

NAMHO Newsletter September 2011

News and events

NAMHO Conference 2011

This year's conference was hosted by Shropshire Caving and Mining Club in celebration of the club's 50th anniversary. The main event was held from 29th July to 1st August at the Field Studies Council's Preston Montford Field Centre, a short distance outside Shrewsbury, with a field trip programme continued into the following week.

The site offered accommodation in a variety of rooms as well as camping in a large field alongside. This allowed most of the 170 plus delegates to spend time on site, enjoy the facilities available and take advantage of the opportunity to socialise with friends from far and wide.

A number of attendees took advantage of the surface or underground trips available on the Friday afternoon prior to the main programme at the weekend. There was a well-attended series of parallel lectures on both days covering a wide range of mining history combined with a comprehensive range of surface and underground trips into both well-known and less- well known Shropshire mines or sites. The highlight of these for some was the winch trip down Chapel Shaft, which permitted those without SRT skills to visit the 40yard level at Snailbeach and see the many artefacts present there.

The standard of food provided by the centre was appreciated by all those who sampled it and the conference dinner on the Saturday night, fully booked for some time, was exceptional. Somewhat to the organisers' surprise, there was beer left over as delegates seemed rather abstemious this year! Nonetheless, there have been a gratifying number of positive comments praising all aspects of the conference.

Andrew Wood, SMC

Future Conferences and NAMHO Meetings

If any NAMHO Member Organisation would like to host a future conference, perhaps in conjunction with their own anniversary, then please contact Kevin Baker (kcbak@hotmail.com) or Nigel Dibben (secretary@namho.org). Help and support is available to assist with the organisation, etc.

Ideas for venues for the twice yearly NAMHO meetings are also welcome, providing an ideal opportunity to showcase your organisations work, meet representatives from other groups and get involved with NAMHO proceedings.

Keswick Mining Museum for sale

Although the Keswick Mining Museum website (www.keswickminingmuseum.co.uk) declares the museum is open for business as usual, it also reports that it is up for sale. It states "This is an amazing opportunity due to the impending retirement of its founder Ian Tyler, the entire Keswick Mining Museum collection is for sale, if interested contact Ian Tyler."

Chinese miners trapped in flooded coal mine

On 23rd August 2011 water flooded into a coal mine in North East China's Heilongjiang Province after workers mistakenly drilled into a neighbouring abandoned mine. At the time 45 miners were underground in this small mine which was operating illegally despite the Government's attempts to close such small, out-dated operations. Of those working, 19 managed to escape, with a further three being rescued on the 27th August and the body of one other retrieved the next day. Rescue efforts continued, including pumping water from the mine and drilling down from the surface to locate further survivors. On the 30th August 19 more miners were rescued, but the odds of the remaining three trapped miners surviving are slim, with large quantities of water and silt hampering rescue operations.

Institute Europa Subterranea

Institute Europa Subterranea (www.europa-subterranea.com) is an unusual species of mining history organisation on several counts. Its origins arise from initiatives in and around the Zuid Limburg province of the southernmost Netherlands, and the Odenwald area of Germany. Amongst the leading lights (and Board Members) are Jacquo Silvertant of Valkenburg, John Van Schaik from Maastricht, Jochen Babist from Reichelsheim, and Luc Stevens from Bruxelles. Understandably, with this parentage, the Institute's interests span the range from building-stone quarrying through to metalliferous mining. There are no personal members, other than the Board, and there is no subscription. The Institute's most evident function is the organisation of meetings of mining archaeologists and historians at an annual long weekend conference, and publication of the papers read. I have attended two conferences, at Freiberg / Sachsen (Germany) (near Dresden and not to be confused with Freiburg / Breisgau (Germany, near Basel)), and at Valkenburg (The Netherlands). An earlier conference was held at Maastricht, in the latter country. These meetings somewhat resemble those of the short-lived British Institute for Mining History and Archaeology, convened in the early 1990s by Dr. Roger Burt of the University of Exeter. The two IES conferences I have attended were convened at the Technical University of Mining at Freiberg / Sachsen, and at the Museum Land van Valkenburg in the Netherlands.

Commendably, those reading papers are expected to submit their publication-ready

scripts in advance. Helpfully, the printed transactions are circulated during the conference at which the papers are read. Impressively, they are very largely all in English, and handsomely colour-printed in hard back volumes (there are some superb colour photographs of underground landscapes). Disappointingly, perhaps, the print runs are very low, and the prices correspondingly high. During the conferences, almost all papers are read and discussions held in English- not just for the sake of the odd Briton attending (three of us at Freiberg, and just one at Valkenburg) but simply because this is indeed the only language in common amongst the attendees, who, this year, were from Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Romania and the UK. Published papers have dealt with sites in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Subterranean and surface visits are included in the long weekend's proceedings. A deep silver mine maintained as a teaching mine by the Technical University at Freiberg was visited last year, and several underground stone quarries in and around Valkenburg this year.

Your reporter has in his collection IES volumes from 2008 to 2011, and can provide a full list of contents. Thoughts for a 2012 conference are focused on the Czech Republic as a possible location.

Paul W. Sowan

AditNow 2012 Calendar and Photography Competition

For the past five years the AditNow web site has produced a calendar as a fund raising exercise. To date just over £2,000 has been donated from calendar sales to groups including Cumbria Ores Mines Rescue Unit, Friends of Cwmorthin, North Wales Cave Rescue and Kelly Mine Preservation Society. This year the beneficiaries have been selected as Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation and the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust. The calendar itself is an A3 wall hanging calendar printed full colour on high quality paper with a different mine featured each month.

AditNow are also running their annual Photography Completion with this year's theme being "Mine Exploration". The first prize is a StenLight S7+ Headlamp, charger and battery, so if you are interested in submitting an entry check out the website for full details.

For more information, to reserve a copy of the calendar or to enter the photography competition, please see: <http://www.aditnow.co.uk/>

Simon Lowe, AditNow

Publications

Cornwall

New for 2011 in the Pocket Cornwall series from Alison Hodge publishers. For further details see www.alisonhodgepublishers.co.uk

Cornish Mines: Gwennap to the Tamar by *Barry Gamble*, Paperback, 112 pages, 139 colour photographs, 150 x 153 mm, ISBN: 9780906720820, priced £5.95

Cornish Mines: St Just to Redruth by *Barry Gamble*, Paperback, 104 pages, 132 colour photographs, 150 x 153 mm, ISBN: 9780906720813, priced £5.95

Cornish Rocks and Minerals by *Simon Camm*, Paperback, 112 pages, 274 colour photographs, 1 map, 2 diagrams, 150 x 153 mm, ISBN: 9780906720714, £5.95

Still in Cornwall

A History of Iron Mining in Cornwall by *Tony Brooks*, Cornish Hillside Publications, PB & HB, 250pp, prices £11.99 & £15.99. ISBN 9781900147514 and ISBN 9781900147521. Thanks to Mike Moore for notice of this item.

More Iron

Neither here nor there? The mining and transport of iron ore from the Brendon Hills to South Wales 1825 – 1925, Volume I & II by *Mike Jones and John Hamilton* Published by the Exmoor National Park Authority in 2010, ISBN 978-0-9563674-0-2 priced at £55. For further details see www.nationalparks.gov.uk/exshop Thanks to Roger Burt for this lead.

From the North

Gone but not Forgotten: A brief insight into the Yorkshire Dales Mining Industries by *David and Margaret Carlisle*, published by the Yorkshire Dales Mining Museum, Earby, in 2010, thought to be available at the museum and local TICs, A5 52pp, c£4/£5

Eyewitness Accounts of Lead Mining in the Pennines: Extracts from:
Notes on a Visit to the North by Thomas Greenbury (1855) and
Lead Mining in the Allendales and Weardale by J. Whaley (1849) Edited by *Ian Forbes*, a Friends of Killhope publication, 40pp, £4.99 ISBN 978-0-9518939-4-4

Ian writes: These two pieces give a splendid account of lead mining and ore dressing in the North Pennines. Greenbury's tale of his visit to Slitt Mine paints a vivid picture of the underground labyrinth of a lead mine, whilst Whaley's description of ore dressing is a

particularly clear and concise account. Both articles contain insights to, the lives and characters of lead miners.

Tin, Malaya and Cornish Investors

Tin Mining in Malaysia, 1800-2000 - The Osborne & Chappel Story by *David Palmer & Michael Joll*, Hardcover, 222mm x 140mm, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-967-10295-0-3 Price: £20

The Malay Peninsular was the principal source of the world's tin throughout the 20th century. The book contains a short history of the mining industry in that country with particular reference to the firm of Osborne & Chappel. "O&C" was one of the earliest of the European pioneers and played an important part throughout the history of tin mining in Malaya and in the Kinta Valley tin field in particular. The book emphasizes the foresight, astuteness and involvement of the Cornish investors who, from the early days, acted as a catalyst for establishing the tin mining industry in Malaya; an industry which, together with rubber, formed the mainstay of that country's economy for so long. A section of the book describes the various alluvial mining techniques used over the years. For further details see: www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?AO=MINING-HISTORY

Don Borthwick

Dates for your diary

2011

12th November: NAMHO Autumn Meeting, Cheddar, Somerset. Individuals from all member organisations are welcome, even if not a named representative, with travel costs for the first representative being paid. Some form of mining related activity is planned for the afternoon, possibly a visit to the Charterhouse site. Full details will be sent to individual organisations in October. If anyone has any ideas for constitutional changes, could they contact either Kevin Baker or Nigel Dibben (contact details as previously mentioned) as soon as possible so that sufficient notice can be given.

December NAMHO Newsletter: Copy for inclusion to be forwarded to the Editor by 30th November please, via:

Email, (with Newsletter as the subject), to secretary@namho.org

Or by post,
c/o NAMHO Secretary,
Peak District Mining Museum,
The Pavilion,
Matlock Bath,
Derbyshire,
DE4 3NR

Note: Could all representatives who receive this newsletter (either via email or post) please forward, copy or just make your membership aware of its existence and ask that they consider contributing.

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