

NAMHO Newsletter March 2012

News and events

Nenthead Mines Conservation Society

At a meeting of the North Pennines Heritage Trust (NPHT) on 28th September 2011 an administrator was appointed and the site was closed. On the same day an ad-hoc meeting took place of people interested in continuing the work of conservation at Nenthead Mines. Some of the ex-Trustees of the NPHT want to continue the conservation and education work at Nenthead, and believe that it is important that there is an active group managing the site and continuing the conservation work. To this end, Joyce Jackson, Sheila Barker and Pete Jackson have agreed to be the founder members of a company limited by guarantee and to fund the start-up costs.

Draft articles of association for a company limited by guarantee have been produced by Pete Jackson and edited by a company formation agent. Taking account of company registration rules, the proposed company title is to be 'Nenthead Mines Conservation Society Ltd.' The draft objectives are *"to preserve the remains of mining and associated industries and to conserve the geological features associated with mining in Great Britain, but particularly in Cumbria and at Nenthead, and to educate the public about mining and geology."* A strategic business case is now being written and we hope that we shall shortly be holding discussions with Cumbria County Council and the administrator.

The new Society believes that Nenthead Mines must be managed in a different way to the past. We envisage a volunteer operation in the early years, focussing on conservation and education. It will be vital to consider whether the existing properties on site are required for the new Society. We see that the buildings around the smelt mill could be used as a base for conservation and education, but are not yet sure whether the other buildings around the Wood yard and Café Courtyard can be supported by a new society. The cottage and bunkhouse are currently on the market because NPHT had a mortgage secured on these two buildings. It will also be important to have a working relationship with Nenthead Hydro Ltd who operates the power station at Mill Cottage.

Support and encouragement from people living nearby should be an important part of future arrangements. We must also look to prospective partners who are already working in heritage, conservation, geology, and recreation in the North Pennines area. There will be significant impact from environmental legislation about water pollution and derelict land, which will require someone to speak up for the preservation of the mines. There may be opportunities to get help to manage the moorland and woodland on the site. Any new operation on the site will require start-up funds, working capital and regular income. We believe that everyone who understands the importance of this site needs to consider how those funds might be obtained.

We welcome any offers of help, funds, and ideas. We would love to hear from anyone who might see themselves playing a leading role in the new NMCS. We have learnt lessons from

NPHT operations at Nenthead and we know that new thinking is required to sustain work on site. If you consider that you can contribute in some way, please get in touch with us. Speak to Pete on 01642564100 or via the newsletter email address. We will continue to send out an occasional newsletter. You can join our mailing list by emailing p.jackson@ntlworld.com.

Pete Jackson

2012 International Mining Games

This year's competition is to be hosted by Camborne School of Mines (CSM) at King Edward Mine Museum, near Camborne from 31st March to 1st April. Now in its 34th year, this is the first time the event has been held outside the USA or Australia. The International Mining Games were started in 1978 to honour those killed in the Sunshine Mine disaster, USA in 1972, as well as miners killed in the industry since.

CSM students are competing in the event, which is based upon traditional mining techniques such as surveying, 'jackleg drilling' and 'mucking', and will include competitors from around the world. The King Edward Mine was the CSM's field station for practical mining and surveying for over a century, but now operates as a museum managed by a team of volunteers. The event will be free and open to spectators. Further details available at: <http://www.34iimg.com/> and <http://www.kingedwardmine.co.uk/>

Demand for state aid for mine rescue services

Peter Hain, the shadow Wales secretary, has called for state aid for mining rescue services in light of the Gleison Colliery disaster, in which four men died in September 2011. At Gleison the rescue attempt was dependent upon the goodwill of local mines and companies to provide equipment and in one instance pay for diesel to power the generators. Hain argues that the service should have access to government funding, whilst in response Iain Duncan Smith, responsible for the Health and Safety Executive, says that rescue service was a private sector service and that it had found ways to generate income lost from falling coal sector receipts. The HSE investigations are still on going.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/21/mining-rescue-fund-gleision-colliery>

Anniversaries of two colliery disasters that changed the coal industry

On the 25th May 1812 an explosion at the Felling Colliery, near Gateshead took the lives of 92 men and boys. The miners work by the light of naked flames or steel mills, and this wanton loss of life prompted the government to have accidents investigated and implement safety measures in mines, but perhaps more importantly it focused the need for a safety lamp and the development of designs by Dr.W.R. Clanny, George Stephenson and Sir Humphry Davy. There are plans to commemorate the 200th anniversary with a remembrance service, more details here: <http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/north-east-news/evening-chronicle-news/2011/12/15/remembering-the-dead-of-felling-pit-disaster-72703-29959389/>

In January a memorial service was held to mark the 150th anniversary of the Hartley Pit disaster, in which 204 men and boys were tragically killed when the beam of the pumping engine broke and fell down the shaft. Like many pits at the time, there was only one shaft, divided into two by brattice for ventilation. With the destruction of the brattice there was no ventilation and with no means of escape, the trapped miners suffocated. Once again it took a tragedy of such scale to have the laws changed, ensuring that in future all collieries worked with two shafts. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-16494120>

Calls for Bersham Colliery to become a museum

25 years on from the closure of the last pit in the Denbighshire coalfield, the North Wales Miners Trust is calling for the Bersham Colliery site to become a visitor attraction. With the headgear and winding house still extant the Trust say that the site has the most original remains in the region and are in discussion with Wrexham Council over their proposals. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-east-wales-16214803>

Snibston Discovery Museum

Based at the former Leicestershire colliery, the future of this award winning museum is in doubt after a major funding bid of £4million from the Heritage Lottery Fund was withdrawn by the County Council. The funding was to have been for a project called 'Mining Lives' aimed at safeguarding the colliery buildings, some of which are included on the English Heritage 'At Risk' Register. With an on-going review of the County's museums, the County Council say that the HLF money had strings attached, which meant that they would be unable to properly review saving money on site. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-16205674>

North Yorkshire Moors Potash Mine plans

Sirius Minerals Ltd has planning permission to drill deep boreholes at 13 sites in North Yorkshire. They hope to develop a mine which would become one of the world's largest producers of sulphate of potash. It is likely that the mine will be situated within the North York Moors National Park.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-16635060>

<http://siriusminerals.com/york-potash-project>

Cornonish Gold Mine, Scotland

The mine received planning permission from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority in October 2011. A financial package totalling £2M has now been agreed between

the Authority and the developer, Scotgold Resources Ltd. As part of the package Scotgold will give Strathfillan Community Development Trust £200,000 towards the development of a mining exhibition and interpretative facility. Development work at the mine in central Scotland is expected to start in the second half of 2012.

<http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/> <http://www.scotgoldresources.com.au/>

Publications

Towards a Better Understanding- New Research on Old Mines.

Editor *DJ Linton*, Welsh Mines Society, 150pp, Paperback, £10.00 (plus £1.50 p&p)
ISBN 978-0-9561377-1-5,

The proceedings of the Welsh Mines Society Conference 2010 and includes:

Esgairmwyn: Some History, and a Personal Story – *George W Hall*

Rediscovering the Lead and Zinc Production of North-East Wales – *Christopher J. Williams*
and *R. Alan Williams*

Hidden Bullion: Silver Production in North-East Wales - *R. Alan Williams*

Silver and Zinc: Cardiganshire, Brittany, and Dillwyn & Co. of Swansea – *Peter Claughton*

A Closer Look at the Upper Nant yr Onnen Valley, Cwmystwyth – *Roger Bird*

Where Fenton went Underground: the Caerffynnon coal trials near Tywyn, Merionethshire –
David M.D. James

Features of Interest at Four Small Lead Mines near Pontrhydfendigaid – *John Webb*

Archaeological Evidence of Metal Mining in the Strata Florida Domain – *David Sables* and
Jamie Williams

Mr Cole's Infernal Engine: The Fair Chance Water Pressure Engine – *Roger Bird*

Llwyn Teify, Bwlchgwyn, Penrhiw and Ystumtuen from 1850 to the 1920s – *George W. Hall*

A Re-examination of the Brynrafr Mine Simon - *J.S. Hughes*

The Glasdir Mill - *George W. Hall*

Alfred Williams of Oswestry: Inventor of the Methanometer? – *Rob Vernon*

The IGS Mineral Reconnaissance Map in the Ordovician inliers of the Northern Central
Wales Orefield – *David M.D. James*

Copies are available from: John Hine (a.k.a. Mole), The Grottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End,
Coleford GL16 7QF (please make cheques payable to Welsh Mines Society)

Enquiries to Dave Linton, 01341 280901, editor@welshmines.org

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**High Rake Mine, Little Hucklow, Derbyshire: Excavations and Conservation at an
Important Nineteenth Century Mine.**

J. Barnatt, on behalf of the PDMHS Conservation Team with contributions from *C. Heathcote*, *J. Hunter* & *D. Williams*. PDMHS, 217pp, illustrated, ISSN 1366-2511

This report describes archaeological excavations and archive research undertaken on High Rake Mine near Windmill in the Peak District of Derbyshire. The fieldwork was undertaken by the PDMHS Conservation Team between 2000 and 2008, usually working one Saturday a month. In 2000 there was little to see on site, but during excavations the remains of two steam engine houses, each with boiler houses, flues and chimneys, a balance bob platform, a raised capstan platform, a horse-drawn ore crusher and dressing floor features were slowly brought back to view. The mine site has since been conserved and interpretation boards installed.

British Mining No92, Memoirs 2011

Editor *R. Smith*, Northern Mines Research Society, 172pp, A5, ISSN 0308-2199

Including the Proceedings of the Lawrence Barker Conference held at Fremington on 10th September 2011

Lawrence Barker: An Appreciation- *Duncan Bythell*

Some Material from the Lawrence Barker Collection- *Alan Mills*

Mines, Quarries, Building and Fuel in Wensleydale and Swaledale- *Ian M Spensley*

Women and Mining Communities in the Dales- *Janet Bishop*

A Forgotten Manuscript, a WEA Class and a Chapter in the History of Swaledale- *Helen Bainbridge*

Archaeological Landscapes of Reeth Moor- *Tim Laurie*

Mining, Quarrying and Aerial Photography in the Yorkshire Dales- *Robert White*

Out of Court: The Battle for Beldi Hill- *Keith Sweetmore*

Bale Smelting in the Dales- *Richard Smith*

The Future of the Mining Industry in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale- *Mike Gill*

The Mid-Cumberland Coalfield- *Graham Brooks*

The Dunker Dossier- *RM Callender*

Gold Mining at Cononish, Tyndrum, Scotland- *RM Callender*

The Great Courts of Devon Tanners 1510 and 1710

Tom Greeves and Phil Newman, Dartmoor Tin Working Research Group, 57pp, A5, £5.95 or £6.95 including p&p from Membership Secretary, 78 Durham Avenue, St. Judes, Plymouth, PL4 8SR (cheques payable to DTRG) ISBN 978-0-9529442-1-8

This book, written by two well-known specialists on the Devon tin industry, marks two special anniversaries of the Devon tanners. A dinner and talks (on which the book is based), held in Chagford on 24th September 2010, marked exactly 500 years since a Great Court of Devon tanners was held on Crockerntor near Two Bridges in the heart of Dartmoor in 1510.

Great Courts were infrequent but momentous occasions, at which a large gathering of tanners passed statutes for governing their industry. The Devon Great Courts are first documented in 1474, more than 100 years before the first known Cornish equivalent.

That held in 1510 enacted 37 statutes, which formed the basis of administration of the Dartmoor tin industry during its most prosperous period. The statutes are reproduced here for the first time since 1725, and in a modern form. One of the statutes led to momentous events in 1512 when Richard Strode MP was imprisoned by the tanners in Lydford gaol for trying to curb their activities by introducing a Bill into the Westminster Parliament. After his release, and because of his treatment, Strode introduced a new Bill at Westminster which, it is argued, became the foundation of parliamentary privilege.

The exciting discovery of a previously unknown record of a Great Court of Devon tanners held in 1710 was also marked as a 300th anniversary on the same day in 2010. Besides being of considerable intrinsic interest, this unique and important record includes the only known eyewitness account of a meeting on Crockerntor itself. The original record is reproduced in full.

The book also explores the context of these two remarkable events, based on much original research about tanners and tin working in Devon in the early 16th and 18th centuries. The book has colour and black-and-white illustrations, a full bibliography and a comprehensive index.

The publication of the book also marks the 20th anniversary of the Dartmoor Tin working Research Group (www.dtrg.org.uk).

The Rossendale Coalfield

Jack Nadin, The History Press Ltd., paperback, 160pp, illustrated, 234x164mm, £12.99, ISBN 978-0-7524-6112-0

Coal mining is the second oldest industry in Britain after agriculture. As big coal mines developed to cope with the output to feed the Industrial Revolution, many small-scale moorland pits - including those around Rawtenstall, Bacup, Rochdale, Littleborough and Heywood - were still worked to provide fuel for local markets, households, farms, mills, factories and foundries. These small, private coal mines were often worked on a shoestring budget, and the miners themselves toiled in extreme conditions using methods of mining hundreds of years old. Written by a former miner, this book recalls an industry now long gone, of accidents and deaths, of child labour and the owners of these mines, as well as the proud men who toiled below ground, sometimes hundreds of feet down, others in coal seams less than eighteen inches high.

The Healeyfield Lead Mine-Castleside

Ray Thompson, A Friends of Killhope publication, soft back, 118 pages, some colour photographs, A5, £9.95, ISBN: 978-0-9518939-5-1.

A collection of reports, historical details and anecdotes about this long lived, relatively silver rich mine on the north-eastern fringes of the North Pennine Orefield.

Regulating Health and Safety in the British Mining Industries, 1800–1914

Catherine Mills, Ashgate, Hardback, 310 pages, 234 x 156 mm, £70 (Web £63) see www.ashgate.com ISBN: 978-0-7546-6087-3

Contents: Foreword; Introduction; Industrialization and the frequency and nature of risk; The rise of a reforming interest and the Mines and Collieries Act of 1842; Organized labour and the Home Office; Intervention in coal mining, 1850–1887; The Kinnaird Commission and the regulation of metalliferous mining; The Metalliferous Mines Regulation Act of 1872; Scientific, technological and medical advances; Hazards and heroics; Conclusion; Bibliography; Index

Gold Frenzy: The Story of Wicklow's Gold

Peadar McArdle, Published by Albertine Kennedy Publishing in Hardback, 176 pages, illustrated, 155 x 220 mm, €20, ISBN: 978 0906 002087

Dr Peadar McArdle, who recently retired as Director of the Geological Survey of Ireland, has had a long-term interest in the history and origin of the Goldmine River gold deposits.

Dates for your dairy

31st March-1st April 2012: International Mining Games, King Edward Mine Museum, Cornwall

29th June-1st July 2012: NAMHO Conference, Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, near Wilmslow, Cheshire.

June 2012 NAMHO Newsletter: Copy for inclusion to be forwarded to the Editor by 31st May please, via: Email, (with Newsletter as the subject), to secretary@namho.org Or by post, c/o NAMHO Secretary, Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR

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