



Welsh Mines Society

(Member of the National Association of Mining History Organisations)

NEWSLETTER 41

November 1999

Editorial Thoughts

1. Welcome to this, my first newsletter for the society. Before proceeding however, I must first thank David Bick for his monumental effort in compiling & editing all previous 40 editions and in providing me with much support and enthusiasm to carry this publication forward into the next millennia.

The decision to take on the task of editorship was not taken lightly, I'm very aware of the commitment I have made, not only in time but also in the effort required to present an appropriate face for a highly respected Society. Not being a long-time member of the Society, and knowing only a handful of the members, to help provide me with some guidance in how to take things forward I decided to issue a short questionnaire to all members to allow you to air your views. Yes, I don't like questionnaires either, horribly mechanical and they never ask the right questions do they? But faced with the alternative of driving on in the dark, with the potential of finding myself in a blind heading, it seemed worth a trial. Being a bit of a cynic I really didn't expect much of a response but having since received almost 80 replies I've been proved very wrong indeed! You're evidently quite a vocal lot providing some very positive and useful feedback, many thanks to you all. For details of what you had to say, the article types you'd like to read and where the newsletter (and other WMS publications!) is heading please see the back pages.....but first lets talk mining!

Events - Dates for Your Diary

2. WMSoc. 2000 Programme

Winter Meet - Sunday 19th March. Host George Hall. Tel./Fax. 01584 877 521. George has again very kindly offered the use of his 'place' for an informal indoor one day winter meet. He lives at 'Abilene', Sheet Road, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1LR. Arrive at any time from 10:30 a.m. onwards, tea and coffee will be provided. If you want a buffet lunch these will be available, cost ca. £5-00 but need to be booked a week in advance, otherwise just turn up and bring a few slides - all are welcome!

To get there - Sheet Road goes into Ludlow from the southern of the two roundabouts on the Ludlow by-pass (A49), 'Abilene' is about 200 yards down on the right, the third house beyond the N.F.U. Mutual Office.

Summer Meet - 10th/11th June. Leader Peter Cloughton. 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) Tel. 01570 422172. There is other bed and breakfast accommodation in the town / immediate area and the National Trust have offered the use of their hostel and self catering at Dolaucothi.

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 to book a bed - don't forget to mention the WMS.

Note: Full details of the latter two meets will be included in the next newsletter.

3. Accommodation - A few requests have been made to provide a list of accommodation (B&B's etc.) located near to our field meets which members have previously stayed in and can recommend. Now that the locations for the meets in 2000 have been confirmed, if anyone can offer any recommendations please let me know and I'll place them in the next newsletter.

4. Field Meet details / 'Hand outs' - Ivor Brown suggested that details of the society's field meets (incl. locational maps, historical details and references etc.) could be issued separate from the newsletter. Given that less than a third of the membership attend the meets, so as to be more efficient with the clubs finances, such info could be made available on receipt of an s.a.e. by the meet organiser or myself - I can copy and despatch them if that helps. This arrangement appeared to work quite well with Adrian Barrel's meet at Llanberis. If there is sufficient interest and it is supported by the meet organiser then appropriate details will be published in the next newsletter. Note that this will not become an obligatory requirement for future meets, merely an optional approach to be taken at the discretion of the organiser.

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.

5. Shropshire Caving and Mining Club - Underground trips to Abergynolwyn 12th December, & Pandora 16th January, if you're interested please contact Alan Moseley Tel. 01952 881007 & John Priest Tel. 01630 657718 respectively.

6. Russell Society - Wales and West Branch. - Are holding the following mine related talks on Saturday mornings at Cardiff University. Contact Stephen Plant for details. Tel. 01222 869352

22nd January; Dr. Frank Ince - The Wapping Mine, nr. Matlock, Derbys.

19th February; Dr. Dave Jenkins - Parys Mountain, Anglesey. (to be confirmed)

7. 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

8. National Heritage Weekend - This is an annual event held over a weekend during September which 'aims to stimulate public awareness of England's rich architectural and cultural heritage by allowing free access to properties normally closed to the public or which usually charge admission'. This year's event clashed with our field meet, which perhaps we can avoid in future years. If there is an equivalent initiative in Wales, then perhaps the WMS could play its part? Any thoughts/ideas?

Important Announcements

9. Honorary President - As recognition of the enormous effort which our esteemed chairman and founder member, Mr David E. Bick has put into the Welsh Mines Society, helping to make it what it is today, he was elected to status of Honorary President at the 20th Anniversary June field meet.

10. A Note from the President

"When I announced my intention to retire as chairman, the Society surprised and honoured me by making me its President - an office which hitherto we have managed very well without! However, since our rather unconventional Society has neither rule book nor constitution, it is not clear what my actual role will be. But the best interests of the WMS and its members will always be my concern, and I hope long to attend its functions and to promote its aims and objectives whenever the opportunity arises."

David Bick

11. HM Mines Inspectorate - Safety Alert

The death of a man who fell down a shaft while excavating at a disused lead-silver mine at Combe Martin in Devon on 27 June 1999 attracted much media attention, some of it critical of the way those involved had concealed their activities from the authorities and responsible voluntary sector associations.

HM Inspectorate of Mines assisted the police with investigations and have provided the following information in the hope that members of NAMHO will learn from this tragic incident. "The dead man was the owner of a farm and the shafts of the mine, which was last abandoned in 1881, lay within his property. He and three friends, none with any previous mining experience but sharing an interest in mining archaeology, had been excavating the two shafts for more than ten years. At the time of the incident they had reached a depth of 40m in the second shaft, clearing debris in a small skip wound by a diesel winch to a landing incorporated in a headgear improvised from scaffolding tubes. The man appears to have fallen to his death in the shaft as he attempted to land a skip of debris by leaning out to pull the skip to the shaft side. The shaft top was not fitted with safety trap doors; the landing had no handrails or toeboards and the dead man had not been wearing a safety harness. If any members of NAMHO are undertaking shaft clearing operations without using these well recognised safety features, they are urged to do so.

NAMHO wishes to it make clear that no members were involved in the activities at Combe Martin. Advice on safety in shaft work is readily available to members from the professional mining engineers within NAMHO. If you are in any doubt, then contact W J Taylor, NAMHO Hon Secretary.

NAMHO N/L, Special Forest Of Dean Conference Edition.

Field Reports

12. WMS Field Meet, 12/13th June - Van\Gorn\Dylife\Geufron

A steady drizzle did nothing to subdue the buzz as members gathered at **Van Mine** near Llanidloes on Saturday 12th. June. Once the richest mine in Montgomeryshire and with a working life of 51 years, its industrial history is regrettably not matched by its industrial archaeology.

Starting from the surviving launder supports it was possible to see the two-level dressing floor layout and the two incline routes. Despite the razing of the site and subsequent tree-growth Seaham's and Engine Shafts were located, together with the prominent yellow-brick chimney. The Ordovician Van Formation was exposed, but apart from tailings all dumps have been systematically scoured.

The afternoon was passed at **Gorn Mine**, an attempt on the supposed eastward extension of the Van lode. An arboreal site, the adit was found to be run in and the leat route challenging.

A well-attended meal was taken at 'The Red Lion' in Llanidloes. It was fitting that the WMS' 20th. Anniversary should be celebrated in a town latterly so dominated by lead-mining. Following extended carousing and the Society's Business meeting, there was no time for slides or talks. A pity - some member's present had pictures of the first meet (Despite them not attending as per the Anniversary booklet !)

Sunday 13th. June was clear and bright (i.e. weather, not members). A form of tribal pilgrimage followed to the ritual site of **Dylife**. Could it really be 20 years ? As ever the magic of the location worked on us all and DEB was told to be present in 2019. A walk to Boundary shaft ensued, visible changes in two decades being few. However in 1979 a large number made it to **Dyfnwgm** adit down by the Clwydog, whilst 1999 saw an equally-large number remain at 'The Star Inn' to sample the dessert menu.

Finally the scenic westward journey to the ancient copper mine of **Geufron** was made. Here a feast of oxides and sulphides gave the mineral-junkies a high as the sun lowered on a memorable weekend.

Terry Evans

13. 'Who was he? A way of explanation.....'

'Don't forget, give us a call when you're in the area'. Never thinking that he would. After all, this was terminal 2 at Toronto Airport, and Solihull is a long way over the pond. 'Bye Dale'.

'Dad, there's a cowboy at the door with a haversack!' Double glazing salesman, what gimmick will they think up next. 'Hi!' said the figure at the front door, 'Remember me from Toronto Airport?' To cut a long story short, he had missed his flight back to the Great Lakes, by two minutes, and wanted a roof over his head for a week, until the next Royal Airlines flight, the following Wednesday. 'Better take him to Wales with you', said her who shall be obeyed. And so I did.

The 'Sermon on the Mount' on the waste tips of Gorn Mine, with the summer rain pouring down our necks through what little cover the oak trees could offer, is an event that I shall never forget, and one that Dale will earn many a bottle of Bud., for years to come, as he relates his Welsh travels, to all who will listen, as he continues his world hike. Along with £'s, s, and d, c.w.t's (members at the sermon, will know what I mean), adits, lodes and flat-rods will now be a part of his life forever!

Dale has been back in touch, from a pay phone on the shore of Lake Ontario. He has asked that I convey his thanks to all members of the W.M.S. that he met in June at Llanidloes. He still can't get over how friendly you were to him. I explained that that was just the sort of people we were!

Robert Barnes

14. Additional 'Wanderings' at Dylife

On the Monday after the WMS 'official' field meet, a minor trip was taken by John Bowers, Geoff Fitton, John Hine (aka Mole) & myself, after a 'tip off' from John B. & Geoff that an 'interesting' winze existed in the 'Pencerig shallow adit' (ref. David Bick, Dylife, 1985, p.28). A difficult (& wet) 50ft ladder pitch down the winze/stope allowed access to what appeared to be the level of the Pencerig Deep adit. A flooded winze containing ladders & a wooden rising main continued down. At further points along the stope a couple of wooden windlass's lie next to flooded openings in the timbered & dead covered (false) floor. A further drivage of some 163 yds. follows the vein in a north easterly direction until a barren forehead is reached. Returning back to the winze, collapses and potentially unstable (and flooded) flooring prevent access into the Pencerig deep adit.

Mole & myself subsequently explored a few more holes within the Dylife sett including the Gwaith Gwyn adit - that to the north of the Llechwedd Ddu engine shaft (with the protruding pump rod). Entry into a low but wide 'chamber' is followed by a flat out crawl upon small pebbles (washed in from the stream) through some nice timbering, a dog-leg to the right allows a silt filled winze to be reached. Just before the timbering a branch to the right, (still flat-out, but over mud now!), reveals another nicely timbered section running into a collapse.

On the following day, we took a look at **Moel Fadian**, (NGR SN 830, 948) a few miles to the west of Dylife which David Bick states (quite correctly) as being one of the most inaccessible mines in Wales, being located in a frighteningly steep ravine. (Ref. also item 16) The kibble however, shown in Metal Mines of Mid-Wales Pt.4, p.13 is no longer present - does anyone know of its current whereabouts? What does remain in the mouth of the adit however is a slab of cast iron measuring 48"x15"x4" (~7cwt), apparently used to cob ore upon.

Mike Munro

15. WMS Field Meet, 11/12th September 1999 - Drwsycoed/Sygun/Llwyn Ddu/Cwm Buchan.

We all met up on a bright sunny morning outside Drws-y-Coed chapel before starting a short walk along to the **Simdde Dylluan** or **Talysarn** Copper Mine. (NGR. SH 543, 533) Our leader for the day, George Halt started by telling us that David Bick was his main source of information for these mines. We then spent the rest of the morning looking at the surface workings, leats, wheelpits and trying to identify many remaining features of the mine. A short adit was entered by a few of the more adventurous.

After our packed lunch we all walked back up the road to the **Drws-Y-Coed** Copper Mine, (NGR. SH 545, 534), which King Edward 1st. reputedly visited in 1284. We started by visiting the surface remains on the North side of the road, the site of the old Engine Shaft and the Level Stamps adit and other remaining features. After traversing an area of well matured cow dung, where one member of the party excelled himself, to everybody's amusement, by sinking nearly up to his knees in it, we took shelter from the rain showers and discussed our next moves.

With our W.M.S. Mountain Goat - Harold Morris - leading the majority of the party started walking in a Westerly direction up across the very extensive scree slopes and adit tips to explore the opencuts and adits. On the direction of Harold, at the base of the almost vertical rock face above the scree a short adit was entered by a few of the party with the necessary equipment and we spent about an hour exploring underground.

The evening was spent at the Royal Sportsman Hotel in Porthmadog. After a very good dinner, we moved to the lounge for the general meeting chaired by George Hall. After the meeting Harold started by showing his slides on the water supplies for the **Drws-y-Coed** dressing floors, this he followed by his collection of slides on the Beam Engine at the **Nantlle Slate Quarry**. Chris Williams followed with a selection of slides on his efforts to trace and record the leats on the Halkyn mountain and then the restoration of the **Pennant Engine House**.

On Sunday we all met at the **Sygun** Copper Mine near Beddgelert where our leader for the day, Richard Amies started by taking us for an extended tour around the area open to the public. After returning hard hats and collecting valuables we all then started to walk uphill from outside the Victoria Level adit through the Rhododendron bushes towards the ridge to visit the remote **Llwyndu** or **Crib Ddu**, (NGR. SH 606, 483), where we stopped for lunch sitting in the sun by the dressing floors and the scene of the great discovery in 1838. We had time to partake our individual pleasures be they snoozing, nattering, exploring, taking photos, etc. After a short lecture from Richard we had to start walking again to look at the very impressive horse-whim circle and capped new shaft before taking of over a slight rise to descend down to the **Cwmbuchan** Mine, (NGR. SH 602, 472). We passed several small workings and trials on the way down before we arrived at the mine. This was extremely interesting on account of the remains of the aerial ropeway and at a higher level the open stopes which were easily accessible and very impressive.

At this point the party split up and we made our various ways back to the car park at Sygun and there to conclude another very successful W.M.S. weekend.

Lyndon Cooper

16. Yet more 'wanderings' near Dylife - David Seabourne sent in the following details of some explorations he's made this summer in the area to the west of Dylife;

"Firstly to **Rhoswydol** (NGR SN 838, 975) visiting the upper workings in the forestry, a level led to a winze where the fine remains of a windlass was found. Someone has evidently been down the winze judging by the two abseiling bolt holes nearby.

Secondly to **Bacheiddon** (NGR SN 837, 971), about 20 yards in (on the upper adit) I noticed what I thought were bat droppings on the floor only on looking up to be delighted to find a bird's nest of mud and black and white feathers about 5" diameter by 2" thick with four eggs inside, being white with brown speckles. Is this a first for the WMSoc.?

(A trip into the shallow adit at Geufron copper mine after the June 99 field meet revealed a small mud built nest carefully attached to one side some six fms. in, but it was at that time untenanted - M.P.M.)

Finally an epic decent and a dodgy return from **Moel Fadian**. (NGR SN 830, 948) (Ref. also item 14) David Bick is right to call the site awesome and inaccessible - it is just such an impossible place. Whilst the accessible workings are not extensive they do offer a microcosm of features, i.e. stoping, winze and stacking of deads plus a delightful windlass handle/drum. Sadly the rusty kibble previously noted in the entrance has been removed - this being no mean feat in these circumstances."

News & Developments

17. Ceredigion Development Plan (Correction) - With reference to WMS N/L 40, Item 8, Peter Claughton has noted that a line was accidentally omitted and hence the second sentence of the second paragraph should have read thus:

"A primary objection was that the stated aim of the council to 'reclaim' mine sites, as embodied in the plan as SUP09 (Enhancement of metal mine sites), was detrimental to the conservation of the historic upland landscape of Ceredigion in general and mining landscapes in particular."

18. Rhosydd - Further to the report from John Knight on the collapse at **Rhosydd** slate quarry near Blaenau Festiniog (NGR SH 6660, 4530), Ref. WMS N/L No.39 Item 15, a closer look (30/4/99) revealed that the No. 4 level is now no longer directly accessible from the 5/9 incline, although a

connection is apparently still possible via a some of the lower chambers. Whether or not the upper end of the 5/9 incline (where the brake sheaves are located) is still accessible is not known.

19. Call For Papers - Peter Claughton kindly forwarded the following notice, originally posted by John S. Ellis, ellisjg@bc.edu, Boston College.

Welsh Culture and Language in the New Millennium -

Sponsored by the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History
June 22-24, 2000, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

The conference seeks multiple perspectives on Wales as well as on the Welsh in North America from those in any discipline including, but not limited to, history, literature, language, art, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, philosophy, music and religion. Papers on all topics are welcome but special consideration will be given to those who address this year's theme, Welsh Culture and Language in the New Millennium.

The conference invites participation from both sides of the Atlantic, in Canada and the United States, across many different academic disciplines, and from among independent scholars, teachers and researchers in different types of educational organisations as well as those with an interest in and commitment to the study of Welsh history, culture and language. Those wishing to present papers suitable for a 20-minute reading may submit either the completed paper or an abstract. Proposals for sessions, panel presentations or other formats are also welcome. Please include a brief vitae with submission. Abstract deadline is Friday, December 31, 1999. Notification by March 2000. NAASWCH works to promote scholarship on all aspects of Welsh culture and history; to develop connections between teachers and scholars in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom who are committed to the study of Welsh culture, history, languages, and literature; to provide an intellectual forum in which scholars and teachers of Welsh culture may share their research and teaching experience, and to provide support for the study of Welsh-North American history and culture.

Please submit abstracts or session proposals by Friday, December 31, 1999, to:

Roderic Owen - Program Committee Chair, Philosophy and Religion Department,
Mary Baldwin College Staunton, Virginia 24401
Tel. 540-887-7309 Fax: 540-887-7137 Email rowen@cit.mbc.edu

20. Welsh Mines 'Network' - John Bowers suggested to me that it would be very useful to have a list of people who are knowledgeable, and possibly in the course of research on certain areas, who are prepared to divulge some of their info upon request from a fellow member who intends to visit an area, perhaps for the first time. This could be easily and economically 'coded' in the membership listing after being highlighted in the newsletter. If used correctly this should also benefit the individual too as miscellaneous info relating to 'their area' would hopefully be forwarded when found by another. This sounds like a great idea, but are people prepared to volunteer? To get the ball rolling I'll propose myself for metal mines in Mid & South Glamorganshire.....are there any others out there ??

21. Pwll Du Tramroad Tunnel - Dave Seabourne has kindly sent in the following article from the **Abergavenny Chronicle** 4 July 22, 1999. ***'Work starts to open up old tramroad:'***

A team of cavers and industrial archaeologists have launched a project to investigate the longest tramroad tunnel in Britain, writes Chris Barber.

The Pwll Du tunnel on the hillside between Blaenavon and Abergavenny originated in about 1782 on the Blaenavon side of the hill to extract iron ore. Reference to it by historian William Coxe in 1801 put the tunnel at about three quarters of a mile.

The Blaenavon Ironmaster, Thomas Hill, later extended the level through the mountain to form a tunnel and turned it into a tramroad to provide a link between Pwll Du and Blaenavon to carry coal and limestone.

In due course, the tramroad was extended past Garnddyrus Forge and down the north side of the Blorenge to Llanfoist Wharf on the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal. From there pig iron and iron products were transported by narrow boat to Newport docks.

The Pwll Du tunnel is about two kilometres (1.2 miles) in length and high enough for horse drawn trams to pass through, along its sweeping curve through Mynydd Garn Fawr. It was used heavily for some 40 years until the Garnddyrus Forge closed and was relocated at Forgeside, Blaenavon. Up until 1926, however, limestone from the quarries near Pwll Du was still being hauled through the tunnel by stationary engines which were positioned at both ends of the tunnel.

For many years the tunnel has been blocked at both ends and access to its dark secrets has not been possible. A known roof fall beyond the Pwll Du end - where there are two entrances - has resulted in the explorers deciding to excavate a shaft in a field some yards away beyond the obstruction.

The project co-ordinator is Clive Gardener, an experienced caver who has been planning the undertaking for about 14 years. His highly skilled team includes cavers, mining experts, and industrial archaeologists. Support has been given by various organisations, including the British Cave Research Association, Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales and the Walters Group, who own the land and kindly supplied a JCB with an operator to carry out the excavation.

“We are hoping that some of the old plateway will be in situ and, perhaps, trams and old mining implements will be found,” said Mr Gardener. “In due course we hope to explore the tunnel as far as the Blaenavon end. Our mining experts are ensuring that safety regulations are being followed and the right equipment is used to test the quality of the air.”

Work on the project started last weekend and access to the tunnel was achieved and a new shaft entrance installed, capped with an access cover. Water in the first part of the tunnel, prevented immediate exploration and it is to be tested for contamination before pumping is carried out. The excavated ground has been back-filled and the access point covered over for safety.

(We must have walked past, or very near to, the northern portal of the Pwll Du Tunnel, NGR SO 2454, 1168 on our field meet in Sept 95 - M.P.M.)

22. Gold at Gwynfynydd - A temporary planning application (5 years) was approved earlier this year to construct a small gold processing plant to re-work the old dumps at **Gwynfynydd** gold mine. (NGR SH 737, 281)

The plant was under construction when I visited the mine 3rd May 1999 and production was intended to be well underway by summer - which depending upon performance of the plant, was expected to last several months. A couple of visits made at around the time of our September meet found however the plant somewhat dormant and deserted with little material having been removed from the dumps.

23. Coal Mining History - Ludo Diels of the Cultural Sciences at the University of Maastricht has contacted the Society seeking information. He is working on a project which aims to create a database of institutions / individuals (both in the Netherlands and abroad) carrying out research on the history of coal mining. The project stems from a recent euroregional research project entitled 'Mines et Mineurs.' That involved the universities of Aachen, Liege, Hasselt and Maastricht and examined comparatively the social, economic and cultural aspects of coal mining in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, culminating in an exhibition and several publications. Current work seeks to broaden the network of people working on the subject and perhaps at some stage in the future to organise a conference. If any member is researching in that area, and is interested in any future collaboration with Maastricht, would they please provide Peter Claughton (see Item 29 for his address) with brief details of their work and he will then prepare a response on behalf of the Society.

24. Gold & Anglesey Mining plc - The following is a summary of a cutting from the Western Mail, Saturday 18 September 1999, p. 17. sent in by Brian Evans; *'Future still golden for Anglesey miners.'*

‘The dramatic drop in the price of gold, following Chancellor Gordon Brown's decision to sell off almost half of Britain's gold reserves, is not making life any easier for Anglesey Mining as it continues its search for gold deep below Parys Mountain. But with the optimism which comes from gold prospecting, Anglesey chairman John Kearney believes that prices will rise in the near future, allowing his group to continue its explorations. “We intend to be in a position to advance quickly as soon as market conditions permit,” he said.

The company is currently exploring Parys Mountain at Amlwch, on Anglesey, and has also been drilling at Dolaucothi, near Lampeter. Parys Mountain is the only area in the UK known to contain such a high variety of minerals, including zinc, copper and lead, as well as quantities of gold and silver. Anglesey Mining has completed geological studies on the mountain and now plans to drill about 10,000 metres in 10 to 15 holes, on the unexplored eastern side of the mountain. But, with the drilling costing around £500,000 and taking a year to complete, Anglesey Mining needs to obtain new funding.

“We believe that, despite the continuing low metal prices and lack of investor interest in the mining sector, conditions will look up in the near future,” said Mr Kearney. “Anglesey Mining has made good progress in very poor conditions for the industry.” Company secretary Ian Cuthbertson said that the recent 25 per cent rise in the price of zinc, the main mineral found on the mountain, had been an important boost for the group. Mr Kearney added that drilling for gold at Dolaucothi in Dyfed, had provided “very encouraging results”. Further explorations are being made on the 11,000-acre site.

The company's losses for the year to March 31 rose to £ 111,465 from £97,551 in 1998. Almost all the losses were made up of its expenses and interest charges.

(This is in fact a brief summary of the 1999 Annual Report, which is available at the Anglesey Mining website; <http://www.angleseymining.co.uk>)

25. Slate ‘Snippets’ - Peter Donovan has kindly sent in the following slate related news items:

Early May speaking to a consultant geologist for Llechwedd who informed me that McAlpine at Ffestiniog Quarry, i.e. Gloddfa Ganol, were undercutting Llechwedd by 40%. Not verified and sounds rather over the top, but source seemed genuine enough. Stated that the tourist caverns were keeping the company solvent.

Piece in The Times - ‘It's an ill wind: A hailstorm which damaged 20,000 homes in Sydney, Australia, last month has led to orders for 600,000 slates from Penrhyn quarry at Bethesda, near Bangor. A consignment leaves today.’ (19.5.1999)

A visit to the Aberllefenni Slate Quarries in late August showed that almost all of the lowest part of the main incline has been removed. The reason is to make the mine entrance higher and safer. No alternative public footpath appears to have been provided, not that many if any would have used the old one. The water balance incline close to the road, built to provide up haulage for waste, is now gradually being reduced. The Quarry sell slate waste as required. This rather interesting incline is now very degraded.

Early September and Blaenau Ffestiniog suffered a mini earthquake. This caused a six foot fault in the Llechwedd working face and the workmen were moved to another face.

26. Coal ‘Clippings’ - Supplied by Tony Oldham;

Mining memorial. Anon. Western Mail 20 Aug 1999 p. 5. A memorial to the Tylorstown [sic] No. 8 and No 9 pits at Rhondda Fach will be un-veiled on Friday September 3.

Torfaen: Big Pit aims for world heritage status. Anon. Western Mail 21 August 1999 p. 6. illus.

120 mining jobs lost. Anon. Western Mail 3 September 1999 p. 3. Aberpergwm at Neath and Fforest and Tyn y Wern to close due to high pound.

Merthyr: Gold dust in the coal dust claim. Anon. Western Mail 20 September p. 3. Gold may be found deep below some of the worst coal-tip eyesores in Wales. Details of gold claims revealed at the public enquiry in the compulsory purchase of land at Ffos-y-Fran.

27. Holywell Eyesore - Another clipping from Tony Oldham.

Derelict mine site transformed into flower meadow. Anon. Western Mail 20 September 1999 p. 7. The Hannah shaft at Lower Trelogan Mines closed in 1911. The 5 acre site had been re-contoured and re-seeded by the Welsh Development Authority and the Flintshire County Council. Corporate vandalism ?

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.)

28. Lewis Henry Evans and the Corris slate quarries.

In 1871 Lewis Henry Evans (a London accountant), and a Mr Lawson, took the lease of the Llanfyrnach Silver-Lead Mine. I understand that Evans' father originated from Merioneth where the family operated slate quarries at or near Corris. Prior to 1871 Evans had purchased his uncle's interest in the quarries but sold them when he moved into lead mining.

I would appreciate any information on the Evans slate interests including the names of the quarries.

Peter Cloughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Rosebush, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, Pems. SA66 7RE

Tel. 01437 532578; Fax. 01437 532921; Mobile 0831 427599, email P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

29. Pumping Engine Performance/Specification in the Mining Journal.

Following the 'Shares' listing in the 1850's Mining Journal there is a small table stating the best performing 'Cornish Steam-Engines' in the country. Not only does this give the rate of working & fuel consumption, but also the manufacturer, bore and stroke - useful information indeed.

Is anyone aware as to which year this information was first presented in the M.J. and for how long they continued to do so? Perhaps more importantly, has anyone actually recorded this data and are many of the installations in Wales mentioned?

Mike Munro

30. Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company.

With reference to N/L No.39, Item 6, R. Protheroe Jones states that "The Welsh Coal & Iron Club" is an error for "The Welsh Coal & Iron Company", he then continues...

Contemporary references are frequently casual in their treatment of early nineteenth century company names, thus the title of the company appears as both "The Welsh Coal & Iron Company" and as "The Welsh Iron & Coal Company". We have a share certificate in the collection for "The Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company" dated 1825 which pertains to this company and thus it can be seen that contemporaries almost invariably omitted the word "Mining" from its title, besides frequently inverting the order of its principal activities. "The Welch Iron Company" is nothing more than an abbreviation of the company's title. "Welsh" has frequently been rendered as "Welch" of course.

The company was floated at the height of the iron boom of the mid 1820s, largely to buy the iron works of Thomas Jones who then had a prominent role within the new company. Its most noteworthy promoter was John Wilks, Methodist MP for Sudbury (not to be confused with the MP John Wilkes who was active in politics in the preceding century), later known as "Bubble Wilks" after his commercial enterprise 'popped' as resoundingly as the 'bubble' enterprises of the eighteenth century. The company was floated with the large capital of £250,000 and acquired four Denbighshire / Flintshire iron works: Aberderfyn, Coed Talon, Leeswood, and Llwyneinion. Thomas Jones had previously owned Aberderfyn, Leeswood and Llwyneinion (the original ownership of Coed Talon is not known) and presumably sold them to the new company of which he seems to have been both a major shareholder and managing partner. Contemporaries seem to have regarded Thomas Jones as synonymous with the Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company.

In time honoured fashion the promoters of the company seem to have done well whereas the shareholders lost everything they invested. This debacle was not entirely the result of fraud however, bad management and poor economic conditions also playing a part. Thomas Jones was declared bankrupt in 1829 and the company apparently failed at the same time, so closely were the two connected. The Flintshire works (Leeswood and Coed Talon) were sold to Edward Oakley in 1830 - presumably a relative of the T.Oakley who was a prominent director of the Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company, which smacks of dubious practice. Of the two Denbighshire works, Aberderfyn seems to have ceased to function in any way by circa 1830, whilst Llwyneinion continued a shadowy and ephemeral existence until around 1840, apparently in the ownership of Thomas Jones, the prominent Welsh Iron & Coal

Mining Company figure, who must have recovered after his synchronous bankruptcy with that of the company in 1829. This implies that the failed company sold one of its works to a former principal for a 'knock-down' price - another hint of ethically unsound practice.

The Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company, having performed disastrously in the pursuit of the first of the aims enumerated in its title, then turned its attentions to the latter of its aims if I recall correctly, and I think, enjoyed a long existence as a modest-sized coal mining company. If this recollection is correct - and I have no sources to hand to verify it then its activities after 1829-30 must have been as a completely reformed company only indirectly related to the original Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company.

There is fragmentary information on the 1820s phase of the company's existence in the following works:

A.H.Dodd "*The Industrial Revolution in North Wales*", Cardiff, 1933 p. 146

P.Riden & J.G.Owen "*British Blast Furnace Statistics 1790-1980*", Cardiff, 1995 pp. 49, 50 & 52

I.Edwards "*Iron Production in North Wales: The Canal Era: 1795-1850*" pp. 141-184

Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions, Vol. 14, 1965 (refer pp. 155-157 on fraudulent companies - particularly prevalent in north Wales it seems ! - and pp. 172-176 which concentrates on Thomas Jones's iron works ownership independent of that of the Welsh Iron & Coal Mining Company, although that company is mentioned a number of times).

31. Swansea Copper Ore Ticketings - With reference to N/L No.39, Item 9, R. Protheroe Jones mentions that following sources contain details of Swansea Copper Ore Ticketings:

- *The Cambrian* newspaper published at Swansea from 1804.
- The Nevill Papers at the National Library of Wales record not just the Llanelly Copperworks Company's ore purchases, but also for some years record all parcels of ore offered for sale on the open market.

He goes on to note that not all ore was sold on the open market and that a significant portion was sold under contract direct to the smelters, often without mention in any public statistics.

Book Reviews & Bibliographical References to Welsh Mines & Mining

32. "Hafodlas Slate Quarry, Betws y Coed" by G R Jones.

A4-230 pages, 4 maps, 13 production Analysis Graphs, 37 detailed survey drawings, 60 plates. ISBN 0 9533692 0 X. Cost £12.50

The Hafodlas story began in 1855 when the initial exploration was carried out by C E Spooner of Ffestiniog Railway fame and his brother James S. Spooner who built the Talyllyn Railway. In 1860 they were joined by other eminent engineers, William Fothergill Cooke of electric telegraph fame, Hedworth Lee who engineered the Chester and Holyhead Railway and Sir Daniel Gooch of the Great Western Railway whose son Henry became manager of the quarry. The impressive remains of the remarkable and unique architecture of this period have largely survived, while later mills of traditional construction have all but disappeared. The mills were equipped with a plethora of machines - fearsome great saws and planers by George Hunter, ordinary circular saws, sand saws and cranes, while some of the incline haulage was operated by highly innovative systems. Part 1 of the book covers the history and development of the quarry from 1855 to its final closure in 1929, with an analysis of the production and men employed. Part 2 assesses and interprets the site remains, and is supported by 37 detailed drawings and 60 photographs. The work, which is published in its entirety, was awarded the prestigious Association for Industrial Archaeology 1997 Fieldwork and Recording Award. Griff Jones' book on the Slate Quarry at Hafodlas is a model study of archaeological and architectural recording in an internationally important industry. It will surely become to be regarded as a classic of industrial archaeological practice. The standard of the readily understandable drawings is remarkable and also reflects the interpretative skills, and the wealth of understanding of slate-industry processes and techniques, of the five members of Fforwm Plas Tanybwllch who spent no less than 7,500 hours at this nationally significant site. They have set an example for such work for others to try and emulate. Few other groups have brought such a fund of knowledge to such a task and conveyed the results in drawings

that are a delight to peruse, and then backed it up with perceptive and informative archival research and writing. The written sources for the slate industry, for long the economic lifeblood of Snowdonia, have hitherto received some attention from scholars, but very little work on its archaeology has been published. Its merits lie in its comprehensive coverage of the documentary evidence, its perceptive interpretation of the archaeology, and most especially in its large number of record drawings of superlative quality. That Griff has no formal qualifications is quite irrelevant, for he has achieved a remarkably competent result of which any professional could be proud.

NAMHO N/L No.36

33. The Industrial Archaeology and Industrial History of South Western England.

A Bibliography, compiled by John Greenwood, published Merton Priory Press, Cardiff, 1999.

Following on from the notice in the last WMS newsletter (40, Item 13) I felt it would be appropriate to comment on this bibliography - the fifth and final volume in a series of bibliographical surveys covering the subject area in England, in this case Bristol and the counties of Gloucester, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall - and its relevance to students of mining history.

In identifying his subject area the compiler clearly orientates his work towards the technological, economic and institutional aspects of industry, excluding such social elements as industrial relations and accidents, yet including housing. A further exclusion which mining and industrial historians in general might find strange is that of 'government publications.' Fortunately for mining that exclusion does not extend to the work of the Geological Survey and such a standard as Dines, *The Metalliferous Mining Region of South West England*, is included although not all the mineral resource reports are listed - for some reason Dewey's report on 'Copper ores' is omitted whilst including his report on 'Lead, silver-lead and zinc ores.'

The range of industrial activity covered is certainly comprehensive, although it is difficult to comment on the bibliographical accuracy for all the industries covered without detailed personal knowledge in those fields. What I can do is make an assessment based on my knowledge of mining in certain parts of the South-West, particularly North Devon, West Somerset and the Tamar Valley. There I found the coverage comprehensive but not exhaustive. The compiler appears to fall down primarily on privately published work. McDonald, Donald. Percival Norton Johnson, 1951 - covering the development of lead/silver mining, smelting and industrial housing at Bere Ferrers in the 19th century; Burton, Roger A. *The Heritage of Exmoor*, 1989; and Stanes, Robin (ed.) *Out of the World and into Combe Martin*, 1989, all providing a wealth of detail on the industrial archaeology and history in their area, are only a sample of the works omitted. John Hatcher, for example, merits only two entries when he has written widely on tin production. One cannot also help noticing how few entries there are on mining in Gloucestershire, particularly the Forest of Dean, and wondering if that reflects a real lack of research into coal and iron mining with greater emphasis being placed on smelting and iron production.

Where this bibliography will prove useful is in accessing information on subjects related to mining or where the researcher is perhaps working in unfamiliar territory. If the lack of exhaustive coverage is borne in mind it should prove a useful tool for any mining historian with interests in the South-West of England. As to price - £30 is not unusual these days for a book of 250 plus pages with relatively limited appeal. What you were not told in the last newsletter was that a pre-publication offer of £22 was available if willing to take your chance on the book unseen.

Peter Cloughton

Bibliographical References to Mining in Wales

34. A Welsh I.A./Mining Bibliography? Ref. WMS N/L No.40 Item 13, An I.A. bibliography for Wales? Now there's a challenge. To my knowledge several bibliographies already exist covering related subject such as geology and mines, only a few of which have actually been published. Such information is however beginning to appear on the Internet, one of its few worthwhile uses! - Item 41 lists a few of these which apply to Wales.

I think a good starting point would be a list of what bibliographies currently exist which cover or relate to I.A., mining etc. in Wales - any thoughts?

35. 'Below 99.2' (Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club) pp. 24-26. Correspondence between George Hall & Roy Fellows regarding exploration of Glog Fach / Fawr & Level Fawr.

Mike Munro

36. Glasdir & the Elmore Flotation Process - Stone, Chris. Glasdir, Plymouth Mineral and Mining Club Journal, Vol. 29, No.1 (June 1999), pp. 3-7. A compact but apparently comprehensive account of the history and archaeology of the copper dressing site used to develop the Elmore flotation process. Not a commonly accessible journal - available from the editors Steve Roberts / Margaret Grimby, 2 Dostabrook Cottages, Whitchurch Road, Horrabridge, Devon PL20 7TH - Tel. 01822 855261.

Peter Cloughton

37. An Adventure ! - Jones, Wyn.'Y Ddraig Goch/The Red Dragon', Journal of the Cambrian Caving Council (26) 1999-2000 pp. 3-4. A trip report down the Olwyn Goch Shaft to the Milwr Tunnel.

Tony Oldham

38. Grosvenor Caving Club No 94 June 1999 - Parys Mountain, Anglesey - Short article.

39. Journal of the Great Orme Exploration Society No 1, 1999 - Mine memories by the aged secretary; The Hornby - report on the wreck of the Hornby on the Great Orme in 1824; Samuel Worthington - Cheshire business man and entrepreneur.

NAMHO N/L No.36

40. Welsh Mines Society on the 'World Wide Web' - We've gone 'global'!!

I've set up a few 'official' web pages for the society, which can be found at;

- http://www.mike.munro.cwc.net/mining/wms/wmsoc_hp.htm

They contain details of future field meets, newsletters (only the last one at the moment, 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. If you have some photos to hand which were taken at or relate to previous meets, please send them in with a few details and I'll scan them and place them on our web pages (duly credited) before returning them. If you've any ideas as to what else we should have there, or if you'd like to volunteer to manage the web-site for the society then please let me know.

41. Mining History on the 'Net' - The following web sites also contain references to, or information on, Welsh mining & quarrying; (These and many others are on a 'Welsh Mining Links Page' I've set up as part of my web page, which can be found by first going to the above mentioned WMS home page.)

- <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfcclaugh/mhinf/fod.htm> An excellent starting point for those getting on the Net for the first time or those struggling to find what they want in the mining history arena. If you're not yet on the Net but want to read about it, sent me an sae and I'll post a copy of this by return.
- <http://www.data-wales.co.uk/orme.htm> Page covering Great Orme copper mine.
- <http://www.ex.ac.uk/mhn/welcome> Mining History Network - Sign on to their discussion list.
- http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/bib_WC.html Mining History Network Bibliography: Central & South Wales.
- http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/new/bib_WN.html Mining History Network Bibliography: North Wales & Merioneth.
- <http://www.llechwedd.co.uk> Llechwedd Slate Mines, Greaves of Portmadoc Slate & trade.
- <http://wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/adrian.pearce/quarbib.htm> A huge bibliography on non-metalliferous and non-coal mines and quarries prepared by Andy Bowman and Paul Sowan.

If you find any more sites while surfing around, or if a site disappears, then do please let me know and I'll update the 'Links Page'.

42.

THE TERM 'ORE'

The 19th century lead miner, tolling with pick and gad to win those bright veins from the unsympathetic rock, called galena 'ore', an Old English word used for at least a thousand years to define a substance containing a valuable metal. After he had laboriously crushed it, and cleaned it on sieves in tubs in water, or saved it on the slopes of a buddle, it went to market as 'ore'. He did not trouble himself with a different name for the mineralised lode material as a whole, although it was occasionally referred to as 'orestuff'. All that concerned him was the number of hundredweights, or tons, in a fathom of rock, the cost of stoping it, and the market value. This practice, calling dressed galena lead ore, which in one sense it is, was enshrined by Robert Hunt in his *Mineral Statistics*, and has ever since been thoughtlessly and unfortunately followed by amateur mining historians, including myself.

That it always was a flawed practice may be shown by quoting from Matthew Francis on Bwlch Consols (July 1849), where he says 'We have caused experiments to be made by which it appears that full 20 tons of ore a month are broken and landed at surface, from which no ore has yet been obtained' - I presume that Francis meant that a lot of galena was being left in the dressing waste, but logically the sentence is nonsense.

The Inspectors of Mines, rather more scientific men, I feel, than Robert Hunt, clearly recognised the need for differentiation, and the production figures in their reports in the late 1870s were headed 'Dressed Lead Ore', a proper distinction.

I don't know who first began to use 'ore' specifically for mineralised rock, rather than for the mineral or the dressed product, but I suppose the practice originated in the U.S.A., a country not tied to ancient traditions, in the late 19th century. Mining engineers were then discarding old rule-of-thumb methods for a more scientific approach, a course essential when developing such mines as the 'porphyry coppers'. These deposits are measured in hundreds of millions of tons of rock, and laid out to treat tens of thousands of tons, containing perhaps 1% copper metal, a day. The capital cost to bring such a mine into production is obviously enormous, and the margin of profit per ton is so small, that the size and metal content of the mineralised deposit has to be known to a hundredth of a percent, mining and processing costs to a penny, and no ambiguity of terms can be allowed. It was no longer enough to have a 'vein of rich ore', and to hope that it would continue. Certainly in 1910, when T.A. Rickard founded the *Mining Magazine*, 'ore' meant what it does now, rock containing enough worthwhile metal to be profitable to mine, and by then would never have been used by engineers for concentrates. But Rickard believed (with Alfred the Great) that, not only for accuracy and clarity, but for style and elegance, English should be used correctly.

There is obviously a vast difference between these usages, ore as mineralised rock and ore as concentrate, commonly (in lead mines) a factor of about ten. I know that a lot of us are fond of 19th century terminology, perhaps savouring it like old port in a glass, and I've certainly nothing against this romantic attitude. But to call concentrates 'ore' today is not only archaic, that wouldn't matter, but plainly wrong, and invites not only a smile from professionals, but serious mistakes.

To quote our President (I could just as readily quote myself) : 'Nevertheless the lode was a rich one, and from 1834 to 1891 Logaulas produced 39,000 tons of lead ore...' But it didn't ! It sold 39,000 tons of *dressed* lead ore, that is, concentrates, or, as I think preferable, since this was cleaned by jigs and buddles, tons of dressed galena. And was it rich ? That depends on how many tons of ore had to be mined to produce a ton of galena, a most important proportion. 400,000 tons ? 300,000, 500,000 ? We don't know.

To take another example, Ian Tyler in 'Greenside', (1992) gives at the end of his book four columns of production figures from 1838 to 1961, headed 'Tons of lead', 'Tons milled', 'Value', and 'Silver'. Up to 1923 'Tons of lead' did indeed mean just that, Greenside smelting its own lead, but 'Tons milled', which a mining engineer would understand to mean tons (of ore) put through the mill, is evidently concentrate. From 1924 'Tons milled' seems indeed to be tons of ore milled, while 'tons of lead', Greenside having given up smelting at this time, now denotes concentrates. I am not suggesting that Ian

is a more careless or less comprehending writer than others in our field (he and I have discussed the issue), but I mention this as a particularly clear warning of the dangers of uncritically copying an antique and unsure terminology.

To say that 'we know from the context' isn't good enough. We often don't, and we really shouldn't need to arrive at the true meaning by mental approximations. Even those familiar with the subject can be trapped or misled, and what of readers less knowledgeable, distant both in time and space, or to whom English is a second language ?

Tin miners, we may note, never got into such a confusion, tin ore being always referred to as 'tinstone' or 'tinstuff', concentrates (dressed cassiterite) as 'black tin', and the smelted metal as 'white tin'.

So what should we call dressed lead ore ? For many years the term 'dressing' overlapped with 'concentration' in common use. The older term gradually gave way to the newer, and nowadays a lead or copper mine's product is invariably called a concentrate, which does not allow of any confusion. However, although there was never in reality such a distinction, to me concentration is so redolent of flotation, a 20th century process, that I prefer, and propose in future, to use 'dressed galena'. It seems to me to retain a pleasant 19th century atmosphere while being unequivocal, and to be less clumsy than 'dressed lead ore'.

But what of copper mines ? In the 19th century, if not earlier, with very minor exceptions, the lead mines of Britain produced only galena, so 'dressed galena' is reasonably accurate. Not so with copper where, although chalcopyrite was certainly much the most important copper mineral, large quantities of other copper sulphides, and even some oxides, were raised.

Comments and suggestions would be welcome. What do other members think ? Has anyone an improvement on 'dressed copper ore' ?

But please, 'ore' long ago ceased to mean 'concentrates'. They are not the same thing. Let's discard muddle with the tailings, and get it correct and clear in future.

G. W. Hall, October 1999

Misc.

43. Geevor Tin Mine - Having been a small shareholder of this mine for many years David Bick has a pile of annual reports, many in colour, giving much detail of the mine. He is prepared to give these to anybody who has a serious interest in Geevor - No dealers please. Tel. 01531 820650

44. Want to Advertise Your Wares? - To help keep the Society in a financially healthy state it is proposed to open the pages of the newsletter to commercial adverts. (A4/A5 Flyers or full page £30-00, half page £15-00) Don't worry, only appropriate ad's will be allowed and the number will be carefully regulated to prevent the newsletter from resembling the Yellow Pages.

45. More Accommodation - John Bowers mentioned to me that the proprietors of the Red Lion Inn, Llanidloes (the base for the June 99 field meet) are prepared to extend their preferential rate (indefinitely!) to members of this society. The reduced rates should be around £25.00 for a single & £35.00 for a double room.

46. 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 and .cc David Roe - email address below.

47. Membership List - It is hoped to be able to publish an up to date list of all current members, which is to be included with next years newsletter - not sure which one yet ! So please take a few minutes to look at the last list published in the December 1996 Newsletter and forward details of any changes to David Roe using the enclosed form, or e-mail him direct on david@d-roe.freeserve.co.uk

48. Questionnaire Feedback - Well if you've got this far then I must be doing something right - unless of course like myself, you always start to read things from the back first !

The following is a brief statistical analysis & ‘executive’ summary of information contained within the returned questionnaires - as issued with the last Newsletter.

With regard to the frequency & format of the newsletter:

| Published When? | Quarterly | Twice Yearly | Yearly |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| | 54% | 45% | 1% |
| Issued when?, On same dates as now? | Yes | If No, when? | |
| | 84% | 16% | |
| Colour or black and white photos? | Colour | Black and White | |
| | 4% | 96% | |
| In what format? | A5 (As existing) | A4 (i.e. larger) | |
| | 73% | 27% | |
| Contain more or less pages? | More | Same | |
| | 74% | 26% | |

With regard to the actual content of the newsletter, the preferences came out as follows (in order of those of greater demand first):

| | More | Less |
|--|------|------|
| Mine exploration reports | 72% | 1% |
| Detailed reports of conservation/field work | 62% | 3% |
| Books Reviews | 56% | 1% |
| Small Ad’s section (Books, shares etc.) - private sales only | 55% | 0% |
| In-depth & detailed research reports | 52% | 5% |
| Reports of field meets | 48% | 3% |
| Articles & information regarding mines & mining outside of Wales | 21% | 20% |

So what else did people have to say ?

Keep it short, punchy, chatty and informal, yet many also wanted to read longer articles, some suggesting the production of a memoir or suchlike - See Item 49.

Many of you are cost conscious, (although some were happy to pay more for more publications !) so therefore maximum information at minimal cost without compromising the quality will be the aim.

There was high demand for articles on slate, coal (to a lesser extent) & minerals (discoveries & findings of note). Interest was also shown in explanation of mining terms & industrial/ore dressing processes.

So where does this leave us??

With regard to the format:

- Although the majority (by a small margin) would like four newsletters a year, this does produce much more work than a few extra pages twice a year - also with only three society events a year the extra frequency is currently difficult to justify.
- A handful requested that the newsletter be published sooner to allow more time to make arrangements for the June meet - the ‘Spring’ N/L will be brought forward to accommodate this.
- Apart from the few minor changes I’ve made to the layout in this edition, the format (A5 & B&W) will stay as is. (I’ll continue to endeavour to put a quart into a pint pot !)
- It will always consist of as many pages as possible, (but without superfluous info) but this one will remain in your hands - i.e. more news equals more pages !

With regard to the actual content of the newsletter:

- There is evidently high demand for exploration reports, so those of you lucky enough to be able to poke around and under those more interesting corners of Wales, please drop me a few lines as to what you saw and found, either on the surface or under it !
- There is little demand for information outside of Wales - however this won’t be excluded when space allows but I will try to give a firm Welsh focus.

At the end of the day although I can't print material I'm not sent, I feel the results of the questionnaire provide useful guidance to us all as to what we'd like to read and therefore what is waiting to be written! Any articles received at any time and in any form, electronic or typewritten are preferred, but a simple news item can easily be phoned through - however if you're prepared to pay the postage an inscribed slate or engraved stone tablet will be just as happily accepted!

To ensure that the Newsletter undergoes a process of 'Continuous Improvement' please don't hesitate to send in your views and 'feedback' you may have about this and subsequent Newsletters - I aim to please the readership, so please support me and let me know what you think about my efforts! (Oh, and before you complain, I won't fill up any more newsletters with statistical analyses !.....well not for another 20 years anyhow !)

49. An Occasional Journal ?

Having received some longer articles for publication (one of which has been included in this newsletter) my thoughts have rested upon the idea of publishing an 'Occasional Journal' of the Welsh Mines Society. If this were to be in an A4 format and of reasonable print quality, then it would be ideally suited to longer articles containing photographs and maps/plans etc. I say 'occasional', as it will only be issued when sufficient suitable material becomes available to warrant its publication, (and funds are available too!) Having said that I know there is much waiting to be written, or in some cases has already been put to paper, but is awaiting a suitable 'vehicle' to allow it to go into print, perhaps this could be it. Also in response to your wishes it will have a focus on mining and associated activities in Wales. If you're interested in submitting an article, please do let me know to help me gauge the viability of this proposal.

I've had a little think about a possible name for such a publication, a first thought being 'Welsh Mining' (a parallel to NMR Soc.'s 'British Mining') however further discussions with one of my Welsh speaking colleagues has produced the title 'Y Gloddfa', which when translated to English I believe means 'The Mining Place'. This I feel is more appropriate, but what do you think ?

Footnotes

Many thanks to all those who have provided me with contributions, the field meet reports are particularly appreciated by those who organise them - please keep up the good work! If we've not previously met, please introduce yourself at the field meets - I normally attend, work commitments permitting, and will in future try to wear an appropriate name tag so you can identify me !

Before signing off I'd like to say that taking on this role has been great fun (honest !), not only in the compilation of this newsletter but also in getting to meet & talk to many more of the faces in the society.....long may this continue!

And finally.....all the best for the next **Millennium!**

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 1998" 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 March 2000, publication due April. Articles to be sent to Mike Munro, address on front page or email mike.munro@cwcom.net

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