

# Welsh Mines Society

(Member of the National Association of Mining Historical Organizations)



NEWSLETTER 16

MAY 1987

## 1. EDITORIAL APOLOGY.

Due to a welcome but unexpected involvement in an Industrial Archaeology project in North Wales, my time in the next few weeks will be fully committed. As a result, if this Newsletter is to come out in time for the Dolgellau weekend then it must of necessity be done quickly - or not at all. Hopefully the result is acceptable.

## 2. EDITORIAL HEARTCRY.

For the umpteenth time of asking, will members please note (especially those who do not read their Newsletters) that I am not NOT the Membership Secretary/Treasurer. That is David Roe, 29 Somers Road, Worcester, WR1 3JJ, to whom subscriptions should be sent. Every time I receive one my heart sinks, as it is just one more job to do. Please, PLEASE, errant members, try to remember!

## 3. WMS NEWSLETTER FORMAT.

David Roe, our worthy Membership Sec./ Treasurer (see item 2 above) is also Newsletter Production Director, and has previously asked for comments on our 'new' format, adapted as he says, from the British Micromount Society's publication. But in fact it is not new at all, as founder members may recall. Our very first Newsletter used it. Did the BMS copy us! Overall the reception has been favourable and we will continue in this fashion.

## 4. ABERCWMEIDDON SLATE QUARRY MINE, CORRIS (Newsletter 15 Item 32.)

Peter Hay reports that the lake is blue due to suspended silica particles. The site also presents the strange spectacle of twin tunnels which were bored by an early tunnelling machine. No refuse has yet been tipped at the site.

## 5. FRONGOCH

The situation regarding the sale of this site is not entirely clear, but it appears that the rubbish- tip threat is still present. The monograph FRONGOCH LEAD AND ZINC MINE is still available from the Pound House, Newent, Glos.

## 6. COPPER MINE ON ANGLESEY

D.A.Davies has sent interesting details of a mine on the sea-cliffs at Copper Mine Creek GR 228798. There is a shaft totally overgrown with hawthorn behind a retaining wall, remains of a pond, and a leat which is now a footpath. There are no tips or buildings.

## 7. OLD MINES AND QUARRIES AS RUBBISH TIPS

The growing scarcity of suitable holes for municipal garbage is now a national threat to I. A. sites, and a proper policy is needed before every open cast or quarry is lost. There is a perfectly good and proven alternative. For years, the West Midlands have been building hills of rubbish, and then landscaping and planting them. They then ACTUALLY ENHANCE THE SCENERY ! This was recently featured on television.

## 8. MINES IN THE OLD RED SANDSTONE

These are so uncommon as to excite more than usual Interest. One at Talachddu near Talgarth (Newsletter 15, Item 37) is to be dug out by the Russell Society. Others are found at Hayton Bent, near Ludlow (copper) and Llanigon in the Black Mountains (lead).

There are also several of a very peculiar nature near Ross on Wye that are a mystery even as to the mineral sought. One appears to be a very ancient trial, I suspect for gold. I am including a brief chapter on them in THE MINES OF NEWENT to be published in the autumn. Note. Since typing the above, gold has been proved here by panning, visible to the naked eye.

## 9. PEMBROKESHIRE MINES.

As rare, almost, as mines in the Old Red, are those in the Little England Beyond Wales. However, Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfl, Rosebush, Dyfed, would like to hear from anyone else interested in these.

## 10. CONTINENTAL MINES

Peter Cloughton is also interested in iron mines in Alava Province, Spain named Eduardo, San Pedro and Olvidao, and the San Feliciano Co. working in the 1890's. Chris Jones (see Item 20c) would also like to hear anything on mines in Southern Spain, especially around Linares and Cordoba. Anyone interested in setting up a Continental or Irish Mines Group please contact Chris.

## 11. SOMERSET MINES RESEARCH GROUP.

Nothing has been heard of this group for some time. Is it still alive?

## 12. CENTRE FOR EARTH MYSTERY STUDIES.

Paul Devereux, P.O. Box 5, Brecon, Powys, wants to hear of any unusual or inexplicable lights or sounds in caves or mines and information on any literature on these subjects. Has he read Lewis Morris, who was a very able and educated man, and a firm believer in the Knockers, or underground spirits? I myself am not altogether willing to dismiss the idea as complete poppycock. Those anxious to decry Morris should first of all see what he has to say.

## 13. NEW BOOK

Carol Hill and Paolo Forti CAVE MINERAL OF THE WORLD, 272 pp. 16 in colour. £22.

From Tony Oldham, Rhyhydwr, Crymymch, Dyfed. SA41 3RB

## 14. BRYNPOSTIG RUBBISH DUMP.

We are grateful to Emyr Searell for writing in response to N/L15 Item 40. Notwithstanding the loss to I.A. the site of the Brynpostig mine is one of the most advanced tips in the U.K., being lined with clay, and with other desirable features to minimize leakage and pollution.

## 15. CEREDIGION MINES GROUP.

This was formed largely in response to the danger threatening Frongoch, and we would welcome news of its latest activities.

## 16. A NEW SLATE QUARRY.

It is very encouraging to learn of a new venture in this sphere which it appears has arisen out of a 9 month strike and subsequent sackings. Those dismissed have opened the Croes y ddawy afon quarry; business is good, with the prospect of more men being taken on.

## 17. OLD BOOK.

MEMOIRS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, VOL2, 1848, containing the well known (but unreliable) paper by Hunt on the Cardiganshire mines, also the well known (and sound) paper by W.W.Smyth. Good condition except for a torn spine. Offers to P.Hay, 8 Hove Park Way, Hove, BN3 6PS.

## 18. BETTWS GARMON IRON MINE, CAERN, also CWMYSTWYTH.

C. G.Stone, 69 Chlltern Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, seeks information, especially dates of working at Bettws Garmon. He also has queries re the Interpretation of the modern mill and circular stone and brick structure about 2ft. high at Cwmystwyth.

## 19. COURSES AT PLAS TAN Y BWLCH STUDY CENTRE, MAENTWRQG, GWYNEDD.

June 28-July 4: Mines and quarries from Snowdon to Cwmystwyth, with Michael Lewis and Merfyn Williams.  
Sept. 18-20. Historical Metallurgy Conference. (HMS members only).

## 20A. VAN MINE LLANIDLOES.

The Powys Planning Authority is expecting an application to rework the dumps for Lead, zinc and Silver, (Dally Post 18.3 87). Note : if I remember rightly, Van ore contained almost no Silver at all.

20B. FIRST BRITISH GOLD PROSPECTORS CONVENTION, Salford University, 16th May 1987. This exclusive affair (by invitation only) is promoted by the Kildonan Club. We would like details from any of our members who might attend, as it sounds interesting. (Perhaps they may address themselves to the problem apparent last year in the Afon Mawddach river below Pistyll Cain where semi-industrial scale panning threatened to overwhelm the ecology of the river. DMR)

20C. THE MINE EXPLORER, Cumbria Amenity Trust, 3 Bell Hill, Lindal, Cumbria. Chris Jones has kindly sent a copy of Vol II, price £3 +pp. The 105 pages are full of interest - mainly the Lake District but also Bearhaven, County Cork.

## 21. GWYNFYNYDD CLOSES.

We understand that this mine is now on a care and maintenance basis only, a sad end to what is the most promising Gold prospect in Wales. In view of the rumours of the good ore left below, it may only be a matter of time before the wheels begin turning again. The vital message for any promoter may be found in D.C.Davies Metalliferous Minerals and Mining chapter XLI.1880. The parable of the Grocer's Shop (nothing to do with M. Thatcher) is very apposite.

## 22. DOLAU-COTHI GOLD MINE.

Since the WMS visited here several years ago, there have been several developments on the tourist front. The latest addition is a steel head frame ex. Hendre (Olwyn Goch Shaft) N.L.15 Item 6 refers. It is not

known whether the shaft will allow public access. In the last few days an exciting I.A. discovery has been made here - further details will hopefully be available at the Gold weekend.

## 23. CWM PRYSOR.

Brian Jones has kindly sent a recent photo of the little water wheel at Cwm Prysor. It is now in a very advanced state of decay - different to how I remember it 30 years ago when all that was needed was the water to turn it.

## 24. ROCKBOTTOM.

Eric Otty points out that this periodical is A3.50 per issue, not for 3 Issues per year as stated in N.L.15. (Even at this price it is well worth purchase if one is a mineral afficionado - DMR)

## 25. CHRISTMAS RITUAL.

Once upon a time it was the practise of G.Hall and myself to go to Wales every Boxing Day for a day or two with no great aim beyond looking round a mine or two and passing the evenings with a little brandy or claret. In our declining years we are tempted to revive the ritual, and we would be happy if any like minded members wished to join us.

## 26. EDITORIAL PLEA.

I am thinking of obtaining a Word Processor, but in the meantime the amount of correction fluid consumed is something appalling. Is there a typing volunteer? ( \*\* ALMOST INSTANT GRATIFICATION ! DMR has just acquired such a gizmo and this is his first effort... hopefully by December 1987 the full power of 256 Kilobyte will be unleashed. ANY advice as to how the Amstrad 8256 could be used to store membership details and produce address labels would be gratefully received by David Roe - answers in english (or welsh ) ONLY - nil comprehendo computereze.\*\* DMR )

27. POTENTIAL NEW MEMBER. We have to congratulate Simon Hughes and his wife on an impending birth, likely to coincide with the Dolgellau meet. Membership forms available from D.Roe, not me ( Item 2 refers).

## 28.

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DOLGELLAU Meet - GOLD WEEKEND - 6/7 JUNE 1987

This will be loosely based at the DOLSERAU HALL HOTEL. Grid Ref 755.195 approx, 1 mile east of Dolgellau on the Bala road.

## SATURDAY

9.30a.m. 'Fringe meeting' with G.Hall leaving Dolserau for an as yet undefined location.

12.00a.m. Visit to Cefn Coch and Berthlwyd sites - meet at the TYNNGROES HOTEL Grid Ref 727.231 4 miles north of Dolgellau, to leave for the mines at 1.00p.m.

7.00 for 7.30 p.m. DOLSERAU HOTEL

Short AGM

Mining quiz organised by G.Hall

Members slides - please advise D. Bick if you are willing to contribute - and general socialising.

28. Cont.

SUNDAY

9.30a.m. DOLSERAU HALL HOTEL car park. Assemble, amalgamate into larger groups in smaller cars and proceed to Vigra/Clogau where parking space is at a premium.

Dolserau Hall Hotel tariff is £14 for B/B (not £18 as some members have been quoted). Tel Dolgellau 422522.

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29. BRYN EGLWS SLATE QUARRY MEET, SUNDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 1987.

To be led by Alan Holmes

11.45a.m. Meet at Abergynolwen Railway Station G.R.671 064 -refreshments are available on the station.

12.14 Train to the foot of the first Incline - if you are late you have to walk!

3.30p.m. Return trip followed by a business meeting, thus reversing the normal procedure.

30. NEW OLD BOOK. JOHN TAYLOR, RECORDS OF MINING, 1829.

Due to a misunderstanding, I implied in N/L 15 Item 35 that this reprint had been reprinted before. In fact, this is definitely its first appearance.

31. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Grateful thanks to the following contributors: Peter Hay, Alan Williams, Emyr Searell, Damian McCurdy, Brian Jones, Eric Otty. Due to lack of time several items are being held over to the December Newsletter copy date 1.12.87.

David Bick (Editor) Pound House Newent Glos  
Tel 0531 820650

32. NAHMO MEETING 12.4.87 WMS delegate A.Williams.

a) A code of practice for mine exploration (for both novices and leaders) has been agreed and will be available shortly.

b) Details of NAHMO alms and activities now available.

c) Gwydyr Forest (Llanwrst area) - Bob Vernon continuing access negotiation as well as working on preservation schemes elsewhere in Snowdonia.

d) Bats in mines - access problems caused by conservationists' love of grilles on mine entrances - joint discussions to be held with the Council of British Bat Groups.

e) Radon in mines - Initial tests at the Bage mine (Derbyshire) showed surprisingly high levels of Radon decay particles. Investigations are continuing.

f) Despite the severe increase in insurance premiums most member societies are still in the scheme: however the possibility of a two tier system is being examined.

g) A new bibliography of Metal Mining publications since 1945 is nearing completion.

h) NAHMO CONFERENCE at Cambourne Cornwall. 3-6 July. For late bookings contact P.V.Bonds 0209 216482.

Further information on the above can be obtained from A. Williams, 5 Longshaw Common, Billenge, Wigan WN5 7JD

33. C.GOUGH.

A member who payed his subscription but neglected to give a postal address - can any one help me contact him ?

34. RED STAR ON YOUR N/L ENVELOPE

If you have this, then dear member I must warn you that you are at least two years in arrears on your Subs. Times is hard I know, but no one else is giving you 2 years credit - so - no dough (e.g. at least £2 to David Roe, 29 Somers Road, Worcester) then no more newsletters.

35. BLUE STAR ON YOUR N/L ENVELOPE ?

The number on the envelope ends with a 6 which means you paid for 1986 - it is now 1987 - would you please send your 1987 Subs ASAP; otherwise you will be joining the outcasts of item 34 in a few months.

36. INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTIONS - PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSION 6 June.

The Society is currently run on a shoe string - Telephone and postal expenses for Society business are usually borne by the individual concerned and not claimed off the Society. Currently we have about £250 in the bank, but the increase in insurance rates to 55p per member per year means we are now losing money. It would not be wise to save on expenditure by cancelling our Insurance cover. I therefore believe we should not only cover these additional costs but have sufficient funds to expand our activities and improve our presentation. I will therefore propose the following at the June meeting :

Subscription to the Welsh Mines Society will be £2 per annum for 1988 and hence forth.

Sorry to end on such a tough Monetarist note.

David Roe (Sec /Treasurer)

29 Somers Road Worcester WR1 3JJ (To whom money should be sent if you wish to avoid the fire and brimstone from Newent.)