

### 1 Report of Llangynog Meeting 14 September 1980 - Discussion

30 or 40 members turned up, and before lunch various matters were mentioned and/or discussed, some being within the body of this Newsletter. The remaining items are given below for the benefit of members not present. (Thanks are due to Mrs. Groucott for typing a report of the discussion.)

A Afforestation 'The Guardian' 21 August 1980 carried an announcement referring to 'plans to create something like 5 million acres of new forest over the next three decades' in this country. This incredible policy would blanket out an area equal to the whole of Wales with incalculable damage to I.A.

Our member David Palmer has had an interview with the Forestry Commission on damage to I.A. sites, and has offered to raise the planting proposals with the Association of Industrial Archaeology. The Industrial Monuments Survey is also, I believe, generally involved, and we await with interest a report from David on the position.

### B Lists of Historic Mine Sites

Chris Williams has already provided a list of sites in Gwynedd & Clwyd to the local authorities and has offered on behalf of the W.M.S. a similar service to Dyfed & Powys. The latter has responded, and I have prepared a list which is currently with Chris for annotation and typing. It should be with the Powys Planning Authority before long. Copies-available on request (+ S.A.E.)

### C Publicity Officer

Mr. Bob Vemon has kindly offered to act in this capacity.

### 2 Report of Llangynog Field Meeting 14th September 1980

After coming to an arrangement with the landowner, who kindly pointed out various features on the site, we were ably led over the mine by R.Alan Williams. Mr. Williams is actively researching into the mine's history in great detail and would welcome any discoveries, archival or otherwise. Much discussion took place on the probable site of the inclined plane at the eastern end, and of the engine house which at one time stood near the stone crushing plant, now demolished. The splendid circular powder magazine was inspected, together with one of the west end adits at stream level. A very successful visit, somewhat dampened by inclement weather.

Note: It would be very helpful if someone would volunteer to record briefly future field meetings for inclusion in Newsletters. If leaders could provide notes, so much the better.

### 3 Your Committee

The W.M.S. now has a kind .of ad-hoc committee, the concept of which arose out of the Llangynog meeting. The arrangement is probably unique, but promises to be satisfactory for the time being. No elections will be necessary, and furthermore everyone present can have his/her say, so that a more representative constitution could hardly be envisaged. The idea is that committee meetings will in future take place before lunch on field trips, and all are at liberty to join in. This happened at Llangynog and seems the obvious and sensible solution to the problem of our widely scattered membership. Hopefully there are members anxious to become chairman, secretary, editor, treasurer, etc. for I do not wish or think it desirable that the present arrangement should continue indefinitely. Indeed, if the Society continues to grow as at present, changes are inevitable within a year or two at most.

#### 4 W.M.S. Publicity

Rob Vernon's publicity drive has gained a splendid response, partly due to his excellent display leaflet circulated to various societies, museums, etc. New members include the Geological Museum of North Wales, Mr. E.I.Rutherford of Llechwedd Slate Caverns and Mr. B.N.James, Wynne Slate Quarry and Museum, Glyn Ceiriog. All have offered support, and with their connections with preservation are much welcomed.

If our growth continues the W.M.S. could soon contribute an important role in overall I.A./Preservation matters in the Principality. (See item 29 for present membership total.)

#### 5 Publications \* Denotes author is W.M.S, Member

- A Peak District Mines Historical Society Neil Dickinson has kindly sent details of their articles on Wales since 1972. Copies are available from P.D.M.H.S. or inter-library loan service.
- 1 Parys Mountain Copper Mine by J.D.Weston, Bull P.D.M.H.S. 5 (2), pp 109-113 (1972)
  - 2 Impressions of visits to Parc Mine, North Wales, by W.G.Jones\* and L.Willies, 6 (1), pp. 47-48 (1975)
  - 3 The Lead Mines of South-East Wales, by M. & G. Tucker 6 (1), pp 15-27 (.1975)
  - 4 Source material for metal-mining history: The Druid Inn Papers at the N.L.W. by M.Tucker, 6 (5) pp 249-250 (1977)
  - 5 Two Cardiganshire Lead Mines: Caegyron & Rheidol Utd., by R.P.Shaw\* & M.F. Critchley, 7 (2), PP 69-86 (1978)
- B Mining Activity Near Newtown Trevor Morris\*, Montgomery Collections Vol 67, 1979. Deals with sundry trials in the vicinity.
- C Stannary Tales Justin Brooke, published by Twelveheads Press, Chy Mengleth, Twelveheads, Truro. £4.50 hardback, £2.50 card covers. Deals with mining swindles of one sort or another. I enjoyed it. We could do with something similar on Wales - there is no shortage of material.
- D The Old Industries of Dean David Bick\*. Not in Wales, but nearby, and full of rare old photos of Cornish enginehouses, collieries, ironworks etc. Just published £4.50 hardback, post free to W.M.S. members. Available from The Pound House, Newent, GL 18 IPS.
- E Lost Mines of Wales Peter Naylor\*. This title is in the pipeline and promises to include Cyftty, Dolaucothi and Cwmystwyth. Naylor tells me he is related by marriage to Sir Hugh Myddelton who made a fortune at Cwmswmlog, so perhaps that famous mine will also be featured even if nothing of the profit has filtered down to the author!

#### 6 W.M.S.Publications?

With the increasing membership there is a growing case for reviewing our no-publication policy, and Rob Vernon has already suggested the idea of producing lists of mine plans and sources of information to aid research. There is clearly much scope. However, we should need not only authors, but members willing to handle the printing and distribution, not to mention capital - the problems involved are substantial.

Will members please consider whether they could help such a venture. Some definite policy would also seem desirable, rather than random publications without a coherent purpose. Perhaps someone might volunteer to make a report on the subject.

7 List of Members and Interests With the next Newsletter, I hope to issue an up-to-date list with members' interests, other societies to which they belong, etc. This list will not be complete, but additions can be accepted for a following issue.

8 Member's Comments John Tennant has suggested a megaphone might be useful on field trips, also a transcript of the talk might be printed. Further, advance notice would be useful concerning the type of terrain to be tackled, as a guide for elderly members. He also suggests a second visit to Cwmystwyth as there is much else to explore. These points will be borne in mind. Potential leaders please note.

9 Industrial Monuments Survey - Listed and Scheduled Buildings - Problems Arising.

The D.O.E. system for protection against wanton demolition is well known. This operates in two stages. Firstly the Industrial Monuments Survey has to recommend listing or scheduling as considered appropriate, and then the recommendation has to be implemented, which is done by a separate department. This latter step is of course essential to safeguard the building. Unfortunately, the whole process often takes years, and there is, the constant danger of demolition in the meantime.

Regrettably, the situation has now deteriorated. According to an officer of the Survey, 'Staffing difficulties now mean that only in those cases of sites under threat can the recommendations be implemented'. The implications need no emphasis, e?????? to say that eternal vigilance at all important sites, whether recommended or not is essential. At the first sign of danger, the Industrial Monuments Survey should be contacted immediately. Unless this problem is rapidly resolved, the benefits of this procedure will be seriously undermined, and it is hoped that all bodies concerned with preservation are aware of the position. Other Societies please note.

10 Collaboration with Amenity Bodies

According to the Welsh Development Agency 8th April 1976, 'it is desirable that bodies interested in recording and preservation should be notified of local authorities proposals for land reclamation so that investigations can proceed well in advance of works proceeding'.

The W.M.S. should clearly involve itself with this dialogue, and the matter needs following up. Perhaps we should appoint a Liaison Officer. Volunteers please.

11 Mystery Mine Ray Borrett has come across an old mine with adits and buildings near Pont Nedd Fechan, grid ref. SN 899088, but can find nothing about it. Comments please.

12 D.C.Davies F.G.S. of Oswestry

Readers of Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales may have detected my soft spot for D.C. Davies, orphan tamed lay preacher and mining engineer. I was fortunate enough some years ago to acquire 80 or so letters of his, spanning 1865-84 which are now deposited in the National Library of Wales and available for inspection. References to Welsh mining and geology are scattered throughout, but mainly in the latter years.

13 Mine Pumps

Eric Tutton has supplied an article on pumps that is unfortunately too long for inclusion here. Nevertheless he has raised some interesting points concerning the actual size of the plungers as you go down the shaft. It is usually assumed these were all the same, but a case can be made out for decreasing diameters in descending, especially if the mine gets wetter in depth, that is, presuming all the water is not allowed to run right down to the sump.

14 Minerals

John Hall reports two specimens of Millerite from Eaglebrook, Cardiganshire.

One consists of isolated capillary crystals up to 0.15mm diameter on and protruding from an Ankerite/Quartz matrix. The other consists of a divergent group of crystals, of about the same diameter and 2mm long in a cavity in the same matrix material. The surface of the spray and some of the single crystals are decomposing into an apple-green mineral probably the hydrous nickel arsenate Annabergite. Although these specimens are very small and the crystals are damaged I think they may be of interest as Messrs Jones and Moreton state in their book, The Mines and Minerals of Mid-Wales (1977) that this mine in 1976 produced the only recorded specimen of this mineral from the area.

Eric Otty has kindly supplied a list of his findings at Llangynog and Craig Rhiwarth areas:

Anglesite, ankerite, aurichalcite, azurite, bornite, calcite, cerussite, chalcopryrite, cuprite, dolomite, galena, limonite, malachite, pyromorphite, smithsonite, sphalerite, quartz, siderite.

#### 15 Gold at Dolaucothi, Pumpsaint

Anglo Dominion Gold Exploration Ltd. of Canada is involved in drilling here, a licence for 14 sq.miles being held. The main site is at Allt Brunant, north-east of the old mine, and drilling was due to begin on 31st May 1980. There are also prospects to the south-west.

#### 16 Discovering Gold

It is worth mentioning a tip learnt from Trevor Chester, who is an expert at finding the precious metal. He never uses a hammer, but concentrates on weathered and oxidized samples in which gold if present, is much easier to discern. He has a number of specimens clearly exhibiting gold found in this way.

#### 17 Dylife

- A Railway Fatality Jeremy Wilkinson has come across a report in the Cambrian News, 22 December 1876 pg 8, of the death of Capt.E.Evans of Dylife, run over and killed.
- B Barnacle mystery I hear from Dr. Ian Ford of Bristol University, that one of his students has found barnacles on the dumps at Dylife. Will this lead- to the designation of a new mineral, Barnaclite, if no explanation is forthcoming?
- C John Bright Yet a further biography of John Bright has appeared, author Keith Robbins, but again his Dylife connections are unrecorded.
- D Cobden and John Taylor The N.L.W. has recently acquired a bundle of Cobden letters including correspondence with Taylor, which may shed light on the latter's shadowy involvement in the mine.

#### 18 Coal Mines

Although collieries may be anathema to certain members, at least two of us, Mr. P.W.Pannett and I, find an interest there. My particular concern are the little forgotten coalfields such as Anglesey, and nearer home, Newent, about which so little has ever been published. Furthermore, magnificent specimens of hair-like Millerite crystals occur in the waste-tips of South Wales, more especially in the east of the basin. I feel the broader our range of interests, provided they are associated with mining, the better. What do other members feel? Years ago someone tried to form a Slag-Heap Preservation Society; perhaps even this could happen, if there are any left.

#### 19 Slate Mines

Several members have also expressed an interest in Slate Mines.

#### 20 Hand-Pump at Cwm Prysor near Trawsfynydd, Gold at Gwynfynydd

Roy Shambrook reports via Neil Dickinson that in 1978 the pump and 7ft. waterwheel were still in fair condition. He has also found gold at Gwynfynydd.

#### 21 Somerset Mines Research Group

A communication has been received from Mr. A. C.Bowman, Church Farm, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset, advising us of the formation of the group, Mr. Bowman would be pleased to supply further details on request.

## 22 Craig Rhiwarth Hillfort, Llangynog

Though forts are not our forté (if the pun may be excused) this one is very near Cwm Orog mine and is worth a visit. Cecil Vaughan Owen informs me that 8 inches of peat were burnt off the top of the hill in the extraordinary summer of 1976, and at least 100 sore hut sites have been found, also more of the ramparts.

## 23 Leats at Nant Methan

Jim Groucott is keeping notes on the Rhayader and Llandrindod Mines for a future Newsletter. Meanwhile his observation on the Nant Methan leat is of interest. It served Cwm Elan lead mine, and brought water 9½ miles from Llynau Cerrigllwydion. It is shown on the 1st edition OS 2½" map and contains but few engineering works except a 150 yd cutting 5ft deep max. Much of the route is now hard to find. The date of construction is uncertain.

## 24 Blaenceulan & Temple

In lieu of the Esgairfraith project, thwarted by the Forestry Commission, these mines were surveyed last summer by an I.A. course organized by David and Marilyn Palmer, and it is hoped that they will be able to oblige us with some details together with future projects, for the next Newsletter.

## 25 Enginehouse in Stained Glass



The adjacent mini-photo is of a stained glass window over a loft doorway representing Clay's 50 inch enginehouse, Vale of Towy, Carmarthen, 1852 - a good mine while it lasted. There is plenty of scope for designs in this medium, which with its ecclesiastical associations seems appropriate for buildings as cathedral-like as enginehouses.

## 26 Annual General Field Meeting (A.G.F.M.)

12 noon Sunday 21 June, 1981, venue in the Llanrwst area. The afternoon's field trip will commence 2 pm and is being organized by John Bennett and Rob Vernon. Please note the date. Further details later.

## 27 Autumn Field Meeting,

Provisionally Sunday 13 September, 1981, perhaps Bryntail - Van area.

## 28 Items for Newsletter No. 3

Please supply copy before 14 April 1981. If I don't get it, I can't print it!  
Note: Other Societies are welcome to re-print items from W.M.S. Newsletters provided acknowledgment is made.

## 29 Membership and Subscriptions

Membership now is 117 if we include 1980 subs still outstanding. If a red cross appears here please note this will be YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER unless £1 is received before the end of this year (1980). 1981 subs. (£1) are due, as from 1/1/'81. Note: Members having joined since 1/11/80 are deemed to have paid their 1981 subscription.

## 30 Christmas Greetings

A merry Christmas & Prosperous New Year to all members, also to my wife for typing this Newsletter.

'Phone 0531820650

*David Bick*

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1/12/'80