

NAMHO

**National Association
of Mining History
Organisations**



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2022

NAMHO Conference 2022 Accommodation update

NAMHO 2022 will be hosted by the Cleveland Mining Heritage Society and take place in Grosmont, North Yorkshire from Friday 17th to Monday 20th June 2022.

Organised accommodation will be exclusive use of the Holme House Residential Centre and Campsite (normally a Girl Guide facility) at the nearby hamlet of Esk Valley, 1km walk from Grosmont along a footpath at the side of the heritage railway.

We intend to provide camping for £15 per night and bunks for £20 per night INCLUDING breakfast. The downstairs bunkhouse toilets, showers, kitchen and lounge will be available to the campers. Further details and photos are included below.

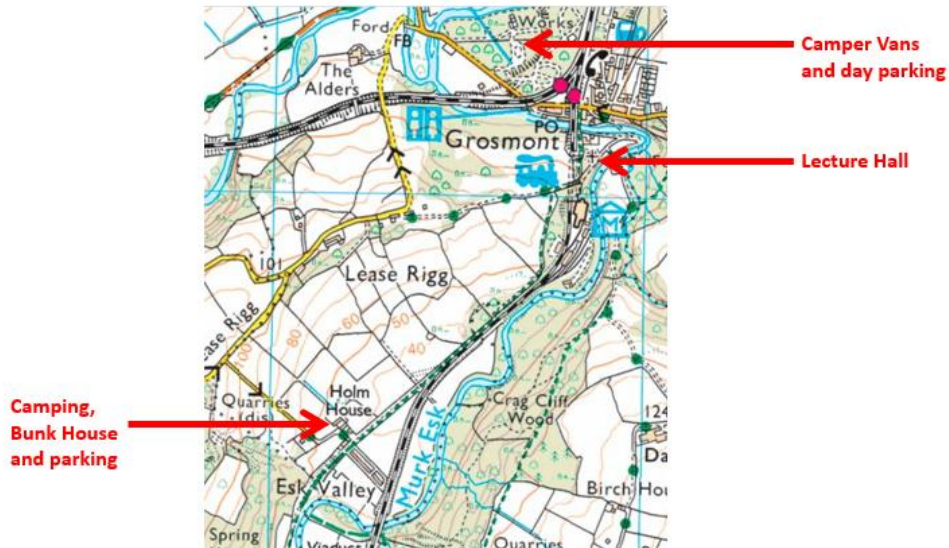
We hope most people will be able to stay here and make the short commute to the lecture venue on foot, rather than attempting to drive/park in Grosmont itself which can be extremely busy on weekends due to steam buffs and costs £5 per day.

Unfortunately, we are NOT able to allow camper vans / caravans at the Holme House site, currently we are planning for them to stay in a Car Park in Grosmont, which is likely to incur the £5 per day fee.

If these arrangements suit you, then you need take NO ACTION at this time, these facilities will be booked via the NAMHO website next year when full details are launched.

However, for those who don't enjoy the camping experience, are unable to make the 1km walk, or would simply prefer to go elsewhere, we recommend you start to make your own arrangement very soon. Staycations look set to be popular again in 2022 and the Grosmont area is a tourist hotspot.

The surrounding villages offer some B&B / AirBNB / Holiday rentals, however Whitby is the only sizeable town nearby, with numerous B&B's, hotels and caravan parks, this is approximately 20 minutes' drive or train ride away.



Facilities at Holme House include:

Large dormitory sleeping 24 in bunk beds

Two bedrooms, each with twin beds and wash hand basins

Fully equipped stainless steel kitchen with 6 burner large cooker, microwave, boiler.

Separate area for food storage. Fridge and freezer. Pot and pans, cutlery, and crockery

Dining room with benches and tables, Activity room with chairs and foldaway tables

Lounge area with low seating and tables

Two toilets with wash hand basins downstairs, plus four shower cubicles

Not provided – sleeping bags, pillows, towels, toilet rolls and cleaning materials

Camping facilities include:

Enclosed campsite adjacent to house.

Use of downstairs Bunk House facilities such as kitchen, dining room, lounge.

Barn available with fridge-freezer, tables and chairs.

Single outside toilet with wash hand basin

Open fires allowed but no turfing

No trailer tents, campers, caravans or dogs allowed



NAMHO Conference 2021

Despite the Coronavirus crisis and non-relaxation of restrictions as was initially hoped for, the Club managed to put on a successful conference. The venue proved to be well suited to the needs of the conference and there appear to have been no problems with the actual venue. Had Covid-19 restrictions allowed, it probably would have been a good location for a Friday night social. To help maintain social distancing when delegates arrived they were able to register for the conference in the Shropshire Mines Trust marquee outside Norbury Village Hall.

The Theme As it was the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Club the theme for the conference was “60 Years of Mining History Projects”. The aim being to look at projects in the mining community that have developed with the growth of industrial archaeology and mine exploration during this period, along with the hopes of what the future might bring. The talks proved to be very technologically challenging and broke new ground with its mix of ‘live’ talks in the hall interspersed with zoom presentations. In addition there were some delegates watching in the hall and others on zoom. All controlled from a remote village hall in Shropshire! Special thanks must go to Peter Eggleston for coming up with an excellent workable solution (after many sleepless nights). Occasionally there was a noticeable Zoom delay, but on the whole it worked well. One advantage of the online element was that it allowed UK presenters, not able to attend and overseas delegates to take part. To pull this off it did require a strict adherence to the timetable which compère Rob Vernon managed excellently

Trips

Steve Holding and other trip leaders did a huge amount of work organising underground trips (which varied from dry, walk-in to multi pitch SRT), surface visits and walks, often with last minute negotiations with landowners for access and places to park. Due to COVID restrictions people were having to travel to sites individually or in their ‘bubbles’ which added extra pressure on limited spaces. Most of the trips were concentrated in Shropshire and the Welsh Borderlands, but a few visits further afield were organised either side of the main conference.

Surface Walks

There were eight different ‘walks’ on offer to delegates and the surface walks programme appeared to progress without any problems.

Underground Trips

Continuing Covid-19 restrictions required quite a bit of last-minute adjustments but there were eventually 46 organised underground trips (this includes repeat trips - some were run four times).

There appear to have been few problems with the underground trips. One trip, added late to the programme, did have some problems and there should be caution of adding trips without adequate advance planning. All other trips had at least one visit in the weeks immediately prior to the conference and individual risk assessments were prepared. The number of underground trips offered did require input of volunteers from other clubs.

SCMC purchased additional rope and just about had sufficient, but the Huglith Main Vein trips were rigged (and manned) using external equipment support

Winch Trips

Basically, these ran smoothly but this is again largely due to the prior preparation. A steady stream of delegates undertook the ride in Chapel Shaft on Paul Thorne’s winch, to access the

40-yard level of Snailbeach mine. Some opted to make use of the winch for just one journey, either making an SRT trip into the mine and out on the winch (sensible) or winch in and climb out! This did complicate things slightly and at times caused minor delays to persons travelling in both directions on SRT pitches where they had to wait for the pitch to become clear.

Andy Kennelly acted as banksman at the top of Chapel shaft and Stuart Tomlins did a great job driving the winch. Over the weekend the driver's brolly doubled up as both protection from the scorching sunshine and torrential rain. One thing that hadn't been taken into account was the possibility of electrical storms while the winch was in operation - luckily this didn't cause any problems, and nobody was struck by lightning!

Conference As Seen by Delegates

It is difficult for the organisers to fully appreciate what the event is like for delegates but there have been very many expressions of thanks from delegates. Most of these thanks have been received by email and only seen by relatively few people but all concerned with the conference should be aware of what I think is an unprecedented level of thanks.

Talking to many delegates afterwards, it seems that despite the Covid-19 restrictions, there was still the strong social interaction between many delegates that are a feature of NAMHO Conferences (anecdotally, despite the Saturday night having a major football match on TV, the Three Tuns, in Bishops Castle was almost exclusively NAMHO delegates). As busy organisers Club members probably missed out on this aspect.

Thanks

To everyone who worked so hard to make this conference happen - judging from the feedback from delegates mentioned above, you also made it a very successful and enjoyable conference. Also, a special thanks to the speakers and delegates who had the confidence to travel to Shropshire to join in or take the time to participate online. SCMC wish to thank the various people who are not club members who helped with leading trips - we could not have managed just from within our membership, thank you. It was also great to welcome David Adams to the conference on the Sunday. As the founder of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club 60 years ago, it was especially nice to see that he felt up to attending the event despite suffering from the advanced stages of motor neuron disease. Although unable to speak he was greeted by numerous Club members and was able to have written conversations with them. Well done, David

Shropshire Caving & Mining Club newsletter

Postscript to the NAMHO 2021 report that Shropshire Caving & Mining Club President, David Adams (mentioned in the report) passed away on 27th November 2021 (funeral held 23rd December).

Important News from Cave Access Ltd

The directors of Cave Access Ltd (CAL) were told on 24/11/21 without any notice in a Zoom meeting with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), that NRW has unilaterally terminated CAL's mine access agreement with immediate effect.

CAL's scheme had been operating successfully for about 6 years without any concerns being voiced. But we are now told that NRW requires strong proof of compliance with statutory

requirements across its estate. NRW said its main concern is ensuring that bats are not disturbed which seemed to revolve around the SSSI status of land. Essentially, we were told That if the land was not a SSSI then bats are not an issue.

This demonstrates a failure by NRW staff to understand bats protection is on a national basis and the SSSI status of particular pieces of land neither adds to nor subtracts from that national-level bat protection which applies no matter where the bats are located. There needs to be more clarity here.

Despite this massive quango being created to integrate environmental management, NRW has divided itself into six operational areas and so no longer has a holistic view of Wales. So sadly the all-Wales access agreement we have enjoyed will need replacing with up to six separate agreements that cover our mines of interest split up by NRW operational areas. We have agreed with NRW to work on a solution to their Northwest Wales area first and once that is deemed a success then to try to replicate it in other areas, but this requires cooperation from five other Land Management Team Leaders which is clearly not a given and we may end up with many different access agreements tailored to these employees.

NRW asked CAL to pay for mine surveys done by professional bat ecologists at various times of the year, to be repeated in future years as necessary. This is infeasible for a voluntary non-funded group like CAL to embrace. So we told NRW that if they held to this idea then we would not attempt to renew the access scheme, leaving them at a dead end.

We suggested to NRW that installing electronic footfall counters (to count all groups using the mines and not just CAL visitors) and electronic bat activity monitors running all year around provided on a voluntary basis would provide a clearer wider picture and be more accountable than infrequent visits by paid-for consultants writing snapshot style reports. CAL is not the only organisation affected by this change. Outdoor Pursuits Centres will also Be affected along with the underground adventure companies.

Unfortunately, NRW is requiring each group to commission its own professional bat surveys even if the surveys done by other groups exist and are in NRW's possession. So, for example, if several local authorities want to use a mine, then all will need to purchase independent bat surveys which concern the very same mine and the cost of this would fall on each local authority. NRW would then have multiple bat surveys for the same site. For NRW's purposes, CAL cannot utilise bat surveys commissioned by others and simply reference them as prior art.

Unfortunately there will be no access through CAL for explorers anywhere on NRW's estate whilst CAL endeavours to work with NRW to find a workable solution for their Northwest Area first. We think this may take a year if NRW is cooperative and flexible. If not, then CAL may wind up and NRW would then be left with no obvious lines of communication with mine explorers in the caving community. Conversely mine explorers in the caving world would have no practical way to obtain permissive access from NRW resulting in a return to the status quo ante which was unregulated, unaccounted for and uncontested activity.

For and on behalf of the CAL directors, Dave Tyson Forwarded by Roy Fellows, CAL Director.

The Rescue

An item of news that has recently 'popped-up' is about the general release of the film "The Rescue" - covering the Thailand cave rescue. There are also special preview screenings before the general release with a Q&A session with the divers. Rick and John had a big input into the film and the makers are going to make a donation/presentation to BCRC at the "Official Opening" in Soho.

On general release from Friday 29th October "The Rescue" is an edge-of-your-seat account of the rescue of twelve Thai school boys and their football coach from a flooded cave system in 2018. It reveals the perilous world of cave diving and the bravery of the rescuers. The film tells the story of the imagination, determination and unprecedented teamwork displayed during this Heroic mission with life-and-death stakes.

There was a nationwide preview on October 26, which included a Q&A with the film-makers And divers Rick Stanton and John Volanthen, hosted by Ben Stiller.

Find times and book tickets: <https://www.therescuefilm.co.uk/tickets/>
Kelvin Lake Shropshire Caving and Mining Club

NAMHO SHROPSHIRE 'REGION' REPORT

Interesting to have Shropshire described as a 'region' but we probably don't easily fit in with any other area.

There are really two NAMHO underground organisations* in the Shropshire area – Shropshire Caving & Mining Club (SCMC) and Shropshire Mines Trust Ltd (SMTL) and both have had a busy time through a lot of 2021.

*IA Recordings are also based in Shropshire but are not a member-based organisation.

SCMC had volunteered to organise the NAMHO Annual Conference for 2021, and despite on-going Covid-19 related problems, there was a strong wish to proceed with some sort of event, rather than have two years on the run cancelled.

More detail of the outcome of the 2021 NAMHO Conference will be described elsewhere, so here, I will simply mention that preparations for the conference involved SCMC members with a lot of prior activity, all squeezed into a period when Covid restrictions were relaxed a bit. All of the mine sites were visited prior to the conference – many visits carried out with significant, but unclear, restrictions still in place. Similarly, use of Norbury village Hall, and its suitability for the on-line aspects of the conference, all needed trial during times of on-going restrictions. Most of the members of SMTL are also members of SCMC and visits to Snailbeach mine were a significant part of the NAMHO conference, so 'normal' activity in terms of opening Snailbeach mine to the public were delayed until after the conference. Since then SMTL has had a busy time with visits to Snailbeach and catching up with lots of maintenance actions delayed by the Covid-19 restrictions. SMTL made the decision to remain reasonably tough with Covid precautions and this has restricted numbers of visitor in buildings and on individual underground tours, but we have had plenty of visitors in the weeks when we have been open.



Snailbeach mine was also used for a major mine survey project and SMTL volunteers (including SCMC members) have been busy in the first part of the year escorting others into the mine. A major part of this activity straddled the timing for the NAMHO Conference. Strangely, 2021 seems to have had an influx of new, younger, members to SCMC and SMTL seem to have had a higher proportion of local visitors. These are believed to suggest good potential for 2022. Thursday's in 2021 have been interesting in that the afternoons are often given over to SMTL conducting maintenance work on the Snailbeach site and SCMC having evening trips into mines in the area, including a lot of SRT training in Snailbeach.

Steve Holding (Shropshire Caving & Mining Club)

Greenside Mine Management Plan

Eleanor Kingston for the Lake District National Park Authority who own the mine and Glenridding Common has managed to secure funding from the Covid-19 Heritage at Risk Fund to produce a Management Plan for Greenside which will allow for funding streams to be sought to carry out conservation work to the remains, ecological work, potential natural flood mitigation measures, etc.

Archaeo-Environment Ltd have been appointed who have previously produced management plans at Force Crag Mine, Coniston Coppermines, Penny Rigg Copper Mill and Carrock Mine. Several organisations including the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society (CATMHS), the Environment Agency, John Muir Trust, Eden District Council, Natural England, Coal Authority and Patterdale Parish Council have been involved in the plan which is now out in draft form for comment.

One interesting aspect is to take photographs from the same position as the historical ones to show how the vegetation has changed over the years.

It is hoped the management plan would allow funding to be secured to carry out the proposals.

Force Crag Mine, Keswick

Since 2019, CATMHS have been involved in the updating of the Management Plan for the mine and the Coledale Valley which the National Trust as landowner implemented. The production of the plan has been carried out by Archaeo-Environment Ltd and has also involved several organisations such as Historic England, Natural England, Coal Authority (they manage the treatment plant), Environment Agency and the Lake District National Park Authority.

The draft report was sent out for consultation last summer and is due for publication shortly.

Warren Allison (CATMHS)

Snippets from Cornwall

New Technology demands are driving Mining interests in Cornwall:

Cornish Lithium:

The Company are still active in raising National and International awareness of the need to invest in Cornwall for minerals essential in Battery manufacturing which is developing at an expedient rate. Minerals such as **Lithium, Cobalt**, and the traditional Cornish minerals **Copper & Tin** and other rare earth minerals. Various locations in Cornwall are being investigated.

British Lithium:

The Company have built a Laboratory which has produced small quantities of **Lithium Carbonate** are based in the St Austell “Clay Country”. They are raising funds to build a Pilot plant to develop and prove technology.

Cornish Tin:

The Great Wheal Vor Project is raising funds for a drilling and exploration exercise for rich lodes of **Copper and Tin** Not previously exploited. The Wheal Vor and adjacent mines did not close because of mineral exhaustion but due to unresolvable Legal actions regarding Land/Mineral ownership. Good Book to read – “Great Wheal Vor by Tony Bennett 2015”.

Cornish Metals: (originally South Crofty Mines)

Following new discoveries whilst drilling for the “Thermal Energy Project” at United Downs by *Cornish Lithium* in 2020 identified New rich lodes of **Copper 4% and Tin 2%**. The location is adjacent to this historical rich Mining Area once called some of the “riches mines in the world”!

The Company is attempting to raise funds to develop these findings.

Hemerdon Mine:

This **Tin and Tungsten** Mine which failed this time, due to the very complex mineral matrix. The difficulties were compounded by the processing equipment available and a low market value of Tungsten at that time.

Tungsten West bought the mine in 2019 and are trying to implement the changes required to restart operations.

The Cornwall Mining Alliance:

This is an Organisation which consist of Professional and Amateur people/groups with an interest in all things mining. Its function is to facilitates Lectures and Contacts.

A Cornish Mining Conference is being held on Oct 18/19 2021

*Further details available on their **WEBSITE***

Kevin Baker MBE

Vice Chair NAMHO

Cumbria coal mine planning inquiry closes

An inquiry into plans for a coal mine off the Cumbrian coast has closed.

West Cumbria Mining wants to mine coking coal to be processed at the former Marchon chemical works site in Whitehaven for use in steel making.

Supporters claim it will create jobs and reduce the need to import coal. Opponents say it will have a devastating impact on the environment.

Planning inspector Stephen Normington said he will make his recommendation in late December or early January.

As he brought the four-week-long inquiry to a close on Friday evening, Mr Normington said he could not give a definitive date for when he would pass on his report to the government. "There will not be a decision this year, I can give no more guidance than that," he told the advocates.



Gregory Jones QC, for the company, had told the inquiry the UK's steel industry will need coking coal "for many years". He said it would be better for the environment to mine the coal from under the Irish Sea rather than import it from countries like the USA or Australia. He also said the mine would create 530 permanent jobs, with a commitment to fill 80% of those using local people.

Opponents, including Friends of the Earth and South Lakes Action on Climate Change, said the country should move away from using coal.

"Every coal mine which is allowed to open, every lump of coal that is burnt, all of it contributes directly to climate change," Paul Brown QC, representing Friends of the Earth, said.

The mine was approved to operate until 2049 by Cumbria County Council in October 2020, but in February the authority suspended its decision. West Cumbria Mining previously said exploratory works led it to estimate there were about 750m tonnes of "excellent quality" coking coal in the area.

However, the company would be limited by planning conditions to produce no more than 2.78m tonnes a year.

Source BBC News

Book reviews

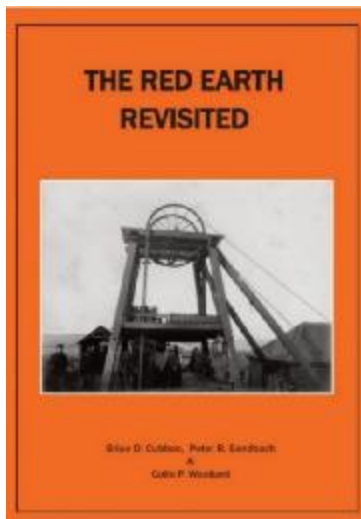
Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society publication

During the Covid-19 pandemic three members of the Society have been working on "The Red Earth revisited", which the Society has agreed to publish later this year,

This book considers the iron mining industry of Furness. It describes the mines, owners, management, employment, and production of iron ore in this area. Richly illustrated with photographs and updated maps it provides an insight into the iron industry of this bygone era. Today, there are few traces of this once thriving industry which gave employment to many of

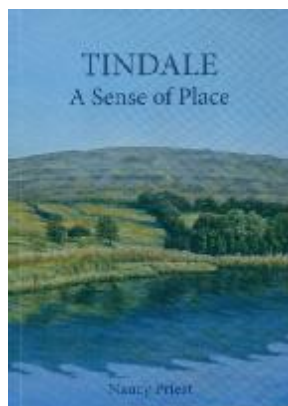
our forefathers who mined Haematite, a particularly rich form of iron ore found in this part of what was once North Lancashire.

This book complements “The Red Earth” by David Kelly; written some twenty years ago and now out of print. The three authors, who are members of the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, have extended David’s first research to provide an in-depth review of nearly three hundred pages that brings to life the ways in which iron was mined and produced.



Two other interesting books on mining in Cumbria have been published by which included description of coal mining, quarrying and Zinc smelting in the area around Tindale by Nancy Priest in the north of the county and coal, lead and copper mining at Hartley near Kirby Stephen by Sir Martin Holgate.

Tindale- A Sense of Place



Nancy covers the history of Tindal from starting with “Setting the Scene” 10,000 BC to 74AD, through the conquest and ancient kingdoms, Romans, other medieval roots, the turbulent times 1296 to 1603, farms, Tindal village, social life. However, seven of the twenty chapters cover mining, quarrying and the Zinc speleterworks.

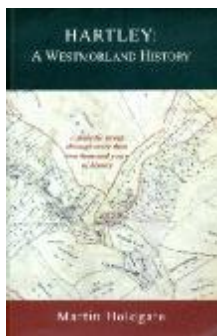
It is rumoured that coal mining was started by the Romans, but mining expanded in the 1700’s and by 1798 the fifth Earl of Carlisle had built a wooden wagonway for horse-drawn wagons from Tarnhouse Colliery to Brampton. By 1808 the wooden wagonway was replaced by cast

iron rails on stone blocks. Amongst some of the interesting facts are that George Stephenson who is renowned as the “Father of Railways” became instrumental in the development of the railways in the area from the mines. What I hadn’t realised is that the line from Hallbankgate to Midegholme was built to 48.5 inches became the standard gauge adopted nationally and is used in over half the rail networks worldwide. By 1836 steam locomotives were in use and even Stephenson’s Rocket was used on the lines to haul coal. There are chapters on the Thompson era from 1837 to 1908 which ended in the disaster at Roachburn Pit, through to the last days of coal and rail when the King Pit at Midegholme closed in 1955.

The famous Zinc Spelterworks which operated intermittently from 1845 to 1937 using Zinc ore from Alston and the quarrying of Limestone and Whinsill are also covered.

This is a well written book made more interesting by being written by someone from the community they live in.

Hartley- A Westmorland History



In a way this is similar to the Tindal book in what it covers but is more in-depth and referenced. There is a single chapter on the Hartley Mines which worked lead, copper, and coal. The highest mines were for coal and was well established by the 17th Century. There are descriptions of the various buildings associated with mining and where the names originated from. One was built by Richard Faraday who as a slater and builder and mentioned is his brother James who moved to London and whose son Michael was the discoverer of the fundamental properties of electricity and magnetism.

The main lead and copper workings were at Birket Riggs and Long Rigg and records show that they were working in the 17th century and ore was also smelted in the area. There is mention of hushing and the plan shows at least three at Birkett Riggs. Considering the mines were worked for a considerable period of time although intermittently there is little in the way of records in existence.

Sam Murphy and Richard Smith also covered these mines in British Mining No 91 Mines of the West Pennines.

I also recently joined a Facebook group which covers the Coanwood Featherstone Lambley, Hartleyburn, Park Village, Kellah, Eals, Plenneller, Tindale and Roachburn areas which is interested in the history of the area covered by Nancy’s book and there have been some fantastic photographs and information about the mines turning up.

Warren Allison (CATMHS)