

# Interim Newsletter April 2005

**NAMHO**  
National Association  
of Mining History  
Organisations



## Chairman / Editor's letter

It was a real pleasure to attend this year's conference at Juniper Hall near Dorking. The Wealden Cave & Mine Society, Kent Underground Research Group and Chelsea Speleological Society put on an excellent event. Everyone I spoke to enjoyed themselves and I've had some good feedback on the quality of the field trips. Many people were surprised at how much the south-east of England had to offer for the mining historian.

The lecture programme was well balanced with the European presentations being alternated with detailed accounts on local mining and it was well attended - overcrowding in the designated lecture room resulted in a quick transfer to a larger room during the first coffee break. One presentation by Deanna Groom of Wessex Archaeology, on The Prince's Channel Wreck, at first glance perhaps not a subject of immediate interest to mining historians, proved most interesting. The presence of Wealden(?) iron bars amongst the cargo provided the link but the remaining cargo of this late 16th century vessel - lead and tin ingots - did spark some useful debate as to their source.

I managed one underground and one surface visit. The quality of the surviving features in the former was excellent - encapsulated since their use for wartime storage - and it was an education to be presented with so much of value in the surface features to be found in that few hundred yards between the M3 and the M25 motorways.

We return to our core area of interest next year - plenty of lead mines and a good selection of slate - and the planning for a good combination of lecture programme and field visits is well underway. I look forward to see you all in Llangollen.

**Newsletter editors** - can you please make sure that **all** the forthcoming events below are listed in your publication. At first glance some might not appear as being relevant to your group's area of interest but your members would appreciate the notice. On the other hand, if you have events you would like to bring to the notice of all NAMHO constituent groups then send them in for inclusion in this newsletter.

An extra printed copy of this newsletter is included specifically for the newsletter editors. There is a copy in pdf format available on the NAMHO website but if newsletter editors would like digital copy sent directly to them as an rtf or Word6 file then please contact me at the e-mail address given at the conclusion of this newsletter.

## **NAMHO research seminars**

The next in the seminar series will be topic based, on Working with Coal; its History and Archives, and will be held at the Coal Authority HQ in Mansfield on Saturday, 21 January 2006. I had hoped to arrange a regional seminar in Newcastle for November of this year but a low cost venue was not immediately forthcoming and other commitments have limited my time, so that will have to be put back until later next year or early 2007.

### **Working with Coal; its History and Archives - 21 January 2006 starting at 10:30.**

If you would like to make a short presentation at the seminar please contact me soonest.

There will be no charge for the seminar but I would appreciate notification if you are attending just to gauge the level of interest. Lunch can be obtained at a local pub.

The Coal Authority HQ are in Lichfield Lane, Berry Hill, just to the east of the A60 immediately south of Mansfield. A map is available on the Internet at -

<http://www.coal.gov.uk/contact/>

## **SILVER IN THE NORTHERN PENNINES**

### **Northern Pennine Silver: Where and How?**

A seminar to be held at the North Pennines Heritage Trust Centre, Nenthead, Saturday 8 April 2006

The evidence for silver production from the northern Pennine orefield in the late medieval period has been addressed by both historians and geologists in recent years. Whilst there is strong documentary and statistical support for the position that the Northern Pennines were the major source of newly mined English silver in the late medieval period, that is not backed up by the geological evidence. The majority of the ores mined in the modern period were low in silver and there is, as yet, no evidence for significant quantities of silver-rich minerals at the shallow depths accessible to the medieval miner.

Although the quantity of silver produced during the 12th century can be estimated with some confidence we do not know the precise location of the workings. Neither can we be certain as to the nature of the ores worked, where they were processed, nor the quantity of lead which might have been produced as a by-product. Information is available on the organisational structure under which mining was carried out but there is currently little to indicate how it fitted into the social framework and upland agricultural practice.

This seminar is being held to consider the evidence for silver production and discuss how our understanding of mining in the area during the late medieval period might be

advanced. The intention is to hear presentations from all those with an interest in the area - geologists, historians, archaeologists and mine exploration.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dr Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA66 7RE; tel. 01437 532578; e-mail P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

There will be no charge for the seminar itself - lunch will be available in the Centre café.

To book, please contact Sheila Barker, The Rise, ALSTON, Cumbria CA9 3DB; e-mail sheila.barker@cybermoor.org.uk

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**Research Seminar - The History and Archives of the Coal Industry** - Coal Authority HQ, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire - Saturday 21 January 2006. Full details above.

**Seminar on Northern Pennine Silver** - Nenthead, 8 April 2006  
See above.

#### **NAMHO 2006 conference**

The 2006 conference is to be held 9th to 11th June 2006 at the Royal Pavilion, Llangollen.

The event will be jointly organised by Shropshire Caving and Mining Club and Shropshire Mines Trust Ltd with assistance from Welsh Mines Society, North Wales Caving Club and Grosvenor Caving Club

The conference theme is '**Mining in the Landscape**', with the programme arranged to reflect how mines and mining sit in their surroundings. In particular, the conference will look at how differences in the type of material mined, and changing technology, have influenced the mining landscape.

Initial subjects include:

- The changing mining landscape; how mines have evolved through history.
- Slate mining landscapes, in particular the area around Llangollen.
- The diversity of mining landscapes:
- Surveying the mining landscape.

It is also hoped a number of mini seminars will run in parallel with the lecture programme, for example - Mining archaeology; Influences of natural history on access to mine sites; Developments in underground stills and video photography; Why should mining historians be interested in quarries?

The lecture programme organisers are already contacting speakers and invite offers of presentations and posters on these and related topics.

Ideally situated along the Welsh borders, Llangollen is within easy reach of coal, metal and stone mining regions. Running alongside the lecture programme are a series of surface and underground field trips to some of the many sites in the surrounding region of North-east Wales.

In addition, it is hoped to provide a coach tour of surface sites on Monday 12th June, and a number of other underground trips during the following week.

The full provisional leaflet is available on the NAMHO website - <http://www.namho.org>

If you have an interest in particular sites in north-east Wales, and are willing to help lead a field trip (surface or underground), or are interested in contributing to the lecture programme, please contact Mike Moore <[mike@moorebooks.co.uk](mailto:mike@moorebooks.co.uk)> or 53 Vineyard Drive, Newport, Shropshire TF10 7DF  
Tel: 01952 405105

## **IMHC 2006**

The International Mining History Congress in Belgium, **9-17 October 2006** - for details go to

<http://www.miningheritage.org>

or

<http://www.patrimoineminier.org>

<http://www.bergbau.org>

<http://www.mijnerfgoed.org>

where the Congress web site should be in place in the near future.

## **AN OVERSEAS FIELD MEET ?**

One of the points raised at the council meeting, held at the conference in Dorking this year, was the option to hold an overseas conference or field meet. The success of pan European programmes, like the current EuropaMines network, has highlighted the rich mining heritage outside Britain and Ireland. The Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland has already held a number of field meets in continental Europe and I've seen the suggestion raised in a the newsletters of a couple of our constituent groups.

The idea of a full NAMHO conference on the continent is perhaps well in the future but we have contacts to organise a summer field trip if there is sufficient interest. Poland has been suggested (benefiting from cheap airfares) and here are some interesting

underground options in the Vosges of northern France. Please canvass interest and feed the results back to council through your NAMHO representative.

### **SYMPOSIUM ON DUST AND DISEASE IN BRITISH MINING**

A symposium on Dust, Disease and the Politics of Ill Health in mid-20th century (c.1930 to 1970s) British Mining, to be held at the University of Exeter, 22-23 September 2005.

For more details contact the Centre for Medical History, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ, e-mail <cfmhmail@exeter.ac.uk> tel. no. 01392 263289.

### **CWMYSTWYTH MINES**

The Crown Estate are in the process of carrying out safety works at Cwmystwyth Mine, Ceredigion. After the works are complete, the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust is hoping to meet with the Crown and its agents, to discuss its involvement in the future management of the mine, and possible access agreement. Would member organisations please note our possible involvement with the future of this site, and please refrain from visits, until negotiations have taken place. Once talks have taken place with the Crown Estate, the Trust will advise NAMHO of arrangements that have been made.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

*G Levins, Secretary, Welsh Mines Preservation Trust, graham.levins@btinternet.com.*

### **Further to the Crown Estate's work at Cwmystwyth.**

I recently took the opportunity to look at the work carried out by Crown Estate to close the mine entrances at Cwmystwyth and, on the whole, the impact is not as great as I was expecting. Once the new wood on the fencing has weathered the visual impact will be reduced and the grilles on the level entrances, although in most cases they are not set inside the levels, have been toned down with grey paint. However, the close spaced wooden palings around some of the more significant working, e.g. Herbert's Stope, will continue to be visible from some distance away. It should also be noted that damage has been caused to the miner's sled tracks to the east of the Nant yr Onnen by the tracked vehicle(s) used to access the site.

There is, however, little logic to the position of some fences with very obvious workings left unsecured whilst other, insignificant, features are fenced. The Level Fawr has not been grilled; mind you the chance of someone inadvertently crawling through an 18"/2ft pipe is pretty remote. Yet, on the other hand, a minor openwork high to the east of the Nant yr Onnen warrants a fence on either side, albeit 6 feet away from the edge and open at either end !

*Peter Cloughton*

### **Applications for membership of NAMHO.**

Recently a number of applications for membership of NAMHO have been submitted incorrectly, resulting in considerable delay and an increased workload for officers. All applications by mining history interest groups for membership must be submitted directly to the secretary, must include the full range of documents required by our constitution and will not be approved until they have been considered by a properly constituted council meeting.

### **NEW NAMHO MEMBERS**

Elected at the last Council meeting, 8 July 2005

Friends of Ramshill Colliery  
Devon Mining Club

### **Future Council meetings and the AGM**

The next NAMHO Council meeting will be at 11am on Saturday 12 November at Loggerheads Country Park (3 miles west of Mold on the A494). The following Council meeting will be after the AGM at 11am on Saturday 18 March at The New Inn, Cononley (direct trains from Bradford and Leeds, travellers using the Carlisle or Lancaster lines need to change at Skipton). Observers are always welcome at the AGM and at Council meetings

### **THE NEXT NEWSLETTER**

The next newsletter should appear in the early winter, after the next Council meeting. If you or your group/society has information, queries or anything of interest to the wider mining history community, then please send it to me; preferably in a common digital format.

Peter Cloughton <P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk>

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