looked interesting was done.



Emerging from a shaft that me Carl and Nick had climbed, we were greeted in the main level with a look of 'arghhh there you are lads' from John and Warren who had patiently been waiting for us to get it out of our system. Bit like parents watching kids on a playground I can imagine. Ha.

More photos were taken before we retreated down the main level to the portal, where the rest of the group were already half way through their bait.

A fantastic mine with a mix of amazing history, fabulous cave system and the efforts overcome by the CATMHS team to reopen the mine

Many thanks go to John Brown for leading, with Warren also assisting.

Michael Oddie

Hudgill Burn, 8th July

Members present;

Stephe Cove,

Tom McNally,

Chris Bunker,

Bob Mayow,

Julian Cruikshank and

Meet Leader John

Brown.



A repeat of the visit of 24th June, which was oversubscribed and required this second meet to accommodate all who put their names down.

In order to reduce the number of vehicles to be parked at the mine we all met up at Nenthead car park again, before moving to Hudgill Burn. Warren Allison remained on the surface, due to a knee injury, and he took this picture prior to our entry into the mine.

This was a brief visit, mainly to show the visitors some of the caverns in the Great Limestone, which was recently classified as the largest maze cave system in the UK after the survey by Moldywarps Speleological Group was completed in November 2014. Michael has already touched on this in his report on our first visit.

Before visiting the caverns, we went to inspect the condition of the last dig, which was an attempt to gain access to the 1st Sun Vein, and sadly halted due to a lack of space in which to stack the spoil, combined with a feeling that most of the ground ahead was probably 'run in' and increasing worries about the team's exposure to high levels of radon gas after sampling had been carried out.

Turning back to visit the caverns, we passed the junction with the East Waggon Way, which serviced the Hudgill Burn Vein, also the site of one of the digs to get nearer to the Sun Veins. At this point you could also see the remains of the digging team's bait station. Visiting the caverns is always a great joy and the visitor's book was duly signed before the brief tour in this very complex system. After a quick head count to make sure nobody had been left behind we exited, and then made a quick visit to the north vein to see the miners' efforts in this area, though there was not much appetite for the deeper water on this day.

Returning to the glorious sunshine of this exceptional summer, the gates were locked and Warren woken from a deep sleep, before returning to Nenthead car park.

John Brown

Goldscope Mine, 1st July

Present : Mark Hatton (ML), Clare Harvey, Kevin Crisp, Lorraine Crisp, Rosie Lord, David Taylor, John Wood, Anthony Brook, Nicola McGurkin.

This meet had been organised with new members, recent joiners or novice mine explorers in mind. The idea was to provide a “gentle” introduction to a mine site and Goldscope was chosen as it offers a lot of interest in return for relatively little physical or technical effort.



We met at Littletown car park during one of the hottest and driest spells of weather that Cumbria has ever known. The biggest risk today was dehydration and sun stroke, which makes a change from drowning and hypothermia. After a briefing about the plan, the mine, its history and the geology of the area, we made our way up to St George's Adit. This was the first mine experience for some members and a few entered the level with a tentative step and a wide eyed gaze. But within minutes the mystery and magic of this level overcame all concerns. The wheel pit

chamber is always a great place to fire up the imagination about the history, effort, engineering excellence and dangers of this mine. We returned to the baking hot and dazzling day light with a far more confident step than we entered.

We then traversed around to Littledale to view the plethora of mining remains to be found here. The 16thC bucking stone, the hand chipped Water Adit and the leat all charmed, impressed and delighted in equal measure. The exceedingly hot climb up to Sealby's Level was not quite so lovely, but the effort in getting there was amply repaid by the interest (and cool airs) within.

Our return route was via the Open Stopes, Pan Holes and Scope End ridge. Arriving back at the cars by 3pm, everyone seemed well pleased with the day. I suspect the mine exploring bug has now infected a few more new CAT members and hopefully we will see much more of them.

All that was left for me to do was to spend the next hour cooling off in the crystal clear and refreshing waters of Stoneycroft Ghyll.

Mark Hatton.



Highfield Mine, evening meet, 11 July

Present: Anthony Brook, Charlie & Sue Fowler and dog, Alan Postlethwaite, P Sandbach ML and dog.



The Stainton branch and its sidings in 1895

While the rest of the world watched football we set out through the parched fields to look at the remains of the Stank branch Railway. It is 13 years, almost to the day, since we were last here and the history of the mines is given in NL80.

Briefly, the Highfield mine was worked by the Cumberland Iron Smelting Co, who mined here between 1875 and 1883.



Bridges on the Stainton branch



Separated only by a fence and the parish boundary was Dalton mine or Hare Gill. This was worked by the Dalton Mining Co (Denny Bros) between 1866 and 1880. It was then sold to Myles Kennedy and later to Barrow Haematite Steel, neither of which profited from it.

We carried on along the line of the Stainton branch railway as far as Longlands mine and the remains of an aerial ropeway pier, admiring the profusion of rosebay willow herb on the way.

At the sidings shown on the map, I informed the party that there was a bull in the next field. Either I was wrong about this or the bull remained asleep in a corner of the field. This section of the Stainton branch has a steep gradient and some tight curves and has recently been cleared of vegetation. We admired the two surviving bridges. Anthony Brook told us that he had the job of demolishing the third one while working for Cliff Hindle.

Peter Sandbach.

Bannerdale Craggs mine - An appetiser for the CATMHS Meet in Sept 2018



Approach to Bannerdale Craggs across a grassy marsh



The worthless graphite trial high up on the crag side.



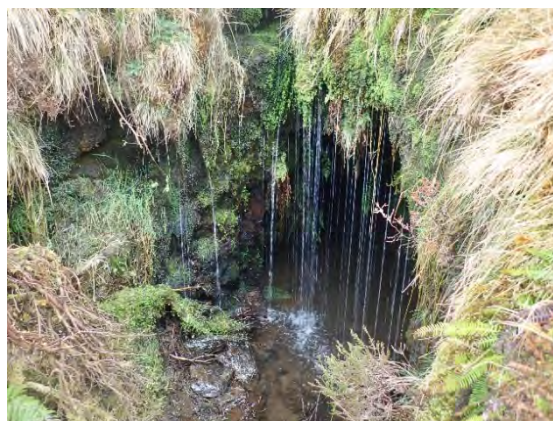
Exploring the upper level

A less well explored mine, set in the hills adjacent to Blencathra, the Bannerdale Craggs mines include a couple of levels worth exploring, a trial "cave" for graphite and the remains of some mine buildings at the base of Bannerdale Craggs.

A very informative article in the Northern Mines Research Society Memoirs from 1984 (reference ISSN 0309-2199) can

be found online through a google search. This explains the history of the mine and gives a map showing the location of the levels and other features.

The return trip from Mungrisdale to the mine is 6 miles and climbs steadily, with a total ascent of 1600ft, including the scrambling around the crags to find the upper portions of the mine. The approach to the mine is boggy, although that is probably not such an issue after this dry summer!



The entrance to the lower level

I'm sure one of the meet participants will enjoy writing up a visit report for the CATMHS newsletter after September. Hopefully with some lovely pictures inside the lower level, which I neglected to visit in my reconnaissance due to the water level!

Jeremy Hunt.

Exploring the Caldbeck Mines (Part 2)

Following on from my first article on the topic of exploring the Caldbeck mines in the February 2018 newsletter, Part 2 covers a 4 mile route taking in Hay Gill, Long Grain and Birk Gill with just over 750ft of ascent. An overview of the route is shown on the following page.

Starting again from the small hamlet of Fellside at a height of 960ft, we follow the old mine road, passing Ingray Gill after half a mile and continuing along the track to the bottom of Hay Gill after another half-mile. Shortly before reaching the wooden footbridge across the beck that exits Hay Gill, the ruins of the old smelter can be clearly seen just to the right below the miner's track (Image A). It's worth pausing here to consider the industrious nature of this valley, with the rich lodes exploited around Silver Gill, Roughton Gill, Red Gill, Brae Fell, Hay Gill and others. The smelter was turned into miners cottages in the mid-19th century and latterly into a baryte processing mill at the turn of the century. If you cross the Dale Beck valley to the opposite side and look back to the old smelter, you can clearly see the line of the flue running up the side of the fell (Image B).

According to John Adams' *Mines of the Lake District Fells*, the Hay Gill sett was worked predominantly through the mid-late 18th century, exploiting lead and copper veins through until the late 19th century.

The amount of investment in Hay Gill was considerable, with the construction of a smelter, water wheels, an 84-feet deep shaft (Lady Charlotte's shaft), water wheels and various levels. Apparently, the rich copper vein was exploited for some time, but, like so many, the story of this mine ends in bankruptcy.

At the foot of Hay Gill, within sight of the wooden footbridge across the beck, lies the ill-fated New Low Level (Image C). This was a late attempt around 1839 to undercut Deep Level and the earlier workings that lie higher up the ghyll. The barren and worthless level is about 80 yards long, is currently open and has water to ankle/shin depth at most.

Climbing the ghyll, about 400 yards further up the beck is the site of the Deep Level. There is evidence of a dressing floor and an ore bin adjacent to the beck, but the adit is completely collapsed and access has not been regained, despite an attempt by MOLES to uncover it years ago. Deep Level was essentially a drainage adit, commenced in July 1785 and driven to the north-east, downstream of the earliest parts of Hay Gill mine. The level was approximately 84 feet below the deepest part of the original shaft. It's such a shame we haven't been able to access this level as it runs for 260 yards, cutting through a cross-vein and then intersecting the main vein, before following the vein in a north-south cross cut to intersect the base of Lady Charlotte's shaft.

Continuing only a short distance up the hill from Deep Level adit, many interesting features appear as the main part of Hay Gill mine is encountered. At NY304361, a lovely little level can be found on the south bank of the ghyll. This was created as a ventilation level to support the work in Deep Level, also providing a secondary means of escape via a 30 ft deep shaft at the end of the level (Image D). This shaft and the whole level are perpetually flooded today, usually to around knee depth, showing that the whole of Deep Level is flooded out.

A - Looking west from the Dale Beck mine road across the HayGill smelter ruins to Brae Fell



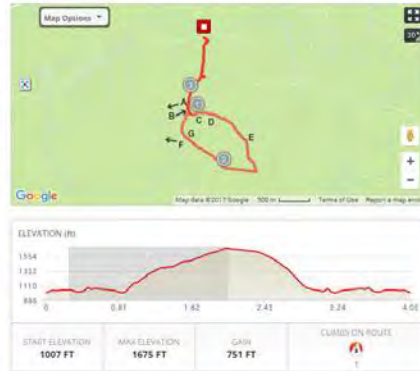
B - Looking east from Ramps Gill to the smelter ruins, with a clear view of the ventilation rise up Hay Knott



C - Hay Gill Low Level entrance



D - Entrance to HayGill Ventilation Level



C - Hay Gill Low Level is short and proved profitless to the venturers



D - HayGill waterwheel pit (bottom left) and the depression of Lady Charlotte's shaft below some ruins (right). The entrance to the Ventilation Level is to the left of the waterwheel pit.

G - Birk Gill Low Level entrance and waist-deep flooded level



F - Brae Fell mine with spoil heaps and hushes



E - The collapsed adit and spoil heap at the bottom of Long Grain



D - The flooded ventilation shaft at the level end



Outside the ventilation level, all sorts of interesting features can be seen (Image D) including the concave depression of Lady Charlotte's shaft, a waterwheel pit, dressing floor and the remains of a bothy/workshop.



The 30-foot ventilation shaft in the Hay Gill sett leading down to Deep Level



The remains of the waterwheel pit in Hay Gill

After mooching around here for a while, the walk continues up the beck to the point where the tributaries of Short and Long Grain join. In the last article we explored Short Grain, but here we will turn south and take the route up Long Grain towards Birk Moss. As we climb up several small waterfall cascades, the remains of a trial on the north bank of the ghyll becomes obvious, with some quartz and baryte evident in the dump outside a very overgrown adit (Image E).



Quartz and baryte in the dumps and the beck at the bottom of Long Grain

As the ghyll rises and broadens out, our route turns to the right across the top of Birk Moss as we head towards the head of Birk Gill and our descent back into the Dale Beck valley. Climbing down the steep ravines at the head of the ghyll, there is evidence of two levels around NY305354, neither of which appear to have been excavated or explored since their working in the

18th century.

Several exposed rocky outcrops hint at hidden veins in the country bedrock, and as we arrive at the very bottom of the ghyll we finally encounter the lowest level, which remains open today. The level (Image G) is very wet, about waist high when I visited on a dry day. The entrance is quite choked with fallen material, so is a relatively narrow entrance, but once inside the level is tall and wide. This level is a cross cut that intersects an east-west vein of copper, with some pretty colours inside but no interesting mineralization to speak of.

The cross cut is about 6 feet high and 4 feet wide, intersecting the vein at a distance of about 60 yards. The cut along the vein is not very long though, only about 18 yards.



Birk Gill low level, along the vein

Finally, as we exit Birk Gill it's always nice to admire the extent of the Brae Fell mine on the opposite side of the valley with its distinctive hushes and dumps (Image F).

It's worth reminding readers that the valleys and hills are quite remote and although they are beautiful in all sorts of weathers and seasons it is best to go prepared. This route is quite short at only 4 miles, but it includes a climb and descent of about 751ft over sometimes rough and slippery terrain. I would allow a full morning or afternoon.

The third part of this series will take us further up the Dale Beck valley and climb up Red Gill, descending via Silver Gill and the early Elizabethan mines of the mid-16th century.

Jeremy Hunt.

In the beginning:

This Shouldn't take any time at all!

From the Meets Reports in Newsletter 009 June/July 1985

In February work began on mucking out Horse Crag Level, which once drained the Tilberthwaite copper mines. Horse Crag Level is 3,240 feet long, has its portal close to the Tilberthwaite carpark, and ends in a blind heading at the foot of the Tilberthwaite Shaft. Four members, C.D. Jones, C.H. Jones, Wickenden and myself (Alen McFadzean), have been down the shaft and along the level to where it sumps to the roof, about half way along the gill. The plan is to clear a massive collapse from the adit end and release the water, this should give us access to a deal of new ground and create an enormous through-trip into the bargain. There is much work to be done; the collapse lies in bad ground just to the south of Penny Rigg Quarry and when mucked out will have to be timbered. Fourteen members turned up for the initial dig and good progress was made, resulting in a steady flow of water percolating through the fall and washing clay and small stones with it.

Well I suppose it didn't really; the project completed on 15th October 2016! At least CATMHS can claim the virtue of persistence!

This was sent to me by John Aird, who said 'this was the earliest reference I could find in the newsletters to digging in Horse Crag. However, in the early days of CAT meet reports were kept in log books, and only a summary was published in the newsletter. The early logbooks are in our archive at the Armit Museum & Library, but Tony Holland transcribed and digitised the contents. The Tilberthwaite saga actually began a little earlier. IM:

21st August 1983

Tilberthwaite Mine

A fair number of members put in an appearance at Tilberthwaite but as soon as the big trip to the Horse Level was mooted, many recent heart attacks, gammy legs etc were mentioned and even veteran mine explorer Mike Mitchell claimed he was too poorly to attempt it.

So it was left to stalwarts Chris Jones, Alen Mcfadzean, Mark Wickenden and Phil Murphy to do the job. The party set off with the poorly members as Sherpas, and after the usual scrabble the head of the first pitch was reached and the 4 adventurers set off down. The first big (150') pitch was quickly rigged and descended. The next pitch involved a great deal of gardening and Chris Jones and Alen McF did most of this. This is now much safer with much less hanging death. The final pitch had the ½ tree trunk removed (Alen had dubbed this "The Sword Of Damocles" on a previous trip, I think) and the Horse Level was reached. The water seemed not to have dropped much but as we waded along, it had, by about 1 foot.

Mark had turned back at the head of the last pitch due, he said, to too much of a head cold, the type that comes out of a tap. So then there was three. As we continued along the Horse Level, the water slowly deepened until it was neck deep. It appeared to sump ahead and the three were about to turn back when Phil M thought that a short duck might lead into pastures new. The sod! Was that water cold – it certainly was. However the duck proved very productive. We entered a large stope at right-angles to the tunnel, containing no artefacts and the water about 5'6" deep. The level continued on but was sumped. A small level in the back of the stope led to a forehead. The sump back was just as cold and especially bad for Chris Jones, who had a carbide lamp and no wetsuit. The climb out was a welcome relief – anything to get warm.

The three finally reached day about 7 hours after setting off. The remainder had gone to dig in the other end of the Horse Level but with no hope of getting through without timbering. A definite project for the future.

Christopher D Jones.

17th February 1985

Tilberthwaite Mine

Present were :- C. Jones (Meet Leader), Dave Blundell, Albyn Austin, Dave Bridge, Roy Garner, Lynsey Harrison, Gordon Gilchrist, Louise Hemsley, Alastair Lings, Phil Merrin, Chris Moore, Mike Mitchell, Ian Tyler (+ Offspring), Angela Wilson.

Excellent meet with a great deal accomplished. Dig started at the collapse beyond the slate closehead. After several hours hard labour the face had been advanced several yards and the floor lowered to enable a wheelbarrow to get near. Spoil dumped in closehead, this was very strenuous as the barrow had to be pushed some 200' through deep water. Another team tried to lower the water level outside (successfully).

After the dig a small breakthrough was achieved when the water started to flow much more heavily. This made digging easier as it washed the clay away.

Eventually it was decided that further digs were needed and a timbering session would be necessary. It would be impossible to shift the whole collapse, so it would have to be mined and timbered.

The job was finished by some rudimentary timbering in order to maintain the water flow. At this time this would not appear too difficult to push through as there is a fairly good wall and a partial roof.

Christopher D Jones

18th September 1985

Tilberthwaite Deep Level

First of the Wednesday evening digs to clear a way through the clay fall in Tilberthwaite Deep (or Horse) Level. 7 Members met at Tilberthwaite Gill car park and due to the fact that we didn't have any timber with us, decided to clear rubble from the floor of the level beyond the slate closehead to give an improve working height at the 'sharp end' of the dig. The rubble was dug from the R.H side of the level & piled up on the left. After 2 1/2 hours the dig was adjourned to the Crown Hotel for refreshments.

D.Blundell

27th April 1986

Tilberthwaite Mine – The Descent

An excellent turn – out, I was quite surprised to see 11 people, alas, many were back-sliders and skivers and only a hard few decided to make the trip. It was left to Chris Jones (meet leader), Peter Fleming, Ian Matheson, Alistair Lings, Phil Merrin and Anton- C-P-Thomas.

The usual tiring entry was effected to the top of the first pitch and whimpering had already been experienced due to depth of water, condition of the roof, colour or Merrin's shirt, etc. First pitch and bucket hole (now a motorway) negotiated with ease followed by the long traverse. The first problem of the trip was then met with – the whimpering had risen to a

crescendo, and one turned back gibbering with fear, last seen running off down the fell, hair white as the pure driven snow, screaming “No floor, no floor!” The rest of the pitches followed on although the top of the last pitch is becoming extremely unstable. It is possible that it will collapse in the near future and CARE should be taken there.

The Horse Level, as usual was flooded and the party set off down it. Unfortunately the water level was much higher than in 1983 and the first stope could not be reached. THIS MUST BE DONE AGAIN WHEN THE WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE MORE SATISFACTORY.

Exit was made with little difficulty and the party ended up in the Crown – surprise, surprise.



Chris Jones, Phil Merrin and Peter Fleming

Alastair Lings at the bucket hole



‘Setting off down the Horse Level’

Peter Fleming – ‘No floor, no floor!’



Photos by Ian Matheson

Denny v Loam – Dalton Mining Co.

Some clues about the nature of the Dalton Mining Company can be found in the papers relating to an arbitration held at the Temperance Hall, Ulverston on 23rd October 1876. Loam & Sons of Liskeard had contracted to erect a 40" pumping engine with two boilers, capstan and capstan engines, for £155 plus expenses. The final bill was for £253 16s 6d including £19 10s for two weeks of hindrances. Matthew Denny disputed whether Loam Bros' Captain was needed to start the engine, accused the sailors of throwing the end caps overboard, and went to arbitration over a balance of £48 18s 4d. The papers do not include the verdict but Loam's letter to his solicitor is worth quoting in full:

Parade, Liskeard
9 Nov 1875
Mr Salmon,

Dear Sir,

We enclose the correspondence with Denny. Kindly do the best you can, taking into consideration that Denny's men will swear to anything but we have every confidence in our men, especially our foreman, who is a very trustworthy man. Although he has been with us nearly 30 years, he never had such people to deal with as Denny & Co. You must also consider that our men are now employed in various parts of England and Wales on very important work, and the cost of taking them from this work to appear as witnesses would enormously overbalance any amount that Denny could be made to pay.

We cannot with any advantage carry on the correspondence with Denny, because our Mr Loam Sr said some rather hard but true things to him at an interview and told him that if we had the slightest idea as to the character of the people we came in contact with we should have declined the business. The fact is we are completely taken in, and in all our experience we never had a similar case.

You will notice that we have written in red across Denny's schedule of remarks, simply for your guidance, except as to paper No1, marked "Denny's deductions", on which our red ink remarks are copies of those sent to Denny in reply. There are some exceedingly trivial points raised or mentioned by Denny.

1st: Stating that he supplied our men with candles for which he did not charge. Denny must know that our men cannot use candles in a house without doors and windows & in the boiler house without roof, but towards the finish they had a few candles, our men think 6 in all.

2nd: Objecting to our foreman's time in starting engine. Our man took two days in going and two in returning. He arrived at Denny's works on Thursday afternoon, worked on helping Denny and facilitating his pumping arrangements etc. till 10 o'clock on Saturday night. Was in again at 4 o'clock on Monday morning showing his willingness to help Denny all he could & save coal, in fact giving Denny the benefit of his experience in work that did not belong to Loams. He left on Tuesday morning.

There is one other point about which we have every reason to complain, viz: Some time after the arrival of the vessel at Barrow, Denny wrote to say that the cap plates could not be found. This caused us to send a man to trace them forward from the mine to the ship at Plymouth, spending about a week over this to find at last that they were at Denny's works. This is only a

sample of the difficulties and troubles this fellow has given us. We shall be happy to give you any further information you require.

Yours faithfully
Loam & Son

In Kennedy's time the 40" engine was reported to be unable to cope with the water in winter at a depth of 103Yds but it seems there was little ore left by then. Today there is only a small pond, and in this weather even that is just mud.

References: BDKF 92/30, correspondence in Loam v Denny Bros

T' Poor Miners i' Forness

THE following is an account of the lives of Furness iron miners during the 1860s, from how the haematite deposits were prospected, the shafts sunk and ore exploited, to the habits of the miners, their hard-drinking and reluctance to attend church. It has been written with humour and wit, and to make things more challenging the entire account is recorded in a dialect so thick you could stand a shovel up in it.



T' Poor Miners i' Forness was published in 1870 in a book called '*Forness Folk, The'r Sayings an' Dewin's; or, Sketches of Life and Character in Lonsdale North of the Sands*'. It was written under the pseudonym Roger Piketah by Roper Robinson (1836-1908), an Ulverston man with a keen eye for detail and a keen ear for language. I was brought up in the late 1950s and early

1960s, when this type of language was dying out and was banished from many homes by grandmothers and elderly aunts (mine included) who deemed it vulgar and old fashioned. I think it's great. Some readers might struggle with the text, and to this end I have added a short though incomplete glossary. Have a go, and, as the author says, see "how t' udder hofe leeves.

"GERT weltin fortunes hes bin meadd i' Forness amang thor red mynd pits at time an' time. Plenty o' foke as is leevin' now can think on when nobbut hofe a dozen aad men scrat't a lile bit o' iron ore atop o' Lindal Moor into swills, to be cart't away to Bardsea to gang i' yan er two flats across t' seea; an' t' last year (1868) varra near eight hundert thousan' ton was gotten i'

Forness. Mair 'en yan body lait't an' boor't o' oorer to finnd some o' this red stuff, an' niwer leet on owte worthwhile – sooa it's a rayder slippery bis'ness is this mak o' wark. Some spots whaar t' muck on t' top was red as blood duddent torn out a bit, an' udders whaar nowte but rock cud be seen, ther' was mynd for iwer mair.

Foke es was flait o' spendin' brass ext some o' thor jouyjists to come an' leakk ower t' countryside to tell them whaar to sink, an' to larn them o' t' likeliest pleasses to dig for t' oor. A lock o' thor off-come chaps seann began prowlin' about, grubbin' an' greawin', an' picking an' chippin' steanns an' o' maks o' tricks; but at t' end of o' they wor fairly maddled an' moidert amang it, an' gev it up as a bad job. An' what's mair, nin o' them cud meakk out how t' iron oor was meadd. Ya fella sed it hed o' settled frae t' sypins o' t' fells intul sops i' t' limestone, anudder sed he believ't 'at t' grund hed been shakken up wi' a yearthquake an' fire, an' t' metal hed bubbrt an' boil't up frae t' bottom o' some-whaars ; an' a lock o' them meadd it out as it was done wi' t' thunner an' leetnin', an' nowte else; an' thor udder fellas es toked different knew nowte, an' wor o' wrang to-gidder.



Boring for ore on Lindal Moor

This was a bonny come up, ye kna, for them es want't to be amang this stuff es sic fine fortunes wor gotten wi', wor t' first te try away still an' gang be guess wark, seamm as the'r fadders dud afooar them, nobbut they gat steam engines to wark t' boor wi' an' cud gang a parlish seet deeper. Wy, bam, efter a pit hes bin sunken it's meeast sayrious hard wark to git t' oor out o' t' rock, an' they hev te blast wi' powder some chance time to shift it. Some poor fellas hes to work amang watter in t' boddom, or else doubled up i' varra lile rowm indeed, or propt atween t' sides o' t' level whaar they can hardly git a pick to swing. It's sic a sleawish job, an' sa cruel yat for want o' air belah, that they can't bide as lang as if they wor at wark on t' top, sooa they hev what they co' shifts – neet shifts an' day shifts – net shifts, ye knaa, but torn an' torn about,

sooa as to git eight hours of a spell for a day-wark. They stick cannels i' lumps o' clay to see what the'r dewin', but it's nea eeasy matter at t' best o' times.

Yance oover a slonkin sooart of a chap ext for a leet job o' some mak at t' pits. T' captin partly-what kent t' fella, an' set 'em to pump in a spot at t' bottom. He gayly seann funnd out 'at he'd gitten hod of a queerly mak of a job, for he mud ayder keep pump, pumpin' away or else be drown't, t' watter com in that fast. Sooa, for yance in his life, t' idle taistrel wos as gradely fit up as if he'd bin sent to t' treadd-mill for a month.



Lindal Moor's main pit – the B30.

Some o' t' companies hev wesh houses fit up wi' warm waiter, an' an aad man, as is pensioned for bein' leamm'd, or badly, or summat, keeps the'r cleaz dry while they're o' underground, sooa when they come up out o' t' pit o' greeast oover wi' this red paint like, they can gang in an' clean the'rsells – doflt

the'r wet things an' don the'r dry yans. It's a pity but what o' t' iron maisters provid't sic accommodashun for the'r poor wark foke. It wod surprise a deal o' grand foke to see thor poor miners, m'appen twenty or thirty at yance in t' middle o' t' neet, hofe neakked, scrubbin' the'rsels to git freshent up afooar gangin' yam.

Terble accidents come sometimes, an' poor fellas git mash't to bits varra near. Ther's clubs for 'em 't leets of a misfortin or complent, but ther's a girt difference i' ther' manage-ment, for while at ya spot t' men gits ten shillin' a week sick pay, an' summat han'som' t' bury 'em wi' (if they need it), at anudder they nobbut git about hofe-a-crown a week, an' seamm to pay in at beath pleasses. It's a queerly mannisht job, that's what it is, an' caps many a yan.

Well, a body wad sartin-ly suppoaz thor chaps hes sic terble nasty, dangerous wark to dew, wod be glad to git yam an' be wyat, but it's net ol'as t' keass. A lock o' them can niwer git by thor jerry-shops on't rooad side, but mun git summat to sup on ivery like, till they offen fill the'rsells varra full o' drink, an' feight an' fratch, an' meakk cruel hakes. When they gang away again i' t' mornin' they er somtimes num wi' bein' drunk t' neet afooar, an' tummel, an' hort the'rsells as seann as they git ageatt. Some o' t' aad 'ans es hes gitten weel seeason'd can sup up a gay lock o' drink. Ther's ya aad sinner, atop o' t' moor yet, he can tak a reet good skin-fuu, for t' wife says she can't tell he ails a thing, net even smell 'em, till he's hed on to twenty pints.

A weight o' t' miners niwer gang tul a church or a pleass o' worship o' nea mak, an' t' parsons is sa terble hard wrought on Sundays that they hevent time to lait the'r lost sheep on t' warda's. An odd 'an or two here an' there does gradely weel, but t' main ruck o' them's sio-an'-sic-like. A goodish teall's telt about ya chap co'd Ned, es hed bin lectur't be t' maister for not gangin' tul a church, a parlish lock o' times. But Ned woddent. Hooiver, ya Sunda' a new preeacher com' for t' day, while t' parson 'at belangt pleass was off a lile bit. T' next day when Ned seed t' maister, he was riddy an' keen enuff to tell 'em he'd bin to t' sarvice, an' heeard t' freysh man. When he was ext what he thowte on him, Ned sed, " Wy, t' man dud varra weel, I meakk nea doubt, but he hed a terble leet coloured voice."

Anudder time, an aad chap at Ossick, 'at hedden't bin to church for a cruel lang while, aboon twenty year, I'll bail 'em, for o' t' priest hed bin at 'em till he was fairly bet wi' 'em, he was sic a stordy aad tyke, suddenly meadd up his mind to gang, an' he sat away an' sat away o' t' time, till t' priest was through wi' his sarment amaist, an' sed "World without end."

Back Guards Pit, Lindal, in the 1870's



Warl' wi' out end," t' aad fella screeam'd out, reet up amang them o' – an' he dud meakk them stare aboon a bit – "nay I think it's niwer gaan to be an end." T' parson went to ex him what he dud o' thattan for, an' sed it wos sic a thing to dew to behave sa badly. T' aad fella telt him t' reeason in a minute. He sed, t' wife hed putten a duck to boil, an' some payz, an' he knew varra weel they wod be spoilt, sooa he cuddent bide an' it meant nowte he mud speakk out. Efter a bit, t' aad man surprized o' t' parish be gaain' to church again, an' when o' was oover, an' ivery body hed gitten out, he sat away still in t' seatt, till at last t' parson com tul 'em, an' sed he wos fain t' see 'em, but what wos to dew he dudden't gang yam. "Wy," sez t' fella, "me aad mistress hes putten a hen intul t' pot for t' dinner, an' it's sebbenteen year aald, sooa I kent it wod tak a parlish girt while to git done, an' I thowte this wos t' likeliest spot to come tul to put time off." He wos nea gommerral thattan, an' he likely thowte he'd teann t' best means o' lamin' them he duddent set mich be the'r teddisum bis'ness.

Well, efter o's sed an' done, ther's a lile bit o' rowm for improvement i't poor miners o' Forness, an' them 'at's takkin pains to meakk better men o' them sud gang to t' cottages whaar they leev, an' ex t' wives a few things, an' then co' at t' nearest shopkeepers an' hear what they've gitten to say about it eno', an' they'll finnd a deal mair out than they're aware on.

Some bleamms t' lang pays, some t' jerries, some t' hadtimes, bad health, bad manishment, an' o' maks o' things; but thets sewer to be a gay bit o' grumblin' amang hands. When they've fouow'd that partly, they sud gang an' hev a toke wi' thor chaps es hes bin meadd captins o' mines, reet tidy fellas, as stiddy as t' aald fashon't Winster clocks, an' they'll tell 'em mair than

them o' gang to wark at o' hours o' t' neet, an' they generally what pay a triflin' matter tul an aald woman to knock them up at t' time they want. Ya poor thing may be seen 'i Oostan trampin' about o' maks o' weathers, wi' a lile nob-stick to lig on to t' dures wi'. Ey, wy, ye may be sewer o' ya thing, as ther's a deal o' quality an' varra-yabble foke es knaas lile about thor chaps as follows t' pits. As t' aad woman sed, "Hofe o' foke duzzent kna how t' udder hofe leeves at o', an' sooa than."

Glossary

Gert, girt – great, huge. Meadd – made. Red mynd pits – red mined pits. Leevin' – living. Nobbut – nothing but. Hofe – half. Aad, aald – old. Scrat't – scratched, scratted. Swill – a large basket woven from bark such as hazel or willow, very common in the Lakes and Furness until recent times; used mostly for carrying laundry; there was a swill-maker in my home village of Askam into the 1960s, but this is the first time I've seen swills in reference to carrying ore. Gang, gan – go. Ya, yan, yance – one, once. Varra – very. Boor – bore, as in to drill.

Niwer – never. Rayder – rather. Torn – turn. Iwermair – evermore. Flait – scared. Ex, ext – ask, asked. Jouyjists – geologists. Leakk – look. Pleasses – places. Oor – ore. Lock – lot. Seean – soon. Steanns – stones. Moidert – moderate? Intul – into. Sops – large ore bodies. Grund – ground. Yearthquake – you can guess that one. Bubbrrt an' boil't – bubbled and boiled. Sic, sec – such. Afooer – before. Parlish – perilous? Watter – water. Boddam – bottom. Lile, la'al – little. Sleawish – slowish. Belah – below. Bide – stay, live. Co' – call. Cannels – candles.

Slonkin' – slonking, to slonk, a slonker, a great word still used to denote idleness and the idle; Furness was notorious for its Slonk Clubs and lodges at this time, bands of men who, come a public holiday, would march from pub to pub with banners and trumpets with the sole intention of getting plastered. Gradely – fine, decent. Wesh – wash. Waiter – another term for water. Leeam'd – lamed. Cleaz – clothes. Iron maisters – iron masters. Neeaked – naked. Yam – home. Complent – complaint. Annuder – another. Beath – both. Mannisht – managed. Ol'as t' keass – always the case. Jerry-shops – pubs or, more specifically, ale houses which were, literally, just ordinary houses that sold ale in a back room.

Mun – must. Iwery – every. Feight – fight. Tummel – tumble. Gay – great, very. Tul, til or till – an old Norse word that means “to”, as in “Gan til Askam”; the term is a staple in modern Icelandic usage, “Fara til Reykjavíkar”. Teall – tale. Riddy – ready. Freysh – fresh. Leet – light. Ossick – Urswick. Aboon – about. Sarment – sermon. Amaist – almost. Payz – peas. Sebbenteen – seventeen. Kent – knew. Thowte – thought. Teddisum – tedious? Finnd – find. Bleamm – blame.

Lang pays – could relate to length of time between pay days, which were usually monthly and sometimes longer, meaning a man's earnings came in one huge lump and the temptation to rush to the jerry was overwhelming for many. Sewer – sure. Fouow'd – followed. Ooston – Ulverston. Lig – lie, as in to lie down or to strike something. Dures – doors. Varra-yable – variable?

Alen McFadzean

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