



CUMBRIA AMENITY TRUST MINING HISTORY SOCIETY

Honorary President. Lord Egremont

A Framework for Health, Safety, and Environmental Care

Introduction

Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society (CAT) was formed in October 1979, constitutionalised for the exploration, recording, surveying and conservation of disused / abandoned metaliferous and slate mine and quarry workings, both above and below ground for both pleasure and posterity. In order to maintain and further the aims and objectives of this society, and to remain at the forefront of mines research, it is necessary for CAT to liaise with landowners and heritage organisations on behalf of their membership at a professional level.

Wherever access for a meet requires members to cross private land the Society will seek to ensure that the requirements of the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act are complied with. Care will be taken to minimise disruption to the activities of the landowner or public at large.

Where intrusive projects are to be undertaken on behalf of the Society the activity will not be sanctioned until permission from the relevant authority has been obtained. Projects within the National Park and on National Trust land require a full schedule and risk assessment to scope the planned activity as part of the submission for approval. Restoration activities within SSSI areas require careful consideration and are subject to strict environmental requirements. The committee will act on behalf of the society and its members where necessary to ensure the project specification meets all the requirements for safety and environmental care and that it aligns with the aims and objectives of the society.

No access to working mines or quarries will be sanctioned by the society unless the visit is organised and controlled through and by the mine operator. Remember these areas are defined as Excepted Land under CRoW.

The activities of the society may be grouped for convenience under three headings:

1. **Field Trips** –Visits to show members of other organisations local mining and quarrying sites, both on the surface and underground.
2. **Meets** –Meets organised by the society and published in the meets list.
3. **Project Meets**- Project activities to explore, record, survey and conserve surface and underground sites and workings (which may be of considerable duration) associated with the history of mining and quarrying in Cumbria.

Policy

It is the policy of the society and the members to conduct all activities in a manner that does not put at risk the health or safety of its members, landowners or the general public. The society seeks to be environmentally responsible and recognises that the requirements of SSSI status apply to many of the mining sites visited.

The society seeks to promote a positive safety culture amongst its membership and it encourages members to undertake training associated with first aid and SRT techniques. It recognises that the safety of an activity results from a working combination of individual expertise and group support to provide a strong team approach. This ensures that a wide range of experience is available and that in the event of an accident initial recovery measures are effective.

Organisation

The society is a registered charity with an established constitution. An elected committee and officers perform the prime functions of running the society and managing the interface with external bodies.

Field trips are managed through the committee as these often place significant demands upon the resources of the society. Members will be assigned the roles needed to plan, implement and supervise these events in an efficient manner.

A listing of planned meets is published. A meet leader, with knowledge of the venue, is identified to be responsible for the organisation, safety and coordination of the meet. To assist members to gauge the level of difficulty the meet may entail, and thus ensure they are capable and equipped to meet the likely demands, the meets are graded according to the society's standard meet controls.

Project meets are more flexible and are not scheduled. These meets comprise members who collaborate to achieve the project objectives as a small team. Project meets may occur at surface and underground locations and their objectives will vary across the wide spectrum of the society's interest. A project leader undertakes to ensure adequate safety controls are in place for the project; an individual from the team will be assigned to fulfil this role for each meet.

The organisation of safety is a combination of collective and individual responsibilities. Where relevant the meet leader ensures that basic requirements for safety are in place prior to the commencement of the activity. Participants are expected to comply with the society's rules and arrangements for safety. Participants unwilling or unable to comply with key safety requirements for the activity will be refused permission to participate in accordance with the society's constitution.

Care is taken to ensure the activities of the society do not endanger members of the society or public. Where the society controls access to mine or quarry workings, simple entry controls are adopted and particular care is taken in areas where children may play or wander unescorted. Steps are taken to ensure that the details of all participants are known and that all key information needed to initiate a rescue operation is available when relevant.

Planning and Implementation

The society seeks to be able to demonstrate that a planned and systematic approach to the safety of its activities is utilised to ensure the safety of participants and the public. The society adopts risk assessment methods to decide priorities for hazard elimination and risk reduction. Risk assessments are recorded on a template are available for review at appropriate intervals. Guidance is provided to assist the risk assessment process and ensure a consistent level of assessment. Control measures, designed to reduce the risk from significant hazards, are established to supplement the standard meet controls developed from the collective wisdom of some 20 plus years experience of society membership. Additional wisdom is drawn from technical guidance and referenced publications as necessary to supplement the expertise within the society membership.

A log is used as a visit checklist, information sheet and simple technical record of the activity. The log and associated guidance and templates are made available to meet leaders via the society's web site. Through this medium safety issues, including underground condition and equipment serviceability, are feed back to the society. The meet leader ensures the completion and forwarding of the meet log to the society web site through the meet secretary.

It is a requirement that all members participating in an activity carry third party insurance relevant to surface or underground visits and participants may be required to produce evidence of current insurance cover prior to joining the activity.

Where specific technical expertise is necessary to set up equipment for the use of the team, e.g. rig pitches, the meet leader ensures that only persons competent in the activity, or trainees under direct supervision, undertake the activity.

Where individuals need specific skills, strength and endurance to complete the activity care is taken to ensure participants are capable. Members are encouraged to undertake initial and refresher training in key skill areas. Where necessary, so that individuals are not placed in imminent danger, additional support from the group is available; either in the form of additional protective equipment or through the use of a "buddy" system of support.

CATMHS safety ropes are the subject of regular inspection. The service life of our ropes is recognised, and they are replaced from time to time. Main SRT ropes have a target life of 3 years, but secondary ropes used for handlines are allowed to remain in service for longer provided they are undamaged and not abused. Ropes revealed to be damaged following an inspection are removed from service and destroyed.

CATMHS do not normally leave descent rigging in situ for extended periods as it may be damaged without visible indication from the pitch top. Where rigging has been in situ for more than 4 weeks it will be inspected before use by a meet. In the event that in situ ropes have to be climbed during a CATMHS meet then they must be inspected fully before the meet takes place since their condition cannot be determined from below. Additionally on all occasions when in situ ropes will be used the Meet Leader must ensure that either replacement ropes are available should damage be found or ensure that all attendees are fully capable of crossing free hanging knots both in ascent and descent.

It is recognised that CATMHS meets may utilise anchors and ropes in pitches that belong to other groups or organisations. In these situations, since the service life of the equipment is unknown, the pitch rigging must be carefully examined prior to its use. Anchors for pitches may be historic anchor points, fortuitous ironwork or modern bolting equipment. These may all be utilised either singly or as a combination to provide the necessary anchorage but should be assessed for their soundness.

Historic equipment is often encountered in the form of hand lines and various forms of protection around shafts and stopes. From time to time, CATMHS inspects hand lines and may effect maintenance or replacement to preserve levels of protection for themselves and any other users. It is recommended that traverses across shaft tops and stopes are only permitted on a meet where the protection in situ is found to be sound and free from damage to ropes or hangers etc.

Measuring Performance

Safety performance is monitored reactively by keeping records of accidents and injuries recorded by participants in society activities.

The meet log is used to record any defect to society safety equipment so that repair or replacement can be implemented. Defective society equipment is immediately withdrawn from use. Additionally, significant changes to the condition of workings, entrances, exits or ladderways etc. are noted in the meet log so that future visits may be planned around the changed conditions.

Review and Audit

The society seeks to learn from the experience of their members and other societies involved in similar activities. Learning is encouraged through the meet logs and consideration of society performance as an agenda item at the AGM. Topics considered are:

- Number of meets
- Equipment usage, wear and tear
- Changes to location access, egress and condition
- Safety issues noted in meet logs and feedback from field trips.
- Technical improvements in equipment from caving and allied sports
- Improvements to society safety management