

Minutes of Council Meeting
of the National Association of Mining History Organisations held at
the Catholic Church Hall, Cheddar, Somerset on 12th November 2011 at 11.00

95.1 Present

Kevin Baker	Carn Brea Mining Society – Chairman
George Price	Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club – Treasurer
Nigel Dibben	Derbyshire Caving Club – Secretary
Peter Cloughton	Combe Martin Silver Mines Research Group – Conservation Officer
Wes Taylor	South Derbyshire Mines Preservation Group
Roger Gosling	South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group; Hades Caving Club
Dave Linton	Welsh Mines Society
Roy Meldrum	Friends of Chatterley Whitfield
John Hine	Observer

95.2 Apologies

Graham Woodrow	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Paul Saulter	Heritage of Industry
Ian Thomas	National Stone Centre
Ivor J Brown	Peak District Mines (Historical Society; Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Steve Holding	Shropshire Caving and Mining Club
Steve Henley	Webmaster
Mike Moore	Shropshire Mines Trust Limited
Kelvin Lake	IA Recordings
Peter Eggleston	Observer
Peter Jackson	NPHT
Jonathan Wright	Clearwell Caves
Mike Gill	Friends of Cononley Mine
Sallie Bassham	Northern Mines Research Society

95.3 Minutes of the last Council Meeting: 12 March 2011

A draft had been issued to NAMHO members. On item 94.9, the date in the first line should be July 2012 and not July 2011. With this amendment, the minutes were accepted as a correct record.

95.4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising that would not be covered by agenda items.

95.5 Chairman's report

KB reported that he had little to report. He was pleased the research project was progressing well. He was disappointed by the poor turnout to the current meeting and wondered whether meetings should normally be held further north, even though there is a fair distribution of member organisations in the south and southwest.

95.6 Secretary's report

ND had no significant correspondence to report. Information had been received from English Heritage which had been passed on to other officers and members as appropriate.

95.7 Treasurer's business

The Treasurer reported that funds stand at £4371. Since the last meeting, 23 subscriptions had been received. Outgoing payments had been for the expenses of the last meeting, the website and donations to the accounts checker. There have been 67 membership renewals in 2011, five are outstanding of which four are expected to be paid. Two members: Rosevale and Tamar Mining Group are now assumed to have ended their membership. Cannock Chase Mining History Society, North Pennines Heritage Trust and Friends of Cononley Mine have said they are leaving the organisation. In view of the high cost of expenses to Council meetings, there was discussion about the possibilities for car sharing and ND said that he would in future ask representatives to say if they expected to come to Council meetings with a view to suggesting car sharing opportunities. (Currently, representatives do not generally notify the Secretary in advance of their intention to attend.)

95.8 Conservation Officer's report

95.8.1 Research framework report

The Framework report is proceeding and the project requires feedback from member organisations and individuals. A circular was sent out at the 2011 conference encouraging feedback and attendance at seminars. The current plans are for seminars at Caphouse Colliery, South Yorkshire on 21 January 2012 and in the Mendip region on 11 February 2012. Members are encouraged to attend one or other of these. A third seminar in the Midlands is being considered for 23 March 2012. The reports are available on the Organisation's website at www.namho.org/research.asp.

95.8.2 English Heritage

English Heritage have been focusing recently on 'Heritage at Risk', especially industrial heritage. Awards have been made to significant projects including Pleasley Colliery (www.pleasley-colliery.org.uk/) which won in the category 'best rescue' for an industrial heritage site. It was noted that while English Heritage promote protection of the industrial heritage in England, Welsh Mines Preservation Trust (NAMHO member) undertake similar work in Wales. There was discussion about the strengths of private organisations in local activity such as archaeology and conservation and whether English Heritage could be encouraged to make more use of NAMHO member organisations. PC will discuss this with English Heritage and pointed out that the Framework report will help to highlight areas where cooperation would be advantageous to both parties. It was further commented that 'Heritage at Risk' focuses on preservation of remains rather than conservation. PC noted that underground archaeology is also getting coverage through the work of Jon Humble in the Peak District. Other examples exist elsewhere in the country.

95.8.3 WRAP and compost disposal in quarries

DL reported on a meeting he attended where the WRAP organisation were involved with the use of compost from household waste in the reclamation of recently quarried sites. DL has prepared a note of the meeting which will be summarised in NAMHO's next newsletter. PC reported on trials on lead mining waste which have been carried out at a landfill site in Wales using material believed to have been sourced at Dylife.

95.8.4 Archaeology and flora

JH referred to a meeting of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) volunteers at Nenthead at which it was apparent that protection of rare flora may take precedence over archaeology in some cases.

95.9 NAMHO website

ND said that he had received no report from Steve Henley. ND has set up a handbook website and a number of organisations have provided updates. The next stage will be to produce a printable version of the on-line handbook. DL commented that some areas of the NAMHO website are becoming out of date such as meeting dates; ND will contact SH regarding updating the website. **Action: ND**

95.10 Insurance and BCA matters

KB reported on behalf of Steve Holding that the BCA insurance premium per person is increasing from £5/£16 to £6/£17 per annum (surface/underground). However, along with this increase, the insurance cover maximum is increasing from £2 million to £5 million. It was noted that the latter increase will suit landowners such as the National Trust and Forestry Commission who have previously sought the higher level of cover.

95.11 Applications for membership

None. ND took the opportunity to suggest a constitutional change to allow a form of provisional membership to bridge the time gap between Council meetings. WT described the system used by PDHMS and other clubs to send out packages of information to show the provisional members the benefits of their membership. The subject led to discussion about the benefits of NAMHO membership and what the organisation can offer. PC referred particularly to the organisation having a voice with national bodies such as English Heritage, Natural England and their counterparts in Wales and Scotland. Indeed, although called the National organisation, NAMHO also has members in Ireland and Isle of Man. It was felt that some material indicating how NAMHO had helped members and official bodies could be added to the current "Who is NAMHO" leaflet (copy attached).

95.12 NAMHO Conference 2012

ND reported on progress with the 2012 conference which is currently being planned in Cheshire after the plans for a Nenthead conference became impractical. The core of the conference will be at Quarry Bank Mill, a National Trust venue near Wilmslow in Cheshire while the majority of underground trips over the weekend will be at Alderley Edge, a couple of miles south. Speakers on topics relevant to Cheshire and the locality have been identified but there are still slots to be filled and speakers are invited, especially from areas where mining is seen as a minority aspect of the history. Surface and underground trips outside Alderley Edge are also being planned for the weekend and following week. With a trip to Winsford salt mine being a possibility, it was suggested by JH that conference attendees who have already visited Winsford should be asked to give way to those who have not. JH also suggested a trip to the Fauld gypsum mine in Staffordshire. It was suggested that speakers from some of the working mines (Winsford, Fauld, etc) should be invited. ND agreed but added that Paul Deakin who was speaking on Winsford and the North Staffs coalfield (separately) would bring some knowledge and experience of these mines.

95.13 Future meetings

95.13.1 Conference 2013

PC described outline plans for a conference that could be organised at Aberystwyth on the theme of archaeology and the environment in the context of abandoned mines. He has identified some interested potential speakers (John Grattan and Catherine Mills). The idea has been suggested to Welsh Mines Society members and received a guarded response but it was felt that the conference plan is worth pursuing and that trips, etc, could follow as support is gained. It was noted that obtaining official and, normally, written permission for external trips is essential as NAMHO has responsibilities as a national body. There was discussion about the value of the social event with 'academic' and 'active' miners mixing on the Friday and Saturday nights even if they go their own ways during the days so it was agreed that a programme of trips should be planned if at all possible. JH commented that the last Aberystwyth conference involved 58 separate people in organising, staffing and leading trips.

95.13.2 Subsequent conferences

Venues suggested which are considered to be feasible:

- 2014: Nenthead
- 2015: Cornwall

95.13.3 Council meetings and AGM

The 2012 spring Council meeting and AGM will be held at Astley Green, near Manchester on 17th March 2012. A venue is required for the Council meeting on 17th November 2012.

95.14 Any other business

95.14.1 Expenses for meeting attended on behalf of NAMHO

DL asked for and was granted expenses for the meeting attended with WRAP (see item 95.8).

95.14.2 Agreement with Forestry Commission

JH reported on a meeting between cavers/miners, BCA and the Forestry Commission following the success of meetings with the National Trust. Agreement in principle to access arrangements appears to be likely and this would be passed down to FC regions (e.g. the four in Wales) to provide licences to cavers and miners.

95.14.3 Clydach gorge widening

DL referred the meeting to the project currently being planned to widen the road through the Clydach Gorge in South Wales. While the greatest threat is probably to natural caves, there is a threat to a historic iron smelting site.

95.14.4 Newsletter editorship

RM was formally thanked by the Chairman on behalf of NAMHO for taking on the task of preparing and distributing a newsletter. Three have been produced by RM since he volunteered to take on the task after the March 2011 meeting.

Date of next meeting

The next AGM and council meeting will be held on 17th March 2012 at Dam House, Astley Hall Drive, Astley, Manchester M29 7TX at 1100 to be followed by a visit to Astley Green Colliery site.

Meeting closed at 1300.