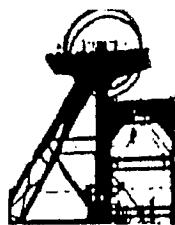


NAMHO

National Association
of Mining History
Organisations



NEWSLETTER

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FUTURE 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. The hosts will be a consortium of member organisations who are based in the Forest of Dean. The Conference will be based at Whitmead Park at Parkend near Lydney. Chalet accommodation, as well as camping and caravanning, will be available.

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. Tel:- 01594 833217. It is anticipated that booking forms and programmes will be available in December 1998.

2. NAMHO 2000 International Conference

It is hoped that a special International Conference will be held in the year 2000 to celebrate the new millennium. No details have been finalised but Carn Brea Mining Society are studying the feasibility of holding this conference in Cornwall during July 2000.

DANGER FROM KARABINERS

The British Mountaineering Council Technical Committee has passed papers to the NCA Equipment Officer papers relating to an inquiry into the fatal accident to a young person during an abseiling exercise. This abstract from the paper is to remind members of the dangers of using karabiners in the incorrect manner.

1. Danger from Figure-8/Karabiner combination.

It has been established that in the accident referred to above, the "figure-8" loaded the gate of the karabiner with the full weight of the abseiler in a configuration which applied the load in a torsional (twisting) manner. The gate was broken and the "figure-8" was released with fatal consequences.

It has been found that if the suspended person is below normal weight (circa 70kg) the gate is normally strong enough to support this abused load as the force applied is marginally below the breaking strain of the gate. The breaking strain can easily be exceeded by heavier persons.

The moral is simple! Always ensure that no suspended load is applied across the gate of a karabiner.

2. Weakness of a Karabiner Gate

The gate of a karabiner should NEVER be considered to be a load bearing component. In situations where the loading of a link system is likely to be other than a simple pull, a maillon rapide provides a much safer means of attachment.

This investigation illustrates just how low the breaking strain of the karabiner gate really is, and how close this breaking strain is to the forces which can easily be applied in normal abseiling.

Speleoscene

MORE EARTHQUAKES IN NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

An earthquake measuring 2.2 on the Richter scale was recorded on 22nd December 1997 in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area. It was centred 500 metres to the south of the M6 Keele Services and shook homes and businesses around Butterton and Whitmore. A week earlier there had been an earthquake of magnitude 1.8 in the same area. Geologists at Keele University consider the quakes to be classic examples of tremors produced by current mining activity. Silverdale Mine is the only deep mine operating in the area.
NSGGA

SECONDHAND AND RARE MINING BOOKS

Arguably Britain's largest supplier of mining books, the Peak District Mining Museum is offering a new service; the selling of secondhand mining (and mining related) books. Books will be accepted, with only one copy of the same title at the same time, on a sale or return basis. The books will be on display at the Museum. If the response is sufficient a book list will be issued periodically.

The price will be set by the vendor though a lower price may be recommended if not sold within three months. The Museum retains the right to refuse or return any book unsold and invoices will not be accepted until after the book has been sold. There will be a commission charge of 33% of the sale price which will go into Museum funds.

Please contact the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR. Tel:- (01629) 583834. The Museum is open from 11.00am to 4.00pm every day, (longer at busy times). Advance notice of arrival with books for sale would be appreciated.

PDMHS Newsletter

WHAT AN ADDRESS!

The following address was noted in a recent edition of the Craven Pothole Club publication "Record". The name of the Craven Cub member has been deleted.

A Member, 121 Rojana
Connudo-Plaza, Village No 3, Asian
Highway, Klongsuanplu Sub-District,
Phra Nakhon Sri Ayudhaya District,
Phra Nakhon Sir Ayundhaya Province,
1300, Thailand.
R Paulson

FRIENDS OF WILLIAMSON'S TUNNELS

The Friends of Williamson's Tunnels was set up in 1996 to save the extensive system of tunnels that had been driven under Liverpool between 1805 and 1840.

The driving of these tunnels was funded by Joseph Williamson, to provide work for the unemployed. In later years most of the tunnels were filled with domestic rubbish.

The Friend's of Williamson's Tunnels group has begun a new dig on the site of some derelict tenement flats. They are confident that they will find a part of the Joseph Williamson tunnels that have not been seen since the flats were built in the 1930's. Records show that there were six layers of tunnels stacked on top of each other, forming one of the the more intricate parts of the labyrinth built by the eccentric 18th century "Mole of Edge Hill".

With the co-operation of a sympathetic architect, a few of the 370 Friends have made some preparatory excavations, coming across signs of a number of interesting brick structures not far below ground surface. A few administrative hurdles need to be overcome before they begin the dig proper. News is available the Friends of Williamson's Tunnel web site at:- http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bill_douglas
Bill Douglas

WORLD WIDE MINING INCIDENTS

(Abstracts from Mining Journal)

1. At least 59 coal miners were killed in a methane gas explosion at Zyryanovskaya Colliery in the Kusbass Region of southern Siberia. The gas explosion was followed by a powerful coal dust explosion.

2. About 100 miners died when floods covered their primitive single-shaft workings for tanzanite at Merelani near Moshe, N Tanzania. About 17 shafts,

up to 90m deep were hit by flash flooding. It is unlikely that the precise numbers of deaths will ever be known.

3. 63 Miners were killed by a gas explosion at Shockinsky Colliery and a further 5 miners were killed in a similar explosion at Petrousky Colliery. Both of these collieries are near Donetsk City, Ukraine.

4. A German coal mining company has agreed to pay Celtic Mining (Wales) up to 10 million dollars in compensation for dumping subsidised anthracite in the UK. They have also agreed to stop dumping and to permit Celtic to compete in Germany.

5. An explosion, followed by a cave-in killed 14 miners at Dyjiang Colliery in Schuan Province, China.

I.J Brown

BOOK REVIEWS

"*Machinations in Coal Mining*" by Charles Round. 1996, xi+399pp, 68 photos, 15 figs, 4 plans, 3 charts and 4 others. Cost £18.50.

This is a fascinating autobiography of a man who left secondary school without any qualifications and started work in the coal mining industry at the age of 14 as an underground pony driver. By sheer hard work at night school, and later at technical college, he qualified at an early age as a mining engineer and colliery manager. He soon progressed to the highest Area Production and Managerial posts.

This book will appeal to a wide audience and will take its place in posterity as an invaluable and essential historical record of the evolution of the British mining industry. It tells the story from the pick and shovel, steam engine and belt driven eras to the modern fully powered coal-cutting, road driving, roof supporting, underground coal and personnel transport system era with their vastly improved productivity and safety records.

author is a brilliant engineer and throughout the book one is impressed by his ingenuity in designing and developing coal mining equipment. This constant drive to achieve a fully mechanised scenario increased productivity by over twenty times. Unfortunately success came too late to save the industry from the savage effects of the Thatcher Government.

The author is also a dazzling diplomat, well able to negotiate with top management or at shop floor level. The difficulties experienced in overcoming "backward looking practices", "management by fear" and "small minds in big jobs" are vividly portrayed. In virtually every position he was able to increase productivity, only the stubborn Welsh thwarted him.

He describes many well known personalities and was on first name terms with Lord Robens. Some Board members, however, proved to be difficult people to get on with. His "warts and all" vignettes of these folk will probably provide the lawyers with work for many years to come.

Finally the management of the NCB proved to be too much for him and he took early retirement at the age of 58. He then undertook mining consultancy work for a number of years with assignments emanating from within the UK to Spain and the USA
Tony Oldham

"Land Restoration and Reclamation - Principles and practice" by J A Harris, P Birch and J Palmer. A5, soft cover, 230pp, about 70 tables and diagrams, 4 photos. Published by Longman, 1996. Cost £20.99.

The book is very much for "discussion", even the title seems odd, surely reclamation comes before restoration! Most "disturbed" or changed areas of land (again the book shows the need for precision - disturbed, degraded, derelict and contaminated each has its own definition) has to be reclaimed before it can be restored. In fact, few sites today

are truly restored to their original condition - what is "original" anyway!

Once this is all sorted out the book is easier to follow. It looks at the way mining, quarrying construction and other related industries change the natural environment and then at the methods of restoring the disturbed land to an acceptable afteruse.

Today this does not mean simply restoring to agriculture, other uses are permissible and recreation, conservation and amenity use are now fully accepted. To those involved in mining history it is satisfying to see that consideration of historic interest is included in the assessment papers, although the whole subject is given only a few sentences and conservation/preservation does not feature in the detailed index.

There are a few doubtful comments as on page 27, the reviewer is unaware of any provision in the Mines & Quarries Act which directs the Opencast Executive to "draw up a detailed restoration plan prior to permission being granted for work to begin". Overall, however, it is a fine textbook and undoubtedly fulfils the needs of students in the newly combined mining and environments courses and it is a source book for practising personnel. As explained on the back cover, these are the groups for whom it was intended - it does not seem to assist the mining historian in his chosen path.
I J Brown

"Database of metal mine impacts in Wales. Construction of a database as a bank of information and environmental assessment tool" produced by the National Rivers Authority Welsh Region. Final report, January 1996.

This report contains some 1,300 mines provided by Robert Protheroe-Jones (Mine Consultant) and extracted from (for example) the DoE Review of Mining Instability in Great Britain, the work of David Bick, R W Vernon et al.

Only non-ferrous metal mines are considered. The mines are listed in various ways including alphabetically, National Grid Reference etc.
Paul Sowan

NEW PUBLICATIONS

"Geologists Association Guide No 59 - Geology of Hadrian's Wall" by G A L Johnson. Cost £8.50.

"Handbook for British and Irish Archaeology Sources and Resources" compiled by Cherry Lavell. Paperback, 440pp. Cost £29.95.

Answer all your questions with a single source book! A truly comprehensive, dedicated and reliable source book of British and Irish Archaeology. It includes a full subject and author index.

"The Dartmoor Tin Industry" by Phil Newman. 80pp, 20 illustrations, 20 b&w photos, index, glossary. Cost £4.95.

The Dartmoor tin industry has been the focus of much historical and archaeological research in recent years but until now no book has concerned itself with this subject alone. This new guide includes established and recently researched material to give the reader a clear, up-to-date interpretation of remains left by the tanners to be seen on Dartmoor today.

"Wheal Jane Underground" by A Buckley & A Karla Riekstins. Penmellick Publications. 29 photos. Cost £3.50.

"Steam Engines of Thomas Newcomen" by LTC Rolt & J S Allen. Cost £17.99.

"The Moorfield Pit (Dickie Brig) Disaster" by Harry Tootle. Landy Publishing Nov 1998. 64pp. illus. Cost £6.00.

"Mines of Cornwall & Devon" by Peter Stanier. ISBN 0 906294 40 1. 108pp, 115 photos, maps and illus. Cost:- £15.00.

Historic photographs of the mines of Cornwall and Devon with a well informed commentary. Many of the illustrations, photographs and drawings have not appeared in print before.

MEDIA EXTRACTS

Home Fires Burning - A plan to support the UK's deep coal mine industry by selling electricity produced at coal-fired generator stations to consumers who want to support the coal industry has been unveiled by Eastern Group, the electricity generator, and RJB Mining, the troubled coal company. *Financial Times*

Coal Collusion - A Welsh-based coal producer has alleged that Government plans to prevent the collapse of the coal mining industry are being undermined by collusion between its own Environmental Agency and a cosy cartel of big power generators. *Guardian*

Power Sale - Rio Tinto, the Anglo-Australian mining group, and a US associate have sold their interests in an Indonesian power plant and transmission facilities. *Financial Times*

Coal-fired Market - Electricity generators may be forced to sell coal-fired power stations to mining companies to stimulate the market for coal. *Times*

Silverdale Colliery to Close - More than 300 miners are to lose their jobs when Silverdale Colliery in North Staffs closes in the near future. *Guardian R Gosling*

BLUE HILL TIN WORKS

The Blue Hill Tin Works are located near St Agnes, Cornwall. A five head stamp battery, driven by a waterwheel, a ball mill and shaking table have been set up and a working miner and his son are reworking old tips. The tin is smelted on site. In an hour on this site

you can learn more about stamping mills and the smelting of tin than can be gleaned from a host of text books.

Welsh Mines Society

SHROPSHIRE ENGINE HOUSES

Shropshire County Council has consolidated Ladywell Engine House and work is in progress on White Grit.

Welsh Mines Society

SPEEDING THE PRODUCTION OF MINING REPORTS

The Coal Authority has a duty to provide public access to mining information. The majority of this information is required by solicitors and local authorities in the form of "property searches" to be included in a coal mining report. These requests are received at a rate in excess of one thousand per day and a fast response to these enquiries is required.

To produce these reports the Coal Authority uses a data base that it inherited from British Coal. This data can be interrogated spatially to produce a written report.

The basic problem was getting an accurate spatial reference quickly.

To overcome this problem the Coal Authority has entered into a Service Level Agreement with Ordnance Survey which gives access to the Ordnance Survey digital maps.

The new system allows properties to be located quickly and accurately and has significantly reduced the time required to provide the report.

Paul Sowan

EXPLOSIONS AT RJB MINE

Two explosions occurred in a sealed off part of Prince of Wales Colliery, near Pontefract on 3 April 1998. The explosions followed a mini tornado in the area. It is believed that the extremely low atmospheric pressure, associated with the freak weather, together with the lack of ventilation in

the sealed off area, resulted in the escape of high levels of methane.

No miners were injured in these explosions.

I J Brown

NEW MANX MINES AND MINERALS VIDEO

This video illustrates the history of Manx mining and features spectacular underground footage. It includes the mines at Bradda and the water leats that provided water for the Laxey Wheel.

The working life of the Laxey miner is also explored.

For further information contact Duke Video, PO Box 46, Douglas, I of M, IM99 1DD. Tel- 01624 623634.

PROSPECTING FROM SPACE

Geologists from the British Geological Survey are working with an Australian team to develop a system using sensors on aircraft and satellites to rapidly map and detect minerals in large unexplored areas.

The system works by scanning and analysing sunlight reflected from earth. Subtle variations in soil, which could indicate the presence of minerals, can be identified.

PDMHS Newsletter

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

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