



# Welsh Mines Society

(Member of the National Association of Mining History Organisations)

NEWSLETTER 42

April 2000

## Editorial Thoughts

1. Many thanks to those of you who sent me words of support and encouragement following my first newsletter for the Society. It was only possible with the support of your contributions, please do keep them coming. Hopefully I can continue to please, but don't hold back if there's something you'd like changed or improved upon, without your feedback it's difficult to move forward.

## Events - Dates for Your Diary

### 2. WMSoc. 2000 Programme

**Summer Meet - 10th/11th June.** Leader Peter Claughton. Tel. 01437 532 578. Ogofau Gold and the small mines of the southern Cambrian Mountains. Based at the Black Lion Royal Hotel in Lampeter, (15 bedrooms) they are giving a special rate on bed and breakfast (£25 per person sharing) - please book direct with the hotel (Tel. Lampeter 01570 422 172) and quote the WMS. Other accommodation is available in Lampeter - contact Peter at Blaenpant Morfil, Rosebush, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire. SA66 7RE or P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk for details.

Advance booking and payment for the evening meal on the Saturday will be necessary, a menu accompanies this newsletter. Please notify your intentions and choice of menu to Peter Claughton by 7th June at the latest.

As mentioned in the last N/L, item 4, field notes for this meet can be obtained from Peter. Alternatively they can be found on the internet, I've placed a link to them on the WMS home page, (along with a few transcripts from the 1860 M.J. relating to Rhysgog) at :

[http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc\\_hp.htm](http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc_hp.htm)

**Saturday - Ogofau Gold Mine,** Dolaucothi (Roman and 19th/20th century mining). Meet **11:00 am** at the **National Trust car park (SN 663, 403)** - small charge for non-NT members. Archaeological and geological expertise on hand to assist in interpretation of the site. Weather permitting there will be the option of a walk - 3 miles and 750' - up to the Gwenlais leat in the afternoon.

**Saturday evening** - Dinner at Black Lion. Don't forget to complete and return the enclosed menu c/w payment to Peter by June 7th. If members wish to give short presentations please contact Peter.

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**Sunday** - Small mines of the southern Cambrian Mountains (**Brynambor** and **Rhysgog**). Meet **10:00 am** at **Llanddewibrefi** (small public car park in the village on the righthand side of the road to Ffarmers, **SN 6630, 5524**) - with limited parking at the mines car sharing will be necessary. Brynambor is a remote mine, but accessible by road, where the iron work, including rods, of the pumping and winding arrangement still remain on site as abandoned. Rhysgog is an enigmatic early mine with a spectacular leat arrangement, only accessible on foot (2 mile round trip, climbing c. 450') - strong footwear essential.

**Autumn Meet - 2nd/3rd September.** Leader George Hall. Tel. 01584 877 521. Based at The George Borrow Hotel, Ponterwyd, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3AD. Tel. 01970 890230 or e-mail John & Jill Wall on [georgeborrow@clara.net](mailto:georgeborrow@clara.net) to book a bed - don't forget to mention the WMS.

**Saturday - East and West Logaulas**, the lower part of the Lisburne leat and possibly elsewhere. Meet **11:00 am** at **Pen-y-gwaith, (SN 7415, 7170)**. This point is best reached from Ysbtty Ystwyth than Pont Rhyd-y-groes. Park there or on the old tailings at **SN 7440, 7185**. Please take care at the former point, where there are some deep, unfenced shafts. Not much opportunity for underground exploration on this day.

**Saturday evening** - Dinner, **6:30 pm for 7:00 pm**, at the George Borrow Hotel - Please do try to be prompt. Members' slides will be welcome.

**Sunday - Grogwinion and Gwaith-goch.** Meet **10:00 am** - meeting place to be announced on the Saturday evening (will also be posted on the WMS web page once confirmed) or call George on the number above. There should be opportunities to go underground. This matter is currently under investigation and some digging may have been done by September. 19th Century reports describe ancient coffin-shaped levels 3ft high and 18 in. wide at widest, which G.W.H. & Co. hope to find by then.

### Other Societies & Organisations

If you're aware of events or trips which other organisations are holding or making to/into Welsh mines, please let me know & I'll include them here.

**3. NAMHO 2000** - 1st International NAMHO Conference, 14th-18th July. Hosted by the Carn Brea Mining Society and Camborne School of Mines and based in Truro School, Cornwall.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Lawrence Holmes, Rivergarth, Bar Meadows, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1SS. Tel. 01872 278234.

E-Mail: [NAMHO@csm.ex.ac.uk](mailto:NAMHO@csm.ex.ac.uk)

## Important Announcements

### 4. Obituary

It with deep regret that I must report the death of one of our members, David William Price, of Blaenau Ffestiniog.

### 5. 'Continuing the Celtic Cycle'

**NAMHO 2000 - Cornwall; NAMHO 2001 - Ireland; NAMHO 2002 - Wales ?**

It has been suggested by Peter Claughton that the WMS hosts the NAMHO 2002 conference, with the theme of 'water power', with support from other NAMHO member groups based in Wales. The location is to be decided but possibilities for discussion are

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Bangor and Aberystwyth. The proposal will be discussed further at the June meet at Lampeter.

The society previously hosted a field meet and a conference for NAMHO in 1984 and 1991 respectively. If you feel you could offer support, or have any comments please contact Peter.

## Field Reports

### 6. Winter Meet: George Halls

“George, as always, made us all very welcome at his house in Ludlow where about twenty members gathered for the Winter Social on March 19th. Its popularity can be judged by the far-flung outposts from which people travelled ranging from Lancashire in the frozen north to Hampshire almost on the equator.

A morning of concentrated mining chatter and perusal of George's library was followed by a tasty buffet. We were then entertained with slides of Spain, North Wales and Nenthead before reluctantly heading for home. Thanks again George for your hospitality.”

*Mike Breakspear*

### 7. NAMHO 99

Last years NAMHO conference was held in the Forest of Dean. One of the principal organisers being WMS member ‘Mole’ (aka John Hine). For those who didn't make it, you missed a real treat. With the usual problem of masses of options to choose from, it was a difficult decision indeed to decide whether or not to go on an underground or surface field trip or stay and listen to a full programme of talks. Accommodation in the chalets, for those who took it, was top class.

For those who weren't there or were on a field trip, recordings of many of the speakers are available, including those of George Hall & David Bick, talking about experiences in the Forest of Dean & the mines of Newent & Ross, respectively. Please contact John Hine for further details - proceeds to NAMHO.

*Mike Munro*

**8. More Moel Fadian** - With reference to item 14 in the last N/L, it's believed that the kibble, shown in Metal Mines of Mid-Wales Pt.4, p.13 at the mouth of the adit was 'relocated' to Llwyernog mining museum - can anyone confirm this ?

## News & Developments

### 9. Cwmystwyth Mine - Proposed safety work

Peter Cloughton reports “Ceredigion County Council has applied for planning permission to carry out safety work on a large number of mine openings at the Cwmystwyth Mine. It is intended to carry out work on 15 openings close to the county road (including Level Fawr), plus the mill tailrace, blocking or severely restricting access.

However, having now looked at the proposals in detail it is apparent that Ceredigion, or their contractors, have based their application on out of date information. They have not taken in to account the extension of the area subject to Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) status in December 1997. Rather than 6 of the 18 sites of intended work being within the SAM area, as stated in the application, they are all within that area and consent will be required in each case. Objections to the proposed work would appear to be in the following areas - lack of justification for the work; lack of any proposal for preliminary archaeological

survey or monitoring of intended work; and the visual impact of the closures. Some aspects of the work, particularly the removal of rubbish from the site, are, however, to be applauded.”

Peter has since submitted the following response on behalf of the Welsh Mines Society;  
[This text can also be found at - <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/cwmyst.htm>]

Ref. Ceredigion County Council, Planning Application No. A 000367CD  
Cwmystwyth Lead Mine, Safety Work.

Submitted by Richard Broun Associates, on behalf of Ceredigion County Council.

### *Outline of proposed works;*

It is proposed that various mine entrances close to the county road be gated and those which are blocked but in an unstable condition should be capped. In addition the construction of a culvert is proposed to channel water into the Mill tailrace which would be replaced by a pipe under the road. For the smaller adits, Pugh's, Gill's Lower, Gill's Upper, Cross Road, Burrell's No. 4, plus an adit identified as Blue in Simon Hughes' Cwmystwyth Mines, the proposed method of closure is the insertion of a 800 mm pipe, plus up to three small diameter plastic pipes, surrounded by mine waste and faced with a stone and cement wall, all enclosed in a reconstructed headwall. A similar method is proposed for Burrell's Stope. Lefel Fawr, Taylor's Adit, Taylor's Shaft and King's Stope would be gated using galvanised grilles.

Pugh's, Kingside, Pengeulan and an unnamed shaft above Burrell's would be capped.

### *The Welsh Mines Society's response;*

The Cwmystwyth Mine is probably the most important non-ferrous metal mining site in Wales. It is certainly the premier example of mining heritage in Ceredigion. Within the site there is evidence for all phases of mining activity; from the Bronze Age, through the medieval period, to its revival in the 18th century and the peak of activity with a subsequent decline in the late 19th / early 20th century. As such it has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.(1) The site also features prominently in the Upland Ceredigion Landscape of Historic Interest.(2) There is considerable potential for low key interpretation of the mining heritage at the Cwmystwyth Mine. A potential which has been recognised in studies of metal mining in mid Wales.(3) Opportunities exist to utilise the mining heritage, and not just amongst those groups interested in industrial history. By promoting mining along with other aspects of local heritage, as part of the landscape and amongst groups with kinship ties to the area it should be possible to generate income in the local economy through increased seasonal visitors.(4) If this is to be realised, the integrity of mining heritage within the landscape must be maintained and that is not recognised in the current application.

This application is defective in not taking into account the extension of the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument in December 1997.(5) All the sites of proposed work are now within the scheduled area. The application provides no justification for the proposed work within the area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Gating the various mine entrances, using the methods proposed, will have an adverse visual effect on the site. The materials proposed for use in gating the smaller adits are totally inappropriate. A combination of a grilled 800 mm pipe, with small plastic drains, set within a stone and cement face and enclosed by a reinstated headwall will present an ugly scar at the entrance to each adit. Similar objections apply to the methods proposed for Burrell's Stope. If the adits are to be gated, conventional galvanised grilles should be used and set one to three

metres inside the current entrances to minimise the visual impact. The gating proposed for Lefel Fawr and Taylor's Adit are acceptable only if they are set not less than three metres inside the portal. Similarly the gating proposed for King's Stope and Taylor's Shaft should be modified to minimise the visual impact.(6)

The invasive work proposed for the Mill tailrace and the major shafts, Kingside and Pugh's, takes no account of potential archaeological features which might be expected in the area around the proposed works. Given the condition of the latter shaft, the proposals underestimate the amount of work, and disturbance to the surrounding area, required to stabilise the shaft. The current condition of the Mill tailrace under the county road appears sound. To line that race with a pipe would reduce its capacity. In addition the proposed work on culverting the stream into the tailrace takes no account of the current path of the stream which sinks, probably into old workings, to the east of the Mill site.

The source of the 'stone available on site' and the 'selected mine waste', proposed for use in the works, is not specified. Such material should not be removed from within the scheduled area.

No consideration is given to the work required to gain access to, and facilitate, the proposed works. Consequently measures to protect known and potential archaeological features are not incorporated into the application. For example, 1) The work proposed in, and on the hillside east of, the Nant yr Onen, particularly on Pengeulan Shaft, would require heavy equipment. Access to those sites could easily compromise the recently discovered evidence for lead smelting during the medieval period.(7) 2) No consideration is given to the treatment of ocherous water discharges from Pugh's Adit whilst the proposed work is in progress.

Overall the closure of the mine entrances, as proposed, will have a detrimental visual impact on the site, degrading its value as an important element in the mining heritage of the area. If the closure of the entrances can be justified, it should be carried out in such a manner as to minimise the visual impact. Conventional metal grilles should be used, set well inside the current mine entrances with little or no disturbance of the existing stonework. If gated in this manner, consideration should be given to negotiating an access agreement with a responsible mine exploration group who could be responsible for ensuring the continued integrity of the gating.

One element of the proposed work, the removal of unrelated debris and abandoned cars from the site, is to be applauded. However, this must be part of an ongoing commitment to the conservation of the Cwmystwyth Mine. The work proposed in this application is not framed within plans for the future of the site.

References and notes :

(1) Monument No. Cd145(CER)

(2) Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Cadw (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 12-16. For a comprehensive account of the mine during the historic period, see Hughes, Simon J., *The Cwmystwyth Mines*, (2nd edn., Talybont, 1993); for the prehistoric period, see Timberlake, S. and Mighall, T., 'Historic and Prehistoric Mining on Copa Hill', *Archaeology in Wales*, 32 (1992), pp. 38-44.

(3) See, for example, *Cambrian Mountains: Metal Mines Project*, by Brian Clouston and Partners, and Parkman Consulting Engineers, (unpublished report to Dyfed County Council, December 1988).

(4) The latter aspect has the advantage of targeting visitors from areas unaffected by the ongoing fall in the Euro, as most emigration from the area resulting from the decline in mining

was either to other parts of the UK or to new mining developments in Australia and North America.

(5) Cadw, Notice of Revised Entry to the Schedule of Monuments, Ref. CAM 1/1/3591, dated 2 December 1997.

(6) Of the smaller adits, there is some doubt as to the name of that identified as 'Blue Adit', Ref. 9. Protheroe-Jones (Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Metal Mines Project, field notes, 1992-3) suggests that Blue adit is further to the east.

(7) Simon Timberlake, pers. comm.; the smelting site was initially identified as 'strewn smelting debris', see Timberlake and Mighall, op cit., fig. 1.

*Peter Cloughton*

Please pass any further comments / supporting information on this subject to Peter.

## 10. Mine Revamp

Work is underway to save North Wales' last surviving colliery headgear at the former Bersham Colliery, near Wrexham. Restoration work includes grit blasting to remove old paint, repair of its damaged superstructure and repainting. Two shafts were sunk at Bersham Colliery in 1868 and coal mining continued there until 1986.

*Ref.: SC&MC, Qtrly Jl, 'Below' 99.3 p.16 - Shropshire Star, 3/8/99*

## 11. More Mines at Risk ?

Our man in the field, Simon J.S. Hughes, has sent in the following reports on the status of several mines in Mid-Wales

Just before Christmas 1999, some agricultural contractors built a road through the middle of **Graig Goch / Red Rock Mine** and used a considerable quantity of dump material, not only for topping the road but also for backfilling the drainage ditches, thus smearing the polluted ground over a greater area. Ditches were dug to allow the tailings lagoon to drain more rapidly and the stream was straightened from the old **Frongoch** Power House, to a couple of hundred metres below the mine. Agricultural exemption was cited and I believe the Environment Agency were unable to act as nothing had died. The procedure for reporting these events is crucial; do not try to contact the local office but 'phone their 24 hour hotline on 0 800 807060.

**Frongoch** is now just an awful mess of sawmill waste and scrap. Some of the opencast at the east end has been backfilled and I fear that it is only a matter of time before it disappears. A heartbreaking sight. I was quite surprised to find Llantrisant Church, to the east of Frongoch, has many of the Bray family interred there. Also, the ancient church at Gwnnws has several members of the Trevethan family laid to rest there beneath distinguished memorials.

The four wheel drive brigade and illicit motorcycle scrambles have been creating problems again: At **Esgair Fraith**, the problem is that a bridleway has become so eroded that it now turns into a stream in wet weather. Similarly, at **Esgairlle**, the fines dumps have become so rutted that they scour in wet weather. At **Cwmsymlog**, there is a lesser problem in that some local lads are participating in unorganised, impromptu noisy outings on motorcycles which annoy the residents and despoil the site.

The Environment Agency have dug a ditch around the Western Shaft at **Glogfach** to keep the stream from running into the shaft under flood conditions. This has resulted in lower flows through **Level Fawr** and will go some way to preventing the adit from becoming silted up, particularly to the south of the fall on the **Logaulas Lode**. Also, some flooding had occurred

at the mouth of **Level Fawr** but this was partly due to the storm drains alongside the road. The movement of the portal appears to have ceased following the Council shoring up the facade.

At **Logaulas**, residential developments have reclaimed the eastern end of the open cut and buried the mouth of the adit. The grille which was over the mouth of Vaughan's shaft has disappeared and I can only presume that some idiot dumped it down the shaft. The part of the opencast nearest to the road has had a large quantity of rubbish dumped into it and I fear that it is only a matter of time before complaints are made that the whole site has become a hazard and is unsafe.

At **Glogfach**, I'm informed that someone managed to back their brand new Range Rover into the mouth of the old footway. Whilst the occupants were in a state of shock they were not hurt but the RR was a write off by the time it was pulled out with a tractor. Last year, a local lad almost rode his off road motorcycle into the Penybwlch or Eastern Shaft. The neighbouring Davey Shaft, which was open 15 years ago, is now severely blocked by an entanglement of old fence wire and dead sheep.

Much of the **Pensarn Mine**, near Talybont, has been destroyed by stone robbing and backfilling of the opencast over the last year or so. I have not had the opportunity of walking across the site recently, but it would appear that there is little, if any, of the whim circle remaining. This was already an ancient mine when an 18th century attempt was made to recover the old soles. It was worthy of further investigation before such a sad fate. Also; a good portion of the dumps have been removed from **Mynydd Gorddu Mine**, and used for roadmaking. At about the same time, the tailings dumps were levelled so that an agricultural building could be constructed but its use has now been suspended following the death of some stock by lead poisoning. Furthermore; Several of the shafts at Neuadd yr Ynys - **Llancynfelin Mine** have recently been backfilled with dump material.

The continual loss of the physical remains is very depressing and I ought to be more cheerful about the land reclamation scheme which took place at **Cwmbwrwyno**. The scheme was funded by the Environment Agency through Ceredigion County Council with RML of Ruthin as Engineering Consultants and Afan Construction as contractors. Visually, the mine looks strange without the grey piles of jig tailings and buddle fines but I'm sure that the stream is much improved and that I'll eventually get used to the green and grassy area. The only loss during the project was part of the culvert which served as the tailrace for the new mill of 1870.

## 12. 'From the Red Lion to the Red Dragon'

Dave Seabourne has kindly sent in a full page article from the Western Mail, 11 March 2000, p.46, complete with map & photos, which details a 5 1/2 mile walk to the site of the Red Dragon gold mine near Dinas Mawddwy - even the WMS gets a mention !

**13. Welsh Mines 'Network'** - Following on from John Bowers suggestion (Ref. N/L 41, item 20) to have a list of people who are knowledgeable on certain areas of Wales, and are prepared to provide guidance to those exploring a region for the first time, the following members have put their names forward :

Graham Levins North Cardiganshire

Peter Claughton South West Wales (Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire & Southern parts of Ceredigion)

Mike Munro Mid & South Glamorganshire

John Knight Slate (North & Mid Wales)

Are there any more takers out there ?? Just because there are already volunteers for your 'pet' area, it doesn't mean it can't be shared !!

## 14. Pre-Roman Gold at Roman Gold Mine

Brian Evans has kindly sent in an article from the Western Mail, 13 April 2000, p.8, detailing preliminary work at Dolaucothi work which indicates that gold may well have been worked there possibly for 1000 years before the Romans arrived ! This makes the site highly significant as the only source of gold which could have been used to create Celtic jewellery - the source of this gold had previously been assumed to be from continental Europe.

This has however created a dilemma for the National Trust, the owners of 2,500 acre Dolaucothi estate, as they have a general policy precluding excavations on their properties - but archaeologists say that they can only find out more by digging for further evidence.

Hopefully we can learn more of this exciting discovery during the June field meet.

**15. More Gold** - Snowdonia planners have approved an extension to the application for mineral exploration at Cwm Wnion gold mine, (NGR SH 713, 216), Ty'n Llwyn, Llanelltyd, NW of Dolgellau for the next 12 months. The applicant being Robert Gunn on behalf of a certain gentlemen called George Hall. Cambrian News, Jan 13, 2000.

*David Seabourne*

## 16. Coal 'Clippings' (& a bit of slate & metal !) - Supplied by Tony Oldham;

Hidden history of Wales is uncovered. Anon. Western Mail 29 October 1999 p.6 photos. Nant-yr-Eira mine in the Hafren Forest near Llanidloes has been uncovered.

[Can anyone report further upon this ? *MPM*]

Grant for Museum. Anon. Western Mail 29 October 1999 p.9. Llanidloes Museum gets £190,000 from the Heritage Fund. Museum contains a model of the Van Mine and other mining relics.

Carmarthenshire Anon. Western Mail 10 November 1999. New drift mine near the existing Dynant Fach No 2 colliery near Tumble, is planned.

Around Wales - Merthyr Tydfil. Western Mail, 14 Dec 1999 p.6. Work to clear and preserve Cyfartha Ironworks will start soon.

Tower Story. Western Mail January 18, 2000 16pp. supplement, illus. Describes how the miners used their redundancy money to buy and re-open their old pit. The story has now been made into an opera.

Mine sheds 50 workers, Anon. Western Mail 22 January 2000 p.3. Betws anthracite mine, near Ammanford is reducing its 115 strong work force.

Retired pit pony found, Anon. Western Mail 22 January 2000 p.9. Now in Fforest Uchaf Horse and Pony Centre at Pontypridd. The last two ponies known to be working underground were retired last year.

Wiping the slate clean of grim decades of decline and decay by Roy Hancock. Western Mail 25 January 2000 p.8, 3 photos. An almost whole page spread on the Welsh slate industry. A regeneration program is pouring £6.6 million into the area.

Blaenavon bids for world heritage status, Anon. Western Mail 26 January 2000 pp.6-7 photo. In December 2000 residents of Blaenavon will learn if their bid for Unesco World Heritage has been successful.

Seams [sic] like a nice place to get married ... by Dean Powell. Western Mail January 31, 2000 p.1 photo. Christina Golledge and Mark Lee are getting married underground in the Big Pit Museum, Blaenavon. A colliery hooter will replace the chimes of the church bells, the reception will be held in the colliery canteen.

Big wheel will stop turning, Anon. Western Mail February 1, 2000 p.6, photo. The 15.4m [i.e. 50 foot] water wheel at the Welsh Slate Museum, built by the De Winton Company of Caernarfon in 1870 will be on-stop for a few weeks for essential repairs to be carried out.

Trio of library exhibitions, Anon. The Tivy-Side, February 2, 2000. The National Library of Wales [Aberystwyth] celebrates the new Millennium with three new exhibitions, one of which is: Black Wounds, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Alun Evans recording the landscaping of Bargoed Colliery Tip.

Multi-million aid for Big Pit, Anon Western Mail 3 Feb 2000 p.2. A lottery grant will transfer the Big Pit [show mine] into a grand National Mining Museum of Wales.

Opencast plan may lose support, Anon. Western Mail 4 Feb 2000 p.9. (see below)

Mining scheme rejected, Anon. Western Mail 5 Feb 2000 p.5. Opencast mining at Rhydycar has been turned down by Merthyr Tydfil council.

Couple take plunge 300 feet underground, Anon. Western Mail 7 Feb 2000 p.9 photo. Christine Galledge and Mark Lee were married in the Big Pit Mining Museum in Blaenavon.

Vivid tales from the coalface by Mario Basini. Western Mail Magazine section 12 February, 2000 pp.14-15, 3 photos. A review of two books: B L Combes by Bill Jones and Chris Williams. University of Wales Press £5.99 and With Dust Still in his Throat a B L Coombes Anthology. University of Wales Press £9.99 A coal miner from Resolven in the Vale of Neath, he was also a long life writer who produced short stories, novels, plays, autobiographies and newspaper articles. He wrote a weekly column for his local newspaper the Neath Guardian for decades.

Paintings that probe beneath the coalface. Anon. The Cambrian News 23March, 2000 p.19 photo. The National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth was the venue for a major exhibition of works of art produced by Welsh coal miners - "Miner-Artists: The Art of Welsh Coalworkers". The collection consisted of 88 paintings, drawing and photographs.

Estuary views decided sale by John Williams. Western Mail Section 3 Welsh House p.1 photo. Quay House at Landshipping, Pembrokeshire is for sale. This former colliery owner's house has old rails and an embankment as a garden feature. Nearby, in 1844, some 40 miners - the youngest just 9 years old were killed in a disaster in Garden Pit Mine.

**17. Gold Again** - Member Eric Gray-Thomas sent through copies of articles published in The Herald, 13/8/99, p.5 & The Daily Post, 3/11/99, detailing his gold panning activities in Wales and other parts of the world. In the latter, with regard to Wales, he states "It isn't that there's no gold there, because there is - and plenty of it" he continues however, "...as for the notion of finding huge nuggets as they do in the films, you can forget about it."

**18. Slate Quarry in Reverse ?!** - John Knight reports that a local resident near **Ty Mawr East Quarry** stated "There's more slate being taken in than being taken out" !!! John explains that this is probably because parts of the site are being infilled. [With slate waste I assume ? *MPM*]

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### Query Corner

(Please reply direct to the correspondent. Any follow-up info will however be gratefully received by your editor to allow a suitable response to be placed in the next newsletter for the benefit of all.)

#### 19. Oliver Lloyd and mines in Wales.

"Whilst doing my 'homework' for the WMS June field meet I came across Oliver Lloyd, solicitor of Cardigan. Up to his death in about 1846 he was one of the lessees of minerals on part of the Bishop of St Davids' estate at Llanddewibrefi (NLW Lucas 1992 and 2118). And it's not the first time I had come across him. He was lessee at Llanfyrnach in the early 1840s. He, or an associate, evidently had some knowledge of the application of water power to mine drainage. He is credited with the construction of the spectacular leat high above Cwmbrefi. Nine miles long, this fed the machinery via a pond above the Rhysgog Mine. At Llanfyrnach his name is mentioned with reference to the erection of a powerful pumping waterwheel.

Has anyone come across Lloyd in connection with other mines in the 1840s or earlier ?"

*Peter Claughton*

#### 20. North Wales Metalliferous Mining Machinery.

With reference to item 29 in the last N/L, regarding 'Pumping Engine Performance/Specification in the Mining Journal' Cris Ebbs kindly sent through a listing of 'Plant details of North Wales Metalliferous Mines' by a certain Russell Bayles. It's thought that this 13 page document is unpublished, can anyone confirm otherwise ? It was also noted that he published a related article 'A Brief Survey of Beam Pumping Engines Employed on Lead Mines in Flintshire' in the 1968 Memoirs of the NMRS.

*Mike Munro*

#### 21. The Lost Mines of Wales.

"I have pulled together many odds and ends from my files and assembled them into a file which I have expanded upon and entitled "Lost Mines". Included amongst the entries are curiosities such as Sarn Fedw, Nant Coch, Gelli Las, Pandy, and about 100 others, most of which have significant remains or archival records, but not both, and have been largely unexplained, badly explained or ignored in recent accounts. The draft copy has already precipitated two further substantial contributions. Other classic examples of lost mines are the Nell Gwynne mentioned by David Bick in Metal Mines of Mid-Wales Pt. III. 2nd ed. p.45, and no one ever found the Meirioneth Lead Mine mentioned in Newsletter 34 ?"

[It is intended that this 'file' will become a series of articles in the WMS Journal *MPM*]

"If you think that you know of a site which has not been given the attention which it deserves, please drop me a line and I'll include the details and acknowledgements.

Tel. 01970 832 324."

*Simon J.S.Hughes*

**22. All in a days work ?**

George Hall poses the following query; "When looking through back numbers of 'Mine and Quarry Engineering' recently for something else, I noticed (June 1956 p.223) the following amazing statement. Referring to then recent tunnelling records : 'Even as early as 398 B.C. (according to Livy) a 6,000 ft. tunnel, 6 ft by 3 1/2 ft., was completed in a year.' Can anyone verify this statement, and if so, where was the tunnel driven and for what purpose ?

**23. Caron Mine (Another lost mine !)**

In the Proceedings of the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society 1884, 'A Description of the Florida Main-Lode...' by Edward Halse, on page 5 the location of 'Florida Mine' is given as '...midway between Esgair-y-Mewyn and Caron Mines.' This puts the 'Caron Mine' at around NGR SN 730, 630. Neither David Bick nor George Hall make reference to such a mine in their publications. J.R.Foster Smith in BM12, p.85 states that it may be another name for Brynhope/New Lisburne at NGR SN 725, 659, but this seems a little too far from the location given by Halse. A shaft and mine is however marked on the current 2 1/2" O.S. (Explorer No. 187) between Pen y Garn and Bronmwyn at NGR SN 715, 645. Burt et al in 'The Mines of Cardiganshire' fail to give a grid reference but state that John Kitto managed it at certain times.

Can anyone offer any further information on this mine that would help to clarify its location and history ?

*Mike Munro*

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### Book Reviews & Bibliographical References to Welsh Mines & Mining

**24. "Slates from Abergynolwyn" by Alan Holmes.**

Gwynedd Archives Service 1999. 144pages, 21 detailed survey plans & drawings, 29 plates. ISBN 0 901337 73 0. Cost £6.95

This book is subtitled 'The Story of the Bryneglwyn Slate Quarry' and is a fully revised version of the 1986 1st edition which has been long out of print. It charts the history of the Slate Quarry from its early beginnings in the 1840's through to final closure in 1947. Many of the surface structures were destroyed by the Forestry Commission in the 1970's, but luckily recording (both on the surface and underground) in the form of surveys and photographs had already been undertaken, this book therefore provides a glimpse of many aspects of the site which can no longer be seen.

For those who want to not only read the history of a specific location, but also visit the site with a comprehensive guide to interpret the remains, then this publication is an absolute must. The price alone justifying its purchase !

Copies can be obtained from The Railway Shop, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY, Tel. 01654 711012. Please add £1.00 p&p.

*Mike Munro*

**25. "The History of Halkyn Mountain" by Bryn Ellis.**

Helygain Press 1998. 239 pages, 14 maps, 9 photographs & 18 figures.

This is the result of twenty years research into mining, quarrying and the community in this part of North East Wales. It is a truly delightful volume full of such wonderful snippets as :-

'On the 30th of July 1850, a crowd of 500 miners broke down the door of Absalom Francis's residence; However, Absalom had fled, leaving his daughter to deal with the mob who were demanding a six hour day. His cousin, William Davey, had been assaulted in 1824 for driving hard bargains.'

I found it almost impossible to open this book and not find an article of interest, which is a remarkably rare attribute in this day and age. It is clearly laid out, well referenced, scholarly and most readable; Your bookshelf is not complete without a copy.

*Simon J.S.Hughes*

**26. "Off, On A Tangent ...with Brynmor" by Brynmor Evans**

1999 48 pp. illus. SB £2.50

Brynmor Evans was born on 9th October 1930, the son of a miner, in an era when coal mining was still the main industry in the Aberdare and Cynon Valley area. Recollections of that era are still clear, deep rooted and have a profound meaning for him, illustrated through a number of poems which highlight the harshness of the industry at that time, and also the unique comradeship that existed among the miners, - unequalled elsewhere in industry. Being brought up in a close-knit mining community that was typical of 'The Valleys' provided a sense of 'belonging' that sadly appears to be on the wane in society today. The mining industry of that time, with its risk of accidents, or 'the dust', (pneumoconiosis or silicosis), was a key factor in creating that community spirit, because families never knew when tragedy might possibly affect them and consequently were very supportive of each other. An evocative trip down memory lane. Should appeal to all those who bought the Auden book and like the coalescence of industrial archaeology and verse

*Tony Oldham*

**27. "Calon Blwm" by Cyril Jones.**

Gomer Press 1994. 191 pages with numerous illustrations. £8.95. This is a thoroughly wonderful book which has not received anything like the attention which it deserves. Nowhere will you find a better, first hand account of mining at Dyfngwm, Nant Iago, Llanerch yr Aur and others. Much of the volume is a primary source being a well edited transcript of the memoirs of the late Wil Richards of Aberhosan. He recounts the old Scot for whom he worked at Dyfngwm; identifiable as John Mitchell, the promoter of Cwmsymlog, Frongoch, Bryn yr Afr amongst many other turn of the century ventures in association with W. H. Paull. As a native, I can only advise you that it is really worth learning Welsh to study this delightful account.

*Simon J.S.Hughes*

**28. "A Welsh House & Its Family - The Vaughan's of Trawscoed" by Gerald Morgan.**

Gomer Press. £12.95. 260 pages. Well Illustrated. This is an essential companion for anyone studying the Lisburne Mines in any detail, and an invaluable who's who and pedigree of the Vaughan family. It is well researched and clearly written, the fruit of many years work by a local man. The book commences with a description of the initial consolidation of the Estate under John Vaughan, and also considers the pedigree of this eminent Welsh lawyer knighted in 1668 and Chief Justice to the Common Pleas. The Vaughans were subsequently elevated to viscounts, and further elevated to earls towards the end of the 18th century. The general running and management of the Estate's agricultural holdings during the 19th century are considered in some detail. Within the few pages devoted to the mines, there are passing references to Esgairwyn, Grogwynion, Logaulas, Fairchance, Cwmsymlog, Frongoch, Cwm

Mawr, Gwaith Goch, and a couple of others; these appear to be largely derived from W. J. Lewis's "Lead Mining in Wales" and divulge nothing new.

Gerald Morgan makes no aspirations about it being a mining orientated study, and therefore only the briefest attention is paid to the running of the mines. The Lisburne Estate benefited to the tune of about £ 150,000 in royalties from their 12,500 acre estate during the 19th century.

*Simon J.S.Hughes*

### Bibliographical References to Mining in Wales

#### 29. Welsh Mines Society on the 'World Wide Web' - We are officially 'global' !!

I've continued to update and expand the society's web pages, which can be found at;

[http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc\\_hp.htm](http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc_hp.htm)

They contain details of future field meets, the last few WMS & NAMHO newsletters (earlier ones will be added when I find the time to put them in) and a list of previous field meets with links to photos and details from those meets. So far this year, the pages have received over 500 'hits' from various countries including New Zealand, Austria and Peru !

The 'Welsh Mining Links' page (accessed from the WMS home page) now has some 80 odd links to other sites containing details on Welsh mines. If you find any more sites while surfing around, or if a site disappears, then do please let me know.

#### 30. Mining Research Guidance.

Want to know more about that hole in the ground, or that pile of stones on top of it, but not too sure where to start ? Then check out an excellent article in the latest edition of British Mining, (No.63) 'Researching Mining in the UK', by Hazel Mary Martell, pp.147-155. This article is recommended reading for those just starting out on a trail of research, even those who are seasoned crusaders in this area may learn a couple of things - I certainly did !

31. **More Mining Research Guidance** - Sources of printed primary resources have been listed by Peter Cloughton as a result of related discussions on the Mining History Discussion list. The list which is likely to remain in an ever developing form can be found at:

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/location.htm>

#### 32. A Summary of the Barn Hill Additional Collection at the University of Wales, Bangor by Elen Wyn Hughes.

Trans Anglesey Antiquarian Soc 1998 pp 79-86. This is a continuation of the history of one of the main gentry families in Anglesey. It includes deeds relating to slate and copper mining in Snowdonia dating from the late nineteenth century - plans as well as surveys, correspondence and leases of the workings of the Great Snowdon Mountain Copper Mines, the Great Snowdon Honestone Quarries and other such as Cwmdyle Copper Mining Co, Snowdon Slate Quarries, Plas-y-nant Slate Quarries, Cribb Ddu Mine, Great Arran and Snowdon Mine - these outline the profits made by the estate though royalties. Other minerals such as zinc and lead were also extracted from these Carnarfonshire lands.

*Tony Oldham*

33. **Public Record Office, Kew, London** For the mining historian there is now a considerable saving in time to be had in using the new 'on-line' searchable database of 8,205,122 references to records held here. For the first time, it is now possible to search for the references to British registered mining companies without looking through ledgers for a

company number and then looking up that number in another catalogue to find the repository box number. The database search function permits you to use three keywords to find specific items in categories and sub-categories or even the whole database. Included in the search toolbar is a <go to page> function which can be useful if the company name has been spelt wrongly but you know approximately when it was registered.

The relevant categories for mining companies are:

**BT41** - Pre-limited liability

**BT31** - Registered limited liability companies

**BT34** - Liquidators reports (late 19th and 20th centuries),

Other relevant categories include:

COAL and MUN for the British Coal Industry and Ministry of Munitions (1st WW) respectively.

The URL of the database is [www.pro.gov.uk](http://www.pro.gov.uk)

*"Below" 99.4 Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club.*

#### 34. British Library manuscripts catalogue.

Mining historians who use archives may like to know that the BL's indexes and descriptions of their manuscript collections are now available online. It is possible to search for a person, place or subject, and also to see the catalogue entry for a particular manuscript. I found it very straightforward to use, and it has already saved me a long journey to consult the printed catalogues. The word 'mines' produced 205 hits, and 'mining' 62, and among them I found references to the Parys mines on Anglesey which I didn't know about.

The main British Library website is at <http://portico.bl.uk>, and the manuscript catalogue is <http://molcat.bl.uk/msscat>

*Christopher J Williams*

### Misc.

#### 35. A Note From Your Old Editor.

"I would like to say how impressed I was with Mike Munro's first efforts as editor. Not only is the N/L better, it is much bigger and more comprehensive as well. Clearly I should have packed the job in earlier - except that MM might not have been around at the time. I am sure all members will join me in offering full congratulations, and to David Roe for the production."

*David Bick*

36. **Mines & Metals Interest Tours 2000.** - Atalaya Tours are offering WMS members 'at least 5% off' their normal prices for their world wide mining history trips to locations such as Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Greece, Cyprus & the UK. Contact Jamie Thorburn, Tel./Fax. 01970 828989 for a brochure. They are also quite happy to provide details of previous itineraries and tour guide notes to WMS members

#### 37. Ore Dressing.

'With reference to George Hall's contribution (N/L 41, item 42) on what is meant by the term 'ore', I agree with his comments. Dressed ore is a time-honoured and perfectly good term for what is now known as concentrates, and undressed ore should be perfectly acceptable for the mineral as it comes out of the mine, mixed up with rock and gangue. What I can't abide is the academics love for the word 'beneficiation' when what they mean is concentration.

The word is ugly, and doesn't appear in the dictionary, but academics simply love to use terms that other people cannot understand.'

*David Bick*

### 38. Glasdir & the Elmore Floatation Process & the PMMC bites back !

With reference to item 36 in the last newsletter, Steve Roberts, the former editor of the Plymouth Mineral and Mining Club Journal, disputes Peter Claughtons' comment that PMMCJ is 'not a commonly accessible journal'. Steve says that for the 'princely sum of £2-50 per year, anyone is welcome to join the PMMC and receive three journals per year in addition to attending several indoor and outdoor events. To join, Contact Ken Roberts, Uppershaugh Farmhouse, Shaugh Prior, Plymouth, PL7 5HA. Tel. 01752 839274.

**39. Electronic Newsletter** - If you have e-mail then perhaps you'd prefer to receive the newsletter in electronic format (Word for Windows Ver. 6.0). Not only does this mean you'll receive it a few days sooner but it will also help save the society costs - and David Roe a bit of time too ! If you're interested, please send an e-mail to me at [mike.munro@cwcom.net](mailto:mike.munro@cwcom.net) and .cc David Roe at [david@d-roe.freemove.co.uk](mailto:david@d-roe.freemove.co.uk)

**40. Membership List** - David Roe expresses his thanks to all for sending updated membership information to him - the list is duly enclosed for your use.

### 41. An Occasional Journal ?

Well, I've received several comments regarding this, (see last N/L, item 49) all in support of such a publication, and a healthy mix of responses to the suggested title of 'Y Gloddfa'. The current state of play however is that insufficient material has been received to produce the first issue, many thanks to those who have offered articles for publication, particularly S.J.S.Hughes who has promised enough material for several editions ! The proposal still stands however and will continue to do so while I remain editor ! I suggest that the issue of the title is decided by those who contribute to the first volume.

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### Footnotes

Many thanks to all those who have provided me with contributions, please don't stop sending them in. Absolutely any news item, from the local paper, T.V, radio or 'heard down the pub' will always be welcome !

*Mike Munro & BronwenDog* 🍷

**WMS Membership** - Annual membership is £4, (or to ease administration - £8 for 2 years). The paid up date is shown on your address label. If you are "paid up to DEC 1999" or earlier then the date will be **highlighted in red**, your subs are overdue and your treasurer would be most grateful if you could pay promptly.

The address for subscription is c/o David Roe, 20 Lutterburn Street, Ugborough, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 ONG (Tel. 01752 896432).

'Copy' date for the next newsletter, **31st September 2000**, publication due October. Articles to be sent to Mike Munro, address on front page or e-mail [mike.munro@cwcom.net](mailto:mike.munro@cwcom.net)

**Commercial Advertisement Rates** - A4/A5 Flyers or full page £30-00, half page £15-00. Please contact Mike Munro with details or David Roe if it's a flyer.

*Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Welsh Mines Society.*