



1. ANNUAL GENERAL FIELD MEETING at Dylife 16 June 1985.

This well attended meeting was blessed with glorious weather, and we were pleased to welcome three gentlemen from Dinas Mawddwy with an interest in their local mines. A brief resume of the Society's progress since formation in 1979 was given, including a list of all sites visited; Liz Pugh suggested the field meetings should extend over a weekend rather than one day only. After discussion it was agreed nem con that the June meeting should cover two days. A subcommittee comprising John Bennett, Rob Vernon and Jeremy Wilkinson has kindly volunteered to plan events for Anglesey in June 1986. No interest was expressed in going outside the Principality. Rob Vernon requested his proposed trip to the Elan Valley area be postponed and in its place I offered to lead a visit to the Lisburne Mines of Glog Fawr and Glog Fach, (8th September) where there is much to see. (See item 24) This was agreed.

In the afternoon we visited Dylife, Dyfngvm, Castle Rock, the spectacular Clywedog gorge, and Cafartha. Many thanks are due to David Roe and Liz Pugh for arranging the trip and food, ably provided by the landlord of the Star Inn.

2. MID-WALES NEWS FROM SIMON TIMBERLAKE.

S.T. is now in Peru for a few months but has given a very interesting account of a descent of Glog Fawr engine shaft by U.C.W. Aberystwyth Caving Club. It is vertical for 260 ft. then inclined to the 90 fathom level. 'So much equipment has been left here ... it is a veritable industrial archaeologists paradise. However, little could be moved, certainly with any margin of safety.'

Rising mains, iron and wooden pump rods, angle-bobs, trams, windlasses, telegraph wires and a skip road are some of the features remaining. Rob Jones of U.C.W. hopes to publish the findings. Who will be the first to re-discover the 25-ft. diameter waterwheel in the 88 fathom level (according to old plans) in the neighbouring Glog Fach?

At Frongoch, S.T. reports it is possible to enter via the long adit through Wemyss mine. 'There are at least ½ mile of workings which you can get into but it is a very sporting journey..' involving swimming through flooded stopes of unknown depth. At Ystumtuen 'Ian occurrence of jelly-like bacterial streamer growth and wobbly Stalactites was noted. These were first noted by Barrie Johnson in Welsh Mines at Cae-Coch Pyrites mine above Trefriw ... with the appearance of something out of a Dr. Who adventure ... a collection of heteromorphic bacteria living in a gelatinous medium in slow-running acidic water.' Bushell's Adit at Cwmerfin. The entrance is badly silted and the farmer wants to fill it in and drain the adit from further in, by means of a trench he proposes to cut to the adjacent stream. Due to the levels it is very doubtful if this would work, quite apart from destroying an ancient monument. This site needs careful watching.

3. MACHINERY AND BUILDINGS.

As a change from blow-by-blow accounts of individual mines there is much need for research into machinery and associated buildings. As an example we may cite crusher houses of which over 30 in various stages of decay are listed in Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales - not to mention those elsewhere. Could we arrange a joint survey? Please advise if interested.

In some cases as at Frongoch and Glog Fawr are buildings, the function of which appears impossible to explain with any degree of conviction. The Glog Fawr 50ft wheel worked a crusher, pumps and a drawing machine which it appears was remotely situated. How these things were done, the mechanical details, are lost to us and it is a glaring gap in our knowledge of the 19th century technology. I hope to report more on this aspect in due course.

4. SCHEDULING SITES IN MID-WALES.

The W.M.S. has been actively, involved in developments concerning two important sites and it is hoped to give further news shortly.

5. FRONGOCH SURVEY.

The historical account and survey mentioned in the last N/L will shortly be going to press as a NMRS monograph, and should assist in rallying support for preservation of this historic site. Underground photos would still be welcomed. The abandoned cars are now removed, apparently by a public health order, but old cookers and 'fridges etc. remain to perpetrate the eyesore.

6. W.M.S. XMAS QUIZ.

The two photos were Pennant near St.Asaph and Vale of Towy near Carmarthen not, however, that their publication encouraged the slightest response. This first annual quiz is also the last.

7. DO-IT-YOURSELF FIELD TRIPS.

New member Darren Hoyle, 18 Speakman St., Runcorn, Cheshire, wishes to join forces with other members on field trips. He is interested in minerals and has discovered Aurochalcite at Howgillsike mire, Cumbria.

8. FORGOTTEN COALFIELDS OF WALES & THE BORDER.

The history of the smaller coalfields has received scant attention, and in many cases almost none. Amongst these are Mamble, Cleo Hills, Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Anglesey. Should we form a W.M.S. Coal Group with a view to co-operation? Some members will be choking over their carbide lamps at the mere thought.

9. PARYS MOUNTAIN, ANGLESEY.

A Canadian based firm is drilling in the Morfa-Ddu area west of the main road and it appears a huge deposit of complex sulphides with a little gold has been proved at 1500 or 2000 ft.depth. Underground mining is anticipated. The environmental impact on the historic Parys/Mona complex will need careful monitoring. The whole site really is of the greatest importance, though this is not to say that mining, with certain provisos, should not be encouraged in the future. See item 25.

10. NAMHO 4TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE.

The Peak District Mining Historical Society Ltd. hosted this event at Matlock Bath 31 May - 3 June. A number of our members attended and it proved first-rate. The only complaint was that the various concurrent activities could not all be attended. I experienced my first cable-car ride to the Heights of Abraham but missed the Temple Mine which was only a few yards away. There was Simply too much to do and almost too many friends and acquaintances to talk to. Those interested in preservation were greatly stimulated by the Carn Brea Mining Club and their achievements at the Botallock site.

11. NAMHO GUIDELINES - GOING DOWN THE MINE.

This useful 13-page document is aimed at newcomers. Of the 12 basic rules, like the 10 Commandments, I have broken nearly every one; but in mitigation let it be said, mainly, before Mining History Societies were dreamed of.

12. INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE WEEKEND,NEATH, 6-8 September 1985.

A weekend of guided tours has been organized, to include Neath Abbey Iron-works, Cefn Coed Coal & Steam Museum, Neath and Tennant Canals, Gunpowder Works and Dinas Silica Mines - all for £33 including B.& B. This sounds excellent value. For further details and booking apply to Industrial Heritage, Information Centre, Aberdulais, Neath. Phone (0639)53531.

13. GEOLOGY AND MINING DAY COURSE, IRONBRIDGE.

The A.I.A is holding a Seminar on Monday 11 November at Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Telford, from which further details are available. Lectures include:

- Roy Porter. The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Geology.
Hugh Torrens. Coal and Iron Prospecting (1650-1850.)
Trevor Ford. Geology in early Derbyshire Leadmining.
Jim Secord. State Patronage for Geology in Britain (1830-1900.)
David Bick. Geological Publications as a source for Mining Historians.

14. THE MINE EXPLORER - Journal of the Cumbria Amenity Trust, Vol.1,

Chris.Jones, 3 Bell Hill Cottages, Martin, Lindal in Furness, has sent a review copy, of which he is editor. The volume is full of articles, photos, maps, etc., 90 pages in all, mainly relating to the Lake District. It even sports a colour cover, but how they do it for £2 is not explained. C.A.T. also publish a N/L with short articles and details of forthcoming events. We wish them continued success.

15. MOUNT GABRIEL COPPER MINES, IRELAND.

In the last N/L I stated that '..According to the IAMS Newsletter No.7. the workings described by Dr.J.S.Jackson as pre-Christian have now been definitely dated by radiocarbon at around 1500 B.C. This should no doubt put an end to a counter-claim that the workings were as recent as 19th Century'. In this I was premature, for our member Dr.Stephen Briggs tells me that the issue is still very much alive. The pros and cons are too involved for details here but for the record the reference to Dr.Briggs' paper is as follows:

- Briggs C.S. 1983. Copper Mining at Mount Gabriel, Co.Corkt Bronze Age Bonanza or Post-Famine Fiasco? Proc.Prehist-SOC-49, pp 317-333.

Dr.Briggs adds that Mr.W.O'Brien from the Archaeology Dept., University College, Cork, is investigating the area to resolve questions of dating and mining methods. Perhaps an experienced mining engineer would be able to assist. We await the outcome with interest.

16. MINES OF MAWDDWY RESEARCH GROUP. (MOMRG)

This includes David Roe, John Burman, Ifor Higgon, Jeremy Wilkinson and David Bick.* There has been much activity in the record office and in the field. J.B. has taken some excellent underground photos and W.M.S. hopes to visit the area.

17. CLOGAU GOLD MINE.

A March newspaper reports: 'there is growing speculation of a major gold strike at Clogau St.Davide. Rumours were rife in the town this week that more gold than normal had been extracted...' - a statement, however, which is open to interpretation. The company's plans to open a gold mine tourist centre have been refused by the Planning Authority, but there is now much talk of the benefits to be derived from the 25% premium for Welsh gold. Dr.Rottenbury of Clogau 'stresses that the present operation is purely exploratory, finding out whether there is gold in sufficient quantity.'(Daily Post 5.6.85.) For this, £4,000,000 has been subscribed. How much more would be called upon for production, and with what chance of worthwhile dividends, or even dividends at all, is yet to be answered.

18. WELSH GOLD RUSH.

The Sunday Telegraph ran a good article on 17.3-85- 'with colour photos. George Hall is quoted as saying: 'there are a million ounces of gold left in these mountains. It is just a question of finding it.' Quite so. Still, Gwynfynydd has recently produced some splendid gold, even though it has been rumoured that at one time more of the precious metal was lost in the tailings than entering in the feed. Let us hope these problems can be overcome, for

* plus Tom Jones Mrs M.Cooper

there could well be a future for gold mining in Wales if run on a modest scale.

19. PANNING FOR GOLD EVERY WEDNESDAY.

According to the publication Mid-Wales Festival of the Countryside, National Trust Warden Alun Price will be demonstrating how to pan for gold at the Cefn Coch Mine, Ganllwyd, near Dolgellau, June-August 1985. He says there is the ruin of a small building below the old mill, containing a wheelpit, used at least 200-300 years before the larger mill, which could be the site that Charles I visited in 1636. Can anyone comment on this?

20. WELSH MINING & QUARRYING SHARE CERTIFICATE

Brian Mills, 56 The Avenue, Tadworth, Surrey, is compiling for publication a list of certificates still extant, and would be pleased to have details of any in members' hands. This valuable and interesting project deserves our best support.

21. NEW BOOKS.

- R.A. Williams. The Old Mines of the Llangynog District. £5.
This comprehensive volume published by N.M.R.S. is to be recommended and will no doubt become a collector's item.
- D. Bick. Dylife. New edition. £1.95.
Old Copper Mines of Snowdonia. New Edition. £4.50.
- B. Smith & H. Dewey. Lead & Zinc Ores in the Pre-Carboniferous Rocks of West Shropshire and North Wales. £8.
(Reprint of 1922 edition.)
Orders to Mining Facsimilies, 41 Windsor Walk,
South Anston, Sheffield.

22. OLD BOOKS.

Antiquarian book prices on mining are going through the roof. I recently saw J.Y. Watson Compendium of British Mining 1843 on sale at £75. This little volume was reprinted not long ago. The same dealer was asking £150 for an 1830 plan of Wheal Towan 'surface cracked, edges frayed...surface very soiled'. Where will it end?

23. CONTRIBUTORS.

Various members have contributed to the N/L including Simon Timberlake, David Roe, Jeremy Wilkinson, Alan Williams, Rob Vernon, Ifor Higgon, John Burman and Stephen Briggs. My thanks are due to them all.

24. NEXT MEETING.

Glog Fawr/Glog Fach Mines, September 8th 1985. As the site is somewhat difficult to find, please meet at CWMYSTWYTH Mine. 12.noon for our usual business meeting and lunch (bring your own). We will then go in convoy to Glog Fawr at about 2.0.p.m.

25. NEXT-BUT-ONE MEETING.

Anglesey - June 9/10. 1986.

*NOTE. The date of Sept 15 agreed at Dylife has had to be changed due to a clash of dates
DAB.*

David Bick

David Bick.

Pound House, Newent, Glos.

27.6.85.

(0531) 820650.