



# Newsletter

## June 2010

### Editor's Letter

My apologies, this is the first newsletter since that produced for last year's conference to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary but it has been a busy twelve months with NAMHO business at the forefront. As you will know I am also the Conservation Officer and, since the start of the Research Framework project, I now have an additional role as Project Manager / Director. So, if anyone has an interest in becoming the newsletter editor, please step forward. Don Borthwick has once again provided much of the content for this issue of the newsletter and I am very grateful for this - without his work this issue would be very sparse indeed.

### A Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries (Mining and Quarrying) in England

Over the Summer of last year a bid was submitted to English Heritage for funds towards a comprehensive study of the current state of mining and quarrying archaeology. The bid was successful with in excess of £46,000 being made available for the project over the next two years. In October the project management group appointed Phil Newman as Project Officer and the project got underway in late November. Phil is well known in the South-West of England for his expertise on tin working but he has a wide ranging knowledge of the archaeology of both mining and quarrying which is being put to good effect in collecting the data in which we will base our assessment of current knowledge.

What can you add to the data on the archaeology of mining and quarrying?

If you have access to the Internet, go to the newly updated NAMHO web site at [www.namho.org](http://www.namho.org) and look at the Research pages where you will find summaries of the archaeological data by county. Alternatively contact myself or Phil using the address at the bottom of the page and we will send you data for the relevant counties.

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The Secretary NAMHO, c/o Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion,  
Matlock Bath, Derbyshire DE4 3NR

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Cover illustration: the engine house at the Dorothea Quarry,  
Dyffryn Nantlle, North Wales (see Page 14)

We have already had a good response to this question in the course of the seminars held in Cornwall, Leicestershire and Lancashire but there is undoubtedly a great deal of information on little known aspects of the archaeology we should consider in the assessment.

Does the reference to 'archaeology' put you off?

It has been suggested that the idea of 'archaeology' does not interest mining historians. Why not? Most mining historians have an interest in specific sites and spend a fair amount of their time visiting them. They seek to relate the documentary evidence for mining or quarrying to the field evidence - identifying shafts, engine houses, leat system and other features in the infrastructure of the industries; determining the chronology of the workings and their purpose. In effect most mining historians are using archaeological techniques to interpret the sites they visit

The sources we are using as a basis for the collection of data for the project are the Historical Environment Records (HERs) maintained by archaeologists in each local authorities in Britain - sometimes still referred to as Sites and Monument Records (SMRs). In some of those HERs there is a significant lack of data on mining and quarrying, and that is worrying as they are the primary source of information for any planning enquiry prior to development work. In a system where heritage protection is linked to planning permission it is important that the HERs reflect the sites that need protecting. Those mines and quarries which are scheduled ancient monuments or include listed building are, of course, well represented in the HER but there are many important but unscheduled sites which are not included.

Do you inform your local HER of the results of a site investigation?

No? Well you should! By keeping the county archaeologists informed through the HER you are helping to protect our mining and quarrying heritage. It is something the Research Framework will be addressing as the project develops: feeding additional data back to

the HERs and making mining historians aware of the value of their research to the heritage protection system.

The process of collecting and assessing the archaeological data will continue over the next year and three further seminars are planned for the Winter / Spring of next year. If you want more information, have any comment on the work of the Research Framework or would like to help the project please do not hesitate to contact me on [P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk) or at the address below.

### **Research Frameworks in Wales and Scotland**

It had been hoped to extend the Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries into Wales and Scotland but the funding was not forthcoming. There is however the opportunity to increase the profile of mining and quarrying in the existing frameworks for both those countries.

The Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales - <http://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/intro.html> - is far more advanced than that in Scotland but due for review during 2010. We should take that opportunity to provide an improved input in respect of the extractive industries. Those interested in contributing should contact me as soon as possible.

In Scotland the process of developing a research framework for the future of archaeology is only just beginning. The 'modern' period group, covering the 16<sup>th</sup> century through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was recently formed at a meeting in Edinburgh in March. John Pickin will be representing mining interests in that group but there are other period groups to consider and we need to actively consider what the issues are for mining and quarrying archaeology in Scotland. To that end there is the prospect of a seminar on the subject in Edinburgh in late 2010 / early 2011 - contact me for details.

Peter Claughton, Conservation Officer and Project Manager

# 50 Years of Mining History



To celebrate the 50-Year Anniversary of its founding, the **Northern Mine Research Society** is holding a conference at Reeth, Swaledale, Yorkshire from 1-3<sup>rd</sup> October 2010 and based at Reeth Memorial Hall. The programme includes papers on all aspects of mining history, a reception at the Swaledale Museum, a conference dinner and a full day of field trips. It is intended to publish the papers in a special issue of British Mining. The programme, which is subject to final additions and alteration includes:

## Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October

Registration and assembly at Reeth Memorial Hall, coffee & buffet

Members contributions and short papers including contributions:

President's welcome – Sallie Bassham.

Mining Heritage in the Yorkshire Dales National Park – Robert White.

The Lead Industry of Bordley Township – Janis Heward.

From Summer Lodge to Wabamum via Allihies – John Hopkins.

Mines and miners in the mid-C19th; correspondence of the Reeth Poor Law Union – Alan Mills.

## Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

Mining in Teesdale in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18th Century - William Heyes.

Mining and Smelting in Dacre and Darley, the work of the Iron Age Nidderdale Project - Gillian Hovell.

Coal Mining at Garforth - Alison Hennesey.

Excavations at Silvergill Mine, Cumbria - Warren Allinson.

The NE extremity of the Central Wales Orefield, Cwm Nant Ddu to Cwm bychan, and the geological controls on the orefield extent - David M. D. James.

Hathorn Davey and Co Ltd, Leeds: Manufacturers of mine engines and pumps - Rob Vernon.

Chert Quarrying in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale - Kay Jackson.

The wrong end of the telescope? Mining law and the working of silver-bearing ores in England and Wales - Peter Claughton.

Lead Mining Plans of the Yorkshire Dales – Keith Sweetmore and Les Tyson.

The papers will be followed by a wine reception at the Reeth Museum and later by a conference dinner at the Bridge Inn, Grinton.

## **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Field trips with packed lunch:

To take full advantage of the opportunity to meet and socialise, those attending are advised to book accommodation early as possible. Please make your own arrangements for this, a list of hotels, B&B's etc is available, together with a menu for the conference dinner.

Conference fee for non-members £15, conference dinner on Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge Hotel, Grinton £20.

Details:

Barbara Sutcliffe,

The Old Manse, 93 Halifax Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0EQ.

Tel: 01282 614615.

E-mail: Mansemins@bopenworld.com.

## WELSH MINES SOCIETY

### OCCASIONAL CONFERENCE 2010

The Welsh Mines Society is pleased to announce a Conference, to be held on the weekend of 9th & 10th October, 2010.

The title will be "Towards a better Understanding\* - New Research on Welsh Mines"

\* a quotation from the Society's Founder, the late David Ewart Bick

Venue: Plas Dolguog Hotel, Machynlleth

#### Programme

##### Saturday

Presentation of Conference Papers  
Coffee, lunch & tea £25 per person  
Evening- Dinner at the hotel £15

##### Sunday

Fieldmeet in the Machynlleth or  
Dolgellau area

##### Call for papers

Offers to David James, 3, Finedon Hall,  
Finedon, Wellingborough, NN9 5NL,  
or [davidmd.james@virgin.net](mailto:davidmd.james@virgin.net)

##### Enquiries & bookings

to: John W. Hine, The Grottage, 2,  
Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Glos.  
GL16 7QF (please enclose SAE), or  
[mole@grottage.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:mole@grottage.fsworld.co.uk)

Further details may be found on the WMS web page, as and when they become available  
[www.welshmines.org](http://www.welshmines.org)

### IAN FORBES, Manager of The North of England Lead Mining Museum (KILLHOPE), Upper Weardale, 1983-2010

Ian retired from his post as Manager of the Killhope Museum in January of this year, much to the regret of all who knew him, particularly his staff in the Museum, his colleagues in the Durham

County Council (who own the site) and last but not least all of us in the Friends of Killhope. He has been the first and only Manager of Killhope so far and its present status as a multi-award-winning flagship site is all due to Ian and his wonderful staff over the years.

We shall remember him for his passion for Killhope, which we sincerely hope will continue with us in the Friends, his friendliness, his approachability, his diplomacy and his interest in every person with whom he dealt. He knew so many people in the Weardale area who all had tales to tell and, of course, told them to Ian who stored them in his encyclopaedic mind and brought them out at appropriate moments to interest those around him. His friendly contact with people also meant that people would donate their treasures to Killhope, such as some of the wonderful spar boxes which are on display on the Killhope site, Sir Kingsley Dunham's hammer, local bibles, etc. The Friends of Killhope also have a large archive, the vast majority of which was initially handed over to Ian.

Ian's emphasis on the care of his customers, particularly the children, and their interest in and enjoyment of the Killhope site is amply shown by the 18 awards won by Killhope between 1990 and 2008, including: the *Guardian's Family Friendly Museum Award 2004*, *Northumbria Tourist Board's Pride of Northumbria awards 2000 - Special Award to Killhope as "An outstanding learning experience"* and *Gold Award Small Visitor Attraction of the Year - North East Tourism Awards 2008*

Shelagh Bridges, Friends of Killhope Representative, March 2010

### The Fate of an American Gold Mine Model Exhibited in Britain

The December Mining History News, produced by the Mining History Association (MHA) in North America, has a piece entitled 'Innovative Colorado Mine Model Educated Audiences across the Globe' by the current MHA president Karen Vendl

William Keast was born in Cornwall in the late 1850's, aged about 20 he sailed to North America and settled in Central City, Colorado. For the next 13 years he worked as a gold miner, spending 6 ½ years in the Saratoga Mine. One of his jobs was to give tours to visitors and explain the actual working of the mine. He realized that many of the visitors retained very little from the tour, mainly due to the strange surroundings of the mine and the nervousness it caused. This gave him the idea to construct a model of a gold mine to give the average person an idea of how an underground mine works, without having to descend into a real mine.

The automatic model, which was run by that new invention, electricity, was a true representation of the Saratoga mine. It showed a section of the mountain that was split in half. The top level of the model showed men at work, stoping and working out the vein. The bottom level of the model showed men drifting, cross-cutting, and drilling, as well as pumps at work. Everything worked at the push of a button, from the robot miners to the compressed-air drills.

It was placed on view for the first time in 1892 at Central City where it was a great success. It was then displayed at all the mining camps of Colorado. The model was so huge that Keast had to hire six railway trucks to transport it.

In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago, along the shore of Lake Michigan. It was the greatest event of its time. Over 27 million people attended the fair to see the "wonders of today and the marvels of tomorrow". The Gold Mine exhibit, which was protected by patent and copyright, was displayed throughout the six-month run of the Exposition. Admission to the exhibit was 10 cents. The Colorado Gold Mine exhibit was termed "the most wonderful piece of mechanism ever placed on exhibition."

After the Columbian Exposition, the model was taken to San Francisco for the California Midwinter International Exhibition in 1894, and, was visited by thousands of people. It was the only exhibit of its class that was awarded a gold medal. Based on this success, Keast decided to take the model to Europe where it was first exhibited at the Royal Aquarium in London. There it was examined and inspected by the leading mining experts of the day. From London

it was taken to the Cardiff Exhibition, and then to Glasgow. Finally, it was shown in the subterranean mining exhibition in the Trocadero Palace at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Where the model went from Paris is unknown, as is the fate of this fabulous exhibit.

If anyone has additional information and would like to help Karen with this research please contact her at: [mkvendl@earthlink.net](mailto:mkvendl@earthlink.net) (a cc to don.borthwick@cybermoor.org.uk would be appreciated).

### **Progress on a neglected period in mining history**

*Mining in a Medieval Landscape – The Royal Silver Mines of the Tamar Valley*, University of Exeter Press, ISBN 978 0 85989 828 7, pp.207+xiii, £20 (soft covers).

By Stephen Rippon, Peter Cloughton and Chris Smart

This book explores the late-medieval royal silver mines of the Tamar Valley on the border of Cornwall and Devon, an industry that was of profound importance both in terms of the local economy and the history of mining nationally. In it the results of a two-year study of the Bere Ferrers landscape is described and represents collaboration between a mining historian (PC) and two landscape archaeologists (SR and CS).

By way of introduction, the metal resources of Devon are described in a national context and there are sections on silver production elsewhere during the twelfth century, particularly the 'Mine of Carlisle' and sites in continental Europe.

The story of mining starts with the Crown taking possession of a silver/copper/gold mine at 'la Hole' in North Devon in 1262 and follows with the immigration of German miners in 1264. When the Bere Ferrers and Combe Martin mines were opened up in 1292, miners from other parts of England and Wales were recruited, or impressed, into Devon.

The mining, dressing and smelting methods are described in detail, based on documentary and archaeological evidence relevant to this part of the country. However, the real strength of the work lies in the way that the whole of the surrounding economy has been

incorporated into the study. The ways in which woodland and water resources have been managed and how the mining community lived and interacted with the other inhabitants are covered in detail. The book traces the development of the landscape and shows how this has been influenced by the mining industry. This holistic approach could well be mirrored by authors whose interests lie in other parts of the country and the book provides a useful profile for doing this.

Not only is the book profoundly interesting and readable, it is well-illustrated and produced with a good index, an adequate glossary and an extensive bibliography. It is written to the highest academic standards in that original texts are quoted verbatim, where appropriate and all the statements which are made are referenced back to original sources – other authors please take note. As such it will be found to be a useful starting point for others wishing to study medieval mining. The book is an absolute ‘must’ for those interested in the West Country and will find a well-earned place on the bookshelves of anyone interested in this little-understood period and its integration with the wider local economy.

This review by Richard Smith is reprinted from a NMRS newsletter by kind permission of Richard and NMRS

## **Publications from NMRS**

*British Mining* No. 87 ***Coal Mining in Morley*** - Jim Thorpe, 108pp illus, £12

*British Mining* No. 88 ***Memoirs 2009*** – Various authors, 138pp illus, £10

Contents include:

The Rothwell Haigh Collieries near Leeds: additional notes on their development, technology and social connotations. - John Goodchild.

Mr Pope's pots and the rapid smelting of Lake District copper and lead ores - 1579 - 83. - Richard Smith.

The Inverness Gold. - R.M. Callender.

Tracing the traces. - R.M. Callender.

The Dyliffe and Dyngwm Mines, Powys. Wales. A revision anode geometry and the significance of lode interference with pre-existing joints. - David M. James.

Women's place in lead mining at Grassington, Yorkshire. - Mike Gill.

Onshore oil and gasfields in the UK. - Mike Gill.

The 'Iron Man' coal cutter. - Mike Gill.

The East Cumberland Coalfield. - Graham Brooks.

*British Mining* No. 89 **The Metalliferous Mines of Cartmel and South Lonsdale** – Max Moseley, 104pp illus, £12

## **From Derbyshire**

Mining History - Volume 17, No. 3 - Summer 2009

***Metal Mines through Time: Unravelling Archaeological Evidence at Long-Worked Mines in the Peak District***

John Barnatt and Terry Worthington, with contributions by John Hunter, James H. Rieuwerts and Andy Tickle

Mining History - Volume 17, No. 4 – **Golden Anniversary Special**

In 2009 PDMHS celebrated 50 years from its inception in spring 1959. The illustrated memories of their activities and achievements over the years; submitted by members – old and new – in response to a request in their newsletter. Even if like me (DB) you are not a “Pudum” you will enjoy this as an informal record of the development and activities of one of NAMHO’s major members. The enthusiasm and commitment to the many facets of mining history is very evident in the 100 plus pages.

Available from: Peak District Mining Museum, Peak District Mining Museum - The Pavilion, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR

## ***The Pitmen's Requiem*, by Peter Crookston.**

The Pitmen's Requiem movingly relates the stories and the hardships of the miners who worked in the Great Northern Coalfield. It tells, through interviews and investigative reporting, how Robert Saint's famous brass band composition 'Gresford' – the Miners' hymn, became a requiem for mining communities and their way of life.

"Peter Crookston has written a book that is at once an elegy and a tribute. This is a moving account of the pit closures and the miners' strike in the North East, but it is also an explanation of a landscape and way of life that is vanishing day by day. He has captured testimony from miners and union officials, from miners wives and politicians, from town planners and fellow journalists, and he has caught it just in time." Margaret Drabble.

Thanks to a NEIMME newsletter for this item.

The hardback version of the book is available at a price of £18.00 plus p&p. Available from North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SE. Cheques payable to NEIMME please.

## **The Heritage Bill**

We reported on the Bill in the last issue but it now appears to be dead in the water. It has not been progressed through Parliament over the last year and we must wait to see if it will be revived by the new coalition government.

## **Just a thought**

In a recent issue of the Carn Brea Mining Society Newsletter (62) an account of recent working of Wheal Concord in Cornwall informed us that 'levels extended to Blackwater and finished up near the site where the Women's Institute Hall once stood. ... a sloping path was excavated so that the miners could come to grass there instead of having to go back to the

main shaft.' But no comment on what the ladies of the Women's Institute thought of hot sweaty miners coming to surface in their meeting hall.

Perhaps it was in line with the thoughts of a guide during the International Mining History Congress's visit to Levant in June last year who, when commenting that the baths in the miner's dry adjoining the man-engine shaft would accommodate five miners, said that she 'would have liked to see that.'

## **Marine and Coastal Access**

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill has now passed into the statute books and includes -

### **300 Occupiers' liability**

In section 1 of the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 (c. 3) (duty of occupier to persons other than the occupier's visitors), after subsection (6A) insert—  
“(6AA) Where the land is coastal margin for the purposes of Part 1 of that Act (including any land treated as coastal margin by virtue of section 16 of that Act), subsection (6A) has effect as if for paragraphs (a) and (b) of that subsection there were substituted “a risk resulting from the existence of any physical feature (whether of the landscape or otherwise).””

This puts into practice the reduced liability on man-made, ie. non-landscape, features including mining structures but only on the coastal margins.

## **Quarrying Archaeology - Conservation Issues**

### **Dorothea pumping engine, house and associated structures.**

Dyffryn Nantlle, Gwynedd, North Wales

The Dorothea Quarry pumping engine is situated three kilometres east of Penygroes at NGR SH497531, between the Dorothea and South Dorothea or Cornwall pits. It is a single cylinder beam pumping engine, 68 inch cylinder, made by Holman of Camborne,

erected in 1904 and worked until the 1950s. The engine, along with two Lancashire boilers, survives virtually intact in its engine house and has had scheduled ancient monument status since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

A recent break-in at the engine house and the attempted removal of engine components was reported to the author on 15 October 2009. The site was visited on 2 November to assess the damage and the future prospects for continued preservation of the engine, its house and the associated structures. Gwynfor Pierce-Jones provided a briefing on the current state of the engine house (attached), and John Williams, the farmer with grazing rights on the site, gave the author access and explained the background to the break-in.

### **Access to the site**

There is currently no right of way providing access to the site. The public do, however, walk freely through the area, and the surrounding tracks and spoil heaps are frequently used by trail bikes.

### **Ownership of the site**

Ownership of the engine, its house and the quarry on which it stands, is currently unclear to the author. There have been some well publicised attempts to develop the Dorothea quarry pit as a dive centre, along with the publicity associated with the all too frequent deaths of divers in the quarry. Glyn Small, of Capital Landfill Restoration, had been linked to the proposed dive centre and was variously described as lessee or owner of the site but there are references to frequent changes of ownership.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Capital

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<sup>1</sup> Gwyn, D. *Gwynedd: Inheriting a Revolution*, (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), pp. 49 and 64-65

<sup>2</sup> 'Quarry's rising death toll fails to deter divers', The Times 17 March 2007, [web document] <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1527802.ece> [accessed 4 Nov 2009]; 'Diving ban at death quarry', BBC News 25 February 2002,

Landfill is still the nominal owner, Small has left the company and was replaced by new investors, but real ownership may lie with a third un-named party. A number of individuals, living locally and having an interest in the preservation of the engine, have secured the engine house itself but do not appear to have any formal tenure of the site. A charitable trust, Tirwedd, was set up a number of years ago with a view to establishing an interpretation centre based on the nearby Pen-yr-Orsedd Quarry but is currently moribund.<sup>3</sup> It is understood that there are moves locally to re-form the trust with preservation of the Dorothea engine in mind.

### **Current condition of the site**

#### Structures -

The engine house structure is evidently sound, although there is advancing ivy cover on the southern corner, with a slate roof which was refurbished by Cadw in 1979. A replacement steel door was fitted on the south-eastern side after the original was badly damaged by a fire lit against its outside some years ago. The external woodwork is in need of maintenance and the window on the upper floor, north-east side, requires repair to rectify damage caused in the recent break-in. On the eastern corner of the engine house is a small structure housing the steam capstan winch. The author did not access the winch but it is understood that some components are missing, stolen some decades ago.

The boiler house is currently roofless and has been since the 1960s, although the walls appear to be in reasonable condition. To the rear, south-east, of the boiler house is a stone-built coal hopper in good

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[web document] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/1840398.stm> [accessed 4 Nov 2009]

<sup>3</sup> Tirwedd Trust Ltd - web site [web document] <http://www.tirwedd.co.uk/index.html> [accessed 6 Nov 2009]

condition and to the south of that are the truncated remains of the boiler chimney and associated flue.

The engine, boilers and the pit-work -

The engine itself is virtually intact although rusting and in desperate need of a cleaning, painting and greasing. Some of the non-ferrous fittings have been removed and are believed to be in safe-keeping with Cadw, although the three double beat valves from the Middle Floor were stolen in 1973 after being removed in 1969 as part of a partial strip-down. The wooden cladding around the cylinder remains in place although it appears to be held there with baler twine. The asbestos lagging was removed several years ago but the brass strips retaining the cladding were stolen about ten years ago.

In the boiler house are two Lancashire boilers, exposed to the elements and covered in foliage from trees and ivy.

Most of the pit-work, the pump-rod, rising main and the pumps, remain in the shaft on the north-west side of the engine house. They are, however, largely inaccessible due to large amounts of debris in the shaft and the flooding of the quarry pit. The pump-rod broke in the late 1970s when the shear-legs collapsed. It was subsequently cut and a section removed a few years ago to prevent its use by children swinging over the shaft and that allowed the beam to settle in the indoor position.<sup>4</sup> In its current position, although the piston rod is concealed within the cylinder, rainwater runs down the beam onto the engine cylinder, creating further corrosion problems. The shear-legs have collapsed onto the shaft but the spring beams remain in place, although it is not possible to determine their condition.

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<sup>4</sup> Gwyn, *Gwynedd*, p. 65

## Discussion

Although the use of beam pumping engines in the Welsh quarry industry was atypical, this surviving example is of universal value at a national level both for Wales and for the United Kingdom as a whole. Its continued preservation is essential from the perspective of its value for quarrying archaeology and the interpretation of the history of technology in general.

The proximity of the Dorothea engine to large former quarrying settlements at Talysarn and Penygroes and the ease of access, albeit unauthorised access, makes it vulnerable to vandalism. There is a small group of local people with an interest in the preservation of the engine but they are not in a position to monitor its security continually although the grazier, John Williams, does check it on a regular, if not daily, basis. In addition to the threat of vandalism there is the real threat to the engine's integrity as the condition of the engine itself, its house, the boilers and associated pit-work deteriorates with time. One has only to compare the photograph on page 64 of Gwyn's *Gwynedd* with that at on the front cover of this newsletter to see the deterioration in recent years.

Since the author visited the site there has been a meeting of Tirwedd with a view to taking an active interest in Dorothea but no decision has yet been made on what action they should take. In the meantime I understand there has been a meeting between officials from Gwynedd County Council and the owners of the site at which the requirements for conservation of scheduled ancient monuments was stressed.

Peter Claughton, Conservation Officer

## **The Welsh Mines Society**

Continuing on the theme started by our chairman, Kevin Baker, in the last issue of the Newsletter - and the editor would welcome further contributions along the same lines.

The Welsh Mines Society was formed in 1979 following an informal meeting of subscribers to David Bick's book *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales*. From then until his death in 2006 David played the major part in making the Society what it is today – a somewhat anarchic group of mining history enthusiasts with particular interests in the history of Welsh mining.

Membership of the Society is open to all and currently includes professional and retired mining engineers, academic and amateur geologists, archaeologists and historians, active underground explorers, conservationists and many enthusiastic people who have an interest in the industrial history and landscape of Wales. Some individual members have their own research projects, both academic and practical, and the results of these may be reported in the Society's publications. As well as mines our interests include quarries and the technical, economic and social history of the extractive industries in general.

The Society organises twice-yearly field meets. These take place over a weekend, with a Society dinner on the Saturday evening, and usually comprise walks around disused mining sites. Recent meets have included the mines of the Gwydir Forest in north Wales, the mines of the Elan Valley near Rhyader, and the slate quarries and coal mines of Pembrokeshire. The meets are informally led by those of our members who have specific knowledge of the location.

In September 2007 the Society organised a one-day conference, 'The Lode of History', followed the next day by a guided field excursion to the Bryntail and Penyclun mines near Llanidloes, mid-Wales. The Society has also hosted National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) Field Meets and Conferences in 1984, 1991 and 2004.

The Society publishes a twice-yearly Newsletter. This details

forthcoming Society and other mining-related events and normally includes articles about mining history, news about current mining developments in Wales, a review of recent publications and members' correspondence and queries.

In 2009 we published the *The Lode of History*, the Proceedings of our 2007 conference and the first of a new series publication Welsh Mines and Mining. This is intended to be a more appropriate vehicle for the academic mining history articles (including those from non-members) which until now have been published in our Newsletter.

So, irrespective of whether you have a specific interest in Welsh mining history or if you are just intrigued by the lumps and bumps and holes in the ground you have found in the Welsh countryside, you will be made welcome and find fellow enthusiasts in the Welsh Mines Society. To join the Society please contact the Secretary:

Dr David Roe  
20 Lutterburn Street. Ugborough  
Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0NG  
david@d-roe.freemove.co.uk

## **Future Meetings / Future Newsletters**

This Newsletter should appear for the conference at Coalpit Heath in South Gloucestershire after which we will be looking forward to the next to be hosted by the Shropshire groups at Preston Montford over the last weekend in July 2011. In the meantime there will be a Council Meeting at the National Stone Centre, in Derbyshire, on Saturday 13 November. Then there will be at least three seminars on mining/quarrying archaeology over the Winter and Spring.

As for future Newsletters - I will endeavour to get the next issue out in about six months but much will depend on the material received. Don't wait for Don and I to collect it - send it in.

Peter Claughton, Editor