

NAMHO

National Association
of Mining History
Organisations



NEWSLETTER

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NAMHO CONFERENCES

1. NAMHO '99 Conference

The next NAMHO Conference will be held in the Forest of Dean on 24 September to 27 September 1999. A summary of the details and a booking form are enclosed with this Newsletter.

The theme of the Conference will be "Free Mining and the Mines of the Forest of Dean and Other Traditional British Mining Rights and Areas". There is a request for speakers to talk on "traditional mining" subjects.

For further information please contact John Hine, The Cottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Coleford, Gloucester, GL16 7QF. Tel:- 01594 833217.

2. INTERNational NAMHO 2000

It has been confirmed that the 1st INTERNATIONAL NAMHO Conference will be held in 2000 and will be hosted by Cam Brea Mining Society and Camborne School of Mines. This will be the 21st NAMHO Annual National Event and will be held on 14-18 July 2000. The conference will be based in Truro and the theme will be "Acquire, Record and Display". Full details of this conference have yet to be confirmed but anyone requiring further information should contact Lawrence Holmes, Rivergarth, Bar Meadows, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1SS. Tel:- 01872 278234. E-Mail:- NAMHO@csm.ex.ac.uk

THE CASE FOR Inter 2000 BEING THE Vth INTERNATIONAL MINING CONGRESS

At the IVth International Mining Congress that was recently held in Mexico, Chairman Dr I J Brown submitted a case for the INTERnational NAMHO 2000 Conference at Truro being the Vth International Mining

Congress

Applications were submitted by UK, South Africa, Spain and Greece. All offered various levels of sponsorship and publication of papers and except for the UK, they also offered sunny exotic locations! There were differing views on the time interval between conferences. Greece and ourselves expected the next conference to be in 2000 whilst South Africa and Spain were planning on 2002. The choice was thus between both locations and years.

Spain was quickly eliminated. The case for their Conference was put forward by the local tourism / development / government agencies without representation by anyone Spanish. The Spanish speaking Scot who put the application forward was only given an hours notice to present the case. He was unaware that a prestigious economic history conference that had been due to be held in Spain last August had been summarily cancelled, leaving substantial bills outstanding to at least two delegates who were present in Mexico.

South Africa was not well prepared, though a good verbal presentation was made. It was keenly supported by the Australian contingent present. In the initial round of voting South Africa's vote was equal to that of Great Britain but a subsequent run off eliminated us by a single vote.

Greece's case was presented by a director of Royal Goldfields Inc of Arizona who are prospecting on Milos. They have promised the local government both a conference hall and conference at their expense as part of their suggested "planning gain". Their single page submission was well received, together with verbal promises of sponsorship and advance publication

It was supported by Stanley Dempsey, an influential American businessman and historian (he was Chairman at the 1994 Colorado School of Mines at Golden IIIrd Congress) who was not present and by James Fell and the American group who were in Mexico. Pre-meeting lobbying concentrated on support for travel and accommodation, as well as the location, which was particularly attractive to the Mexicans.

Our own group indulged in a great deal of pre-meeting lobbying. Our Chairman's verbal presentation at the meeting was excellent and is unlikely to be improved upon at subsequent meetings. The leaflet we had available had a good effect but it had much less inducements than did the Greeks.

The final vote, between Greece and South Africa was decisive. In the final confusion of the meeting an organising committee to look at the longer term may have been set up.

The Vth International Mining Congress will be held on the Greek island of Milos

What next? From what transpired in Mexico, it could be a very long haul indeed to get a meeting in Great Britain. The task will become more difficult if each time there are a number of last minute unco-ordinated bids, as was the case in Mexico. Attracting such conferences is now highly commercial (it was worth at least £50,000 to Guanajuato), politicised and bound up with support by industry. We should consider the following:-

1. Agitate for a better international organising structure with a sequence of meetings planned well ahead, probably at two year intervals at specified locations. "We support yours - you support ours" diplomacy.

2. A full and formal submission is required by all countries making a bid. Lobbying should take place well before the meeting, especially amongst the influential Americans.

3. We need funding for travel and accommodation inducements for speakers, together with financial and political support from industry. Rio Tinto, Billiton, Anglo American and others are all based in London and may be pleased to see a conference like this staged in our country.

4. In retrospect, the idea of combining NAMHO 2000 and the Vth Congress was probably a mistake. Certainly the point was seized on by the opposition. Members of each conference / congress have, on evidence of past meetings, quite different expectations. It is, therefore, easy to perceive the destruction of the advantages of either in any attempt to compromise.

5. Although all NAMHO Conferences have been excellent, for the congress there is a need for a much higher degree of academic input, and a wider range of subject areas, than NAMHO has been accustomed to presenting. These will include the provision for, perhaps, three parallel sessions, rigorous organisation, chairmanship and good lecturing / audience conditions, possibly with simultaneous translation. With the exception of the latter, these were conspicuously missing in Mexico and tolerance in future is likely to be lower following the Mexican experience. Something like a hundred speakers can be anticipated and items such as certificates of attendance will suggest the compelling academic reasons.

6. There needs to be specific proposals for publication, with pre-issued detailed guidelines as to how submissions should be made.

7. Use of the Internet is normal in groups such as this. Every attempt should be made to utilise it to promote this and every conference.
Lynn Willies, IVth Congress attendee

WORLDWIDE MINING INCIDENTS

(Abstracts from Mining Journal)

Six Chinese miners managed to stay alive for 4 weeks after being

trapped by a collapse in a mine at Langroa, Hebei Province. They were kept alive by eating their belts and sipping water from the rocks above.

Twenty eight coal miners were killed and 18 are still missing after an explosion at Liushi Mine, Shaanxi Province in China in November 1998.
I.J Brown

BRITISH MINES AND QUARRIES -1998

The current edition of the British Geological Survey's *Directory of Mines and Quarries* lists 119 mines at work in 1998. Some 19 different minerals were being mined but only 4 mines were being worked for metalliferous ores.

The minerals extracted and the number of mines are shown below.

<u>Mineral</u>	<u>No of underground workings</u>
Anhydrite	1 mine
Ball Clay	5 mines
Barytes	2 mines
Calcite	1 mine
Coal	75 mines
Fireclay	1 mine
Fluorspar	4 mines
Gold	3 mines
Gypsum	6 mines
Honestones	2 mines
Igneous/metamorphic rock	1 mine
Iron ore (haematite)	1 mine
Iron ore (ochre)	3 mines
Limestone	5 mines
Potash	1 mine
Salt	3 mines
Silica sand	1 mine
Slate	3 mines
Tin	1 mine

The number of underground employees were:-

Coal mines	75	13,581 *
Metal mines	4	247
Misc mines	44	243

* Includes surface workers at underground coalmines.

Location of the mines

1. Anhydrite is mined as well as Gypsum at Newbiggin Mine near Appleby, Cumbria.

2. The active ball clay mines are near Newton Abbot in Devon and at Wareham in Dorset.

3. Barytes is mined at Silverband Mine near Appleby and at Foss Mine near Aberfeldy, Perth & Kinross.

4. Calcite is mined at Arbor Low Mine near Middleton, Derbyshire.

5. Fireclay is mined at Shibden No 1 Mine, Halifax, Yorkshire.

6. Fluorspar is mined at Frazer's Grove Mine near Rookhope, County Durham; in Derbyshire at Chance Mine near Castleton, Milldam Mine at Great Hucklow and Watersaw Mine at Eyam.

7. Gold mining is carried out at Clogau-St Davids Gold Mine and Gwynfynydd Gold Mine, Dolgellau, (Wales); and Cononish Mine near Tyndrum, Scotland.

8. Gypsum mines are near Appleby; Barrow on Soar, Leicestershire; East Leake, Nottinghamshire; Fauld, Staffordshire; and at Brightling Robertsbridge, East Sussex.

9. Honestones are mined at Quilkiestone and Sundrum Mines near Stair, South Ayrshire.

10. Precambrian igneous or metamorphic rock is worked at the Sullom Mine, Shetland Isles.

11. Haematite is worked at Florence Mine, Egremont, Cumbria for "annealing ore, pigment and mineral specimens".

12. Small amounts of ochre for pigment are mined at Clearwell Mine and at Wigpool Mine in the Forest of Dean.

13. Limestone is quarried underground for dimension stone at Hayes Wood Mine, Bath; Monks Park Mine, Corsham; Teffont/Chilmark and Westwood Mines near Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire. The Middleton Mine near Wirksworth, Derbyshire, is worked for chemical/industrial limestone.

14. Potash is mined at Boulby Mine near Lofthouse, Redcar & Cleveland.

15. Rock salt is mined at Boulby Mine; Winsford (Meadowbank) Mine, Cheshire and at Carrickfergus, Antrim, Northern Ireland.

16. Silica sand is mined at Lochaline Mine, Highland Region, Scotland.

17. Slate is quarried underground at Aberllefenni Mine near Machynlleth, Gloddfa Ganol and Llechwedd Slate Mines near Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd.

18. Tin is mined at South Crofty, Camborne, Cornwall.

Please note that this list is already out of date, particularly with the recent closure of South Crofty. With the ever changing mining scene in the UK it is virtually impossible to publish an up to

date list of active mines.
Paul Sowan

BRE-X MINERALS LTD

David Walsh, the former chief of Bre-X died of a brain haemorrhage in June 1998. He and his wife faced many lawsuits over Bre-X's Busang gold property in Indonesia which had been declared to be a fraud.

The Walsh's, after declaring personal bankruptcy in 1992 and escaping debts of \$C200K, launched Bre-X in 1993 with the help of John Felderhoff, an unemployed Canadian geologist. Bre-X acquired the Busang property in Borneo and drilling showed promising results. Within a year Busang was being reported as one of the largest gold finds yet.

The company's shares soared and the former Indonesian President Suharto became involved. By 1996 Bre-X was valued at \$C6B. In 1997 the company collapsed when an investigation disclosed that no significant amounts of gold could be found, despite twinning holes that had been drilled by Bre-X. An independent audit later showed a massive fraud.

Private investigators hired by the company concluded that the fraud was committed by staff at Busang who were led by former geologist Michael de Guzman. Unfortunately de Guzman allegedly committed suicide in March 1997 by jumping from a helicopter en route to Busang. A body found four days after his disappearance was reported to be that of de Guzman.

Only John Felderhoff remains of the original three players. He has declared that he very much regretted that David Walsh will not be standing with him and others from Bre-X as they continue to fight to clear their names and reputations.

So, readers, if you attend any function that auctions off mine share certificates remember the name. BUSANG! (Engineering & Mining Journal)
PDMHS Newsletter

BOOK REVIEWS

1. "Glossary of Derbyshire Mining Terms" by J H Rieurwerts. PDMHS Ltd 1998. Available from Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath. Hardback, 192pp incl 14 tables and 2 illustrations.

This is an interesting and painstakingly researched piece of work.

It is much more than a dictionary or glossary, occasionally becoming a gazetteer pointing to surviving examples of the term described. It would be interesting to compare the definitions with meanings in the other mining areas but, unfortunately, similar glossaries for many of these areas are not available. Perhaps some of our members could do something about these missing glossaries.

Comparing definitions with words employed in areas of the West Midlands that are known to the writer, there are many similarities. For example, "trees and lids" (pg 157) would be well understood by Shropshire coal miners. Other words, however, would not be understood. For example "Twitches" (pg 162) has a completely different meaning in Shropshire to that in Derbyshire.

To add to the usefulness of the book, the various terms have been cross referenced to alternatives and are included in a Thesaurus as a separate section. Many dates of early usage of the terms are given so that the work also becomes a history book. While some of the dates are claimed as "firsts" in Derbyshire, these are not always referenced.

This is not just a reference book, it also provides interesting reading. We are very fortunate that Jim has made these results from his outstanding research work available to us all. PDMHS Ltd is to be congratulated on supporting the venture.

Dr I J Brown

2. "Coal Mining in Limesdale" by Philip J Hudson. Published by Hudson History of Settle, 1998, 303 pp, soft back. ISBN 0 9533643 0 5, cost £15.00.

Subtitled "An Introductory Study into the History of Coal Mining in the Valley of the River Lune and its Tributaries in Northwest England" this book is largely based on the author's MA thesis. It is an unusual book in several ways: it deals with an area outside the main coalfields; most of the coal seams concerned are within the Millstone Grit Series; it is concerned mostly with archival history derived from old documents and it combines the latter with field archaeology where most of the relics of mining have long been swept away by agricultural improvements, buildings and roads since mining all but ceased in the mid

19th century. These unusual aspects make it almost unique in the annals of coal mining and the author (and publisher) is to be congratulated for his persistence in ferreting out obscure stories.

To some extent this book should be a model for archaeo-archival research in other coalfields. However, it does have some shortcomings. The author admits that he was unable to see some of the documents concerning mining at Hornby Castle near Lancaster but does not say why. Also he would have been well advised if he had sat down with a geologist familiar with the area and sorted out where coal seams could have occurred and what the limitations to mining from faulting might be. In short he does not always appreciate some geological matters and constraints. Only a very few colliery plans are given, though probably none were ever prepared for these early workings. Thickness of seams and their position in the sequence of the strata are rarely given. Bibliographies follow each chapter but some of the references checked were not accurate.

The Ingleton Coalfield, on which the reviewer did part of his PhD thesis nearly 50 years ago, gets rather brief treatment "as it has been done by others" and only one of the twenty or so available plans is reproduced - from your reviewer's work and inaccurately attributed.

The book is nicely printed on heavy glossy paper and has numerous local maps, some not too well reproduced. There are nearly 100 photographs. Even allowing for the poor quality of some archival photographs, half tone reproduction is poor. For no apparent reason some photos have no figure numbers, and a few have no captions.

In spite of the matters noted above, the book is recommended as a well worth while addition to any coal mining historian's library.

Dr T D Ford

3. "The Moorfield Pit Disaster" by Harry Tootle. Landy Publishing 1998, 64pp incl 20 photos, drawings etc, A4 folded soft cover. Cost £6.00.

There is no list of contents, index or list of information sources.

Having recently read a number of rather morbid mining accident publications the writer's initial thought was "not another!". This one, however

appeared to be rather different. It gave a rehash of the reports of the Inspector of Mines, the Inquest and the Newspapers, together with correspondence of the time. However, the book looks at the wider aspects of the disaster. The author has dipped into the account books of the Relief Fund, School Log Books and other registers of the time. It seems to have been written by someone who knows both his technology and social history.

Moorfield Mine was at Althum to the right of "the A678 Blackburn to Burnley road" and the explosion happened on 7 November 1883. In all, 68 died underground, or in the following days from injuries received. The author has found that many more died from their injuries, their "gassing" and even by suicide in the following years. The cause of the ignition of the gas that was issuing from a fissure on the coal face was never positively identified but there was evidence of illegal smoking, relighting of flame safety lamps and of shotfiring having taken place.

Brief "portraits" of the dead and injured are given which give a clear picture of life at the time with more than 20 of the victims being no more than teenagers, 2 were as young as 10 years. One 11 year old died on his 3rd working day, others were "half time" workers and scholars, a 23 year old survived the explosion but was "gassed" whilst looking for his brother.

The manager's son survived and worked heroically in the rescue. He was assistant to his father (who was also killed) at the time of the accident but refused to take on the post of manager after the disaster. He became a publican and when 40 years of age he committed suicide.

There is, as the author says, "a great deal of sadness" in the book but it is also a vivid history lesson. It is clear and well written, even though it is unconventional in some ways. It is certainly worth reading.

Dr I.J Brown

NEW PUBLICATIONS

1. "The Nenthead Mines"

PDMHS has recently published a new edition of this popular Bulletin of the Peak District Mines Historical Society. The original edition was in Vol 9, No 1 of the Bulletin was published in 1984.

This 1998 edition has been revised by the author, Dr Martin Critchley. Besides updating the text to include new information, the author has also partly revised the photographs, drawings and plans.

Copies of this revised publication cost £6.00 + P&P, and are available from M Luff, Publications Secretary, The Coppins, Wash Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, LE6 2AZ. Tel:- 01530 810905.

2. "The Slate Quarries of Pembrokeshire" by Alun John Richards; 200pp; many maps and illustrations; ISBN 0-86381-484-0. Cost £5.50.

The south west of Wales is not thought of as a slate producing region yet prior to the industry's great 18th and 19th century expansion, which made Caernarfonshire and Meirionnydd slatemakers to the world, Pembrokeshire's output rivalled that of any of the northern Welsh counties.

This book, the first comprehensive study of slate quarrying in south west Wales, sets out to provide a brief account of this once important industry and the railways which served it. It identifies and describes almost one hundred sites in Pembrokeshire, southern Cardiganshire and western Carmarthenshire, with historical accounts of the larger undertakings.

AUSTRIAN MINE TRAGEDY

Ten rescue men died whilst trying to rescue a trapped miner in a talc mine at Lassing in Austria. The miner was trapped by an inundation of mud in a gallery about 60m below the surface.

The trapped man was uninjured and was in contact with the surface. As the rescue team was getting organised underground there was a second, more serious, inundation and all men were trapped.

Attempts to rescue all of the trapped miners has involved pumping out the mine. It is believed the subsequent lowering of the water table caused the formation of a 100m diameter crater at the surface into which two houses have fallen.

The mine has been working since 1901 and employs about 30 men. It produces about 30,000 tonnes annually. (Mining Journal)

Dr I.J Brown

MINING LICENCES IN THE ROYAL FOREST OF DEAN

The Coal Authority recently tried to force free miners in the Royal Forest of Dean to pay a licence fee for mining coal. The proposed cost of the licence was equivalent to that of large commercial mining companies.

The right to levy these charges was contested, as were the costs.

The Coal Authority has continued to insist on a licence fee being paid by the free miners, albeit having reduced the fee to a nominal amount. None of the miners are happy with the payment of such a fee. They still insist that the rights they have under the Free Mining legislation give them the right to mine coal in the Forest without any payment to the Coal Authority.

Most of the miners have, grudgingly, paid the reduced fee but two free mines are holding out against making this payment.

J Hine

GRANT TO SAVE THE NATIONAL COAL MINING MUSEUM OF ENGLAND

Mr Alan Howard, the Arts Minister, has recently pledged £770,000 funding to the National Coal Mining Museum at Caphouse Colliery, Wakefield, for next year with the promise of more to come.

Announcing the grant on a visit to the Museum last October, he said that it was important that the coal mining history and legacy should be preserved. The museum had stated that it would have to start running down by the end of the year due to a financial crisis.

Changes to the operation of the museum which are a condition of the funding are:

a. The Museum will be administered by the National Museums for Science and Industry who will assume ownership of the collection and lease it back to the Caphouse Trustees.

b. The Museum will be managed locally and will receive the grant of £770,000 in the first year. Future grants will be subject to negotiation.

FRIENDS OF St AIDAN'S DRAGLINE

Members of the Friends of St Aidan's Dragline recently held their AGM at the RJB Opencast Coal Site at St Aidans, near Leeds.

Before the AGM the members

toured the site and saw the RRW 2000 working in a flourishing coal extraction operation in what was a desolate flooded lake on the last visit by the Friends some two years ago. When the dragline stopped work for the week, the Friends had access to the "innards" and a number of them went to the top of the massive jib.

At the AGM the existing officers were re-elected. Dr Ivor Brown (Secretary) presented a report on the years activities, including the successful negotiation to finance the preservation of the other dragline on site, the American manufactured BE1150. As 1998 was the 50th Anniversary of the manufacture of the BE1150 the meeting ended with a small birthday party for this dragline.

Membership of the Friends is open to all interested persons. Subscription rates for individual members is £5.00 per year and £6.00 per year for families. Family members are advised that there may be minimum age restrictions on some of the site visits that are being arranged for the future.

For further information contact:-
Dr I J Brown, 95 Manygates Lane,
Sandal, Wakefield, WF2 7DL.
Tel: 01924 257137 or A Mutter,
72 Wolds Rise, Matlock, Derbys,
DE4 3HJ. Tel: 01629 584468.

ARROCKS BLACK MARBLE MINE, ASHFORD IN THE WATER, DERBYSHIRE.

This mine has now been fitted with a gate on one of the entrances and a grill on the other. The mine has been secured for safety reasons: it is in a dangerous condition and close to the main road and Ashford village. Chatsworth Estates, in conjunction with PDMHS, will grant access on an occasional basis.

DRAKELOW UNDERGROUND COMPLEX, WOLVERLEY, WEST MIDLANDS

The underground complex at Drakelow had various uses over its active life of about 50 years. Constructed as an underground factory for the manufacture of aero engines in 1941 it had become a "nuclear bunker" when it was sold in 1994. A full description of the development and use of the Drakelow complex is given in "Drakelow Unearthed" by Paul Stokes.

There are 1.5hr guided visits (cost £6.00 per person) available.

Unfortunately no cameras or camcorders are allowed underground. Further information is available from "Travellers Joy", tel:- 01338 4877680.

MINING INTEREST STUDY TOURS

The 1999 Atalaya Tours programme of tours for 1999 is now available. Tours have been arranged to Rio Tinto - Seville and the Iberian Pyrite Belt; Greece and Cyprus - major sites of the ancient Greek world; Northern Spain and Portugal - gold and metals in the Cordillera Cantabrica; Germany - silver mining centres of Saxony and the Hartz; Western Britain - the mines of SW England and Wales; Mexico - the silver mines of New Spain.

For further information regarding itineraries, dates and costs, please contact Atalaya Tours Ltd, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HR.
Tel/Fax:- 01970 828989.

CLEAN UP OF SHAFT AT DOUNREAY

Approval has been given to remove nuclear waste from a shaft at Dounreay in which there was an explosion in 1977 and from a nearby silo.

The shaft is 200ft deep and 14ft wide and was dug during the 1950's in a fractured rock cliff some 50ft from the Pentland Firth. From 1959 to 1977 the tunnel was used as a licensed site for the disposal of nuclear waste. The Wet Silo replaced the waste disposal shaft after the explosion.

It is proposed to remove the waste material from the shaft by using a robotic platform. Grabs will recover the waste and deposit it in a container which will then be raised to the surface. (Daily Telegraph)

I.J. Brown

MEDIA MINING REPORTS

1. RJB is facing the prospect of the first miners strike for 15 years unless it withdraws a threat to impose a five-year pay deal on 7,000 deep mine workers. (Financial Times)

2. RJB suffered blow when the Government introduced tighter curbs on opencast mining development in England. (Daily Telegraph)

3. RJB slashed its interim dividend by 70%, sending its share price to a new low. (Financial Times)

4. Chinese government has given

go-ahead for a few modest UK joint venture projects. At a signing ceremony in Beijing National Power agreed to invest £120m in a £440m contract for a 700MW coal-fired power station in Hunan Province. (Financial Times)

5. Trade and Industry Secretary announced plans aimed at saving 5,000 miners' jobs when unveiling the Governments energy review. (Daily Mail & Guardian)

6. Unwanted nuclear material from power stations and decommissioned nuclear weapons could soon be safely entombed in stone by a new process that has been licensed to a British company.

The Oxford Research Group warns that Britain is set to become the worlds biggest stockpile of unwanted plutonium. (Sunday Times & Daily Mail)

Roger Gosling

THE MILLENNIUM ROCK

A piece of Butterton Dyke dolerite is now on the Russian MIR Space Station that is currently orbiting the earth. One of the reasons for calling this sample the Millennium Rock is the association with Charles Darwin - who "discovered" the dyke. When the sample returns to Earth it will be contained within a travelling display which will be on show at the Potteries Museum, Hanley, possibly in August 1999.

Down to Earth

THREAT FROM NATURAL RADON OVERSTATED

Fears that thousands of people worldwide die each year from lung cancers caused by naturally occurring radon gas may be groundless. For the past two decades, researchers have been warning of the dangers from alpha radiation given off by radon, but they have struggled to find real effects among the general population.

Now David Brenner and colleagues at the Center for Radiation Research in Columbia University, New York, believe they have shown that extrapolating risk from high to low exposure is wrong, and that the real risks from radon in the home are much less than suspected.

The results appear to support the growing number of studies that have failed to find a link between domestic exposure to radon and lung cancer.

They include a controversial survey by Bernard Cohen of the University of Pittsburgh that failed to find any connection between average lung cancer levels in US counties and radon levels in half a million homes.

These results, however, contradict the findings of a British study published last year by Sarah Darby of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's Cancer Epidemiology Unit. She followed up a thousand lung cancer victims in Devon and Cornwall and concluded that people exposed to "high" radon levels faced a greater chance of developing lung cancer. Roger Cox, head of the radiation effects department at the NRPB, hails Brenner's "heroic experimental effort", but says that the number of mutations produced is too low to determine the true biological effect.
New Scientist

WANTED - "REIGATE STONE"

Representatives from the Historic Palaces Agency, who look after Hampton Court, the Tower of London and other structures, and two eminent geologists recently met Paul Sowen and Wealden Cave and Mine Society members in order to investigate the possibility of quarrying some "Reigate Stone". The stone is required to replace the original stone which is mouldering away at the Royal Palaces.

The difficulties in obtaining the replacement stone were explained. These difficulties include the fact that the quarries are underground, the original quarry men's knowledge has been lost and the actual beds used cannot be easily identified.

Underground visits were made to Football Field quarry and the Ockley Wood workings. A visit was also made to Merstham Church to look at the large blocks of stone in remarkably good condition in the 14th century work.... and the very small blocks in poor condition in the 1860's extension. Further meetings with HPA and English Heritage are planned to progress this problem of obtaining the most suitable stone for the renovation work.

Research into Reigate stone and the quarries looks likely to "take off" and recognition and conservation of the quarries and their archaeological importance is now increasingly recognised
News of the Weald

RHOSYDD SLATE QUARRY

There are two recent reports concerning collapses in the Rhosydd Slate Quarry.

1. There has been a collapse at surface level close to the Floor 2 adit. There is also evidence that a further fall is in the offing.

2. Near the buildings at 4 level there is a big collapse as if much of the ground has run in. The underground workings may now be less accessible than they were before this collapse.
Welsh Mines Society

CORNISH NOTES

(Abstracts from the West Briton)

Members of the Cornish Chamber of Mines, the county's oldest mining organisation, have agreed to continue to protect Cornish mining interests even though there are no mines now working in Cornwall (but see below).

Support for the Trevithick Trust has been withdrawn by the Cornish Chamber of Mines and the Cornish Mining Development Association.

The closure of South Crofty has stimulated tourist interest in mining history. This has been shown at the Poldark Tourist Mine where there has been a lot of national and international interest in the last few months. The mine, Wheal Roots, ceased working in 1810 and was rediscovered in the early 1970's and reopened as a tourist mine.

Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, has included Cornish Mining remains in a draft list of potential World Heritage sites. West Cornwall has more tin and copper remains from the 19th century than anywhere else in the world. Cornwall is now left with a unique landscape of engine houses, foundries and other buildings associated with the mining industry.

Maureen Holmes

HOPE FOR SOUTH CROFTY - SOON TO BE BACK IN PRODUCTION!

The South Crofty tin mine at Redruth in Cornwall could be producing ore again by mid 1999.

Towards the end of last year it was announced that after months of negotiations a consortium led by Welsh businessman Wilf Hughes had reached an agreement to acquire South Crofty.

Wilf Hughes is a mining engineer with interests in coal mining and quarrying.

Contracts for the purchase of the mine have been exchanged. The purchase will be completed during March 1999 and the work can start to refurbish the equipment in the shaft and other work underground. At the time of the completion of the purchase, the mine will have been closed for a year.

It is expected that 25 men will initially be employed at South Crofty but eventually it will employ 350 - 400. Central to the future of the mine is a new clean coal technology generator to supply electrical power for the mine. This generator is currently under construction in Switzerland.

South Crofty is still of political importance in the south west of the UK as well as being the last working tin mine in Europe.

GEOLOGICAL COURSES

Once again, Bristol and Nottingham Universities are organising a number of geological field and study courses, in the UK and overseas.

Full details are available from:-
University of Bristol,
Public Programmes Office,
8-10 Berkeley Square, BRISTOL,
BS8 1HH.
Tel:- 0117 928 7153.
Fax:- 0117 925 4975.
and
University of Nottingham,
School of Continuing Education,
14-22 Shakespeare Street,
NOTTINGHAM, NG1 4FQ.
Tel:- 0115 951 6513.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS

Registered Charity No 297301
Registered Office, c/o Peak District Mining Museum,
The Pavilion, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Matlock,
Derbyshire, DE4 3NR.
Tel:- Matlock (01629) 583834.

[wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/adrian.pearce/
NAMHO.HTM](http://wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/adrian.pearce/NAMHO.HTM)

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