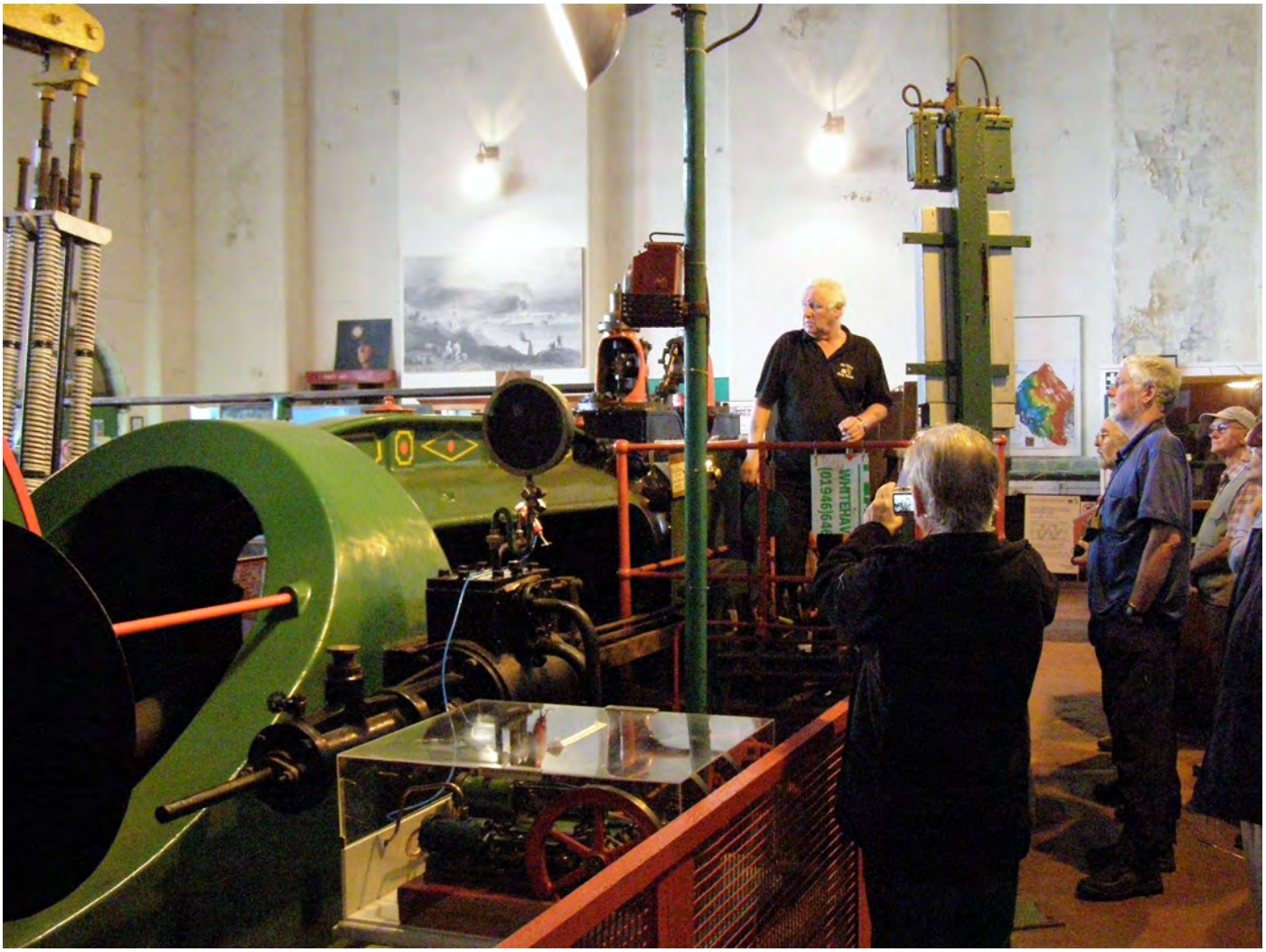
C A T

The Newsletter of the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society



CATMHS meet at Haig Colliery in July 2008, when the winding engine was in operation

No. 140 August 2020

Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society
Newsletter No 140, August 2020.

Alan Westall.

Alan died unexpectedly of a heart attack on 30th April. He was one of the founder members of CAT and was its first treasurer. Pre CAT he met with Peter Fleming through the Barrow Ramblers, and he was one of the enthusiasts who re-opened Glencoyne Level at Greenside. In later years Alan developed a hearing impairment which made it difficult for him to participate in social events. Because of this he declined to attend the recent 40th Anniversary dinner at Rydal Hall, but he did attend the AGM.

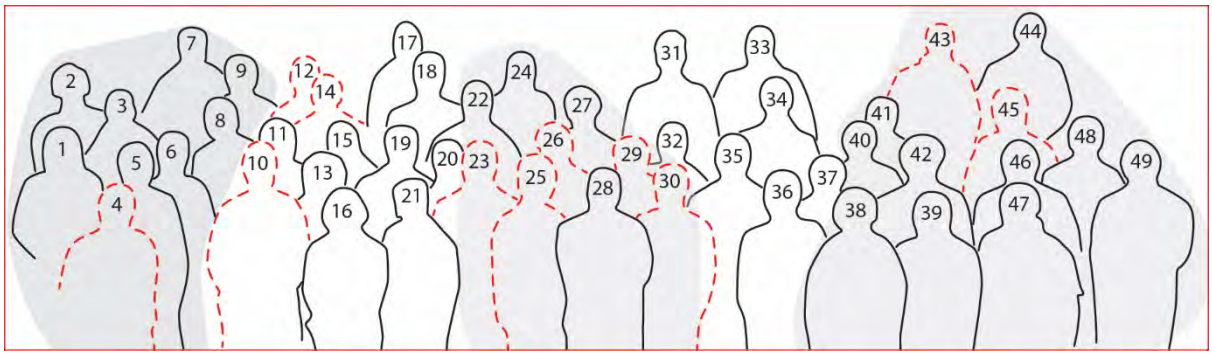
He had a dark side and not everyone got on with him. However, he was a staunch supporter of our Society and his membership never lapsed. He knew a lot about local history and was a member of the Duddon Valley Archaeology Group. By chance I had a telephone conversation with him the day before he died. He had sent in a press cutting for the newsletter and told me he was filling some of his time during the Covid lockdown by reading past CAT newsletters. He did say he was feeling a bit off colour, but there was no hint that it might be serious. I am glad to have known him. Ian Matheson.

1976. Phil Meredith, Pete Blezard, Alan Westall, Eric Holland, Ronnie Calvin and Peter Fleming outside Glencoyne Level adit.

Alan had recently sent me a newspaper report from the Daily Telegraph. Apparently the Duke of Buccleugh is to sell 3,863 acres of his 83,000 acre Queensberry Estate to the Wanlockhead Community Trust, who have outlined plans to bring more tourists to the village. They want to promote the fact that Wanlockhead is the highest village in Scotland and to upgrade the Lowther Hills Ski Club and develop new bike trails and zip wires. The trust will also take over mineral rights of the rivers that run out of the Lowther Hills, and a gold-panning centre, which will raise revenue through the sale of licences. Wanlockhead once provided gold for the £3 coins minted by Mary Queen of Scots and A couple of years ago a gold-panner found a nugget worth £10,000 nearby.

CATMHS 21st Anniversary

This photo was taken of members and guests who stayed at Rydal Hall for the 21st Anniversary celebrations. It was published on the cover of CATMHS newsletter No 63, but without naming any of those present. For the record, we are trying to do so now. Can anyone make any corrections or identify those outlined in red in Don Borthwick's key? If so please email imatheson007@btintenet.com



1	Anne Danson	10	Unknown	22	Dave McAnelly	31	John Aird	38	Liz Bowden
2	Bruce Deane	11	Alan Westall	23	Unknown	32	Leslie Aird	39	Liz Bowden's friend
3	Chris Hargreaves	12	Unknown	24	Angela Wilson	33	Brian Marshall	40	Joan Helme
4	Unknown	13	Barbara Mitchell	25	Unknown	34	Alastair Marshall	41	John Helme
5	Pete Blezard	14	Unknown	26	Unknown	35	Warren Alison	42	Alastair Cameron
6	Margaret Geddes	15	Janet Cresswell	27	Dave Bridge	36	Cilla Cameron	43	Mark Pickhall?
7	Don Borthwick	16	Deirdre Ryan	28	Ronnie Calvin	37	Karen Beer	44	Peter Fleming
8	Ken Geddes	17	Phil Meredith	29	Unknown			45	Unknown
9	Peter Wilkinson	18	Clive Barrow	30	Unknown			46	Ian Matheson
		19	Nills Wilks					47	Mike Mitchell
		20	Liz Wilks					48	John Cram?
		21	Sheila Barker					49	Geoff Cram

New members
Hugh Taylor, from Milnthorpe
Chris Brown, from Ulverston

CATMHS and Covid
In compliance with Government "stay at home" requirements and 'social distancing' rules, all CATMHS meets and field activities were postponed until further notice. These requirements made face to face committee meetings inappropriate at this time. Indeed, since the major CATMHS activities had all been postponed there was little new business for the Committee to consider. The Committee Meeting that had been arranged for May was cancelled and the Secretary requested officer's reports and compiled them into a set of "minutes of record" so as to allow us to continue in a simple fashion until things become clearer.

Meets Report by the Meet Secretary, July 2020
The past few months have been strange to say the least, who would have though at the start of the year that we would be living through a global pandemic! Hopefully everyone has stayed safe over these difficult times, and, as restrictions on movements are being relaxed, we hope to ramp up the meets again. These will start with surface walks with potentially limited numbers with the hope to move back to underground meets soon. Please keep an eye on the CATMHS Facebook group for new meets.

What this pandemic has created is a need to continue our hobby in different ways. One of these ways has been the online Live Meets via the Facebook live video streaming. This was something I thought was worth a try and the first Live Video Meet was held on 28th May with a talk on the extensive salt mines of Preesall. (Presented by Michael Oddie.) An amazing thirty two people watched the live video and I hope it was enjoyed by all in the comfort of people's homes. At the end of the presentation questions were asked via the app which brings messages onto the live screen which I could then answer. This brought a nice interactive part to the video which I personally enjoyed a lot.

The 8th of June was the second live presentation, and this was given by Chris Twigg on The Ironstone Mining in New Marske. Again an excellent turnout of members watched live and interacted with Chris at the end of the presentation. The nice thing about the live videos is that they are saved onto the Facebook page so that members can either re-watch them or watch them at their leisure should they not be available to watch them live.

Seven scheduled meets have been postponed or cancelled. These include the SRT practice session, two Wales weekends and the infamous Greenside re-run from the ill-fated Christmas AGM meet. (We will get round to it soon!!)

I have had fantastic suggestions and support from members for meets they would like to do, see or run, and I am always happy to receive more ideas and suggestions. My number is 07747607691; just give me a call or drop me a text. Mark Hatton has kindly offered to do the third Live Meet, and this will be The Story of the German Mining Colony in Elizabethan Keswick. We are currently trying new software which may include Zoom. When we have ironed out any issues a date will be set. Just keep an eye on the Facebook page.

Warren and I will be running a surface meet at Greenside; this will be in line with Government guidelines. Details to follow, again, keep an eye on the Facebook page

Michael Oddie.

Hudgill Burn Mine – recording the geology and archaeology.

Hudgill Burn Mine is on the west side of the Nent Valley between Alston and Nenthead. The adit entrance had been blocked since before 1930, until it was excavated and rebuilt by CATMHS. The history of the reopening is described in the newsletters from 1995 onwards.

Colin Fowler and I had been enthused by Tony Harrison's presentation at the 2015 NAMHO Conference at Nenthead but never got around to arranging a visit to Hudgill. Sheila Barker kept reminding us that we should go and look and eventually we arranged a visit thanks to John Brown and Colin Woollard.

If you are used to North Pennines mines in limestone or shale, Hudgill Burn immediately seems different. After admiring the excellent newly built arched entrance, and opening the Fort Knox Door (reverse of intuitive) you spend a lot of time walking in sandy mud in a well-preserved crosscut level in sandstones and mudstones. On our first visit we were immediately struck by several features of importance in the mine.

First is that there are well preserved examples of wood rails. We have visited several mines with wood rails which are often difficult to record and photograph. In Hudgill, they are clearly visible and photogenic. Secondly, the geology is very visible and interesting including well preserved examples of fossil trees in the mudstones and shales just below the Great Limestone.

The junction between the base of the Great Limestone and the Tuft sandstone is visible in at least two places where the caverns and their fillings can be seen close-up. We are both interested in the geology of vein formation and we had never seen anything like Hudgill. One of the interesting features of Hudgill geology is that the Great Limestone is capped by boulder clay in several places. Old accounts talk about the miners driving along the top of the Great Lime, because the best mineralisation was often found at the interface with the clay. In the mine it is possible to see this interface not quite in situ. There is a long crosscut drive to the south east which is still passable for about 300 metres. The roof of this crosscut displays piano sized lumps of limestone in the boulder clay, with a tendency to drop out of the clay into the level. The journey down the crosscut is a good test of fortitude and the desire to explore to the final fall. It is a fascinating part of the mine.

The graffiti in the caves has been described by Tony Harrison already, but there is also plenty of graffiti in the mine itself.

Colin Fowler and I suggested that the geology and archaeology should be recorded photographically and perhaps the geology of the mine should be written-up in some way. Tony Harrison has described the caverns geology in detail and we assumed that very little had been done to make a record of the mine workings.

We were then reminded that the mine was recorded as having high level of radon and this was the reason why the Society had stopped work on the exploration and digs. We discussed this with Don Borthwick, who has a good store of knowledge about this mine, and he very generously offered to pay for Radon monitors to be installed in the mine. Four monitors were installed in late November 2019 and retrieved in January 2020. The current law on workplaces states that where the radon levels are greater than 300 becquerels per cubic metre of air as an annual average (bcqs), then the employer must take steps to reduce the exposure. Our four stations were indicating readings of 5300(Main Crosscut), 11000(Sun Vein digs), 19000(main crosscut) and 25000 (Cavern) bcqs.

One of the simplest ways of reducing exposure is by increasing airflow through the mine. Although there is clearly air flow via the open joints in the limestone with safe quantities of oxygen, there is no way of radically increasing the air flow. Colin and I agreed that we would install another batch of monitors in late spring because it is known that the amount of radon varies with the seasons, and that we would limit our exposure underground. Our objectives would include recording the features as quickly and as safely as possible. We are both over a certain age and calculated the slight difference in likely life expectancy as being acceptable to us.

Our life expectancy has, however, now been threatened by Covid 19 and we have not returned to the mine since January. We have, however, photographed most of the interesting geology and some of the archaeology. We have also surveyed the main crosscut from the entrance to the rise to the cavern (at Dig 2), explored the West level, North Waggonway, Sun Vein workings, and the Crosscut to the main workings. We also managed a short visit to the Caverns.

Access to the mine is on part of a caravan holiday park and is dependent upon the goodwill of the site owner. John Brown has arranged permission for our visits and we hope to be able to renew that permission sometime during this year when we can safely work together in a confined space underground. Meanwhile, we have the survey to draw and the photos to process.

Peter Jackson

Tree planting near Coniston

Cumbria Wildlife Trust has applied for consent to plant a mix of native tree species at Dunnerdale, Seathwaite and Torver Common. The proposed works are to install 14,110 meters of stock proof fencing 1.2 meters high to create seven enclosures with a total area of 1220 hectares.

A New railway history book

The Cumbrian Railways Association has published a new book, 'The Bigrigg Branch & Iron Ore Mines.' It tells the history of the Bigrigg Branch, which was part of the Whitehaven, Cleator & Egremont Railway in West Cumbria.

Extensively researched and written by the Bigrigg Research Team – a group of knowledgeable CRA members – this forty six page extensively illustrated book tells the fascinating story of this piece of West Cumbrian railway over the period from origins and construction in the late 1860's until the last rails were taken up in the 1950's. The book also tells the story of the forty or so iron ore mines that existed – all within an area of little more than one square mile.

With little physical evidence now left on the ground, this volume has numerous current and original photographs and maps to bring to life this little-known branch line and the pits it served.

The book is priced £7.50 and can be purchased from:
CRA Book Sales, 50 Tattershall, Toothill, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 8BX
e-mail: sales@cumbrianrailways.org.uk
or online at the CRA website: www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk

Community Archaeology Volunteers receive an Award

The Duddon Valley Local History Group has been named the Community Archaeology Group of the Year by the Council for British Archaeology. Chairman Ken Day and Stephe Cove travelled to London to receive the award from Dr Mike Heywood, Director of the Council, in the iconic halls of the Society of Antiquaries on behalf of the History Group.

The award of a certificate and a monetary cheque was given for its work in the excavations of three potential Norse longhouses in the Duddon Valley near Seathwaite. This was the culmination of over ten years work, providing detailed surveys of the valley for the Lake District National Park, during which a number of structural remains of similar size possibly of Norse origin were identified. Three of these were chosen for excavation. Mr Day said "This award came as a complete surprise. To actually win is a real credit to the teamwork that went into putting this project together. There are many people to thank but without the support of the National Heritage Lottery Fund it is unlikely that the excavation would have taken place".

Also at the ceremony Eleanor Kingston, Lake District National Park archaeologist, won her award for Community Archaeologist of the Year for going above and beyond her role to support, encourage and contribute to Community Archaeology. Eleanor was involved in Coniston Copper, Rusland Horizons and Duddon Dig.

Potential sale of Glenridding Common by the LDNPA

The Lake District National Park Authority are reviewing the existing lease of land to the John Muir Trust at Glenridding Common, part of the Helvellyn massif. The John Muir Trust has been in occupation of this area for almost three years commencing on 1st November 2017. The land forms part of the Helvellyn and Fairfield Site of Special Scientific Interest) which benefits from statutory protection.

The current lease to the John Muir Trust will expire in October of this year and, because of the success of the relationship to date, the National Park will be looking to renew their occupation on the Common. The new lease would be granted on essentially the same terms apart from one important addition, namely the inclusion of an Option Agreement that would grant the JMT the future right to purchase the area of land which they occupy should they so wish. The addition of such an Option would mean that **the National Park is effectively agreeing to offer this land asset for sale at some as yet unspecified date in the future** and so the necessary approvals would need to be sought in advance.

The National Park wishes to consider the views of key stakeholders and interest groups and are therefore actively seeking any comments that will bring to their attention any concerns and/or objections that may inform any decision on this potential disposal. The period of consultation will close on Friday 31 July 2020.

CATMHS has written to the LDNPA expressing concerns regarding their commitment to sell the land without agreeing or stipulating any terms or conditions.

Old Man Quarries, Coniston. Stabilisation and Interpretation project.
Despite the present restrictions to movement and project-work caused by the recent Covid-19 lockdown, things continue to move very fast on the proposed High Level Stewardship Scheme project on Coniston Old Man. So I have decided it might be an idea to put out a regular update on progress. I will send updates to CATMHS for the newsletter and also those in Coniston who are keen to be kept up to date on this scheme.

As far as information to CATMHS members goes, details have already be given in NL 139 in the short article Eleanor Kingston and I drafted, concerning the announcement of the proposed High Level Stewardship Scheme in the Coniston 'High Commons' area. These schemes are operated by Natural England and other organisations and, if accepted, part of the outcome will be the provision of funding to carry out an historic interpretation of a site in the area. We discussed this at the February Mines Forum Meeting at Grasmere and I suggested that the work we had already started at the Old Man Quarries in the autumn of 2019 would be a very suitable subject for this aspect of the Stewardship Scheme. It was subsequently accepted by Eleanor as an ideal project to accompany the Scheme.

The small group of three of us (myself, Robert Gurr and Peter Archer) had already been working for quite a few months on the Old Man looking at the possibility of carrying out a stabilisation and interpretation project at the Smithy and also slate workings sites on the north-east shoulder of the mountain, from Low Bank up to Scald Kop. Eleanor, effectively, joined the group and we became a team of four and work progressed very rapidly with me taking on the first stage of the project of getting data together on each site and setting up ranking systems to take the project forward, Eleanor then liaising with Historic England and also preparing data that contractors could bid for.

The Spion Kop site, in a high and remote location worked the silver-grey slate band by a long tunnel driven in from the bank. It was sited in this location so that spoil from the mine did not affect workings beneath. Slates were produced, docked and riven in a riving shed on the site and the finished product was transported away on a long aerial flight that ran down the mountain to Stubthwaite, close to the access road from the Walna Scar Road

Unfortunately, on April 8th Eleanor notified us that she had become furloughed and, temporarily, would not be able to have anything more to do with her work, including work on the Scheme. Fortunately the first stage of the project which I had taken on was virtually complete, although only just! Within a few hours of us collecting the final data from the higher Scald Kop area of the Old Man, lockdown was introduced and the mountain effectively became 'out of bounds'.

As a result of discussions with Eleanor, I also had a fairly good idea of the stage 2 and 3 of the project. So we decided to crack on regardless. This included preparing data for the bidding stages, including such things as selecting the sites to progress and discussing the project with dry-stone wallers. We assumed Eleanor might be back permanently from furlough on 1st June but eventually we were informed that it was more likely to be 1st August. We have also heard that the time scale for the Scheme itself has also been put back by four weeks.

An extremely useful drone image taken by Peter Archer shows the layout on the High Moss Head bank. A significant amount of work still needs to be done to interpret the exact method of operation of this site.

A photograph taken 20 years ago of the drum-house that controlled the inclined aerial flight that ran from the High Moss Head site down to the Saddlestone Bank. The incline carried slate 'clogs' (blocks) from which slates were manufactured in the riving sheds at Saddlestone.

We now have three local wallers keen to be involved in bidding for the work, one of whom has already worked on previous schemes. They have now received the data pack I drew up giving them the information they needed. Robert is handling the wall-head consolidation side of the work as he has considerable practical experience in this.

Local groups have shown a lot of interest and, in particular, Michael Deanley, Coniston Parish Council clerk. He is in close contact with the organisers of the Stewardship Schemes, which is extremely useful as he will keep me up to date on developments, and has experience with Heritage Impact Assessments, which, he informs me, will need to be carried out at some point. So it's all still going well at the moment. The four of us agree that local interest and help from the community is important with this type of project as, amongst other things, it is then much more likely that the scheme will attract further Heritage Lottery funding if that becomes necessary.

At the present time a ground-survey plan has now been completed for all seven of the old working sites at the Old Man Quarries. These are all to scale. The former use of each building has been recorded on the survey and each structure has been assessed for the level of necessary improvements. The level of wall-head consolidation has also been estimated as has the quantity and cost of lime mortar preparation to carry this out. In most cases 'stabilise' will not include a complete re-build. The ranking exercise has now been completed on each site giving us data on how suitable the site is for including in the project.

Following the ranking exercise it seems that the initial Stabilisation & Interpretation work will be carried out on three banks – Saddlestone, Smithy and Spion Kop. The amount of interpretation required has also been estimated. We currently feel that an interpretive hub will be required at one location describing the site in general. This will most likely be at Saddlestone Bank. Each of the three sites will also have their own descriptive panel explaining what took place on the site.

This drone image taken by Mark Simpson shows the layout of the lower part of the site. The bottom bank is Low Bank, above it is Saddlestone bank and above that is Smithy Bank. Remains of a large cave working, with a collapsed roof, can be seen further up the mountain.

We are also looking at two further additions to the project. One is to establish a second interpretation in the Ruskin Museum at Coniston and the other is to improve the old quarryman's path on The Old Man that ran up from Smithy Bank through the higher workings. We need to inspect this route – I seem to remember it used to have a staircase of steps at one point for a short distance because of steep ground! At some point I will take Jeff Carroll (Coniston Montain Rescue Team) up there for his safety comments.

So we are nearly there now on the preparation of the application. We have had a lot of help offered to take it forward – including from Jamie Lund of the National Trust (thanks Jamie) and the few guys currently left working at LDNPA who are also keen to help. My laptop is now linked to their video conference system. Carter Jonas Ltd, Kendal, the land-agent for the Rydal Estates has also been made aware. If any further CAT member would like to give us a hand, please let us know.

Alastair Cameron.

Buttermere Mine survey with LDNPA archaeological volunteers

In the February newsletter there was a short article on the proposed survey of the copper mines from Burtness Wood to Low Wax Knotts in conjunction with the LDNPA archaeological volunteers as a joint project. The intention was to use the experience of CATMHS in being able to identify and interpret mine workings and use the LDNPA volunteer's knowledge of how to carry out and record a proper survey, taking six days, spread out over three months.

This project came from discussing with Mark Hatton this fascinating area, which had been originally worked by the Germans in the early 1600's and from their records it seemed to be one of their most important workings at the time. There are some beautiful coffin levels on Low Wax Knots which were dug out with permission from the landowner many years ago. The last period of working appears to have been in the mid 1800's.

Part of the area had been previously surveyed by Oxford Archaeology North (OAN), but this was only in the wood. The intention was to start here and re-investigate this area since many of the trees had been recently felled.

The first two meets in February were cancelled due to poor weather and some of the survey equipment was away for repair. However, on the 11th March four members of each organisation met at Buttermere and walked down the west side of the lake. We arrived at the old smithy, set just above the footpath, which is still in good condition and the hearth is clearly visible.

The smithy probably dates to the 1800's to serve the level that was driven just a few yards away. The level mouth is blocked but issuing water and the footpath crosses the tip, much of it apparently taken away to make repairs to the path. Many years ago, it was rumoured to be open, but filled with water, although apparently you could get one hundred yards down the level before it sumped up, but there is no way of verifying this.

From the level, Peter Style (LDNPA volunteer) got us to spread out from the lake shore about ten yards apart and slowly walk in a line. We were to stop if there was anything of interest. The boundary of this part of the survey was the wall coming down the fell. Just short of the wall two surface trials were found which had not been picked up in the previous OAN survey. One was a long trench of approximately twenty yards with a shorter trench above.

Starting to survey the two trenches.

Once the surveys had been completed, we spread out again but further up the fell and walked back towards the head of Buttermere. After a while of negotiating the detritus from the felling operation we came upon a large six-foot-wide vein outcropping on surface, consisting of quartz running 165 degrees SSE.

The vein on the surface

Just below this was a very short level and a spoil heap to one side. Again, these were surveyed, but, as it was higher, the spoil heap had not come from the level and so a discussion was had about where did the material come from. The consensus was that there was the potential for another level just above the forestry road, but unsure on what vein it would have been driven. The short level and the one by the lake appear to have been driven on the vein outcropping on surface as all the directions taken were virtually the same.

We then finished the survey up to the wall running along the fell without finding anything else before returning back to the cars after an enjoyable day out. The next survey was planned to cover the area around Burtness Comb, where there are open workings, dressing floors and buildings reputed to be of German origin. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 virus stopped the remaining surveys being carried out.

Warren Allison.

Level opened up below a walker's path at Buttermere

During the Covid-19 crisis, I was looking at some photographs which may help with the Buttermere Mine survey. In the mid to late 1990's I got a phone call from the National Trust ranger for the Buttermere area saying that some footpath work on the way to Low Wax Knotts had broken into the roof of a previously unknown level, which was flooded; could we come and have a look.

Arrangements were made and Roger Ramsden, Pete Sedgewick, Colin and Andrew Woolard and myself met up with the ranger at Gaitesgarth Farm where we loaded my pump and hoses into the vehicle alongside the motorised barrow to get it all up the fell. We drove as far as we could and then started the slow walk up the track.

Arriving at the level, it did not take long before we opened it up sufficiently to create enough space to get the suction hose in. Once connected to the pump it was a case of sitting and waiting for the level to be emptied of water, which took a couple of hours.

Sliding inside there was a debris on the floor, and it had the appearance of having been hand chipped. After a few yards, the level turned slightly to the right and ended up at a collapse (must find my notes). On exiting the entrance was closed up and made safe. Warren Allison

Pump draining the level

Ready to go in

Near the collapse.

Leadhills and Wanlockhead lead mines

The mines of these two villages are in the beautiful Lowther Hills just off the M74 near Abington, and between 1700 and 1958 produced four hundred thousand tonnes of lead, ten thousand tonnes of zinc and twenty five tonnes of silver; in addition, the area's stream sediments were also a source of gold. The mines were worked separately, as Wanlockhead was on land owned in Dumfries and Galloway by the Dukes of Buccleugh, and South Lanarkshire in Leadhills to the Earls of Hopetoun. Little appears to have been written on the mines, but an article by the Northern Mines Research Society sheds a little light.

"Those in Leadhiills were worked as early as the 15th century and in 1641 the Hope family acquired the land and mining rights around the village. Charles Hope was made Earl of Hopetoun in 1702 and increasingly leased his mines to adventurers, with the Scots Mining Company dominating until 1861 when it was followed by the Leadhills Mining Company which sold out in 1876 to the Leadhills Silver Lead Mining Co. Ltd. In 1902 this company was replaced by the Leadhills Company Ltd, which modernised the mines and carried on through the difficult years of the First World War until the low price of lead in 1929 closed the mines down, with the machinery sold off in 1940".

Susanna mine

The remains of the smelter at Leadhills

An article by W G Harvey in 1991 says *"Acting on the advice of W.H.Borlase of Cumbria, the Glengonner shaft was sunk 230 fathoms to work the Brow Vein. At the mine-head steam engines wound the cages and generated electric power at 500 volts AC to drive the pumps and machinery in the mine. Following cases of sheep being poisoned by pollution*

Glengonner shaft looking towards Wilson's shaft

the Waterhead smelter was closed. By 1901 a railway had reached Leadhills, so the dressed ore was taken out by rail. Output rose to three thousand tons, about fifteen tons per man, and the company paid a dividend of 70%". W H Borlase was the mine manager at Greenside Mine.

The Leadhills Miners Reading Society was founded in 1741 and is the oldest subscription library in the British Isles. Of the twenty three founding members at Leadhills, all were miners except the minister and the schoolmaster. It has a huge collection of book as well as the cost books for the mines, which are in the process of being digitised.

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Range of 3 TROMMELS; 2 Sets BUCKET ELEVATORS, 20ft. and 10ft. between Centres;
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3 HOLMAN DRIFTER ROCK DRILLS; 2 HOLMAN PAVING BREAKERS;
CLIMAX HAND ROCK DRILL, Type F.2. (New 1939); 6 Sets HOLLOW STEEL DRILLS;
2 EVANS SINKING PUMPS, for 4in. 3in. by 3½in. by 12in. and 4in. by 3½in. by 9in.; 2 SMALL AIR HOISTS;
Four 1-Yard STEEL SIDE-TIPPING WAGGONS, 24in. Gauge; 12 Tons LIGHT F.B. RAILS;
36in. SIROCCO HIGH-PRESSURE FAN; LORRY, CART and PLATFORM WEIGHING MACHINES;
3 P.P. PITHEAD FRAMES, 42ft., 35ft. and 14ft. High;
SECTIONAL WOODEN HUT, 36ft. by 12ft. by 7ft. to Eaves;
70 POWER CARRYING POLES; 200 PERMANENT SLEEPERS; W.P. PLANKS, BATTENS and BOARDS;
CORRUGATED IRON and WOODEN ERECTIONS; WOODEN STORAGE HOPPERS; WOODEN GANGWAYS;
9in. 6-size SELF-ACTING SLIDING, SURFACING and SCREW-CUTTING HOLLOW-SPINDLE GAP BED LATHE, with Bed;
PILLAR VERTICAL DRILLING MACHINE; D.H. EMERY BUFF;
C.I. CIRCULAR SAW BENCH, Table 40in. by 28in. 4in.; HAND MORTISING MACHINE;
SHAFTING and BELTING; SMITHY and ENGINEERING TOOLS;
Large Quantity C.I., M.I. and STEEL SCRAP; SCRAP COPPER, BRASS, ALUMINUM and LEAD;
SURVEYING INSTRUMENTS, &c.,

— AT —

LEADHILLS MINE,
LEADHILLS, BY ABINGTON,
LANARKSHIRE,
On TUESDAY, 18th JUNE, 1940,
at ELEVEN o'clock precisely.

The Wanlockhead mines were active in the 17th Century when they were also leased to adventurers one being the London Lead Company and the Friendly Mining Society. In 1842 the Duke of Buccleuch took over the mines and ran them until 1905, having produced around 85,000 tons of lead concentrates. This was followed by the Wanlockhead Lead Mining Co.

Ltd, who concentrated on the New Glencrieff mine, and were able to keep going until July 1931.

Remains of the Pate Knowes Smelter are located near the middle of the village and operated from 1746 to 1845 and eventually had five scotch hearths, two roasting furnaces, one slag hearth and a reverberating furnace driven by a water wheel inside the building. In 1780, an additional waterwheel was installed to crush the ore on site. It was replaced by the larger smelt mill at Meadowfoot further down the village.

Remains of the Pate Knowed Smelter

Smelting hearth

Looking towards New Glencriffe mine in the distance from Lochnell mine with Straitsteps mine in the foreground.

The beam engine was built in 1870 and became disused in 1910 to pump water from Straitsteps mine and is the only surviving example of a water bucket pumping engine in the UK.

In 1951 a joint venture between the Siamese Tin Syndicate Ltd, Bangrin Tin Ltd and Rio Tinto Ltd was formed under the name Lowland Lead Mines, who were interested in working the New Glencriffe Mine and started to dewater the old workings in 1953. A year later they had drained the mine down to three hundred metres and underground exploration started.

However, there was a shortage of labour and Rio Tinto pulled out in 1954. A mill had been built and over one thousand six hundred tons of lead ore was processed, but the fall in the price towards the end of the 1950's brought production to a halt in 1958 and the mine closed in 1959. The reserves were estimated at over two hundred thousand tons of lead ore and a further one hundred and ten thousand tons in the stopes.

In the early 1960's a small syndicate re-processed some of the old sand lagoons with a froth flotation plant and produced 3 to 5% of lead fines.

In the 1980's the Wanlockhead Mining Museum was built, and they look after much of the mining remains in the village.

New Glencriffe mine

Winding engine house

In March, Liz Withey and I spent the weekend in Leadhills looking at some of the old mining remains and also to attend the meeting held at the Wanlockhead Mining Museum to form a mining society in the Southern Uplands of Scotland. This is a fascinating area and one which appears not to have received a great deal of attention, other than by people such as Jeremy Landless who in the 1980's discovered an intact water pressure pumping engine and a water pressure winching engine in the New Glencriffe Mine. There are also connections with the mines in the Lake District as miners came from here to work at Keswick and Greenside mine, for example Murray shaft at Greenside was sunk and named after a miner from Wanlockhead. The meeting was attended by twenty five people, and the new group came into being called "The Southern Uplands Mining Heritage Organisation".

The area would be worthy of holding a meet there (possibly over a weekend) and on speaking to the director of the museum afterwards, he was keen that the museum could help host such a meet.

During the Covid-19 crisis, I found some old photographs, which are reproduced below, taken on a meet in the late 1980's or early 1990's when Mines of Lakeland Exploration Society visited the area. Warren Allison.

New Glencreif mine, where the buildings appear to be in better condition.

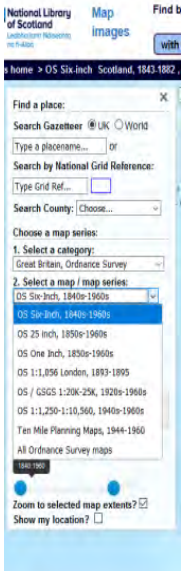
The Meadowfoot smelter.

Exploring from Home Using the NLS Maps Website

The National Library of Scotland website is a treasure trove of Ordnance Survey maps of the UK. Their prime concern is for maps north of the border but coverage in Cumbria is good although missing some of the earliest edition sheets. There are 25 inches to the mile and 6 inches to the mile sheets, each as a separate scan. There is also a georeferenced view which has a seamless map to scroll over. This avoids the problem of looking at sheet edges and corners but has two really important features. The first is a scrolling ten figure grid reference so hovering over a feature that might be long gone gives you an accurate reading of where to start looking for any remains. The second feature is that it is overlaid on the Google satellite image so you can use a slide bar to fade between the two views.

So let's go to the website - https://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/

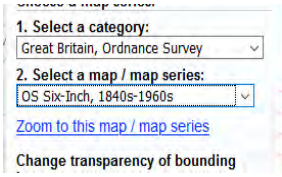
1. Using Find by Place

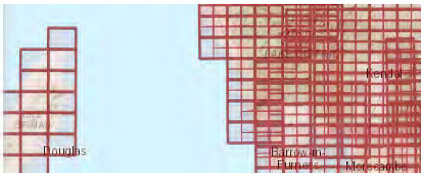


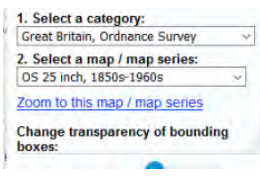
Read the Help screen and then close it to see the UK Map and choice of map scale

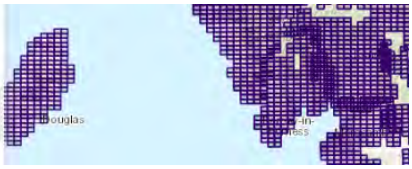
Select your map scale

Zoom into your chosen area



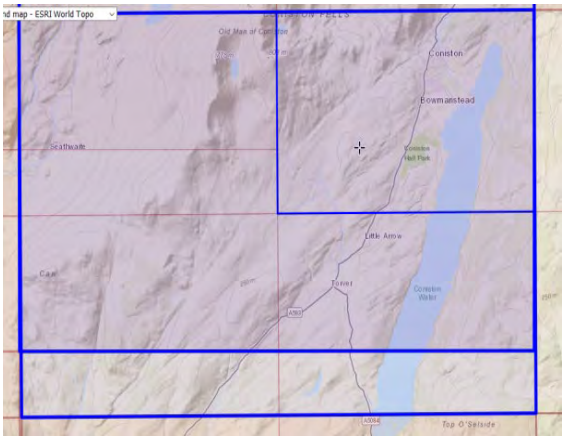


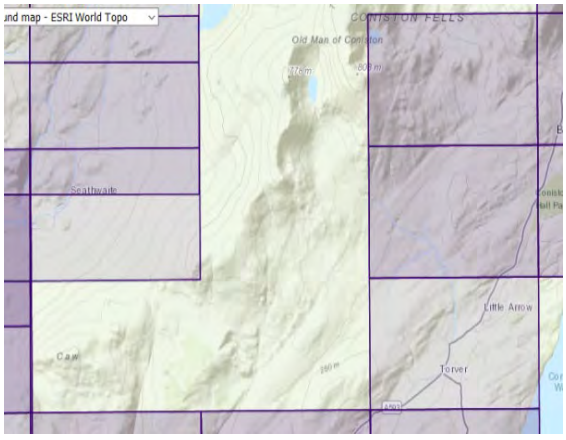




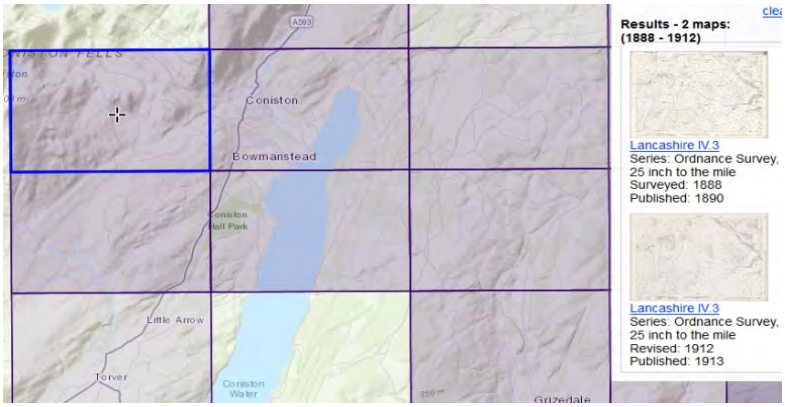
6 inch sheets show as red blocks, 25 inch sheets show as blue blocks.

The counties are split into blocks, each given a roman numeral. There are four 6 inch sheets to each block and 4 25 inch sheets to each ^ inch sheet which makes 16 25 inch sheets to a block. So the Lancashire Sheet IV at 25 inches is divided into IV.1, IV.2, IV.3, and IV.4 as a top row and three more rows of four below finishing with IV.16 at 25 inches. Most of the high fells were not covered at the larger scale and are shown clear of bounding boxes.





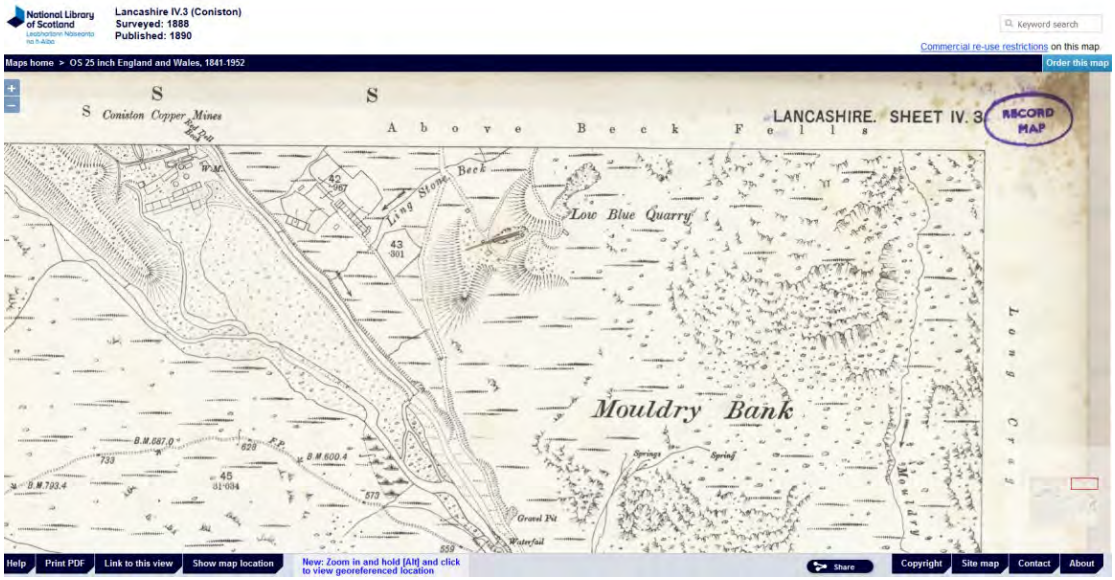
Surveying of the 6 inch sheets started in the 1840s and they were published in 1850/60 and resurveyed in the 1890s for all three counties. The 25 inch sheets have different dates. Cumberland and Westmorland had first editions in the 1860s and second editions in the late 1890s. For Lancashire the dates were 1890 and 1913.



When you select your sheet area, you get a thumbnail of editions available to view. The first edition may be blank and labelled **No copy in the NLS**.

Click on the map you want to view. Scroll up down across, zoom in and out. Map details and dates are at the top.

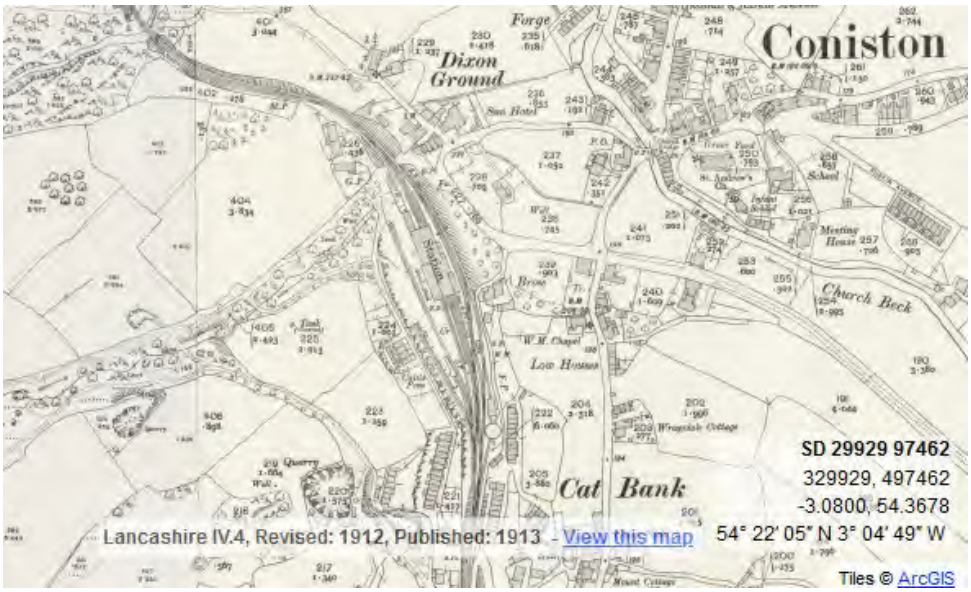
To save the screen view, click on Print PDF at the bottom left. Follow the instructions to save the file for printing later



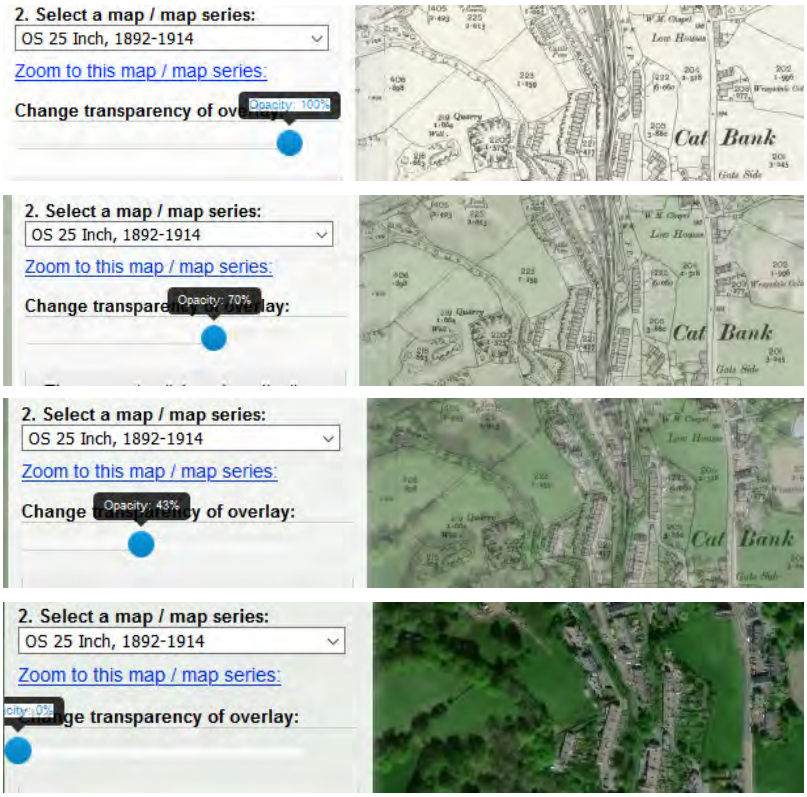
2. Using the georeferenced maps

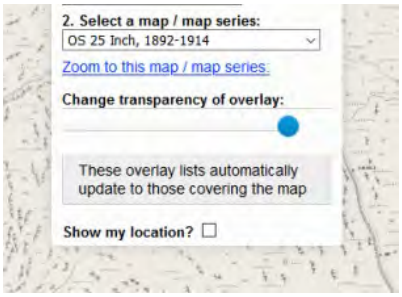
Click on Explore georeferenced maps at the top of the screen.

You will get a help page which you can read and close. There is no choice of the date of sheet used. Where you see the satellite image, it shows that no mapping of this are of high fells was done.



The bottom right-hand corner shows you the Grid reference for the current cursor position and also gives details of the sheet number and date being used in the overlay





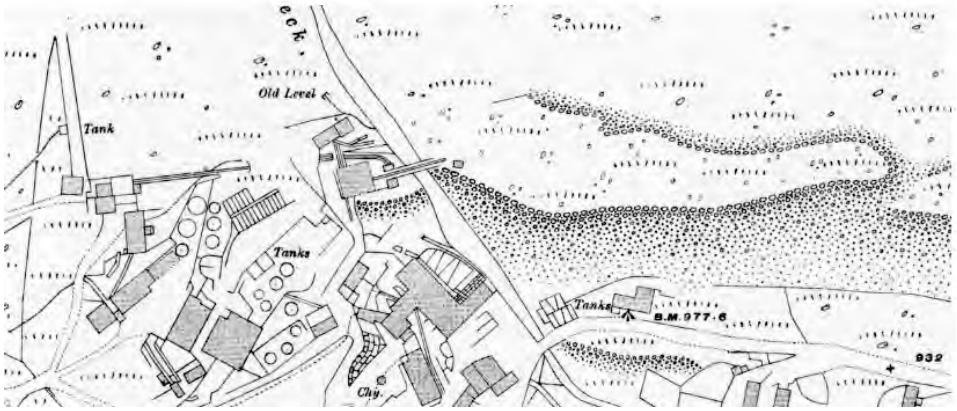
Using the slider on the left hand side of the screen you can fade from the old map through to the current Google Satellite image.

This is really useful if you are producing displays or presentations

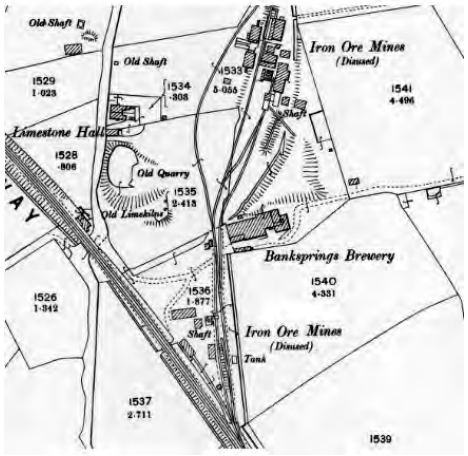
3. Using the Side by Side view

This does exactly what it says on the tin! Try it.

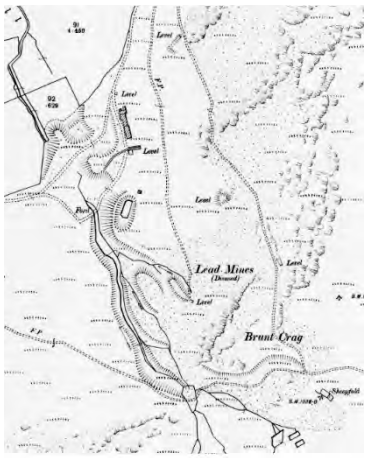
Here are some screen shots around the area. Have a little explore and find out where they are. *Clue: use search box top right with county and roman numerals only.*



Westmorland XII.6

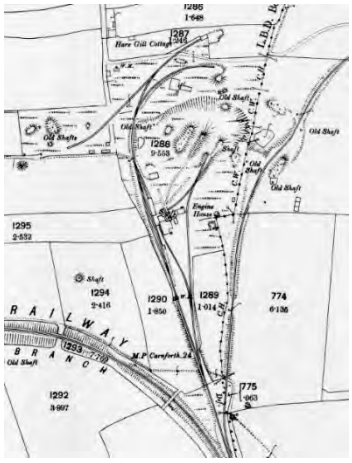


Cumberland
CLXXXVIII.13



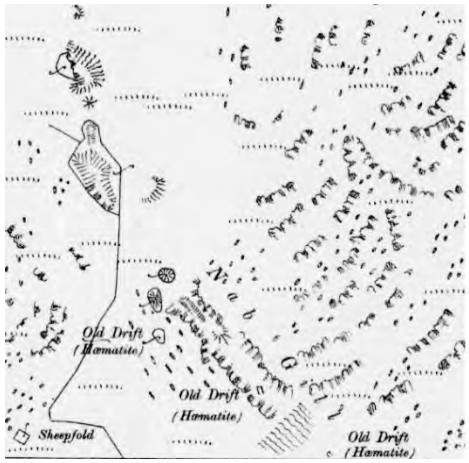
Cumberland
CLXIV.13

Northumberland
CX.3



Lancashire
XVI.13

Cumberland
XLVII.16



Cumberland
LXXIX.10

Stephe Cove June 2020.

Preesall Salt Mines

Preesall is a small town in Lancashire, the parish covers the Eastern bank of the estuary of the River Wyre and includes Knott End-on-Sea. Preesall salt is a halite deposit that ranges in thickness from 79-280m.

A borehole in Fleetwood was driven 559ft deep by the Royal Engineers in 1860 to try and locate drinking water. The town and troops stationed there were dependant on surface-wells for drinking water, so they were looking for a better solution. None was found.

In 1872 twenty boreholes were started in the hope of discovering hematite due to the discoveries at Hodbarrow. Only four boreholes were completed with No2 bore-hole showing unexpected signs of rock salt. (Halite) The men doing the borehole samples were lodging at the 'Black Bull Pub', so they brought a sample of the salt back with them. The Landlord's daughter, seventeen year old Dorothy Parkinson, dissolved, filtered and boiled it to produce the very first sample of Preesall salt.

1875 was the start of ground development, with Rev. Daniels and Daniel Elletson, who became partners and sank an exploratory shaft near Lower Lockow Farm, the shaft being close to the No 2 borehole that had showed signs of rock salt. The shaft was 8ft diameter and finished with 4 ½ inch of brick. By 1885 many more boreholes had been sunk to confirm the extent of the salt deposit. The Daniels' shaft was now 610ft deep with 340ft of the shaft being in salt.

The early partnership of Daniels and Elletson sold out before any salt was raised. The mine was bought in 1888 by the Salt Union Ltd, who realised the potential of the deposit and secured a monopoly of all the salt manufactures in Great Britain. Obviously, the company raised prices 100% for common salt and 300% for fine salt!! The Daniels shaft was converted for the pumping of brine. The salt was removed in a saturated solution, basically dissolving the salt with fresh water and pumping the heavier brine to the surface. A five stroke 9" pump was driven by a Bull Engine. Designed by Edward Bull, a Cornish engineer. The Bull engine differed from the standard Cornish beam engine being that it had no beam! This is because the steam cylinder is inverted over the pump, eliminating the need for the beam. (takes up less space) The Bull engine could pump 3.4 million gallons of water every 24hr! There is only one left working in the world and this is at London museum of water and steam.

The volume of production of brine was now vast, 45,000 gallons per hour, so an area on the West side of the River Wyre was chosen to build the purifying works and the ammonia soda works. This was called Burn Naze. These plants processed the salt and brine that was pumped across the river from the brine reservoir at the shaft head by a 10" steel pipe. The stresses of the tidal river wreaked havoc on the steel pipe and it was later replaced with an armoured rubber pipe.

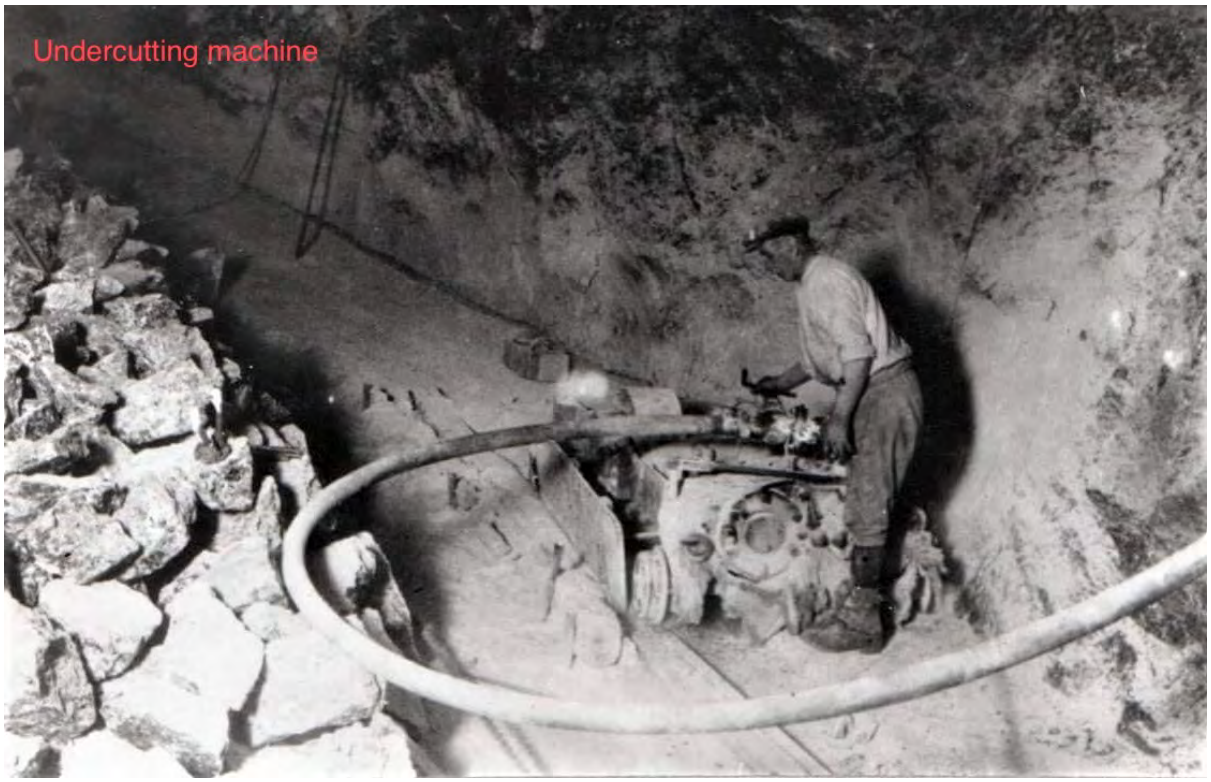
The Preston and Wyre railway ran right past the works to the docks and an agreement was made for them to transport the salt to Fleetwood Docks for export. The rate was 4d per ton plus 2d for tipping loose salt onto the ships. A dam five hundred yards long had to be built to 'reclaim' 22 acres of marsh land for the siting of the works. It was built in 1889 by T.Riley of Fleetwood.

While waiting for the works to be completed the No2 shaft was allowed to flood to dissolve the salt, but, upon the commencement of pumping inspection of the brick lined shaft bottom, found it to be hanging in mid-air as the salt had dissolved all around it. Urgent repairs were carried out! After repairs of the shaft salt extraction was at full steam ahead, fresh water being pumped from No17 shaft to No2 shaft, left to saturate and then pumped to Burn Naze.

In December 1889 an American drill rig bored No21 borehole and at 261ft salt was discovered, this was unable to be extracted as it wasn't on company owned land!

In 1890 The Salt Union Ltd was bought out by United Alkali Co. Ltd and the way the salt fields were mined was about to change! Due to subsidence caused by the salt caverns dissolving near to the surface, the overlaying marl (Mud) could not support itself and began to collapse. To prevent this from happening traditional dry mining was started. Shafts No 3 and 4 were sunk around 1893 with one at 470ft and the other at 900ft to enable extraction at two horizons in the middle of the salt deposit. They were called the Upper and Lower Mines. Metal mines generally suffer from water ingress and it is nothing more than a nuisance but in a salt mine water ingress can be deadly and avoided at all costs. This was a major construction headache as sand beds and pockets of water in clay had to be dug through. 7 ½ ft timber shafts were sunk through the upper marl which contained the water until the ground became more stable. Upon reaching stable ground a foundation was put in with blue bricks and Portland cement. Then 6ft diameter cast iron tubing with socket and spigot was installed from the foundation to the surface, with any free space between being packed with clay to make it watertight.

To start the mine at the base of the shafts an air compressed tunnelling machine was brought in; this could drive 5½ft diameter tunnels at a rate of 360ft per week and were driven in a westerly direction for 'considerable' distance before being driven easterly the same. The widening of the headings was done by a compressed air rotary undercutting machine which



drove a ‘roofing’ 105ft long. A roofing is 6ft from the height of the top of the salt deposit forming the mines roof. Special undercutting machines had to be manufactured, as the same type used in coal mines couldn’t cut through the tough rocksalt. Once the roofing has been completed the whole of the salt deposit can then be mined in a typical open quarry way blasting lumps from the face.

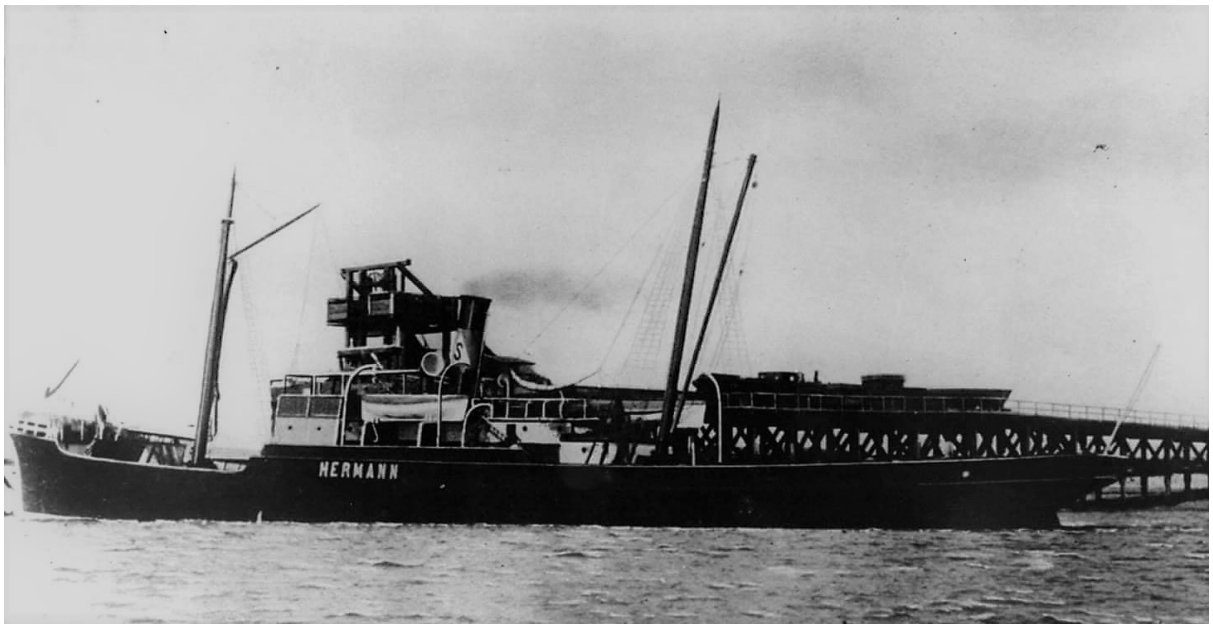
The shafts were driven just 20 yards apart to enable the same winding engine to serve both shafts; for the men working the deep mine this was the only way in and out with only one rope long enough, a sobering thought. The men were lowered down the shaft not in cages as you would imagine but by riding in wooden tubs called ‘hoppets’. Two guide ropes guided a horizontal bar from which three chains hung and the ‘hoppets’ could be attached to these. Each ‘Hoppet’ could hold 1.5 ton.

Bogies on rails were used underground in the caverns as would be similar practice in slate mines. Black powder in compressed cartridges was used and the shot holes hand drilled. Unlike the hard work in metal mines a 1 ½ hole 5ft deep could be hand drilled in 45mins! Chambers 105ft long and 40ft high were standard chambers! 60ft pillars being left in for roof support.

As time went on the mines evolved with electric mercury vapour lamps illuminating the vast voids, made by Cooper Hewitt. Elliot rachet drills with friction feed brakes were modified with compressed air motors to the feed screws, and were used to cut the hole drilling time from 45 minutess per hole to 5 minutes!

By 1906 the mine was producing 140,000 tons per annum and the mine estimated at ¼ square mile. Preesall had turned from a rural idyll farmland into a bustling army of workers, the lanes were filled with workmen and miners, new structures popping up in fields and the 24hr pumping of the brine reverberated across the fields.

A purpose-built jetty was built on the river with the tramway being laid from the mine to the quay. Here boats were loaded with the salt for export. The Australian and South American markets were regulars. The tramway was extended to the No5 shaft and in 1912 it was connected to the Knott-End to Garstang main line by a mile-long branch line. The No 2 Locomotive called 'Sir Max' was used to shuttle salt from the mines to the quay and the main line.



Ship being loaded with salt from the jetty

The mine had various steam pumping engines, although I cannot find any records on the type, the only comment being that water was supplied to them via the various bore holes, but due to the hardness of the water a special softening plant had to be built to treat the water.

As the mine grew the brine wells were pumped dry and sealed to prevent any chance of flooding should the mine breach an old chamber. As No2 shaft was being pumped dry it was noted again that the base of the shaft was damaged due to salt saturation. After repairs it was capped and a decision was made to sink a new shaft away from the deposit; this was No5 shaft and unknown at this time became the ruination of the mine! Driving No5 shaft was trouble from the start with the first 100ft being mainly through quicksand! The completed depth was 500ft and at the base tunnels were driven into the salt deposit near the recently capped No2 shaft. No5 was then flooded with water and the brine extraction via pumping was continued.

Accidents were similar to other mines, explosions, flying lumps of rock salt, staging falling, accidents with the bogies, men getting trapped etc. On the 12th June 1905 Frederick Davies and Arthur Phillips were dressing No4 shaft at a depth of 480ft from the surface. They were stood on wooden staging when large lumps of rock salt fell onto the staging. Arthur saw the staging collapsing on Fredericks side and reached out to grab him, he got hold of his vest but had to let him go as he lost his own balance and had to save himself. Frederick fell 420ft to his death, and as far as Arthur could remember he didn't let out a cry.

Chemical technology was moving on, and in 1905 various other buildings around Burn Naze were built to manufacture the various salt bi-products. Demand was high and 140,000 tons, from both the dry mines and shaft No5, were supplied to the factories in the same year. No 5 shaft was mothballed around 1911 as it was thought the area extracted by solution mining had reached its maximum. The pumps were stopped, and water was left to fill the chambers and shaft.

The outbreak of war in 1914 affected operations slightly as most male miners were called up or volunteered for military service. The women took over from the men working in the mines and productivity did not drop much during the war years. The situation remained stable until March 1919 when brine was noted leaking through the roof of the Upper dry mine, also the level of water in No 5 shaft was dropping. Pumping was commenced in the mine as thousands of gallons per hour were entering the mine. £3,000 was spent to try and seal the leaks in the mine and to also fill and seal No5 shaft with clay and concrete. After a year, between 7,000 and 8,000 gallons per hour were pouring into the mine. This worked for a while…..

The reason for the collapses of the brine wells was due to poor geological knowledge in the early years of brine pumping, the halite or salt being completely mined away to the underside of the marl mudstone layer. This in turn cannot support its own weight and eventually succumbs into the void. Later the brine wells were left with a halite roof and air was forced in under pressure to effectively seal the chamber so it would support itself.

June 1923 a 12ft deep hole appeared in the field a few hundred yards away from the dry mine shafts; one week later it was 60ft deep with a diameter of the 35ft. The sinkhole continued to grow through the next few months until on October 5th the local paper 'The Chronicle' reported 'The Cavity That Roars' as overnight the final collapse of the hole had been heard four miles away. The great hole was visited by hundreds of curious onlookers and geologists who described the depth and size that would swallow Blackpool Tower and leave no trace. The ground had collapsed into an old brine well chamber and did not stop growing until January the following year. The hole is known locally as the 'Bottomless'.

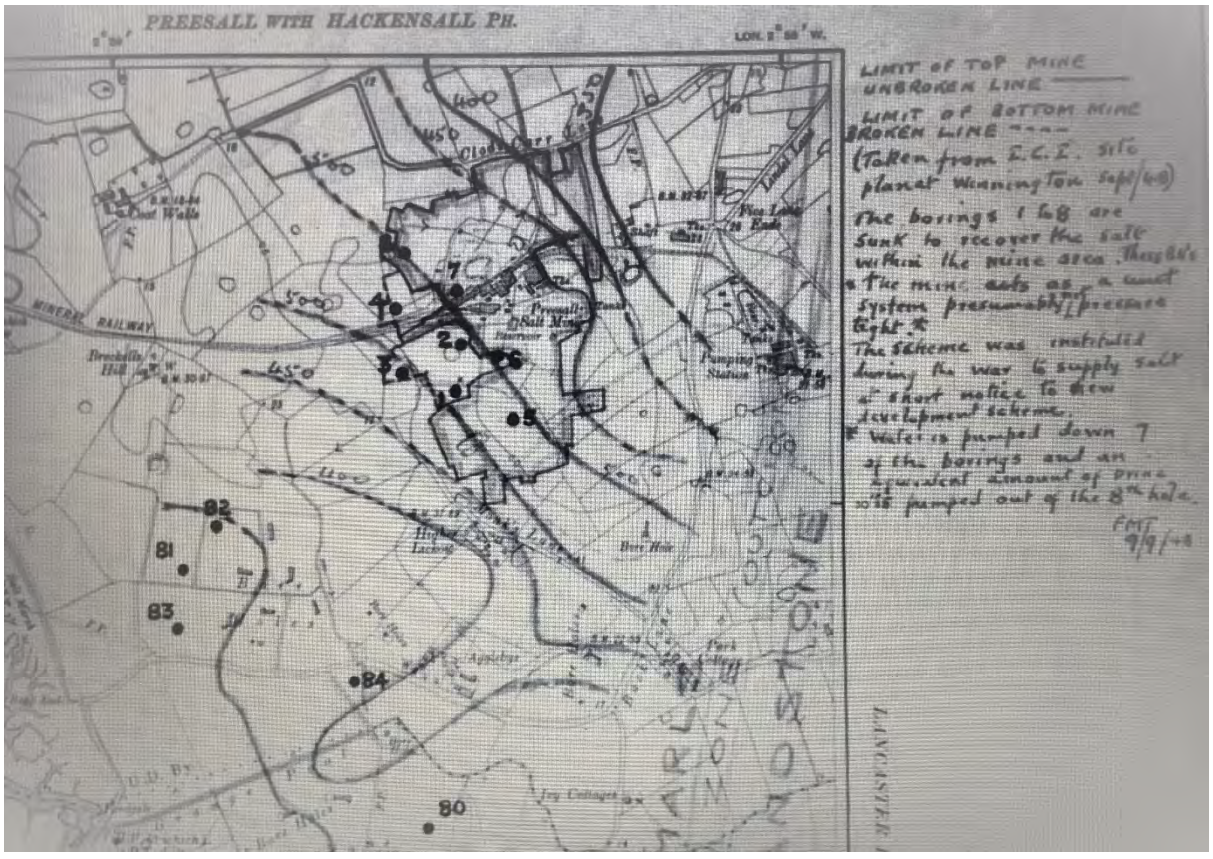
June again but this time 1930 and another subsidence, this time right next to the mine shafts. Unfortunately a 40yard square area of land collapsed and water breached the Upper Mine and started to pour in. All the men we evacuated safely and pumps were brought in to try and save the mine. Sadly, the water was dissolving the pillars left in to support the roof and as a consequence the mine had to close completely in 1931. All machinery was removed and the mine was left to flood; this only took a few months. In 1934 another subsidence occurred near the shafts collapsing into the old mine, which forced brine up the two shafts and high into the

air, flooding the surrounding fields. This ‘Flash’ or lake is known locally as ‘Big Hole’ Altogether there have been eight brine well collapses, with the latest being in 1994 at the Height’o’th’Hill.

With the mine permanently closed, all efforts were returned to brine pumping at the various other boreholes, the 300 men employed in the mine were cut down to between 20 and 30. In 1941 eight boreholes were sunk onto the old mine voids; seven boreholes had freshwater pumped into them while the eighth borehole down dip from the others was extracting the denser brine.

In 1956, in order to secure their water supplies for future production, ICI purchased twenty farms from the Elletson family, amounting to 1,550 acres of land in Pilling. By this time the buildings at the mine, along with the jetty and rail links had been dismantled. ICI continued to pump brine into the 1980s until itself was asset stripped and dismembered, the Elletson family buying back some of the land it had sold. Maintenance of the brine wells continues and is closely monitored due to risks of further subsidence. The brine wells are filled with a saturated solution to prevent the chambers from collapsing. Seven hundred and forty five boreholes are known now in the area.

Halite Energy Group Limited are attempting to secure the Preesall salt mine area in order to store natural gas underground. This may or may not involve the use of the caverns created by the mining operations. At present plans are on hold. Michael Oddie.



The only known plan of the underground mine.

The Day the Mining Stopped

Article extracts from the 'Whitehaven News' 30th March 2006, mildly edited & altered to reflect current date/times, and images added.

27th March 2020 marks thirty three years since the closure of Haig Pit, when 600 years of deep coal mining in and around the Whitehaven area came to an end.

Haig Pit. Miners at the Shaft Bottom

Those closely involved with the long and emotionally-charged wind-down and ultimate closing of the county's last deep coal mine will spare a nostalgic thought for those times gone by, of dirt and dark and back-breaking work ... and of a community spirit and comradeship unmatched.

It was in March 1986 that Haig closed for good after a tortuous two years trying to find a rescue formula. It was a shattering blow to the local economy. The hovering gloom was a reminder of the grim times of mining disasters of earlier decades that had mercilessly claimed life and limb. This time jobs and livelihoods were the victims and the effects were to be felt throughout West Cumbria. It was the end of a way of life that had been going for generations but also an unspoken relief that local menfolk would no longer have to toil in underground dark and dirt and risk their lives on a daily basis, just to earn a living.

So, as the last shift reached the top shaft at Haig the men handed in their tags, lamps and helmets for the final time, marking the end of the pit's 72-year history and of deep mining's long, sometimes tragic, but always proud traditions.

Most of the five hundred and eighty mineworkers were major family breadwinners and the likelihood of them finding new work was slim. Around one hundred and sixty were initially kept on for exploratory work ... but in the end just for salvaging. Some of the younger men and their families elected to move to coalfields in other parts of the country.

The enforced redundancy situation hit particularly hard at the Morton family. Albert Morton, the third generation to mine coal, was due to marry on the very day the Coal Board finished the men. He and his bride Susan decided to uproot and move to Staffordshire, intent on finding work there. The family association with Haig had started in 1932 when grandfather Albert started work in the mine. His son, also called Albert, worked there for twenty eight years. And there were many stories like theirs.

Severe faulting of the seams and the high cost of developing the mine further had made the task of finding good coal to work profitably nigh on impossible, and it all came at a time when nationally miners were in dispute with the Coal Board, and their flying pickets were causing a virtual shutdown of the industry. Amid fears for their own future, the Whitehaven pitmen voted against joining the national strike action.

Haig was sunk during the years of World War I (1914-18) and stretched out four miles under the Irish Sea. The considerable distance that the men had to walk from the shaft bottom to the coalface meant the loss of valuable man-hours in each shift, so in 1939 one of the fastest man-riders, with a 350hp mechanism, was installed at Haig Pit, carrying workers a distance of three miles at fifteen miles per hour.

During its life Haig had suffered its own share of tragedy. There was loss of life in 1922 when thirty nine were killed, and in 1927 (four killed), 1928 (thirteen) and 1931 (twenty seven victims). The 1922 disaster particularly devastated the nearby Thwaiteville community of Arrowthwaite, where one family, the McCreadies, lost three of their menfolk, father and two teenage sons. A widow was left with five young children. Bodies were identified at an inquest held in the engine house of the pit.

Haig’s demise was ultimately down to the balance sheet; it had racked up losses of £27m in ten years. Anger, blame and allegation abounded, but rumours that Haig had been earmarked for use as a dumping ground for nuclear waste were quickly dispelled.

In February 2001, two hundred people gathered for a special service held over the shaft of Haig Pit in memory of the fourteen men entombed in the mine seventy three years earlier. It marked

Daily Mirror colourised photo of Haig taken at the time of the September 5th 1922 explosion.

the anniversary of day when a party of mine officials went down Haig and became victims of a methane explosion. Two months before there had been an explosion when four men were killed, but only three bodies were recovered. A party of thirteen, including a member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate from London, local senior management, representatives of the overmen, deputies and shotfirers and workmen. went down to look for the missing man and see if the underground district could be re-opened. They were all killed and their remains are still sealed behind the stoppings down Haig. A memorial plaque was erected in the pit yard.

The Memorial plaque in Haig Pit yard

Whitehaven's newest mining memorial is that at South Beach created by Colin Telfer.

Whitehaven News interview extracts:

n. Ex-miner Ronnie Calvin: "I was always proud to be called a collier. The mining community is special, Whitehaven is built on coal and it cost a lot of lives.''

n. Late miner's poet and ex-pitman John Skelly: "As a boy of fourteen I had to go down the pit. My memory was of near-slavery in awful conditions, men working with nothing on except clogs because of the heat and lack of ventilation.

"These were brave and courageous miners, they had a comradeship not to be found elsewhere and they should never be forgotten by the people of this town. Nor should the widows and families who were left to look after the children of the lost miners.''

n. Ex-miner Ray Devlin: "Before retirement at sixty five became compulsory in British collieries each coalfield could boast miners who were still working in their seventies and eighties. There was strong rivalry between the areas as to which employed the oldest or the longest-serving collier, and Whitehaven certainly had its fair share; one had sixty seven years continuous service in the Whitehaven pits, all of it underground!''

n. Grandson of a Cumberland coal miner, Melvyn Bragg: "I think the people of the mining community that existed alongside the Solway had exceptional qualities - good humour, despite frequent hardships, loyalty, although so often let down, resolute in the face of constant exploitation.''

Compiled & re-written by Kevin Timmins.

National Archive photo, showing the sinking of Haig Pit in 1914

National Archive photo, showing the construction of Haig Pit, 1914/1916

Photo showing demolition of Haig Colliery 1986/1987.

Photo with permission of John Harkness.

Stone tools and prehistoric metal mining in Cumbria

Over the last 30 years a combination of field survey, archaeological excavation and radiocarbon dating has shown that at least fourteen metal mines in England and Wales were worked during the Bronze Age. The largest of these prehistoric mines are Alderley Edge (Cheshire), Ecton (Staffordshire), The Great Orme (Conwy), Parys Mountain (Anglesey) and Cwmystwyth (Ceredgion) ; a further nine smaller Bronze Age mines have been identified in mid Wales. Most of these mines date from the Early Bronze Age, 2000-1500 BC, but working at the Great Orme continued until around 1200 BC at which time it was one of the most important producers of copper ore in Europe.

Many of these prehistoric mines can be identified today by the presence of shallow opencast workings associated with spoil tips containing burnt rock and charcoal – from firesetting – and broken stone tools. The most common stone tools are hammer-stones - large oval, water-rolled cobble hammer-stones, generally 15-20 cm long, with distinctive batter marks at one or both ends. Some of the hammer-stones have peck marks or notches on their sides to secure a flexible wooden withy handle; at Alderley Edge, uniquely, many of the stone hammers have distinctive deep grooves pecked around their centres. These were multifunctional mining tools, used as hammers for pounding a fireset face, for hammering wedges of bone and stone into joints and fissures and for crushing ore.

A typical hammer-stone from the Bronze Age mine at Erglodd near Tal-y-bont, Ceredigion.

An Alderley Edge hammer stone.

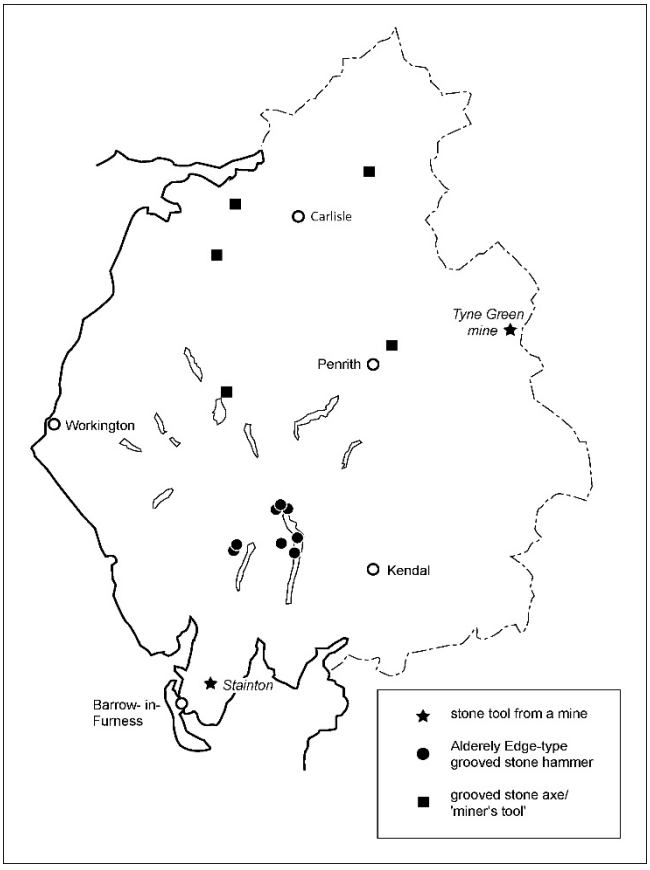
Have any stone tools been found at Cumbrian metal mines? In W. Wallace's 1890 'Alston Moor: it's Pastoral People; it's Mines and Miners', published in 1890, is the following short but intriguing statement:

> In the Tyne Green mines, as I have been informed, a large stone hammer was formerly found, near the surface, the remains of a rope formed of leather, and a wooden spade.

No further information is given and neither the stone tool nor the other items described by Wallace appear to have survived. The Tyne Green lead mines are at the head of the South Tyne and comprise two lead veins (Middle and High/Far Tyne Green), part of the Tynehead vein complex. Wallace's sparse account says that the stone hammer and other objects were found 'near the surface', which might suggest a shallow working or open-cut. Although no description is given of the stone tool, it was obviously unusual enough to attract the attention of nineteenth century miners.

Also of interest are a number of distinctive grooved stone tools from the Windermere - Coniston area (three from Ambleside, two from Windermere, two from Coniston and one from Hawkshead) that are very similar in size and form to the grooved tools from the Alderley Edge mines in Cheshire. Ambleside, Hawkshead and Windermere are some distance from any metal mines and the grooved stone tools from these locations are best interpreted as fishing weights or net sinkers. However the two examples from Coniston have batter marks on their ends, indicating that they had been used as hammers. These two tools were rediscovered in the loft of a farmhouse on the east side of the Old Man; their original findspot (s) is unknown but the possibility that they were found at or close to the Coniston copper mines cannot be discounted. [1]

Kendal, Keswick and Tullie House museums contain examples of unusual polished grooved stone axes, three of which (from Wigton, Keswick and Eden Hall, Penrith) have been described as 'miners' tools'. With the exception of the grooved stone axe from Keswick, none of these implements were found near a known metal mine or mining area and they may have acquired the spurious title 'miners' tools' because of their passing resemblance to the better known grooved stone hammers from Alderely Edge.



Map of Cumbria showing Stainton and Tyne Green mines and the locations of grooved stone tools and 'miner's tools'.

There is a curious antiquarian account of stone tools from a Furness iron mine. G. M. Tweddell's 'Furness, Past & Present, its History and Antiquities', 1870, describes the following discovery at Stainton in Urswick parish:

> ...in driving a level from the foot of a shaft at Stainton, one of the "Old Men's workings" was discovered, and within it, in front of a breast of ore, two polished stone celts of the usual type were found, and a rude implement of iron. One of these celts, stained with red hematite, is now in the possession of Mr S H Jackson, solicitor, of Ulverston, and there are other facts [not mentioned] which prove the ancient Britons were iron miners.'

Stone 'celt' was the term used during the nineteenth century to describe Neolithic polished stone axes (of the type produced at the axe quarries in Langdale and on Scafell Pike in the period 4000-3000 BC). How do we account for two Neolithic stone axe heads in an iron mine? The most likely explanation is that the axes were deposited in a natural fissure or cave which was cut into and exposed during nineteenth mining; the probable ritual deposition of polished stone axes in limestone pavements is known from elsewhere in Cumbria, for example at

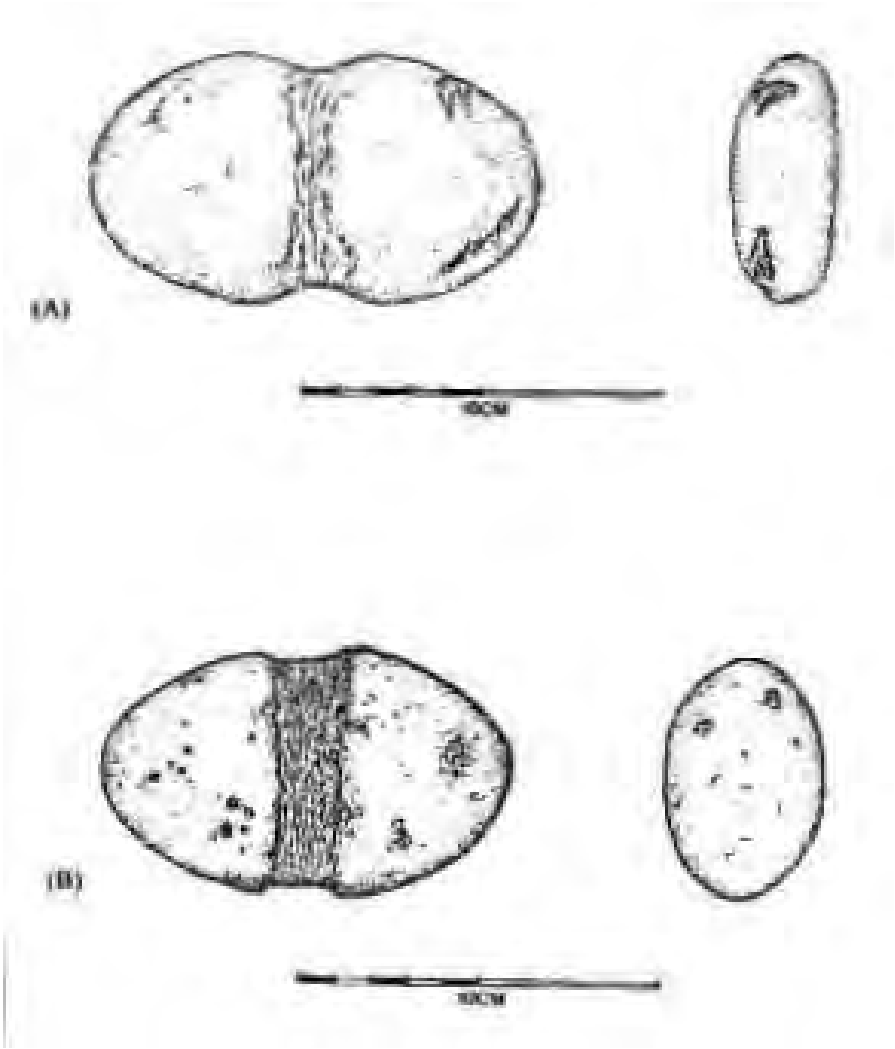
[1] Lund, J. 1999. The rediscovery of two stone hammers from Coniston, Cumbria. *Archaeology North* 16, 14-15.

Skelmore Heads near Ulverston where four axes where found hidden in a gryke. Alternatively, the axes might have been used during the Neolithic as mining tools to extract hematite as a pigment for colouring fabric, leather, wood, pottery and bodies.

The apparent absence of stone mining hammers in Cumbria suggests that there was no significant exploitation of the county's mineral deposits during prehistory. Hundreds – possibly thousands – of hammer-stones hammers have been found at the prehistoric mines at The Great Orme, Cwmystwyth and Alderely Edge. Cumbria, by way of contrast, has produced a single possible example from Tyne Green, two possible but inconclusive examples from Coniston and an antiquarian report of polished stone axes from a Furness iron mine.

But how thoroughly have we searched for evidence of early mining in the county? As recently as 2015 a large but previously unrecorded Bronze Age mine was found by chance at Penparc, Cwmystwyth during geological fieldwork.[2] Similar evidence for prehistoric mining could still be lying unrecognised on a Cumbrian fell.

John Pickin.



Drawing of the stone artefacts found at Spoon Hall farmhouse, Coniston, described by Jamie Lund in Archaeology North No 16.

[2] http://www.earlyminesresearchgroup.co.uk/excavations.html

The Crosthwaite Parish Records 1562 – 1600

St Kentigern's Church Crosthwaite, on the edge of modern day Keswick, was the Parish Church for a large area including Borrowdale, Newlands, St Johns and Wythburn (Thirlmere). The Parish Registers record all of the Marriages, Baptisms and Burials from 1562. These records were diligently transcribed from the original hand written Registers and published in multiple volumes in 1928. Volume 1 covers the period from 1562 to 1599, and within these records we can find a treasure trove of information about the men, women & children who came over from modern day Germany and Austria to exploit the mineral riches of the Lake District Fells. For simplicity we will simply refer to them as "Germans".

Very briefly, the first arrivals from Germany were in 1563, when six men under the leadership of Daniel Hechstetter came to England to investigate the mining potential. In June 1564 a larger group of over a dozen Germans were in Keswick locating and trying various copper and lead veins in the Derwent Fells and Grasmere area. They obviously liked what they found because the following year, summer 1565, a much larger group of up to fifty Germans arrived in Keswick, via Newcastle, some with wives and children, to start large scale mining and smelting operations in the Lake District. Over the next few decades there were many comings and goings of Germans and their families. Some stayed long term in Keswick (in fact many never returned to Germany at all), whilst others stayed for as little as a year before going home to Germany.

Within a very short period of their arrival we see reference to these German men and their families in the Parish Register. The Registers were written up in a quasi-latin script which gave the Parish Clerk the opportunity (or excuse) for appalling spelling inaccuracies and inconsistencies. But at least the Clerks noted where any record involved a German man, woman or child. Initially they did this by adding the word "Theutonicus" to each entry (Latin for Germanic) but very soon they adopted the description "Duchman" or "Duchwoman". This word derives from Deutsch rather than Dutch. For the next few decades every entry involving a German person is accompanied by this description. However towards the end of the 1500's it seems that the Parish Clerks became less consistent in using this description, which may well be a sign that the Keswick locals had become so familiar with some of the Germans and their families that they were starting to treat them as locals, or at least occasionally forgetting that they weren't.

It should be noted that in the 16th Century, many people never travelled more than a few miles from their birthplace over their whole lives. People from outside their Parish were often described as "strangers" and perhaps treated with some suspicion. So the fact that these Germans had travelled over a thousand miles across several countries and crossed the North Sea, must have made them seem very foreign indeed.

Despite the extent of their foreignness, or perhaps because of it, the German men wasted no time in forming relationships with local women. However, it is clear that some of the early arrivals from Germany were not just single men, but family groups. The first entry we see in the Parish Register involving a German is on 1st January 1565 where Hance Mathlar's son, Thomas, is baptised. Hance Mathlar's daughter, Elizabeth was baptized just less than 12 months later on 16th December 1565. This gives us clear evidence that some of the first German arrivals in Keswick included wives. On 10th February 1566 a German called Felyx Waldner marries a German woman named Eva Stilts. The fact that Eva was in Keswick early in 1566 indicates that she was part of a family of Germans that probably arrived in the summer of 1565.

The single German men who arrived in these early years were starting to marry local women by the late summer of 1565. On 17th September 1565 Johnes Harryng marries Elizabeth Atkinson. Two months later, on 19th November 1565 Symon Puchberger marries Janet Fisher of Grange. This marriage is the start of a Puchberger dynasty, which is worth quickly summarizing:

What the Register tells us is that Simon and Janet have three children in quite quick succession (John in 1566, Leonard in 1568 and George in 1570. Sadly it appears that Janet dies giving birth to George (she is buried two days before George is baptized). Simon remarries less than six months later, this time to Janet Dodgson. They go on to have five children together (Balthazar in 1571, Janet in 1574, Simon in 1576, Margaret in 1579 and Thomas in 1582). By this time the family are living at Stair in the Newlands Valley, and some entries in the Parish Register no longer trouble to describe them as Duchmen. Symon Puchberger dies in 1597 and is buried at Crosthwaite. Shortly thereafter some of his sons (by now married adults with their own children) move to Hawkshead and start working at Coniston Coppermines. It is thought that Simon's Nick at Coniston is named after the Simon Puchberger who was born in Keswick 1576.

One other illuminating fact is that in the Parish Registers the name Puchberger is spelled at least fifteen different ways! The spellings used includes Pusbargar, Pupsbarghar, Puphbargar, Pufparker and even Brichbarger. This clearly suggests that the Parish Clerks were writing the name down phonetically and often struggled with the Germanic accent or pronunciation.

Between 1565 and 1599 there are sixty marriages to Duchmen, with forty six of these taking place by the end of 1576. The most marriages to Duchmen in a single year was 1568, when there were eleven such marriages out of a total of thirty five marriages that year in the Register. So over a third of all local marriages that year involved Germans. This statistic illustrates what a large impact the arrival of the German miners must have had on the local society within a short period of their arrival.

There is also ample evidence that the German Miners did not always marry their Cumbrian girlfriends but did father children with them. Illegitimate children are diligently labelled in the Parish Register as "Basse Gotten" but in most cases both the name of the Father and the Mother are still given, with the Duchman description applied where appropriate to the Father. The first example of such we have is on the 14th September 1567 when John, son of George Seaver (Duchman) is baptized. John's Mother is Agnes, who is described as a "Singlewoman" (meaning unmarried) with the label, "Basse Gotten" added to the entry. There are six more "Basse Gotten" children born to German fathers and unmarried mothers within the next three years. One of these fathers is Daniel Ulstat, who was a Director of the mining operation and the man in charge of the whole outfit during 1569. The Register tells us that Daniel fathered a child with Essaybell Atkinson, but it appears he had returned to Germany before that child was born. It seem likely that Daniel had a wife and family back in Germany. Essaybell Atkinson is recorded as marrying another German, Steaven Colker, on 21st October 1571. The Register shows that this couple together had six more children born in Keswick, Janet in 1572, Annamaria in 1574, Marcus in 1577, Mary in 1580, Elizabeth in 1582 and Fronick in 1586.

The Register has a total of two hundred and thirty two baptisms involving German fathers between 1565 and 1599, with one hundred and thirty seven of these taking place before the end of 1576. During the 1590's some of these fathers described as Duchmen had themselves been born in the Crosthwaite Parish.

The first burial of a Duchman was on 10th September 1566 when Leonard Stilts was buried. Leonard was the German who was allegedly killed by a mob in Keswick, although questions arise due to the label "infant" being included in this burial record. There are a total of seventy burials between 1565 and 1599 which are described as Duchmen or Duchwomen. Thirty four of this total were buried between 1565 and 1576. Twenty of the thirty four entries are described as Children or Infants, seven are described as Women and seven are described as Duchmen. This indicates a high infant mortality rate and undoubtedly many of the deaths of the women were related to childbirth.

Daniel Hechstetter was the main German protagonist and the first to arrive in Keswick in 1563. For the next eight years Daniel Hechstetter split his time between Keswick and Augsburg in Germany. However in 1571 the Hechstetter Family, including Daniel's wife, Radagunda and their six children moved from Germany to England, over wintering in London, before finally arriving in Keswick in the spring of 1572. Radagunda must have been heavily pregnant during the overland journey from London to Keswick as she gave birth to her eighth child, David, on the 14th May 1572. It is perhaps of interest to chart out the Hechstetter Family at that time, as follows:

Name	**Year Born**	**Place Born**	**Year Died**	**Place Died**
Daniel Hechstetter	1525	Germany	1581	Keswick
Radagunda Stamler	?	Germany	1610	Keswick
Annamaria	1555	Germany		
Emanuel	1556	Germany		
Veronica	1559	Germany		
Joseph	1560	Germany	1569	Germany
Daniel	1562	Germany		
Susanna	1564	Germany		
Radagunda	1569	Germany		
David	1572	Keswick		
Elizabeth	1574	Keswick	1594	Keswick
Leonard	1578	Keswick	1578	Keswick

Daniel and Radagunda and their children never went back to Germany after 1572. Two the children (Emanuel and Daniel Junior) carried on the mining business in England well in to the 17th Century. Some of the children married in to powerful English families, and their descendants went on to hold important offices in England, including Lord Mayor of London.

Note I am using 1 January as New Years day, although in the Parish Registers at that time the New Year started on 25th March.

Mark Hatton.

Year	**Marriages**	**Baptisms**	**Burials** **Total (women) [children]**
1565	2	3	- (-) [-]
1566	2	8	2 (-) [2]
1567	10	6	1 (-) [-]
1568	11	11	3 (-) [2]
1569	5	9	3 (3) [-]
1570	3	25	6 (2) [3]
1571	4	13	6 (-) [4]
1572	2	18	4 (1) [2]
1573	3	12	2 (-) [2]
1574	1	12	1 (1) [-]
1575	3	9	3 (-) [2]
1576	0	11	3 (-) [3]
Sub total	**46**	**137**	**34 (7) [20]**
1577	0	7	2 (-) [2]
1578	1	4	1 (-) [1]
1579	2	5	1 (-) [1]
1580	2	9	1 (-) [-]
1581	2	6	3 (-) [2]
1582	-	10	1 (-) [-]
1583	2	7	2 (-) [2]
1584	-	3	- (-) [-]
1585	-	4	- (-) [-]
1586	-	4	1 (1) [-]
1587	-	2	3 (2) [-]
1588	1	6	5 (2) [-]
1589	-	3	- (-) [-]
1590	1	4	- (-) [-]
1591	-	3	1 (-) [-]
1592	-	4	- (-) [-]
1593	-	4	1 (-) [-]
1594	1	3	2 (-) [-]
1595	1	-	1 (1) [-]
1596	-	2	1 (-) [1]
1597	-	3	4 (1) [-]
1598	-	-	5 (3) [2]
1599	1	2	1 (1) [1]
TOTAL	**60**	**232**	**70 (18) (32)**

Table showing the annual total of Marriages, Baptisms and Burials which are described in the Parish Register as involving Duchmen or Duchwomen.

Patterdale Church Yard

I have had had a long family connection with Patterdale Parish from when my Great-Great Grandfather moved there from Coniston in the mid 1850's; subsequently his sons and other family members worked at Greenside Mine, including my Mum who was the wages clerk. She still says it is the best job she ever had. From time to time I have a wander round the church yard while putting flowers on the family graves.

From research into life in the parish and Greenside Mine, I have photographs of many of the people there and knew some of them. Each headstone tells a story, and many have a connection with the mine in one way or another.

The top left-hand corner is probably the saddest part in this lovely churchyard as there are three graves together, all with the same date on the headstones, July 7th 1952. They were buried on Saturday the 19th July 1952, and the newspapers reported there were hundreds of wreaths and hundreds at the service. Over a hundred had to stand outside the church. After the service the coffins were taken to their final resting place, each one draped in the Union Jack.

Dear to the memory of
George Wm Gibson
Who gave his life for
His friends July 7th 1952
Aged 35 years

In
Loving memory of
My dear husband
Richard Mallinson
Died July 7th 1952
Aged 34 years

In ever loving memory
of
Johnny Miller
Who died July 7th 1952
Aged 29 years
Andrew Miller
Who died Dec 29th 1981
Aged 65 years
RIP

This is when four men died at Greenside from an underground fire which caused poisonous gas to seep through the mine. It is well documented in Grey Gold, by Sam Murphy. This article is about the men themselves, from having spoken to people involved in the accident, members of their families and locals who lived in the village at the time.

The fourth man, Patrick Leo Mulryan, known as Leo, was buried in Penrith cemetery on Friday the 18th July 1952, with the service held at St Catherine's Catholic Church, Penrith, attended by over 100 people.

The accident

To summarise, there had been a fire in the timber lagging in North Shaft over the weekend, which had cut the compressed air line and was unknown to Tommy Hind, who started the Joy Sullivan compressor up and fanned the fumes through the workings. Some of the men had started to collapse and were being brought out to surface. However, some parts of the workings were clear of the gases, so, unaware of the problem, Leo Mulryan and Richard Mallinson, known as Dick, carried on to the 940 N Winze, which Leo descended in a kibble. After stepping out of the kibble he fell ill and men who were passing the shaft top found Leo in trouble. Richard Mallinson set off down the ladder-way and found Leo in a bad way and shouted up that he too was now feeling ill and was coming back up. He got part way up before collapsing on one of the stagings.

Meanwhile a party of surface workers, George Gibson, Eddie Poole and John Miller, came into the mine and reached the top of 940 winze. They looked down, seeing Richard on the staging, and they thought they could hear Leo calling faintly. George and John set off down the ladders leaving Eddie at the top to operate the kibble. They managed to get Richard down to the bottom of the winze and one of them into the kibble. They shouted up to start to bring the kibble up, but air was being lost due to the broken pipe in North Shaft. Eddie was now becoming unconscious and was rescued by a party of men including Cyril Conner, the mine manager. Cyril shouted down the winze, but all was quiet and so the remaining men evacuated back to surface. A rescue team from West Cumberland arrived on site and with some of the Greenside men got to the top of Smiths Shaft, but a gas test showed the presence of Carbon Monoxide and so the mine was evacuated.

From talking to men who worked at the mine, apparently they were brought out in aluminium coffins at night on Wednesday 16th July once the all clear had been given to go back underground. Given the shock to the community, it was thought better not to bring the men out during the day when people would be around. Having been underground in the heat for a number of days, identification was helped by the overalls they were wearing.

George Gibson came from Keswick to work at Greenside on the crushing plant and he had a brother Jim who lived at Keswick, and two sisters Violet, who also lived in Glenridding and was married to Arnold Lewis, who worked at the mine, and Molly who lived in Portsmouth. George was a bachelor and went to lodge with my Aunty Edna and Uncle Hugh (Taylor) at No 6 Browfield, Glenridding for a couple of weeks, while his sister Violet who he was living with was on holiday, but he ended up stopping with them up to the accident.

My Aunty said he had joined the Border Regiment and was stationed out in the East. On examining the regiments records there is a Private G Gibson, listed No 14065467, and he was awarded the General Service Medal with clasp Palestine under army order 146 of 1947,

incident date 16/03/1948, clasp awarded Palestine 1945-48. I think this is the same person but have no detail of when he enlisted.

While he was in Glenridding he was in a relationship with my Grandmother and the family rumours were that they were to be engaged. After the accident Molly, his sister from Portsmouth, came up to see Aunty Edna to collect his belongings.

John Miller, known as Johnny, was a Scotsman whose wife was Iris Mary Constance, and they had two children, Shirley (baptised 15/12/1946) and Barbara (baptised 08/06/1952) When Shirley was born they were living at No 8 Halton Terrace, Glenridding, but by the time Barbara was born they had moved to The White House, which is opposite the Travellers Rest in Glenridding. Johnny was an electrician working at the mine.

His father, called Thomas, had moved down from the Wanlockhead area, which presumably could include Leadhills. In the 1930's when the mines there were closing some of the miners came to Greenside. He initially lodged with my Great Grandmother and Father and their family at No 11 Stybarrow Terrace, Glenridding. The rest of Thomas's family must have moved down shortly afterwards.

Johnny had two sisters, Margaret and Jessie, and a younger brother Andrew, who is buried with him. Aunty Edna told me that Johnny had served at sea, and on looking at the Navy records there are a number of J Miller's listed, but I was unable to determine if any were him.

Patrick Leo Mulryan, known as Leo, came from Tyrone in Ireland about twenty years earlier. He had three brothers, one working at Greenside called Tom, who was in the mine at the same time, and two sisters. He was married to Elizabeth Ellen, had a son called Terry and was living at Browfield in Glenridding.

Richard Mallinson, who originated from Pooley Bridge, lived at 4 Middle Rake, Glenridding with his wife Elsie Elizabeth and their four children, Elaine, Richard, Philip and Christopher.

George, Johnny and Richard were all posthumously awarded the Edward Medal for their efforts to rescue Leo.

The Edward Medal is a British civilian decoration which was instituted by Royal Warrant on 13 July 1907 to recognise acts of bravery of miners and quarrymen in endangering their lives to rescue their fellow workers. The original Royal Warrant was amended by a further Royal Warrant on 1st December 1909 to encompass acts of bravery by all industrial workers in factory accidents and disasters, creating two versions of the Edward Medal: Mines and Industry
In both case (Mines and Industry), the medal was divided in two grades: First Class, silver, and Second Class, bronze, with the medal being a circular silver or bronze medal as appropriate to the class awarded suspended from a ribbon 1 3/8" wide and coloured dark blue and edged with yellow. Peculiarly, the cost of the Edward Medal (Mines) was borne by a fund established by a group of philanthropists which included prominent mine owners, and not by the state.

The Edward Medal (Mines) has been awarded only 395 times, 77 silver and 318 bronze, and the Edward Medal (Industry) only 188 times, 25 silver and 163 bronze, of which only two were awarded to women, making the Edward Medal one of rarest British gallantry awards. Only posthumous awards were made after 1949, and the Edward Medal (Industry) (1st class) has not been awarded since 1948.
The Edward Medal was discontinued in 1971, when surviving recipients of the Edward Medal along with holders of the Albert Medal were invited to exchange their award for the George Cross. Nine, two silver and seven bronze, elected not to exchange their medals.
Source- Wikipedia.

The Royal Warrant, parts of which are summarised below:

Whereas We are desirous of distinguishing by some mark of Our Royal Favour the many heroic acts performed by Miners and Quarrymen and others who endanger their own lives in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others from perils in Mines and Quarries within Our Dominions and in territories under Our Protection or Jurisdiction, We do by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs, and Successors institute and create a new Medal to be awarded for such acts of gallantry:

Firstly: — It is ordained that the Medal shall be of two classes which shall be designated and styled "The Edward Medal of the First Class" and "The Edward Medal of the Second Class".

Secondly: — It is ordained that the Edward Medal of the First Class shall consist of a circular Medal of Silver with Our Effigy on the obverse and on the reverse a design representing the rescue of a miner with the inscription "for courage".

Thirdly: — It is ordained that the Edward Medal of the Second Class shall consist of a Circular Medal of Bronze of a similar design.

Fourthly: — It is ordained that the Medals shall only be awarded to those of Our Faithful Subjects and others who, in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others from perils in Mines and Quarries within Our Dominions and in territories under Our Protection or Jurisdiction, have endangered their own lives, and that such award shall be made only on a recommendation to Us by Our Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Fifthly: — It is ordained that the names of those upon whom We may be pleased to confer either of these Decorations shall be published in the London Gazette, and that a Register thereof shall be kept in the Office of Our Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Given at Our Court at Saint James's, the thirteenth day of July, one thousand nine hundred and seven, in the seventh year of Our Reign. By His Majesty's Command.
H.J. GLADSTONE

Award of Edward Medals, Whitehall, March 31, 1953.
The Queen has been pleased to award the Edward Medal to the late George William Gibson, the late Richard Mallinson and the late John Miller in recognition of their gallantry in the following circumstances: —

On the morning of Monday, 7th July, 1952, a miner who had been lowered down a shaft connecting two levels at Greenside Lead mine, Patterdale, Westmorland, was observed by Mallinson, who had remained at the top of the shaft to assist in the lowering, to be looking ill; although a thick haze and a strong smell were coming up the shaft, indicating the presence of gas, Mallinson descended by ladder to investigate. He reached the bottom and shouted back that the other man was in a bad way and that he (Mallinson) was feeling queer and was coming back up. He collapsed on the way. A third miner who had remained at the top summoned assistance, and three volunteers, including Gibson and Miller, went to the scene. Getting no response to their calls, without hesitation, although the danger must have been apparent, Gibson, closely followed by Miller, set off down the ladder, leaving the third volunteer at the top. This man, on receiving a signal from Miller attempted to raise the hoist, but it would not function. By the time further rescue workers arrived no replies could be obtained from the men who had descended the shaft.

The actions of Mallinson, in descending the shaft to the help of the sick man, and of Gibson and Miller, who went down to the help of both, were in the highest traditions of the mining industry.
Source: London Gazette (31 Mar 1953)

My own recollections of meeting members of Johnny Miller and Richard Mallinson's family.
Between 1999 and 2003, a friend and I put on exhibitions on Greenside mine and life in the parish while it was working, and I remember sitting on one of a row of chairs during a quiet time, when Nan Dawes who lived in the village and had been married to Fred Dawes, a miner at Greenside, and who greeted the visitors for us, brought Iris Miller and her two daughters and introduced them to me. I replied "Iris, I heard you were coming" and we sat down beside each other with Shirley and Barbara on either side.

Iris began to recount the day of the accident. On Sunday night Johnny was in the Travellers Rest and bought his friends a pint, which he said would be the last one. His last words to Iris on that fateful morning were "look after the girls, I don't think I will be back". This was something that Iris had never told the girls, but she said he must have had a premonition that something was going to happen. Both girls were in tears and I was close to it. Shirley said that they still had the Edward medal that their father was awarded and sent me photographs.

In 2002 it was the 50th anniversary and there were still a lot of people in the parish who remembered that fateful day. However, I noticed that the church service on the preceding Sunday had no mention of it, so approached the Vicar about including the accident in the service and was asked to write a piece for the sermon and I also made sure there were fresh

flowers on the graves. Apparently, the church was packed and people such as Eddie Poole, who was involved in the accident, were in tears when the sermon was read out. I made sure that Iris got photographs of the graves and a copy of the sermon, as she and her daughters did not come up until after the service had been held.

For the 60th anniversary, I arranged with the church to dedicate the service to remember those men involved in the accident. Iris and her daughters were going to come up for the service, but Shirley got in touch to say that her mum was very ill with cancer. Replying, I said there would be fresh flowers on the graves and would email photographs and a copy of the sermon to her, which was done on the Sunday.

On the Wednesday, Shirley got in touch to say that her mum had passed away the day before, but had been determined to hang on until the day of the 60th anniversary on the Monday and had been able to see the photographs and listen to the words of the sermon.

I have also met Elaine, Richard Mallinson's daughter, several times over the years, but wish I had had a tape recorder with me. I intend to go and see her.

Writing this article has probably been the most difficult one I have ever written, having met people who remembered the accident, and for some of them it is still a very raw experience. Meeting Iris, her daughters and Elaine Mallinson, my Aunty and Uncle taking George on as a lodger and having to sort out his belongings, finding out about my Grandmother's relationship with George and having two uncles, who I knew, and another relation who were all in the mine on that fateful day. Warren Allison.

CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

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