

Welsh Mines Society

NEWSLETTER

No.9 January, 1984.

- 1 Field Trip to Pumpsaint 4 September 1983 This was well attended and thanks are due to Jim Groucott for making arrangements. We went through various workings not normally accessible to the public, including some quite stiff climbs up ladders. The guides were very helpful, though one was taken aback by my son's carbide lamp, an invention he had not seen before, and requested it put out due to possibilities of gas. Tempus mutandur!
- 2 Notes on Field Meeting at Pumpsaint
 - a Forestry Commission Liason A volunteer is still required for the South Wales area. Please contact Alan Williams.
 - b NAMHO field trip W.M.S. has been requested to act as host for the 1984 meeting, to take place at Beddgelert 19/20 May. (see later).
 - c Logo Contest The various entries were discussed and handed over to a sub-committee consisting of Eric Gray-Thomas, Alan Williams and Damian McCurdy for final judging. (see item 22)
 - d O.T.Jones Xerox Copy This fetched £15, half of which has been paid into Society funds.
 - e Society Finances David Roe reported £147 in the bank, so we need not increase subs at present.
- 3 Cwmsymlog Reclamation The consulting engineers to this project, Robinson Jones Partnership Ltd. have kindly supplied full details, from which it is clear that care has been taken to preserve I.A. features of interest. They are also involved in possible similar work at Dylife and a dialogue with W.M.S. has been established. The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments at Aberystwyth photographed various evidence during the work.

Our Mid-Wales Correspondent Simon Hughes was much involved in the project from the start and has forwarded a report dated 18 July 1983 concerning his contribution. Copies are available from S.J.S.Hughes, Lerry Mills, Talybont, Dyfed. (Please enclose S.A.E.) His conclusions are that the Welsh Development Agency and the District Council are nowadays well aware of the amenity and heritage value of such sites, and it is clear that pressure from bodies like ourselves and NAMHO is paying dividends.
- 4 18th C Newcomen enginehouse in S. Wales? In N/L No. 8 in referring to this site I mentioned 'its existence was first noticed, it appears, by the RCAHMM ...' The Commission has drawn attention to the fact that the words 'it appears' are inapplicable. I am pleased to have this opportunity of correcting the error.
- 5 Clogau Ifor Higgon has sent a cutting from The Cambrian News 2/12/83 stating that the mine may become a tourist attraction. The Council, Welsh Tourist Board, and Snowdonia National Park are in favour in principle, but what the Crown Mineral Agent will have to say is another matter. The manager is John Rottenbury, late of Wheal Concord, which closed down so it is said, due to lack of ore.
- 6 Gwynfynydd After 2 years of fruitless endeavour, rich gold has been struck in the Chidlaw lode only a few yards from old workings, and I have seen samples that would make your mouth water. An underground mill including Cornish rolls is being set up. See Cambrian News 16 December 1983. It is understood a new manager, ex-Concord, has also been appointed here; the reason behind this sudden Cornish influx is not apparent.

7 Van Part of the Van Mine unexpectedly came up for auction in November, including 18 acres and much of the dressing area. According to information received, it fetched £5000, and was sold to an Egyptian. The site has potential as a museum etc. but whether this is envisaged is not known.

8 Parys Mountain I understand enormous lead-zinc deposits have been found here, at a depth of 500 fathoms, but cannot say if there are plans to work it. At the present price of lead, perhaps not.

9 Membership Secretary Re new members, change of address, subs, etc. please note this office is held by Dr. David Roe, 29 Somers Rd., Worcester, not Alan Golding.

10 Sygun Copper Mine The deep adit area, dressing floors etc. has been acquired by Mr. P.J. Amies, Ty Hen, Beddgelert. He has cleared the adit with a J.C.B. and is hoping to develop the area as a tourist attraction. With its connection with the earliest days of the Elmore Flotation process this is an important site and we wish him well. The W.M.S. will be in the area May 19/20.

11 Ystrad Einion Waterwheel This important underground monument, which is one of Wales' best I.A. assets, is currently under threat of being removed lock, stock and barrel to the Morewellham IA complex in Devon. There is much opposition, including a letter in The Cambrian News 13.1.'84, and I no doubt speak for the great majority, if not the whole of W.M.S. members in associating ourselves with it. The place for this wheel is Ystrad Einion, and certainly not several hundred miles removed. Simon Hughes has the details, and would welcome comments.**

12 Trevor Morris I am saddened to report the sudden death in July of Trevor Morris aged in his 30s and one of our earliest members. Though employed in the north-east, he was a native of Montgomeryshire, and author of several papers to learned societies on mines of that county. He had been working on a history of Van, and hopefully his efforts will not be wasted,

13 Snowdonia National Park Study Centre Courses These are held at Plas Tan Y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd and include Early Iron Industry in N.Wales, 23-26 March £43.20, Copper Gold & Slate Mining 16-23 June £99.44, Mines, Mills & Furnaces 28 July-4 Aug. £99.44. For further details contact Merfyn Williams at the Centre.

14 Cumbria Amenity Trust Chris Jones of 3 Bell Hill Cottage, Marion, Lindal-in-Furness, Ulverston, has requested a mention of this Trust which mainly concentrates on Cumbria mines but also ventures elsewhere. Their first Journal 'The Mine Explorer' is due shortly at around £1.50 - please contact Chris for details.

15 Welsh Slate The Sunday Times 18.9.83 in an article, reported that mainly due to house improvement grants, the slate trade is more buoyant than for 50 years and cannot meet demand. Quarries are in a dilemma how much capital to invest, as the long-term market is difficult to judge. Nevertheless, this is good news.

16 Nikrot Zurim This is the title of the Israel Cave Research Centre's Journal, of which I have received a copy. It is full of information and plans, some in English but mainly Hebrew, with articles such as The Prehistory of the El-Bazaz Cave, and Underground Secret Tunnels (can one get them above ground?). The address is Ofra, D.N. Harei Jerusalem, 90 906 Israel.

17 Llanrwst Mines John Bennett's paper on early workings in this area has appeared in N.M.R.S. publication, B.M. No. 23. Very interesting.

* 18 Next Field Meeting Provisionally Gwynne Slate Quarry and Museum, Glyn Ceriog, south of Llangollen, September 9th. Please note the date.

19 Association of Industrial Archaeology Conference To be held at Aberystwyth, Friday-Sunday 14-16 September. It will prominently feature the local mines with well known speakers including W.J. Lewis, D.B. Hague, Barri Jones and George Boon. Field excursions also.

In the words of W.H. Auden the lead miner's poet, 'get there if you can'. Details from Douglas Hague, Llanafon, Aberystwyth.

The Forestry Commission have been contacted on this situation

20 Collieries of Kingswood and South Gloucestershire by John Comwell, published by D.Brown & Sons, Cowbridge. 84 page Hardback £6.95. This is a collection of mainly old photos, many underground, of the Old Bristol Coalfield and is much to be recommended. Cornwell is working on similar books for South Wales, which would seem to have almost unlimited scope. However, hopefully some definitive histories will not be far behind - we hardly want to emulate the railway publishing scene.

21 Forestry Commission Liason Alan Williams has reported promising initial discussions with the Newtown District.

22 NAMHO Constitutional Change Alan Williams has kindly forwarded the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 1983, which he attended. One item was a revision of the Constitution allowing the facility for co-opting individuals with specialist knowledge which was merely 'a confirmation of what was already developing, with for example the Welsh Mines Society's efforts in Wales' - this being a reference to Rob Yemen's valuable work in the Llanrwst area. It is good to know that we are being noticed in this important field, and Rob is now the NAMHO 'Annually Co-opted Specialist'.

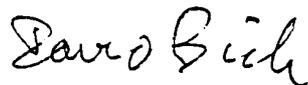
23 Mine Plans held by the Health and Safety Executive According to NAMHO, the Executive may re-locate the plans in the respective County Council Record Offices; in any event it is moving to Merseyside from July 1984. The executive has received much criticism re the recent viewing charges of £9/hr + VAT.

24 WMS/NAMHO Field Meeting The WMS is hosting the Biannual NAMHO field meeting in the Snowdonia area on 19/20 May 1984. Depending on weather etc., mines to be visited are Lliwedd, Hafod y Llan, etc., the Nantlle Valley area, and hopefully, Sygun (see item 10). Leaders Eric Gray-Thomas and D.Bick. There is a good book on the district called The Old Copper Mines of Snowdonia, copies of which will be on sale from the well known bookseller Eric Gray-Thomas, &/or myself.

For both days, meet 10.30 am at the Forestry Commission's Camp Site 1 mile N.W. of Beddgelert, Grid ref. SH 577 492. There are good camping facilities. For a list of Hotels, B & B etc. please send S.A.E. to Alan Williams, 5 Longshaw Common, Billinge, Wigan. Please contact Eric Gray-Thomas, re queries, 'phone 0286-2842. Those staying the Friday night may like to meet for a drink in one of the pubs close to the bridge in Beddgelert.

25 Next Newsletter Apart from one or two stalwarts, very little news etc. has been sent in. There must be plenty happening that members could pass on.

Yours in anticipation,



David Bick, Pound House, Newent, Glos. 23/1/'84.