

Note Numbers in parenthesis refer to items in Newsletter No. 2

1 Matters arising from previous meetings

A Afforestation (1A) The following report was received last December from David & Marilyn Palmer who had planned further excavations at Esgair Fraith, but no news has been heard concerning David's proposed meeting with the Association of Industrial Archaeology on afforestation. 'As readers will know, a Forestry Commission road was driven through the site and destroyed its archaeological value. We had been given a permit to excavate but this had apparently not been communicated to the builders of roads ! However, discussions are going on with the F.C. on a procedure to prevent such destruction taking place in the future without interested bodies being informed prior to the event : this will at least enable rescue surveys to be done. The material from Esgair Hir and Esgair Fraith is being written up for N.M.R.S. publication,

'The potential Esgair Fraith excavation group went to Wales last July and completed field and building surveys at Temple, nr Ponterwyd and Blaenceulan. It is hoped to prepare these for publication shortly.'

B List of Historical Mine Sites (1B) The W.M.S. list relating to Powys has been forwarded to the Planning Dept. who seemed pleased with the result.

C Publicity (1C) Thanks largely to Rob Yemen's efforts, membership has much increased, now amounting to 125 or so. We hope Duncan Vernon, born 3rd November 1980 a healthy 8 pounder, will also eventually enrol. Congratulations!

D Publication Policy (5) It is said that problems ignored generally go away, which seems to be the situation here. Already well known for Welsh titles, the Northern Mine Research Society has officially offered to consider for publication any material which W.M.S. members may wish to submit. This potentially takes a weight off our shoulders and enables us to benefit from their efficient publication facilities. Presuming this gesture is accepted at the A.G.F.M., I am sure the Society would wish me to thank on its behalf the N.M.R.S., and Richard Bird for his part in the arrangement. This does not of course prevent us from publishing in our own right should the desire and capability arise, not however that we set out to become an historical society as such. A large number of our members also belong to the N.M.R.S., so a strong link already exists.

E Sharing of Work Load (3) The W.M.S. has now reached a point where I can no longer devote enough time to its affairs. However, I feel that a solution could be found if a volunteer would act as Membership Secretary/Treasurer, leaving me to concentrate on the Newsletter, and general matters, with Rob Vernon handling publicity. The job should not involve more than an hour or two a week, and I do hope someone will come forward, otherwise we are faced with a serious crisis. Offers at the A.G.F.M., or beforehand, please.

2 Annual General Field Meeting, 12 noon, 21 June 1981, Cyftty, Llanrwst. Grid Ref.77458

A Balance Sheet (1980)

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
Printing two Newsletters & A.G.F.M. report	42.08		
Publicity printing etc. (Mr. Vernon)	11.00	1980 Subscriptions	91.00
Postage & Envelopes	27.40		
W.M.S. letterheaded paper	10.35		
Phone calls (say)	1.00		
Gratuity to Landowner at Llangynog	5.00		
	<u>£96.83</u>		<u>£91.00</u>

From this it seems that an Increase in subscriptions is probably inevitable for 1982; we can manage for the rest of this year, as the entry for letterheaded paper will not recur for some time, neither will publicity printing. This Newsletter (No.3) if it amounts to 5 pages, will cost to print about £30 for 150 copies or 4p for every single sheet! If anyone knows a cheaper way, please advise - printing is easily our major expense.

B Appointment of Membership Secretary/Treasurer

E Any other business

C Report from Mr. C.J.Williams NAMHO representative

D Publication & NMRS officer

The Afternoon's Field Meeting This has been arranged by Messers Verno & Bennett to whom our thanks are extended. Rob has provided the following notes,

FIELD TRIP - Meet at Cyffty Mine

Please comply with no parking signs, there is plenty of space. And take care not to start forest fires.

The site is in good condition, apart from an Engine House which was demolished in the late 1960s. According to the booklet 'A Glimpse of The Past' published by the Welsh Tourist Board, the site is going to be made into a mine interpretive centre. (Now that the best feature has gone ! D.E.B.) The road will than "be followed towards Gorlan Mine. The Forestry Commission trail will be followed passing Bryn-y-Fawnog and several trial levels and shafts on the Talylllyn lode. Glyn Glangors is one of several reservoirs in this area which served the Pandora and Hafod Mines. The site of Pandora Mine will be examined and the features explained, including concrete dressing floors and buildings.

We will then walk back to Cyffty along the road, passing the Pandora Wheelpit. Total distance is about 24- miles. If time allows, additional mines can be visited.

3 Lists of Members Interests (7)

This should be issued before long, depending on the outcome of item 1E.

4 Collaboration with Amenity Bodies (1d) Volunteers please raise hands at the A.G.F.M. - none yet.

5 Mystery Mine (11) Ray Borrett's discovery near Font Nedd Fechan has raised more correspondence than any other topic. Jim Peden believes it was for silica, Alasdair Neill attributes it for silica-stone, closed about 1920. He says it was described in Portrait of the Brecon Beacons or similar title, published some years ago. The nearby Dinas Rock mine worked from 1937 till recently and is worth a visit. • There are interesting trials on a vertical coal seam in a high cliff, and lead mines were tried in the 1920s. It seems we could well visit the area. Comments please. Mr. E. Eifion Jones also has information on the mine.

6 Minerals

A In addition to Eaglebrook, Nigel Moreton has also found millerite at Brynrafr. This mine is rather isolated, and may well be a good site generally.

B The British Directory of Micromounters Roy Starkey has launched a new, hopefully annual publication with this title to serve those interested in micro-minerals, in which it appears Wales is very rich. The initial fee is £0.50p for entry in the first edition, due for distribution in June '81. If sufficient interest accrues a newsletter may be launched. For further details please send an S.A.E. to Roy at 15, Whitehall Drive, Dudley, West Midlands. Hopefully he will bring a few samples for us to see at Llanrwst as part of a publicity drive.

C Great Barnacle Mystery Solved ? (17B) Nothing further has transpired from Bristol University regarding the supposed Barnacles on dumps at Dylife. Mr. H.J. Woolgar has suggested they are in fact cone-in-cone calcite which also occurs at Llanerchysaur, and Neil Dickinson believes weathered cerusite could have been mistaken for barnacles. He also mentions an old slope has fallen in from daylight near the Red Wheelpit at Dylife leaving a deep chasm. Query: which lode is that ?

D Mineral Collecting in Wales is the title of a very interesting and readable article by Eric Otty in Popular Crafts January 1981. Perhaps we should request some of our mineral experts to lead a mineral meet before long, or at least bring along a display. On another subject, Eric thinks we should stick to metal mines and slate, and leave coal mines alone, but on this he appears to be in a minority, see below.

7 New Mining Museum New member Mr. E. Eifion Jones, 7, The Square, Crynant, Neath, an experienced mining engineer is opening a post-card and documentary museum relating to Wales - about a mile from the coal and steam centre at Cefn Coed Colliery. He would welcome members and be pleased to consider purchase or exchange of suitable material.

8 Coal Mines, Slag Heaps, etc. (18) A number of members have written in support of including collieries. Alastair Warrington, joint author of a book on the Somerset Coalfield is interested in all mines south of Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury, especially with railways/tramways. Jim Peden feels there is room for coal and metal in W.M.S. and mentions a recent book on Lancashire coal mining that sold out in a week. David Higgins also likes coal mines but is astonished at my reference to a Slagheap Preservation Society - was it really genuine ? Yes, and what is more, according to the Sunday Times 18.1.81, the D.O.E. wish to preserve a chain of colliery tips in Co. Durham which have been designated ancient monuments ! As ever, the enlightened enthusiast is years ahead of the Establishment.

Richard Haszard is also interested in coal and wrote a very long letter on the subject generally. Rob Vernon says the Anglesey coalfield last received attention in 1920 from a company formed to work it. The ruinous stack of an enginehouse still survives near the Holyhead road.

9 Slate Works (19) These also have adherents; indeed, Howard Rees, 21 Audon Ave., Beeston, Nottingham, finds them more fascinating than metal mines. Query: How is that possible? He is studying the life of Moses Kellow and would welcome assistance. Gareth Edwards, 8 Bowydd Rd., Blaenau Ffestiniog, is interested in all Gwynedd mines and asks if anyone knows of mining activities near Moelwyn (see item 15). Mr. E. Eifion Jones knows of at least five people pro-slate mines. Perhaps he can get them into W.M.S.

10 A Conferences and Courses (Please mention W.M.S. if applying) A Historical Metallurgy Society Conference at Bath 18-20 Sept. includes Mendip Mines, etc. Approx. cost £43. Apply I.Standing, Rock House, Coleford, Glos.

B Rocks Ores and Quarrymen 5-7 June. At Snowdonia National Park Centre, Maentwrog Fee £33. Apply Dr. R.C.Wright, LE.Studies, Royal Institution, Colquitt St. Liverpool. The closing date is 13th March but late entries may perhaps be acceptable. We are indebted to Peter Challis for the details.

C N.A.M.H.O. Conference, Ironbridge 12-15 June. A full programme of visits and lectures is laid on. Rob Vernon and I, and no doubt other W.M.S. members will be present and it is hoped to lay on at least a token W.M.S. display. Full details from Stuart Smith, The Wharfage, Ironbridge, Telford. Fee is £5.

11 Mr. C.E.Vaughan Owen Members will be saddened to learn of the recent sudden death of Cecil Vaughan Owen of Llanidloes, aged 79. His knowledge of Wales was unrivalled, and he held high positions in a number of antiquarian and historical societies. He was a keen supporter of W.M.S. and his help and infectious enthusiasm will be greatly missed.

12 Traction Engines, etc. Brian Bourn has sent some good colour photos of his 1913 traction engine, and other subjects. He has considered taking it across the breadth of England and Wales as per my Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales, Part 4 in connection with Dyfnwgwm in the 1860s. A splendid idea, and I trust W.M.S. would have exclusive rights to the story. Another photo revealed the inside of a barn near Bwadrain, the columns of which are cast-iron rising mains, four or five in a row and worth seeing.

13 Welsh Gold Mine One in N.Wales is expected to reopen shortly, and as a considerable sum is to be expended in sinking, we must wish the adventurers well. It is hoped shortly to have authority to reveal further news of this development.

14 Underground Photos of Snowdonia I should be very grateful for a few of these, old or new, preferably black and white, for my forthcoming book, and would be pleased to offer a bound copy free for every picture used. Mines of particular interest are Drys Y Coed, Talysarn, Sygun, Catherine & Jane Consols and Llwyndu. (Behind Sygun on top of the hill).

15 Llechfraith Mine. Moelwyn In the 1830s was a mine of this name at or near Moelwyn, Ffestiniog. If anyone can explain what it was for, or give any other details, I should be greatly obliged. The site may have been on the opposite site of Moelwyn from Ffestiniog.

16 Puzzle Corner Which Welsh lead mine has produced as much weight of ore since 1845 as the South African Rand has yielded gold. Answer, see last page.

17 Hushing Most of us supposed that hushing as a means of revealing and scouring ore died out before about 1800. However, I am reliably informed it was used in connection with iron-ore at Maesteg as late as 1890.

18 New Publications

A S.J.S.Hughes The Decline of Mining in Cwmystwyth Ceredigion 1979. An interesting account dealing mainly with the John Taylor period.

B Although not in Wales or the Border, I am mentioning the following title out of deference to the memory of a great mining historian, A.K.Hamilton Jenkin. Mines of Devon, North & East of Dartmoor. This is in effect volume 2 of Mines of Devon published by David & Charles in 1974. It will be published by the local authority at £12 in a very limited edition, ^{case} bound, A4, typewritten format, 18 plates, about 200 pages. Send Orders (not cash at this stage) to County Librarian, Barley House, Isleworth Road, Exeter, as soon as possible.

C A.Marfell Forest Miner - reminiscences of Trafalgar Colliery, Forest of Dean, an interesting little book. Published by D.Mclean, Forest Bookshop, Coleford. Price 75p.

19 Llangynog R.Alan Williams who has been making intensive investigations into this famous mine, acting on information received from the North Wales Caving Club, has been able to see a number of virtually unknown plans of the workings. This promises to settle various uncertainties and we look forward to publication of his findings in due course.

20 Correspondents Please Note At times I seem to receive a letter on W.M.S. Matters by every post, but rarely is an S.A.E. enclosed. This creates more work and expense, so in future if a reply is anticipated, please remember that the new rule is NO S.A.E. NO REPLY.

21 W.M.S. Membership This now stands at 126 including 1980 subs outstanding.

22 Subscriptions (£1. per year) Please note subs are due if a red cross appears here.
1980 1981

23 Future Field Trip Brian Bourn has suggested a weekend at Ystum Tuen Youth Hostel, this sounds a good idea, being in the heart of the Cardiganshire mines. We will take a show of hands at the A.G.F.M.

24 Autumn Field Meeting 13 September 1981 Neil Dickinson has kindly offered to arrange a conducted tour of Van Mine, Llanidloes, 943876 after the morning meeting which will begin as usual at 12 noon. We have had a number of requests for a meeting in the area so please come if you can. PLEASE NOTE THE DATE - there may be no further reminders due to the cost and work involved in circulating members.

25 Items for No. 4 Newsletter Please submit before the end of October. Finally I should like to thank members who have made kind remarks about the last newsletter, and indeed, everyone who has troubled to write, regardless of comment. After all communication is what the W.M.S. is here for.

26 Puzzle Answer Logylas; 35,000 tons.

27 Final Notice Have you noted items 20, 22 and 24 ?

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Below: Cyftty mine about 1880 & 1965 (photo D.E.B.)

*Best regards
D.B.*

David Bick,
Pound House,
Newent, Glos.
'Phone: 0531 820650.

