

J1445

NAMHO

National Association of Mining History Organisations



NEWSLETTER

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ENGLISH HERITAGE MONUMENTS PROTECTION PROGRAMME

The Monuments Protection Programme was initiated in 1986 insofar as industrial monuments are concerned. The programme has within its scope all periods and branches of archaeology and incorporates a review of the currently scheduled Ancient Monuments. It is recognised that industrial monuments are very poorly represented in the schedules. English Heritage is letting out contracts to various organisations or individuals to report on, and to make representations concerning particular industries but it is being very cautious about underground archaeology. It is generally restricting the current process to surface aspects of sites, with a promise that the underground dimension will feature later whilst acknowledging the importance of the archaeological resource.

For each "industry" there is a six-step process:

- Step 1 - A description of the industry
- Step 2 - Data gathering
- Step 3 - A report
- Step 4 - Evaluation and selection
- Step 5 - Consultation
- Step 6 - Protective action

Topic Headings

The MPP "Topic Headings" for industrial monuments that are currently listed are diverse and there seems to be some room for debate concerning which elements that might, or might not, fit in particular topics and contracts. Alongside such evidently important topics as the coal, iron, steel and glass industries we

find arsenic, dove farming, ice, peat production and rural kilns.

A table showing the topics which may have a mining dimension and which have been published to date are shown in the appendix to this Newsletter.

Any members who are interested in taking part in any stage of the MPP process should write Janet Morgan, English Heritage, Room 202, 23 Saville Row, London W1X 2HE for a copy of the Strategy Document and/or any Step 1 or Step 3 reports.
Paul Sowan

DUMPING OF CATTLE WASTE IN SHAFTS AND POT-HOLES

Eric Cotterill, the Derbyshire Caving Club NAMHO representative asks "Have cavers and miners noticed any unusual cattle waste dumped in shafts and pot-holes lately?"

This question was a television report on a slaughtering and animal rendering company which had allowed disgusting wastes and slimes to escape into local water courses. Concern was expressed that the lack of hygiene at the company might have resulted in a group of CJD cases in the surrounding area.

In view of the national need to slaughter thousands of cows over the next few months, one is forced to wonder whether the holes and pits wherein we gain our pleasures might not pose a sore temptation to the unscrupulous.

Apparently, the organism that causes BSE and CJD is a "prion" that can remain infectious for several years, (it is alleged).

Would anyone with information on the subject please inform Eric Cotterill, tel: (01625) 877998.

MINING ACCIDENTS WORLD -WIDE - SPRING 1996

1. Three miners drowned when the cage in which they were travelling was lowered into a flooded shaft bottom. Unknown to anyone, the mine pumps had stopped working.

The shaft, at Kalinin Colliery, Gorloyka, Ukraine, was 1080m deep.

2. Three miners were killed at Indonesia's Grasberg copper/gold mine in a riot after one person was injured by a car being driven by a mining contractor. The mining company is suspected of preferentially employing labour from outside the area.

3. A further riot in Indonesia left two policemen dead. During the loading of the bodies at the airport the police guard fired on local people and 15 of them were shot dead.

4. A fire at Sukhodolskaya Vostochnaya Coal Mine, Ukraine, killed eight miners and injured four. An underground conveyor belt caught fire and trapped the miners.

5. A dam of a retaining pond at a gold mine at Placer, Surigao Province, Philippines collapsed and killed two persons who were passing the site. The mine filled with water from the pond and

12 miners are missing, presumed drowned in the mine.

6. Fifteen miners who were being taken to work at Kumtor Krygyzstan (Asia) were killed when the helicopter in which they were travelling crashed.

7. Forty eight miners are dead and thirty-eight are missing after an explosion at Pindingshan Coal Mine, Central Hunan, China.

8. Thirty three miners were drowned at the Lijiaguo Lead and Zinc Mine at North Gansu, China.

9. Sixty six miners died and 162 missing after two landslides at goldmines in SW China

Abstracts from Engineering and Mining Journal

HAIG PIT RESTORATION GROUP

Haig Pit was sunk during the Great War and was named after, the then, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, General, Sir Douglas Haig. Coal was raised from this mine until 1984 when geological problems forced its closure.

Mining can be traced locally to the thirteenth century when the monks from St Bees Abbey supervised the opening of the coal mines at Arrowthwaite, Kells. Major inventions, developments in coal mining techniques and safety legislation of national importance were initiated in the local coal fields. The price paid by the local community was immense with over 1000 men, women and children being killed while winning coal up to four miles out under the sea. Fourteen miners and officials are still entombed in the Haig workings after an explosion in 1928.

After two years of salvage work, the pit finally closed and the shafts were sealed in 1986. The site was then cleared with the lamproom, showers, washery etc being demolished and the area was landscaped to form the site of the Haig Enterprise Park. Only the winding engine house, headgear and workshops remain. The workshops are, however, part of the Enterprise Park. Since then the site has lain derelict suffering from vandals, pigeons and the worst of the Kells weather. Listed building status (Grade II)

was given to the building, winding engines and headgear in 1987.

Haig Pit Restoration Group have taken over ownership of the building and headgear with a view to restoring them to their former glory, along with the two unique Bever Dorling steam winding engines. The eventual aim is to provide a mining heritage centre which will not only provide a tourist attraction but also benefit the local community by providing an interesting and educational trip for local school children. Haig is already included in the education syllabus but will provide an opportunity for out of classroom learning.

The group is a totally independent volunteer organisation. The members will not only undertake the restoration of the building and the engines but will also act as guides for tours of the building, display rooms and cellars. In the longer term, as visitor numbers increase, staff will be employed to provide day to day cover but members will still remain heavily involved, especially the ex-miners.

Phase One and Two of the development includes roof repairs, restoration of the engines, toilets, car park, refreshment facilities and the interpretation of the many artefacts available, together with displays of West Cumbria's long mining history.

The cellars at Haig are immense and Phase Three involves creating a simulated underground trip displaying a "mining through the ages" theme. This will begin at the entrance with a drift similar to the "Bearthmouths" that used to exist along the Main Band outcrop in Whitehaven during the 1600's, moving through "bord and pillar" workings and onto modern longwall techniques.

Phase Four would depend on the success of the project. A narrow gauge railway would compliment the museum if the land surrounding the site were available. Steam rallies, exhibitions, in fact, all kinds of attractions and events would be possible if the forecast increase in visitors to the town became a reality.

Since beginning work on site in April 1994, many thousands of volunteer hours and over £12,000, which has been raised locally, have been expended. No.4 Engine Hall is now starting to take shape and is open to the public over the summer holidays. The committee worked hard to be ready to open on March 30th 1996, exactly ten years since the mine closed.

If the building had not deteriorated to such an extent, the members would have been able to open the whole building to the general public fairly quickly and possibly cover the cost of restoration from its own income. This, unfortunately, is not the case with the roof causing the committee considerable concern. All of the objectives of the committee are possible and within our capabilities.

An application for assistance from the European Regional Development Fund has recently been approved and we are awaiting an outcome of our application for Heritage Lottery Funding. This will allow these works to be completed by outside contractors. The volunteers are currently working on No.4 Winding Engine which is now almost ready for its first steaming in ten years, and creating and mounting the displays on the walls. This will then complete the workscope for Phase One.

John Greasley

THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

A recent Government announcement states that the British Geological Survey (BGS) is to be the subject of a "Prior Options" review by its parent body, the National Environment Research Council.

It is believed that there are four possible prior options being considered; namely abolition, privatisation, contratorisation and rationalisation. The "Status Quo" is not an option.

BGS is the oldest geological survey in the world, having been set up in 1835. It is now the national centre for earth science information and expertise. Its work relates to minerals, energy, groundwater resources, land use and geological hazards. This work is increasingly international with several key projects being recently carried out in third world countries.

Recently BGS has sought a higher profile and role within training and education and its almost "open door" policy to the general public when it comes to high quality lectures is surely a model for other public bodies.

BGS also makes available affordable geological literature by way of guides, memoirs and maps. Despite recent price rises on many products, brought about by previous financial constraints, BGS still produces a wide

range of high quality products. Recent initiatives have included the popular "Holiday Geology Guides" and a brilliant series on Scotland.

Hints as to the future price of geological maps, at the popular 1:50,000 scale come from the fact that new maps are only available as colour electrostatic copies at £75.00 each. Is this what the future holds?

Down to Earth

STAFFORDSHIRE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

a. Planning permission has been granted for the opencasting and subsequent infilling of Knypersley Quarry at Brindley Ford by the HJ Banks Mining Company. Opencasting will take nine months and this will be followed by commercial tipping; the work to be completed within a five year period.

The Planning Committee considered that the proposal was the most cost effective way to remove the current eyesore that is the derelict quarry.

b. The life of the sand and gravel quarry at Baden Hall, Cold Meece, near Eccleshall, is likely to be extended by 18 months so that a further 150,000 tonnes of mineral can be extracted. Redland Aggregate have the support of Stafford Borough Council when the request goes to Staffordshire County Council Planning Committee.

Work started on the quarry in 1991 and the new proposals specify that 2001 is the new completion date for extraction of the mineral. Once extraction is finished, Redland intend to create water lakes to improve the wetland habitat of the area.

NSGA

EARTH QUAKES

Tremors from the earthquake that was centred on Harmer Hill, eight miles south of Shrewsbury, were felt in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area shortly after midnight on Friday 8th March, 1996. The quake, measuring 3 on the Richter Scale lasted for about 24 seconds.

A tremor, measuring 1.9 on the Richter Scale shook homes in the Keele area on the 21st February 1996. This was probably due to the collapse of old mineworkings.

NSGA

FLORENCE MINE, EGREMONT, CUMBRIA

Florence Mine, the only deep haematite mine still working in Europe, is open to the public from spring until October from 10.00am to 4.00pm. There are underground tours at 10.30am and 1.00pm. There is an admission charge of £6.00.

TRUE STORIES!!!!

1. An Inspector of Mines was visiting a small mine that was operated by two brothers. On checking the first aid facilities, the Inspector commented on the fact that there was no stretcher available.

"And *who* is going to carry the other end?" asked the elder brother.

2. Three men in a rural area were wending their way home one fine summer's evening, somewhat the worse for wear. In the gathering dusk, one of them spotted an open mine shaft by the side of the cart track along which they were "walking" and they decided to investigate the shaft.

Having dropped some pebbles into the abyss, one of them spotted a railway sleeper a few yards away from the shaft top. Working together, the three chums picked up the shaft and tossed it down the shaft.

What was so startling about: the plummeting baulk of timber was not so much the attached steel chain which snaked past them, but the sudden appearance and disappearance of the unfortunate goat which was tethered to the chain!

DDMS

GUIDE TO MINING MUSEUMS

A comprehensive guide to mining museums and tourist mines of coal, peat and oil appears in one of the coal industry's major reference works, Guide to the Coalfields 1996. It is published by Coal International Publications. The list is too long for reproduction in this Newsletter but it is recommended as the most up-to-date listing on the subject. It has been compiled by Dr Ivor Brown, 95 Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 7DL, who will be pleased to hear of any necessary corrections or potential additions.

TICCIH Bulletin

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LIBRARIES CONCERNED WITH GEOSCIENCES, MINING AND METALLURGY

The International Newsletter "The Cultural Heritage of Libraries concerned with Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy" will serve inter-disciplinary functions. It will support thinking and apply in the field of cultural heritage among libraries of geosciences, mining and metallurgy. It will also be a means of information and communication for all international symposia on cultural heritage which in future will be held by libraries of geosciences, mining and metallurgy every two or three years.

The Newsletter is directed at all those who are concerned with the cultural heritage in libraries of geosciences, mining and metallurgy. It explicitly includes publishers, booksellers, antiquarians or second-hand booksellers, restorers and similar occupational groups closely connected with libraries. Reviews and preliminary information should recommend the relevant libraries to purchase literature and also to draw the attention of relevant historians to these publications.

The idea of producing this International Newsletter was conceived during the preparation of the First Symposium on Heritage of Libraries concerned with Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy. The first number of this Newsletter is now available. In the next few years it will develop into an information paper and contribute to planning for the future. Please send papers to be published in the desired language. It is planned to publish the Newsletter annually.

Volumes 1(1994) and 2(1995) will be edited, printed and published in Fribourg. Volumes 3(1996) and 4(1997) should be controlled directly by those libraries which will be invited to the Third Symposium on Heritage in Libraries of Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy. The aim and object of the new organ of publication are symbolised on the title page of the Newsletter. May the new publication be successful.

Dr I J Brown

EXCAVATION OF A PREHISTORIC MINING SITE ON COPA HILL, CWMYSTWYTH, DYFED

Excavations were carried out during a period of three weeks in July and

August 1995, and again for a week in September 1995. This was the sixth season of work at the site by the Early Mines Research Group.

The mine is a naturally infilled open-out-working, some 40m x 15m in area and up to 10m deep which is located at the top of the Comet Lode, a lead-zinc-copper mineral vein which outcrops on the brow of Copa Hill at the eastern end of Cwmystwyth Mines. It was first examined by Oliver Davies in 1935. Since 1986 it has been the focus of more archaeological investigation, providing evidence for the mining of copper using pebble hammers (mauls) and fire-setting to attack a number of veins within the quarry. A sequence of radiocarbon dates obtained from overlying peats, mining debris and wooden artefacts has provided a reliable chronology which indicates that mining commenced in the Early Bronze age, sometime before 1900 BC, but had finished by about 1400-1300 BC.

In 1995, the excavation of the entrance cutting to the mine was completed. The cutting was apparently made for the course of a drainage launder, a hollowed-out oak log some 4.8m long, which was found in-situ here in 1993. The thin sequence of sediments immediately beneath it have just produced the first two antler tools from the mine, together with a possible withy used in the hafting of pebble hammers. In addition, brushwood and timber show the signs of metal axe-marks and there is evidence for in-situ ore-crushing and fire-set mining.

Work continues on the excavation of a deeper working, as does the palaeoenvironmental investigation of the site, sampling the pollen and macro-plant remains from the mine sediments, overlying infill, and also from the moorland peats within a 0.5 kilometre radius.

It is planned to remove the last 2m section of the oak launder in April/May 1996. It will be taken to the National Museum of Wales where it will be conserved and eventually put on display.

Royal Archaeological Institute

CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION - EQUINOX "EARTHLIGHTS"

Just Television is making a science documentary in the "Equinox" series that investigates light phenomena associated with seismic and volcanic activity. The best known examples are

sky luminosities at Matsushiro in Japan which were photographed by an amateur. They are also interested in ball lightning and other luminous events.

If anyone has any video, films or still material that you think may be suitable for the programme, please contact Gloria Morris, tel: 0171 404 6744.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR **ACCESS TO NENTHEAD** **MINES**

"I am writing to draw your attention to new arrangements for access to the mines on land owned by Cumbria County Council in the Nent Valley.

It is generally known that the County Council bought this land to secure the conservation of the important remains and to make them available to the public in a controlled fashion.

Since 1992, negotiations have been taking place with the North Pennines Heritage Trust to achieve these aims. In 1993, the Rampgill Workshops were acquired. These are now leased by the Trust which has converted them into workshops for local businesses and a heritage centre which opened to the public on 24 June 1996. The Heritage Centre tells the story of the people of Nenthead and their activity on the site.

Further developments of which you might like to be aware are that:-

1. The whole site is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
2. Parts of the site are now scheduled as a geological SSSI. This includes Carrs Level and Smallclough Mine, both the surface and the interior.
3. The site is now the subject of a management plan prepared by English Heritage and a programme of conservation of the surface remains is now being prepared.

These developments mean that for the first time access to the site can and must be regulated. The only right of access on foot is over existing footpaths and there is no vehicular right of access except for quarry and agricultural purposes. Admission away from the footpaths is therefore by permission and the public will in future be paying for access to the Heritage Centre and the waymarked trails which are being set up. Groups from outdoor activity centres will, in future, pay to use the site by prior arrangement.

Mining and geological groups who are members of NAMHO may

continue to use the site within the following framework:-

1. Vehicles will no longer be able to park along the Priorsdale track but will be required to park in the enlarged car park at the old Rampgill workshops.

2. Neither the County Council nor the Trust wishes to prevent access to the mines by bona fide mine exploration and survey groups. Indeed the Trust would welcome co-operation with them in extending our knowledge of the Nenthead Mines as a whole. In future what we seek is your co-operation in:-

a) parking in the Heritage Centre car park

b) notifying the Centre Manager before you go down a mine - either by calling at the Centre during opening hours or leaving a note in the Trust letter box outside that time.

c) helping us to prevent activities which damage the fabric of the mines or involve the extraction of minerals.

We would welcome publicity for these arrangements in any club journal so that as many members as possible are informed.

The Trust cannot be held responsible for any damage, injury or loss by parties from mining history groups while visiting the site.

We would be very pleased to know if your club or group has a particular research interest in any part of the site above or below ground. We are attempting to build up a comprehensive record of the whole site and if your organisation has carried out surveys or produced written material we would welcome a copy for our archive.

Groups and individuals who feel willing and able to help with the conservation of the surface remains will be very welcome. They should let the Centre Manager know so that any work is carried out with Scheduled Monument Consent and in accordance with the Management Plan.

Jill Fenwick
Centre Manager"

NEW PUBLICATIONS

1. Following the successful publication, South Crofty Underground, two new publications similar publications from the same publisher will be available in the near future.

The new publications will be "Geevor Mine Underground", to be published in early August, and "Wheal

Jane Underground", which will be published in the late autumn.

The cost of each of these publications will £3.50 each. Further details from J A Buckley, 25 Carn Breca Lane, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 3DS.

2. "Caves and Tunnels in South East England - Part II". A4; 60pp. Cost £4.00.

This is a further volume in the series on this region. Interesting underground sites in Kent, Berkshire, Sussex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Northants are described. The range of sites includes bunkers, natural caves, chalk mines and an extensive coverage of flint mines.

There is a Notes and Queries section, with brief comments on a variety of sites, a list of bat sites in Kent, a General Bibliography and a comprehensive index produced to BS 7666 standard.

3. "Slate from Coniston. A History of the Coniston Slate Industry" by A Cameron - 1996. Published by Cumbria Amenity Trust. 151pp, illustrated. Cost £7.50 + p&p

This substantial book draws on estate papers and, largely, secondary sources to present an account of the openworks and underground quarries for slate and flagstones that are located near Coniston in the Lake District. There are two illustrations of underground scenes and 14 surface views, which include several old photographs of men at work in the quarries. Nine maps or diagrams include reproductions of early Ordnance Survey products. The bibliography lists mainly secondary sources. A gazetteer gives extensive details of 25 quarries, some being underground. There is also a one page glossary of quarrying terms.

Paul Sowan

3. "The History of the County of Gloucester, Volume V - Bledisloe Hundred, St Briavels Hundred, the Forest of Dean" edited by N M Herbet. 1996. Published by Oxford University Press/Institute of Historical Research/Victoria County Historical series. 440pp + xxiii, ISBN 0 19722 787 2. Cost £70.

The book includes numerous references to lime burning, stone quarrying, iron and coal mining etc. A

separate section on the Forest of Dean Industries, pp 326 - 354, includes Mining in the 18th Century, Mining from the 1770's, Quarrying, Ironworks, Mills and Tramroads and Railways.

Paul Sowan

GROSVENOR CAVING CLUB NEWSLETTER

The current Grosvenor Caving Club Newsletter is a special edition devoted to the Halkyn Tunnel. The Newsletter describes the history of the discovery of the workings, the trips that have been made into the workings, the difficulties encountered and the precautions necessary for any going into these old workings.

MINING STUDY TOURS

Atalaya Tours, which has a very high reputation in this very specialised field, plans a further series of tours for 1997. They are:-

Spain - Rio Tinto and the Iberian Pyrite Belt
- Southern Spain including Linares and Almeria
- Northern Spain and Portugal including the Roman Gold Mines
Mexico - Real del Monte to Durango
India - Zawar, Rajpura and Kola Goldfield
Western Britain
- Wales and the South West

All enquiries to Atalaya Tours Ltd, Ceinionfa, Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth, SY23 3HR. Tel & Fax (01970) 828989.

END OF AN ERA AT POINT OF AYR

The last coal was raised at the Point of Ayr Colliery in North Wales on 23rd August 1996. 230 jobs were lost as a result of this closure.

RJB had offered to sell the colliery to the workers but this offer was rejected. Flintshire County Council is considering turning the site into a heritage centre linked to a boating marina.
NMRS Newsletter

WHEAL JANE POLLUTION

This year has been the second full growing year that reed beds have been used to attempt to control the pollutants in

the mine water issuing from Wheal Jane Mine in Cornwall. These reed beds have removed some 80% of the iron and 95% of the arsenic from the water. Underground, beds of cattle slurry, straw and hay have been shown to be capable of removing zinc, cadmium and copper. These processes produced Hydrogen Sulphide which has resulted in complaints from local residents but the Environment Agency state that the level of this gas in the atmosphere is well below any danger level from prolonged exposure to this gas.
NMRS Newsletter

BE1150's BIRTHDAY PARTY AT ST AIDANS OPENCAST SITE - 16TH NOVEMBER 1996

It wasn't long after arriving at the RJB site office at the St Aidans Opencast Site in Yorkshire that I discovered that I wasn't the only one in our party of twenty to have had the conversation that went along the lines:-

"What are you doing on Saturday?"

"I am going to a birthday party"

"Someone in the family or is it a friend?"

"No, its a dragline"

"What's a dragline?"

Well, we certainly knew after this trip.

Mr Alan Stopher, site manager for RJB, gave an introductory talk describing the events leading to the flooding of the opencast site, the civil engineering works required to recover the site and the plans for the operation of the site when all of the water has been pumped out. He also gave a description and history of the two draglines that are on site but have not worked since 1988 when the site was flooded.

I was first introduced to the draglines when travelling by train to Leeds. Travelling to college one morning in 1987 I saw through the gloom a large machine working in a deep pit on the other side of the river but I knew nothing more about the site.

In March 1988, all this changed and St Aidans hit the headlines. The rock face collapsed along a fault and the River Aire broke through. In three days a new lake was created 1000m x 600m (150 acres) and 65m deep with the lake bed being made up of 2.5m tons of coal. Until the lake was filled the river downstream of the breach actually flowed

backwards as water from the River Calder also helped to fill the pit.

Fortunately the two draglines that were in use at the time of the flooding were, even with a maximum travelling speed of 0.1 and 0.15 mph, able to get to safe ground before the site was completely flooded. To this day, some 7½ years later they have not moved again.

The smaller of the two draglines is a Bucyrus - Erie 1150B. It is one of four similar machines that were built in Milwaukee and operated for up to ten years in the United States before being imported into Britain. The 1150B worked at several other opencast sites in the UK before arriving at St Aidans. The larger Ransoms and Rapier W2000 was built in the UK for use at St Aidans.

It is hard to give an idea as to how big the birthday girl is, her working weight of 1200 tons is the same as four fully loaded jumbo jets. The main structure could have a house built inside it with room to spare. The total power output of 1750 hp is close to that of a main line railway engine and if its electricity supply had a coin-in-the-slot meter you would be putting 10p in every 2.5 seconds. With the 215 ft boom and 19 cu yd bucket, she could quite easily carry both teams in a football match straight over the proverbial football pitch.

As the 1150B was built with US electrical equipment she requires special equipment to be able to operate in Britain and this combined with her age means that the future looks grim. RJB may again use the larger and much younger Rapier W2000 dragline.

Our trip around the site was conducted with the help of the site's resident Land Rovers. The thick mud and deep ruts proved the Land Rovers to be essential on the six mile trip.

Pumping of the pit started in July 1995 and at 31,000 cubic metres (6.8 million gallons) per day, the lake is now half drained. One quarter of this water is currently being processed and used as drinking water.

As part of the recovery plan, the River Aire and a length of the Aire and Calder Navigation have been moved to a safe distance from the pit. This has required the building of 3.5 km (2 miles) of new navigable river and a 4.2m (13.5 ft) automated lock. This is the first new inland navigation of any length to be built in 90 years. The lock, complete with glazed control tower and the nearby new Marina, are very nice apart from being

down wind of the local sewage works. The nearby original lock is now high and dry and half filled with the rubble of the old lock keepers cottage.

Where it has not been cut by the new river or filled in with spoil, the old dry river bed is now well grassed over, but in being drained it has revealed a number of interesting things. Adjacent to one of the river bridges are the remains of two cars, long since lost in the river but now the subject of a great debate between the site employees as to their make and model. Also visible from the same bridge is what could possibly be the remains of a wooden coal barge.

Lunch time was not without surprises, for what should be produced but a birthday cake, complete with a dragline on the icing, and a very nice cake it was too.

PDMHS Newsletter

THRELKELD QUARRY & MINING MUSEUM

Development of the Museum continues. Projects underway are the erection of a waterwheel, the extension of a 2ft gauge railway into the former microgranite quarry and the construction of a working gravity operated incline. Work on the projects will slow down during the winter but the impetus will be revived the spring. As our numbers are small we need help to make progress. Anyone interested in helping in any way please contact Ian Hartland, via the Museum. Tel: (017687) 79747.

Graham Bullough

WELSH SLATE MINE NEWS

1. Pen yr Orsedd Slate Quarry

On 2nd November 1996, a fall of slate occurred at the Working Base in the New Pit. There are no reports of injury to persons. The fall had been predicted after the removal of rock buttresses earlier this year. No damage has been done to the three remaining Blondin Cranes but any attempt to make the working area safe may make significant changes to the site.

The quarry has had several years of poor production, caused by geological problems, and this incident

may result in the total closure of the quarry.

2. Maenofferen Slate Quarry

The Narrow Gauge Railway Society have reported that underground slate quarrying at Maenofferen ended early in 1996. Local sources have confirmed this fact but state that underground slate quarrying may start again in the future. The only remaining underground slate quarry working in Britain is now Aberlleghenni Quarry at Corris.

3. Rhosydd Quarry

The slate industry is currently in depression with prices being heavily discounted.

There is good news, however, for those wishing to visit Rhosydd Quarry before work starts to extract slate by modern capital intensive methods - investment in the project is "on hold" until the price of slate recovers.

Andrew Hurrell

NEW COAL MINING PROJECT

RJB Mining has announced a new coal mining prospect located in an area bounded by Newark, East Retford, Tuxford and Lincoln. The proposed deep mine will involve a 10 - 15 year development time span and will eventually employ about 500 people and produce 3 million tonnes of coal per year. The location of this proposed mine is within easy distances of the major power station on the rivers Trent and Ouse.

Down to Earth

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINING HISTORY ORGANISATIONS

Registered Charity No 297301
Registered Office, c/o Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR
Tel:- Matlock (01629) 583834.

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