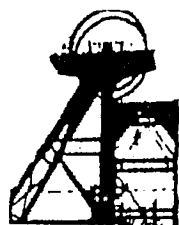


NAMHO

National Association of Mining History Organisations



NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Wes Taylor, 18 Station Lane, Walton on Trent,
Swadlincote, Derbys, DE12 8NA

!!!STOP PRESS!!!

THE GREAT ORME EXPLORED

10th - 11th May 1997

A weekend of lectures,
underground trips, museum
visits, guided walks, all connected
with transportation via the world
famous cable hauled tram system.

The weekend is organised by the
Great Orme Exploration Society
and the Llandudno Museum.

Details from David Edwards, 24
Maegwyn, Llandudno, North Wales,
LL30 2YN. Tel:- (01492) 879677.

SOUTH EAST KENT STUDY WEEKEND

25th - 27th July 1997

Organised by Subterranea
Britannica, the weekend will be
based at Wye College, near
Ashford.

During the weekend, participants
will explore a variety of
underground structures that are
located in this part of Kent. The
soft Upper Chalk has been
excavated for a variety of
commercial purposes but, more
significantly, it has been the subject
of extensive burrowings for defence
from Roman through to Cold War
times, resulting in a variety of
fascinating sub-surface defences.

Further information from M Tadd, 3
Nutfield, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 4JL.
Tel:- (01737) 7823456.

NOTES FROM IVOR BROWN

1. Eleven miners were killed during
an inter tribal dispute at East
Driefountain Gold Mine, South
Africa. The police have not
discovered the cause of the
violence.

Mining Journal

2. The Millenium Commission has
awarded £15M to the Dynamic
Earth Project in Edinburgh. This
project will provide the first
geological visitor centre of its kind,

combining education and
entertainment, and will be housed at
the William Finnger Centre on the
site where James Hutton, founder of
Modern Geology lived and worked.
Planning Magazine

3. Three senior managers of Pyro
Mine, Kentucky were fined and sent
to prison (max period 18 months)
following the deaths of 10 miners in
an explosion in 1989. The owners
were fined \$3.5m. A law suit has
yet to be heard against the Mines
Inspectors. Present owners of the
mine are Costains.

Coal Magazine

BOOK REVIEWS

1. "Derbyshire Black Marble" by
John Michael Tomlinson and Trevor
D Ford. Peak District Mines
Historical Society Special
Publication No 4. 96pp. ISBN 0
904334 04 X. Cost £9.95.

PDMHS is to be congratulated on
bringing together John Tomlinson
(the principal author) and Trevor
Ford and publishing, to a very high
standard, this splendid book.

England has no true metamorphic marble of commercial significance but dense polishable limestones have been worked, and described as being marble, at a number of locations. Many of these had architectural applications and can still be found in-situ.

The Derbyshire Black Marble described in this book is a polishable variant of the carboniferous limestone and was mined at several locations around Ashford-in-the-Water, some 3 km north west of Bakewell. When cut, turned and polished it was used for memorials, table tops, mantelpieces, ornaments, vases etc. The polished black material, reminiscent of jet, was often inlaid with pieces of other coloured stones etc. Being generally small and portable, Derbyshire Black Marble objects can now be found scattered throughout the UK and beyond.

John Tomlinson's great grandfather and two of his uncles had been connected with the black marble trade at Ashford and his researches have taken in family history as well as industrial history. It is known that in 1748 one Henry Watson had invented an "ingenious method of sawing and polishing marble by water power from the River Wye" and in 1789 J Pilkington had reported the "main employment" of the 540 inhabitants of Ashford as being the turning and polishing of the marble.

This industry appears to have ceased operation early this century. Dr Trevor Ford has contributed valuable appendices on the marble mines, the marble works and the geology of the deposit. Two principal mines are described, the Rookery Mine (SK190696) and Arroch Mine (SK191694). Access

to Rookery Mine is controlled by DCA and there is no access to Arroch Mine. The thickness of the beds that were mined was about 7 ft. Descriptions of the mines and the mining methods are described. Also included are plans showing the 3000 ft of passages in the Rookery Mine and about 700 ft of passages in Arrocks Mine. Other small-scale workings, both opencast and underground, are also mentioned.

The book contains a detailed plan and description of the site of Henry Watson's water-powered marble mill with saws, lathes and polishing machinery. There is also a useful plan that shows the location of the mines, works and other sites in relation to Ashford-in-the-Water village. The majority of the illustrations (including 35 in colour) are of ornamental objects made of the marble with coloured inlaid work. There are two black and white photographs of the inside of Rookery Mine, four reproductions of older illustrations of and inside the Marble Works and several relevant printed ephemera. Two pages are devoted to a very full and useful bibliography.

This is an exceptionally well produced and presented book. It has the unusual virtue of treating its subject from the mine face to the end-user, a link that is too often neglected in the publications of mining history organisations.
Paul W Sowan

2. "Slate from Coniston. A History of the Coniston Slate Industry" by A Cameron - 1996. Published by Cumbria Amenity Trust. 151pp, illustrated. Cost £7.50 + p&p.

This substantial book draws on estate papers and, largely, secondary sources to present an account of the

openworks and underground quarries for slate and flagstones that are located near Coniston in the Lake District. There are two illustrations of underground scenes and 14 surface views, which include several old photographs of men at work in the quarries. Nine maps or diagrams include reproductions of early Ordnance Survey products. The bibliography lists mainly secondary sources. A gazetteer gives extensive details of 25 quarries, some being underground. There is also a one page glossary of quarrying terms.

Paul Sowan

3. "The History of the County of Gloucester, Volume V - Bledisloe Hundred, St Briavels Hundred, the Forest of Dean" edited by N M Herbet. 1996. Published by Oxford University Press/Institute of Historical Research/Victoria County Historical series. 440pp + xxiii, ISBN 0 19722 787 2. Cost £70.

The book includes numerous references to lime burning, stone quarrying, iron and coal mining etc. A separate section on the Forest of Dean Industries, pp 326 - 354, includes Mining in the 18th Century, Mining from the 1770's, Quarrying, Ironworks, Mills and Tramroads and Railways.

Paul Sowan

4. "The Building Stone Heritage of Leeds" by F G Dimes & M Mitchell. Published by the Leeds Philosophical & Literary Society. 112 pages paperback. ISBN 1 870737 10 5. Cost £9.00.

Building stones are somewhat marginal to mining history but this nicely produced little book by two former officers of the British Geological Survey (Frank Dimes died during the final stages of

production) is a welcome addition to the literature.

It starts with an introduction to the history of Leeds and the geology of the surrounding area. In particular, it relates to the history of many of the notable public buildings in Leeds. Some comments are made on the quality and durability of the stones used, which are mostly Millstone Grit and Coal Measure sandstones. Comments are also made on imported ornamental stones. However, regrettably, little is said on the technique of quarrying or of shaping the stones. The main part of the book is itineraries for four walks round central Leeds plus more extended tours outside the City.

The book concludes with a classification of the stones used and comments on problems of decay such as rising damp, sulphation and reaction to acid-rain. A glossary and bibliography are appended.
Dr T D Ford

5. "Abandoned Mines and the Water Environment" report of the National Rivers Authority, Water Quality Series No 14. Published by NRA. vi + 46pp. ISBN 0 11 886520 X. Cost £7.95.

This report, which has been widely quoted in the national press, surveys the legalities of abandoned mine and mineral rights ownership and relevant planning issues.

There is a brief account on the chemistry of mine-water which mainly deals with the oxidation of pyrite and subsequent reactions. Coal mines as sources of polluted mine-water on abandonment are discussed at some length and case studies that relate to abandoned mines on the River Calder (S E of

Burnley), the River Don (Yorkshire) and the River Pelenna (West Glamorgan) are presented. A further section addresses groundwater pollution resulting from the abandonment of metalliferous mines with case histories relating to Wheal Jane on the River Carnon, mines in the Mawddach catchment in Wales and the Devon Great Consols on the River Tamar.

There are ten coloured plates of iron-discoloured watercourses.
Paul Sowan

NEW PUBLICATIONS

1. "Mines of the Lake District Fells" published by Dalesman. ISBN 0 85206 931 6. Cost £8.95.

The mining of lead, copper, zinc and a variety of other minerals was once a flourishing, though not always profitable, Lakeland industry. This book is a compact comprehensive catalogue and history of the numerous mines and trial levels that are to be found on the Lake District fells. It will appeal to the fell walker, geologist, industrial historian or anyone else who wishes to know something of the history, nature and extent of these old and fascinating workings.

BLUE HILLS TIN STREAM, St AGNES, CORNWALL

This site contains what is probably the last operable example of a water driven stamps system. The water wheel has been reinstated and the water from the stream raises the stamp rods which then crush the ore. The crushed ore is fed onto a shaking table where gravity separation of the ore occurs. The

site also includes a building where pyrite was burnt off to form iron oxide.

Down to Earth

HIGHWAY SUBSIDENCE AT SUTTON, NEAR MACCLESFIELD

In the spring of 1996 I was asked by the Cheshire Highway Department to inspect and comment on suspected mining subsidence on a road south of Sutton, Macclesfield.

Accompanied by Dr Peter Thompson, the inspection revealed evidence of mining subsidence consisting of large areas of upward migrating voids. The largest void that was visible terminated at the surface in a crater about 1 metre square and extending onto the highway. Feruginous shale bands of minimal compressive integrity made up most of the strata under the tarmac. These shale bands, we concluded, were probably unmined ribs or pillars.

The reinstatement of the highway was carried out by a mining treatment company that is based on the site of the Chatterley Whitfield Colliery at Biddulph. The affected area has now been stabilised but access to the workings has been retained in order to monitor any further ground movement.

This access is via a shallow shaft that is capped and locked. A concrete lined conduit along the strike of the strata has been provided from the shaft bottom which leads to a large chamber that is bisected by what appears to be a main cartgate cum water sough. The collapsed tail of this level is still evident in the valley bottom above river level. The section of the level

directly under the highway is lined with substantial brickwork that ~~probably post-dates the mining~~ activity. It is possibly late 19th Century and suggests past instability of the area.

Mining at this geological horizon is unusual. No plans or records of mining in the area are known to exist and the old maps in the County Highway Department do not offer up any clues.

The questions now raised are:-

What was mined?

When was it mined?

Who were the miners?

A search through the Geological Memoir of Macclesfield reveals that quartzitic sandstone of the Crowther Series (Minn Beds) was mined in the area. An extract from the Pocock Survey of 1906 states that a "tough and durable stone was mined in the past for roadmaking".

Current geological information suggests that these stones could have been the Middle Churnet Shares Group, probably low R1.

According to local tradition, stone setts (cobblestones) were produced in adjacent quarries and this could be the end product of the mine.

Inspection of the extant evidence in the valley side below the highway suggests that there several other headings spaced along the strike and passing under the road. Egress of water to the stream level is a classic example of early mining practice.

The Sutton Estate passed from the Lamb family to the Earls of Lucal circa 1750. The leases for farm "coal delves", stone pits etc in this area are worthy of research.

This subsidence incident, which has generated more questions than

problems solved, is probably the first of other expensive remedial works that will be required to this section of the highway. The constant pounding by heavy goods vehicles of ever increasing tonnage can only exacerbate the problem.

PDMHS

CHANGES AT SOUTH CROFTY

Mr Kevin Ross resigned as Managing Director of South Crofty Mines at the end of last January. Kevin Ross joined South Crofty some 12 years ago and was appointed Managing Director in 1991.

His successor is Mr David Giddings, a business executive with 35 years experience in banking and construction.

Carn Brea

CORROSION OF STUBAI KARABINERS

Members are advised that there have been a report in the Croatian journal "Speleozin" of failures of corroded Stubia (Austrian) karabiners. The krabs in question were about 15 years old and were subjected to destructive testing. Both krabs failed at a lower force than was expected.

Anyone who has examples of this equipment is advised to examine them to ensure that they are not corroded, especially in the vicinity of the hinge.

Speleoscene

TOURIST MINE TO BE CLOSED

Amid allegations that the lives of visitors may have been at risk from lethal gas, the Wet Earth Colliery Exploration Group have been instructed to close the 1,000-metre water drainage shaft at the Clifton Country Park near Swinton, Manchester. International Mining Consultants Ltd have said that the decision to close the access to the workings follows a recent survey.

Salford City Council Health and Safety officials are to launch an investigation even though they were involved in drawing up a rigorous Code of Practice with the Wet Earth Colliery Exploration Group, a group of professional engineers, before the workings were opened to the public. The Coal Authority has said that no unsafe areas had been directly pinpointed although a further survey might highlight dangerous spots.

The drainage shafts were first built as part of James Brindley's water wheel complex in 1750. Brindley was the mastermind behind the Bridgewater Canal and the area is being restored as a potential tourist attraction.

Manchester Evening News

LARGE CAVE FOR SALE

The well known tourist and sporting cave, Peak Cavern at Castleton, Derbyshire, is for sale. The owners, the Duchy of Lancaster, feel that the time is right for someone with experience and flair to invest in the cave to exploit the cave's potential.

The Agent acting for the Duchy sees the opportunity to develop a shop, coffee shop and waiting area at the entrance. He also believes that the history of the cave could be developed into both static and active