

NAMHO

National Association
of Mining History
Organisations



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2000

Issue No 38

NAMHO inter NATIONAL CONFERENCE - TRURO, CORNWALL, JULY 2000

The Conference will be based at Truro School which has a large sports hall, lots of ground with plenty of parking and a swimming pool that will be available to delegates. There will be bedrooms, camping and caravan pitches available on site, together with a range of meals. There is alternative accommodation in the city for those who do not wish to stay on site.

The lecture programme will include speakers from France, Eire, USA, Argentina, Holland and Wales. We are waiting to firm up with Portugal, Spain and possibly South Africa. Of course there will be speakers from Cornwall and other parts of England.

In addition there will be social events, legitimate underground and surface excursions. There will also be the opportunity to visit behind the scenes at Camborne School of Mines.

The big difference from previous NAMHO conferences will be its length. The opening address is at 14.00 on Friday 14th July followed by two speakers. In the evening there will be a free buffet/reception hosted by Cornwall County Council at County Hall where the Cornwall County Records Office will be putting on a display. During the evening there will be another lecture at County Hall. On Saturday evening there will be a river trip to Falmouth. On Sunday evening there will be the Conference Dinner followed by a concert given by the Holman Climax Choir. Monday has a full day programme with the formal closing of the Conference at about 17.30. In the evening there will be

meals available for those who are staying for further excursions on Tuesday.

We have arranged a number of deals with local tourist attractions and some conference specials. We hope that potential delegates will contact us quickly as we are sure that they will want to take part in this unique international event and there is a strong possibility that we will have to limit numbers.

We look forward to meeting you in Cornwall in July.

Full details and booking forms are now available from:-
Lawrence Holmes, Rivergarth, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1SS.
Tel: 01872 278234.
E Mail: NAMHO@csm.ex.ac.uk

DAMAGE TO SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT

The Environmental Agency faces prosecution after its staff bulldozed and buried the remains of the 300 year old Rookhope Old Smeltnill in Weardale, Co Durham. The site, one of the best preserved examples of 18th Century lead mining in Britain, had been "Scheduled" by English Heritage in 1997.

The Environmental Agency admits that it failed to get permission, as required by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, before the site was extensively damaged.

Paul Sowan

BOOK REVIEWS

1. "Peak District Mining and Quarrying" by Lynn Willies and Harry Parker. Published by Tempus

Publishing Ltd, 1999. Cost £9.99.

This is one of a new series of books in the well established "Images of England" Series that this publisher has produced in association with NAMHO. It has hard covers, 70mm x 240mm and there are 128 pages and about 200 photographs and drawings, all of which are of historic interest.

As can be expected from the authors, this is a well researched and authoritative work and the result of many years enthusiastic collecting. The contents cover not only most aspects of lead mining (early history, law, the mines and the miners, the deposits and the method of working, mechanical power used, dressing and of the last big mine, Mill Close) but also other types of mineral working in the Peak, often forgotten. This includes the working of fluorspar, calcite, chert and "black marble" and the quarrying of sandstone and limestone.

The book is, however, intended to record an area's mining heritage in "images", each image having a descriptive caption but with the occasional page of text. It brings together a large number of historic pictures normally only found in scattered papers, a few are well known but a surprising number have not been seen in print before. Some of the images are over 100 years old but they are well balanced with photos taken by modern professionals like Harry Parker, Richard Bird and Paul Deakin, in the last 50 years.

This is a well produced book and a "must" for anyone with a serious interest in the Peak District.

I J Brown

2. "Mining in Cornwall: Volume One, The Central District and Volume Two, The County Explored." By J-H Trounson and L-J Bullen. Tempus, Stroud, Glos. 128pp and 128pp. £9.99 per volume.

AND

The East Shropshire Coalfields. By Ivor J Brown. Tempus, Stroud, Glos. 128pp. £9.99.

Together with a volume on *Peak District Mining and Quarrying* by the writer and Harry Parker (modesty forbids further comment), these are the first offerings in a series of collected regional mining photographs to which NAMHO has given its blessing.

Each is done to a similar formula, with a comparatively substantial amount of text as introduction and for each photograph, with about 200 photographs in each volume. The overall impression, with allowance for the fact that £9.99 is not enough to produce coffee-table standards of reproduction, is very good indeed, much better than the average book of this type.

Many photographs in the Cornwall volumes were published some years ago by Trounson, but don't let that put you off, there are many previously unpublished photographs here. Obviously the Cornish engine has a major part, but the selection is wide and probably no other source gives quite as good an impression of what mining in Cornwall was really like from the mid 19th century onwards. Together with Ken Brown and Bob Acton's recent series, Cornish mining is being well served indeed, never better than since Barton was active.

The East Shropshire volume, which of course includes Coalbrookdale, has a somewhat different approach by Ivor Brown, reflecting both the availability of sources and his own particular contribution to mining history with more emphasis on the social and also attempting to put the historical clock back further with a few illustrations of an earlier date than possible with photographs. Good to see a couple of Peak District photographs present representing the products made at Coalbrookdale! If anyone still thinks

that the multi-volume NCB coal mining history series has said it all, this volume will give a few leads to further research.
Lynn Willies

3. "Derbyshire Blue John" by Dr Trevor Ford. Pub 1999 by Ashbourne Editions. ISBN 1 873775 19 9, Cost £5.95.

Britain cannot claim to be home to many of the world's most precious minerals. It does, however, have a unique form of the common mineral Fluorite in the form of Blue John. This colourful mineral has been fashioned into objects of great beauty by a small band of skilled craftsmen working in and around Castleton in Derbyshire.

The story of Blue John had never been told in a single comprehensive volume until Trevor Ford put pen to paper and produced this superb book. Trevor is an authority this subject.

The book covers the geology of the mineral, the history of its use for ornamental purposes, the mining of the mineral and the method of working the mineral into fine works of art. There are superb colour photographs of some of the exquisite Blue John works of art which litter our great houses, including Buckingham Palace and Chatsworth. It is truly amazing the range of pieces that have been fashioned from this "difficult to work" mineral. The book is a tribute to the skilled craftsmen who, down the ages, have made it all possible.

Give your self a treat - go out and buy it now!
Down to Earth

4. "South Crofty Old Workings" by J A Buckley & K T Riekstins with pictures by P R Deakin. Penhellick Publications. Size 5³/₄in x 8¹/₈in. Cost £3.99.

The Cornish mine workings you've always wanted to see, but have never had the opportunity to visit, cover some two square miles and span working periods from before gunpowder up to the 1930's. They embrace many ancient mine setts including such evocative names as Dolcoath, Carn Brea, Tincroft and East Pool - all of which are connected

underground.

Now at last you can see them thanks to this new picture book, the fourth in the "Cornish Mining Photographs" series. It will have greatest appeal to mining historians as it shows the epic work of the Cornish "Old Man". All the pictures bar one are in colour and were taken by Paul Deakin FRPS.

Many of the old workings were entered with great difficulty to enable the photographs to be taken. The outcome is a collection of some of the most fascinating pictures of vast stopes that I have ever seen. The title page illustration shows an enormous stope on the Great Lode at the 255 fathom level of Wheal Agar which is 50 feet wide and 100 feet high which had been driven by hand and black powder some 90 years ago.

Also shown are massive, and fractured, hanging walls towering over the levels along which the photographic party had to travel. These hanging walls were supported by rotting tree-trunk size props (Stulls) and extensive 45 degree angle stopes that looked like a sponge cake with the jam removed and held apart by only a few rock pillars and more rotting stulls. If Mother Nature had decided to have a shiver while the party were underneath, a hard hat would have been little help.

The overall result is a gem, don't dare to miss it.

H M Parker

5. "Slates from Abergynolwyn" by Alan Holmes. Published by Gwynedd Archives Service. 121 pp, 28pp illus. Maps and line drawings in text. Cost £7.99.

This, the story of the Bryneglwyys Slate Quarry has been reissued. The original was sold out soon after publishing in 1986. This book, written by Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society member Alan Holmes, is a comprehensive history of the quarry operations and its association with the railway. Today, much of the quarry is hidden under forestry work and vegetation and the buildings were 'lost' some years back. The book is a fitting tribute to the quarry and the quarrymen.

This revised edition contains

additional information and is excellent value.

John A Knight

6. "SWALEDALE - Portrait of North Yorkshire Mining Community" by John Hardy. 1998. ISBN 0-948511-16-8. 39 plates, 14 maps & figs, 139pp. Cost £15.95 from Frank Peters (Printers), Kendal.

This is an improvement on his last book, but that was so dire that this is no great achievement. Once again, the book, with its large format and high quality paper, has been beautifully produced by Frank Peters. It would be peevish not to admit that the book reads much better than the *Hidden Side of Swaledale*, but basic errors abound. For example, Hardy refers to characters without introduction and regularly changes their names. He remains convinced that the London Lead Company was active in the dale. He clings to an early, incorrect date for the building of the Octagonal smelt mill and is unaware that the cluster of buildings at the Old Gang Mill is actually two smelt mills. All these errors show a lack of knowledge of easily accessible secondary sources.

He muses at length about the course and purpose of Hard Level and concludes that it was driven after a fatal accident at Old Rake Whim in May 1778. If so, then it was truly prescient as the level was begun a year before the accident! He does not give a source for the claim that the accident was at Old Rake Whim and the Grinton Parish Registers only tell us that, on the same day, two men were "*killed in the lead mines at Old Gang*". He refers to a map drawn in 1821 by Francis Gill. Not bad, even for a Gill, as the man died in 1801!

He returns to his pet piece of conspiracy theory - the cover up (by the bosses of course) surrounding the supposed events at Water Blast Shaft. In *Hidden Side* we were told that 24 miners were killed here after blasting into water. We are now told, depending on what page you read, that this involved "*a handful of miners*", "*the loss of many lives*" or "*a gigantic human tragedy*". Hardy's "*considered judgement*" is that the accident took place, according to his "*strong*

suspicion", in the early 18th century. This date appears to be favoured because of "*the viciousness of these times*". We are even treated to nine verses of doggerel on the subject of 'Water Blast Vein' from the author's pen! In these times when the crime of Holocaust denial features strongly in historical debate, perhaps there should be a new one of Water Blast denial - for which I want to head the list of offenders!

You've probably guessed that I do not recommend this book, but if you insist on wasting your money, it is available from Frank Peters for £15.95. *Mike Gill*

7. "Hell under Haydock - The Lyme Pit Explosion, Haydock, Lancashire, 26 February 1930" by Ian Winstanley. Pub 2000 by Landy Publishing. 53pp, 9 illus, 4 plans. Cost £6.00.

This book was written in 1990 but publication was delayed until 2000 as a mark of respect to survivors and dependants. Unfortunately the author refers to "the events of 60 years ago" when writing in 1999, a fact which adds to the confusion.

There is a "Glossary of Mining Terms" at the start of the book which is intended to help the non technical readers understand terms used in the text. Unfortunately, there are a number of gross errors in the definitions which makes one wonder about the technical ability of the author. For example a "Conveyor face" is not a roadway equipped with a conveyor which "takes coal from the coal face" but a coal face which is equipped with a conveyor to take the coal off the face. Similarly, men are not necessarily conveyed down the pit via a Downcast Shaft. There are other gross errors. More attention should have been given to the definitions of words which are an important part of the publication.

The surface plan of Lyme Pit is not dated and it has to be assumed that it is contemporary to the disaster. There is no indication of where Lyme Pit was in the Haydock area.

It is difficult to get good photographs of underground disasters. The photographs in the book are within the context of the subject except for an illustration of shaft sinking and the

power house of the colliery. These last two illustrations are completely out of context with the subject.

The description of the explosion and the recovery of the victims and the mine are quite moving. Whilst the author has obviously done a lot of research to obtain the detail discussed, he quotes a lot of verbatim accounts that were recorded at the time of the disaster and, particularly, the transcript of the interview with 85 year old Pat Creham which was conducted in March 1990.

The book describes the events leading up to the explosion, the effect of the "stone dusting" work which minimised the spread of the explosion, the recovery of the victims and the mine, the inquest and the official inquiry. Details of the victims are also included. It is easy to read and succeeds in getting the message across; coal mining in the 1930's was hard, dangerous, and, if anything went wrong, there was little financial relief for the dependants of the victims.

A number of books have recently been published describing coal mining disasters in the UK. Whilst some people find them morbid, they all vividly describe the arduous and dangerous conditions in which coal miners worked in the past. They are all a tribute to the hard working families who mined the coal that was the backbone of the Industrial Revolution in the UK. This book falls within this category and, with all its faults, is a fitting tribute to the victims of this 1930 disaster at Lyme Pit, Haydock. *Wes Taylor*

WEB-SITE REVIEW

"Lead Smelters in the Yorkshire Dales"

<http://www.ayresnet.swinternet.co.uk/m smelter.htm>

There are a growing number of web-sites devoted to mining related topics and, as with publications, there is a widely varying level of quality. One unfortunate effect of the relative ease with which material can be published on the web is that basic grammar, spelling and sentence structure have gone to pot. Even more frustratingly, material is often

presented on a 'take it or leave it' basis, with a total absence of reference to sources.

To this end, they have taken on the challenge of trying to cater for all levels of interest, from the casual visitor or walkers to the industrial archaeologist. Pages of text are devoted to describing "From outcrops to mine", "From baille [sic] hills to smelters" and the "Leading families". Regrettably, in their attempt to present a simple description, the message has become corrupt. For example, we are told that "lead ore occurs in long seams, known as veins" and, whilst talking of outcropping veins, "these veins were called rakes, presumably because the ore could be exposed by raking off the surface soil". There are also a number of references to "bell pits", which is a term borrowed from coal mining and misapplied to shallow shafts on lead veins.

Unfortunately, the site's authors have given no means of contacting them to draw new material to their attention. This is an especial problem as their core data is almost totally lifted, without acknowledgement, from Arthur Raistrick's book "The Lead Industry of Wensleydale and Swaledale: Volume 2 - The Smelting Mills". When published, in 1975, this was the first attempt to identify and list a chronology to the area's smelt mills. Raistrick's model was followed assiduously until it became clear to some that it had some serious flaws. In order to expose these flaws I wrote a paper, in 1992, on "Yorkshire Smelting Mills: Part 1 - The Northern Dales" which was published in *British Mining*. This changed many of the spatial and chronological elements of Raistrick's model and showed that his Applegarth smelt mill never existed. Since then, others have refined my model and also published their work in *British Mining*. For example, Les Tyson discounted one of Raistrick's four mills at Clints and greatly improved our understanding of their chronology and ownership. He also showed that the Cupola Mill, at Marrick, was not built in 1854 but in 1701 - making it a very important site (now a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Subsequent work, by Dennison, Lamb

and Vernon, is likely to revise our knowledge of early smelt mills even further.

Strangely, the notes on the condition of the mills fail to mention the consolidation work done by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (Old Gang, Surrender, Blakethwaite and Grinton) or by English Heritage at Marrick. Not all the mills are described, but the authors propose to add more as they visit them. It is to be hoped that they do not use their own map for this task as they will have some long and fruitless searches! For some reason, Keld Side Mill has been moved from near the head of the dale to Gunnenside Gill - being put almost where the Blakethwaite Mill is, while the latter has been moved about a mile up the gill. Cupola Mill now stands on the Arkle, between Grinton and Reeth and Scott's Mill has moved to near Grinton Youth Hostel. Moulds Low Mill has changed liberties and stands alongside Surrender Mill. None of the four smaller, 17th and 18th century mills on Barney Beck are shown.

I would be the last to discourage people from putting information on the web, but I hope that it will not become the home of vanity publishers whose work would not pass the mildest of peer reviews. The Archbold-Ayres site is well worth visiting, if only to get some ideas on what should and shouldn't be done, but the content should come with a health warning. It's like digital Hardy - John not Thomas.

Mike Gill

FOUNDRY PLAN GETS SUPPORT

Plans to restore the sole surviving foundry complex in Cornwall have gained support from a direct descendant of the creators of the company. The Perran Foundry at Perranarworthal, Penrhyn, was founded in 1791 by the Fox family of Falmouth. Perran Foundry was owned and controlled by the Foxes until 1858 and it ceased production in 1880 after being sold to the Williams family of Gwenap and Scorrier. Now Charles Fox (head of Falmouth based shipping and travel agents G C Fox & Co), the great great

grandson of Alfred Fox who was party to the sale of the foundry in 1858, has backed the restoration.

The foundry complex, which is located beside the A39 at Perranarworthal, has lain derelict for more than a decade. The £8 million restoration and development scheme will be progressed in conjunction with the Trevithick Trust. The visitor centre will tell the story of the effect of Perran Foundry, and Cornwall, on the Industrial Revolution.

Western Counties News

CLAYTON EQUIPMENT PRODUCTS

Clayton Equipment, part of Rolls-Royce Plc, has won an order to provide 21 trolley locomotives and 250 mine cars, together with the associated electrical and trolley wire system, for the Maddhapara "hard rock" mine in Bangladesh. It is believed that this mine is the first of its kind in the world.

The company is also exploiting the demand for refurbished locomotives for use in mines. It has recently completed an order for refurbished locomotives for a mining company in Peru.

The problem in satisfying the demand for refurbished locos is the availability of used locos. As most of the production is exported it is unusual for the used equipment to be returned to the UK. This problem has, in the short term, been resolved by the company buying back the fleet of Clayton locos from Cornwall's South Crofty tin mine. *Roger Gosling*

LLECHWEDD/MAENOFFEREN SLATE QUARRIES

The main productive part of Llechwedd Quarry has been closed due to the enforcement of an Inspectorate Prohibition Order relating to the safety of the working face after a rockfall. The areas now being worked are in Floor 2 1/2 in Maenofferen (this is near the old mill which was razed to the ground a couple of years back) and in Votty (a location which is unknown to me). A total of 39 men have been laid off and the situation (in December 1999) is looking bleak.

John A Knight

GUIDANCE NOTE

A draft DETR Minerals Planning Guidance Note has been circulated which covers the subjects "On-shore Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane Development". All of these may take place in areas of interest to members although the draft does not make it clear that "there is also a growing interest in related activities of extracting methane from disused mines which vent gas naturally and in in-seam degasification". It adds that "these activities are not, however, covered" in this particular guidance note.

Copies are obtainable from the Department of the Environment and the Regions.

I J Brown

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF SELLING A COLLIERY

RJB Mining, the owner of Ellington Colliery, the last deep mine in Northumberland, which is due to close in Spring 2000, has agreed to sell the colliery to Giovanni Di Stefano, an Italian business man and politician.

Unfortunately for RJB Mining, Giovanni Di Stefano has been arrested in Rome. He is in custody pending extradition proceedings on a warrant for his arrest that had been issued by the Suffolk Police Fraud Squad in 1994.

Financial Times (29/11/99)

PRESCOTT PACT STARTS COAL CRISIS

Coal industry insiders are saying that the new power station emissions limits, agreed by the Government, could lead to the closure of all of Britain's 14 remaining collieries, which employ 12,00 people, by 2004.

Sunday Times

125 YEARS OF MINING EDUCATION AT LEEDS

October 1999 marks 125 years of mining education at the University of Leeds. The first student to enrol at the Yorkshire College of Science when it opened its doors on 26 October 1874 was Shadrach Stephenson, a local mining student. Forty eight hours later a second student enrolled. The first Professor was A H Green who was

appointed Professor of Geology and Mining in 1874. Arnold Lupton was appointed as "Instructor in Mining" and in 1885 he became the first Professor of Mining without any responsibilities for geology. Professor P Doud is the present (and 15th) holder of the title. In 1904 the college became, by Royal Charter, the University of Leeds. The Department of Mining and Mineral Engineering still flourishes with an intake of 50-60 undergraduates each year on 3 and 4 year courses, plus post graduates etc.

A series of events to commemorate the 125th Anniversary were held during November 1999.

These included an Open Day, a special dinner, special lectures and an historical exhibition (mainly documents). A special edition of the Leeds University Mining Association (LUMA) Journal is to be published. This Journal has been published almost annually since the 1920's when it was called the Leeds University Mining Society Journal. Both the University and the National Coal Mining Museum would be interested to hear of anyone who has a back issue of this Journal as neither organisation have a complete set of the publication.

Ivor Brown

RJB TO GO PRIVATE!

If Richard Budge, Chief Executive of RJB Mining, can persuade financial backers that the company is a worthwhile investment, Britain's largest coal producer is set to go private during this year.

MAN SURVIVES FIVE HOURS IN WELL

A 49 year old man who was following his hawk through woodland near Trowbridge fell through a thin layer of branches that covered an open well shaft. He was stuck up to his neck in cold water for five hours before being rescued by firemen.

Daily Telegraph

TICCIH2000

The TICCIH2000 will be held from 30 August to 7 September 2000. The Congress will be based in London and will include the choice of a Tour to either Cornwall, Wales or Scotland.

Further details from TICCIH2000 Congress Administrator, 42 Devonshire Rd, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 2BL. Tel: 01223 323437.

PROPOSED NEW STONE MINE

The September 1999 edition of "Mineral Planning" gave details of a proposal by Albion Stone Quarries Ltd to try underground mining of Portland Stone for dimension stone purposes. If planning permission is granted, the underground working would start from an adit in their Bowers Quarry and would reach a depth of 20 metres.

I J Brown

SOUTH AFRICAN SHAFT TO BE 3000M DEEP

The December 1999 edition of the Mining Magazine reports that two 9m diameter shafts are being sunk to a depth in excess of 2700m at the Western Areas Ltd South Deep Gold Mine Project. When completed, the shafts will be equipped with the deepest single lift winding system in the world.

To ensure that the 3000m of winding rope is not crushed on the drum, only four layers of rope can be coiled at any given time. To make provision for the entire length of rope, the drum diameter is increased and the length of the drum can be increased to accommodate the entire 3000m.

I J Brown

RESCUE OF SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINERS

Fifteen gold miners were trapped after an earth tremor caused a rock fall at the African Rainbow Minerals mine about 100 miles south of Johannesburg.

Rescue teams reached the trapped miners after two days and found nine survivors. They had been entombed in a cavity about 18in high with the temperature at about 40°C and had managed to drink water and semi-liquid food that had been poured down a compressed air main.

Evelyn Dixon

COAL AUTHORITY MEETING

Footnote to the article in the last edition of the Newsletter: No member of the public attended the "open" AGM of the Coal Authority in

Leeds last September. Perhaps the possibility of being charged £7.95 for admission plus £3.00 for car parking had put them off attending - or perhaps it was due to the fact that the meeting was held on the 13 September, not the 14 September as had been stated in the notice in "Newscene".

The meeting that was held on 14 September was for representatives of public bodies, local authorities and contractors.

Ivor Brown

BEWARE WHEN OPENING OLD WORKINGS

When miners at the Sextet Mining Co's mine in Madisonville, Kentucky, broke through into old mine workings in July 1999 the large volume of water released flooded the mine and the 150 miners had to be laid off. But this was not the end of the problem as the sudden release of the water from the old workings created a vacuum and instant subsidence damage occurred in the town above due to cave-ins and sink holes caused by this vacuum.

Ivor Brown

LATEST BLOW LEAVES COAL INDUSTRY FACING EXTINCTION

British Energy, the electricity generator, stated that it would review its coal suppliers when it took over Eggborough power station from National Power at the end of February. It appears certain that the company will switch to imported coal that is up to 80% cheaper and has a lower sulphur content.

Financial Times

SURPAC2000

Surpac2000 is a computer package for the simulation of mine resource, development and production planning. Details from Surpac Software International (UK), Whitwick Business Park, Stenson Rd, Coalville, LE67 4JP. Tel: 01530 835554.

WELSH SLATE QUARRY NOTES

Pen-yr-Orsedd Quarry - This quarry was closed by McAlpines shortly after purchase and there has been much vandalism to the old building remains. Two of the Blondin

towers have "fallen" over leaving only one intact.

Maenofferen Quarry -

Underground working has ceased at present - I have heard that it has possibly been abandoned totally with the workforce moving over to the Llechwedd operation. The Office on Maenofferen "Office Level" has been razed to the ground. It was thought that historical papers were kept/dumped in the loft of this building but if they were there we have no idea if they were saved.

Gloddfa Ganol This site closed last year as a tourist attraction and work has commenced on "open topping" the old Hollands Level Fawr, this was the site of the underground tourist route. McAlpines bought the site and are engaged on robbing the pillars for good quality slate. There has also been a major find in the area as substantial remains of a weighbridge mechanism, thought to be dated from the 1840/1850's has been uncovered. Believed to have been tipped over early on, it is made from a number of wooden parts instead of iron.

Glanrafon Quarry - The ravages of the Welsh climate are not dealing kindly to the two-storey barracks. On a recent visit more of the structure had fallen. The somewhat unique end on bay window is still surviving.

Aberllefenni Quarry - The water balance table on the face of the Foel Grochan incline sited between levels 7 and 8 has been taken down being considered unsafe.

Talysarn Quarry - On a recent Archaeological Survey of the quarry, a boiler was unearthed amidst slate waste. On further inspection it was found to be off a locomotive and carried the name "Margaret".

Rhosydd Quarry - Subsequent to a major fall in August/September '98 it appears that a further, albeit smaller fall, has taken place. The area around is heavily cracked and very obviously dangerous with further falls expected. The falls are close to Floor 2 adit.

Vivian Quarry - The V2 incline is now in operation and is part of the attractions offered at Gilfach Ddu, the Welsh Slate Museum. The old quarrymen's cottages of Fron Haul

dismantled from Tan y Grisiau and re-erected in the back yard are now open to the public. Three of the cottages have been furnished from a different era, the fourth is being maintained as a "hands on" living history house for educational use. They have made a welcome addition to the site.

Cook & Ddol Quarry - The two storey building on the lower level to the mill (thought to be a barracks) has seen a partial collapse. There also appears (and not noted on my previous visits) to be a waliau built within the southern room.

Dorothea Quarry - The diving centre at the quarry pit workings has closed after a short time in operation. It also appears that work on the first phase of restoration of the beam engine at the site is close to fruition. The first operation will be to remove asbestos from the cylinders.

Alexandra Quarry - The stone circle that was sited on the infilled No 1 pit and built for a film scene appears to have been removed.

Glynrhonwy Upper Quarry - Whilst visiting recently (6.9.1999) it was noticed that a quite substantial fall of rock had taken place from the north face. The fall into the pit working is close to the old wooden bridge for those who know the site.

John Knight

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