Northern Mine Research Society

Newsletter

November 2024

Society established 1960

www.nmrs.org.uk www.nmrs.org.uk

Your Society Needs

YOU!

Our Constitution mandates that the Society shall be run by a Committee comprising of the following Officers:

Title	Current Member
President	**Len Morris**
Vice President	**Malcolm Street**
Vice President	**Steve Grudgings**
Hon. General Secretary	**Open**
Treasurer	**Tim Cook**
Editor	**Dr Richard Smith**
Recorder	**Under Review**
Librarian	**Sallie Bassham**
PRO (Newsletter Editor)	**Paul Gidley**
Committee Member	Barbara Sutcliffe
Committee Member	Guy Hindley
Committee Member	**David Nichols**

Those in **bold** are **Trustee** positions registered with the Charities Commission.

Our Committee Members are all volunteers. Without them our society would cease to exist. Some of the roles are required to maintain our status as a Charity.

In recent years we have struggled to fill roles. In 2021 our Recorder Mike Gill also took on the role of Newsletter Editor. This was on the understanding that it would be a temporary measure to ensure that members continued to receive the Newsletter – Mike ended up editing **ten issues**, his final one being the November 2023 edition!

At the beginning of 2024 we still had two open positions, Honorary General Secretary and Meets Secretary /Coordinator.

James Cleland stepped up to act as Interim Secretary. Sadly, due to personal circumstances James had to step down in May.

Just last month (October) our Recorder, Mike Gill, a member for the past 57 years, stepped down due to personal circumstances.

The Committee would like to record our grateful thanks to Mike and James for their committed service and we will be acknowledging their individual contributions in a future edition of the Newsletter.

As of now we have three open positions, two of them, the Secretary and Recorder, are Committee/Trustee positions. The role of Recorder is currently under review by the Committee.

The Meets Secretary/Coordinator is not a committee position. The duties and responsibilities of this role

have been reviewed and an exciting new role of **Programme Coordinator** has been created to replace it. This will be a highly visible role, providing a great opportunity to work across NMRS and developing an engaging annual programme of events for our members. This role will initially focus on technical presentations, either online or as part of the AGM and Autumn Meeting programmes. However, it is hoped that in time the role will expand to cover the coordination of field visits, a much-missed feature of NMRS activities.

Can you help? If we are unable to fill the open vacancies the Society may be unable to fulfil its charitable responsibilities, placing our future at risk. Ideally, we also need to have a succession plan in place, with volunteers shadowing key roles and willing to act as substitutes, if required. Full role descriptions are available for the Secretary and Programme Coordinator roles, our initial priorities for recruitment. However, the Committee is open to discussion on how responsibilities for any of the trustee roles might be adjusted to fit around your existing commitments. Our **President, Len Morris** would be happy to speak to you informally if you would like to know more (Email: lmorris768@btinternet.com or phone: 07972 185644)

Can you help fill these positions?

Honorary General Secretary

General Summary

The Secretary's responsibility is to establish, keep and maintain the written records of the Society.

Essential role functions

1. Prepare an accurate record of all Committee meetings, annual general meetings and any other meetings of the Society.

2. Maintain a comprehensive record of the Society's official correspondence, and especially that involving an outside agency, such as the Charity Commissioners.

3. Issue a draft version of minutes taken at meetings for approval by the Chair of that meeting and, after approval, distribute copies to all Committee members.

4. Ensure that members attending general meetings have access to the minutes of the previous general meeting. As a general rule, the minutes of the AGM will be approved at the Autumn meeting.

5. Provide Committee members with a monthly summary of important transactions and decisions that were conducted by email during the preceding month.

Other Role Functions

1. In conjunction with the President, prepare an agenda for all meetings of the Committee. In particular, the Secretary should draw the Committee's attention to matters "on the table" and awaiting a decision.

2. Maintain an accurate version of the Society's Constitution which will include an indication of the authority for any changes to the items covered by the Constitution.

3. Initiate the arrangements for the election of Committee members and receive all nominations at least 28 days beforehand. Where necessary (that is for contested posts), prepare voting slips for use at the AGM.

4. If deemed necessary, to lobby standing Committee members on their willingness to put themselves forward for re-election.

5. On relinquishing position pass the following documentation over to the incoming Secretary (or the President):

- Minuted records of all general meetings of the Society
- Minuted records of all committee meetings, summaries of monthly email business and any official correspondence

Programme Coordinator

General Summary

This is a new role and initially, the Programme Coordinator's responsibility will be to assemble and coordinate a programme of face to face and online technical meetings (presentations by speakers) for each year. It is anticipated that the role may eventually expand to include the coordination of field visits if agreed by the NMRS Committee and experienced leaders are available. The Programme Coordinator reports directly to the President.

Essential Role Functions

1. To develop and assemble a programme of technical meetings for each year by approaching NMRS members and where appropriate external societies and organisations. This may involve email correspondence or drafting announcements or calls for volunteers in the Newsletter.

2. For all technical meetings, to work with a nominated NMRS Committee member to ensure that a suitable programme and booking process is arranged and that

a chairperson or facilitator is nominated to lead the meeting.

3. For online meetings, to work with a nominated Committee member to arrange access to Zoom and arrange a booking process for members.

4. To publicise the programme of meetings via the Newsletter, NMRS website and where appropriate, the Society's Facebook page throughout the year.

5. To arrange for a report of each meeting to be written up for the Newsletter and website.

6. To arrange for photographs to be taken, where possible, and to liaise with the Newsletter editor and NMRS Webmaster regarding their publication.

7. To thank all speakers and those actively involved in arranging NMRS meetings.

8. To assist the Committee in arranging the Society's Annual General Meeting by researching suitable venues and helping to coordinate arrangements for catering, audio-visual equipment, risk assessments etc.

Additional Responsibilities for Field Visits, Outings etc. *(applicable only if a policy on field visits is agreed by the NMRS Committee)*

9. With the assistance of the nominated visit leader, to compile a list of the names and contact phone numbers of all members booked on a field visit.

10. To be aware of health and safety requirements regarding field visits and with the assistance of the visit leader to ensure that a risk assessment is prepared prior to the visit.

11. To ensure that field visit leaders are aware that all members participating in underground visits must hold valid British Caving Association (BCA) Insurance.

Unfortunately, that is not all …

British Mining Needs Your Help

Hitherto NMRS has not experienced problems in attracting articles for its journal, British Mining. These can be either papers of up to 50 pages or so in length or more detailed monographs of 70 – 250 pages. Subjects can be on any form of mining and can include associated topics such as mining geology, smelting, ore dressing and quarrying.

Sadly, some of our most prolific authors have passed away and unless new contributors step forward this essential part of our activities will decline.

Contents

The existing literature on mining subjects is very extensive and at first sight it appears that most of the accessible source material in the record offices has been written up. This may be so but there is always new material appearing, many of our monographs deal with wide overviews of mining areas and for reasons of brevity have had to leave out detailed descriptions of individual mines.

Please contact me if you think you might have a contribution and wish to discuss it or submit it for publication.

Dr Richard Smith, Editor
Email: rsmith6@btinternet.com

NEW MEMBERS at 29th October 2024

Mr Brian Begg-Robertson	ASTON-under-LYNE
Dr Cecilia Dean	COALVILLE
Mr Simon Dyer	BANBURY
Mr Chris Everitt	OTLEY
Mr Daniel Fryer	PRESTON
Ms Claire Graf	EDINBURGH
Mr Gordon Hull	DURHAM
Mr Nathan Lawson	GATESHEAD
Mrs Ann Mannifield	WAKEFIELD
Mr Guy Maxwell	GLASGOW
Mr Stephen Maxwell	THORNHILL
Mr Derek Mearns	WITNEY
Mr Christopher Montgomery	STOKE-on-TRENT
Mr Andy Smith	YORK
Ms Ruth Walker	MINEHEAD
Mr Stuart Warburton	COALVILLE

A warm welcome to those new members who have joined us this last quarter. I hope you find the newsletter and monographs in your first year of membership interesting.

This is the quarter when membership renewals will be going out. Could you please let me know if you change your postal address and or email address. You can email me at membership@nmrs.org.uk and I can update the Society records for you. I know some members don't have email and as usual you can renew your membership by sending cheques to me at my home address. If any members prefer to send a cheque than pay electronically, that is fine by me. Please make cheques payable to NMRS, not myself! My address for those paying by cheque is 2, Meadow Bank Close, Cockermouth, CA13 9AA. Thank you.

Guy Hindley, Membership Secretary

Publication News

Thank you very much to the following for their recent donations for re-sale – Dave Nicholls, Stephen Moreton and Robert Poole on behalf of his late father Robert. Also, to an unknown gentleman who left a generous donation at KarLen antiques and collectibles. He was probably a member so if reading this "thank you". Amongst them were some 'Out-of-print' (Oop) BMs.

Don't forget to contact me if you have any "wants". All your donations are really appreciated.

I have set up a new Facebook page for interested parties in our publications and other related topics: https://www.facebook.com/publicationsnmrs/

If books are your interest, please join PublicationsNMRS. There you will be able to view books about to go to our retail stand at KarLen Antiques and Collectibles, Unit 56, Kings St Mill, Queen Street, Harle Syke, Burnley. If any interest you please contact me and I will leave them there for you to collect.

I am also putting Oop BMs on this new Facebook page and have already sold some to a member - with discount. The Oop ones will not be going to KarLen retail stand.

With this latest hard copy Newsletter of ours you will find a new flyer about our Society. Please pass this on to an interested party so we can continue to spread the word. We should be very proud that next year marks our 65th Anniversary.

My contact details - mansemins@btopenworld.com or 01282614615 before 8.30pm please.

Barbara Sutcliffe, Publications

Library News

Thank you to John Adams for a copy of his "Mines of the Lake District. Edition 3", donated to our library. If you wish to borrow this book, please contact Barbara Sutcliffe on 01282 614625 or mansemins@btopenworld.com as she will have this book until the Christmas post subsides in the New Year. There have been 2 library loans since the last newsletter.

Sallie Bassham, Librarian

Advance Notice of Proposed Visits in 2025

While we do not currently have a Meets Secretary/Coordinator we are reaching out to other societies to join their visits.

The Cumbrian Industrial History Society (CIHS) are organising two mine related walking visits in 2025. These will be surface walks where a reasonable degree of fitness is required over rough terrain. The provisional dates are:

11th May 2025 - Mine and mill at Alston, Cumbria
21st September 2025 - Greenside Lead Mine, Glenridding, Cumbria

More details will be announced in our Spring newsletter.

The website of the CIHS does include mining related material. The CIHS holds an annual conference each year and next year's theme is on Water. Details when they are confirmed will be on their website. The date is Saturday 22nd March 2025 at Penrith.

Thanks to Guy Hindley for coordinating this

Request for information

As Basil would say, "I'm so sorry, I'm not perfect!". In our August NL I gave an incorrect contact email for George Grimshaw's request for information about steam locomotives used at the Bank Hall Colliery, Burnley. My apologies to George and you, our members.

George already has photos and information about one loco, 'Carbon', saying that a friend had mentioned two saddle tank locos that were used at the colliery earlier. He thought 'Wasp' was the name of one of them.

So, if you did send information to George about the steam locos used at Bank Hall Colliery, or have now found some, please contact George at: georgeggrimshaw@btinternet.com

I cannot find any information on 'Wasp' but have found a brother to 'Carbon', called 'King'. (Ed.)

0-4-0 Andrew Barclay 'King' at Bank Hall Colliery

https://www.flickr.com/photos/12a_kingmoor_klickr/50194840411/

"On 26th June 1968 'King' (W/No.1448 of 1919) was shunting the exchange sidings for Bank Hall Colliery.

The exchange sidings serving Bank Hall colliery were connected to BR via a half-mile branch north east of Burnley station. The colliery also enjoyed a wharf on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

Unusual for 0-4-0 Andrew Barclays both 'King' and 'Carbon' (W/No.1704 of 1920) had Giesl ejectors fitted, the modification having been carried out at the NCB Walkden Workshops.

'King' was fortunate and, upon the colliery's closure in April 1971, saw further work at Haig colliery in Cumbria, following overhaul at NCB Walkden Workshops during late 1971."

Article: Copper Slag Blocks

By Tim Jeffcoat

In our 'Let's Continue the Discussion' section of the August Newsletter Tim commented on Steve Grudgings 'Historic Mining Landscapes' article (May 2024). Tim has followed up his comments with this article.

Following the brief item on page 31 of the August Newsletter referring to slag blocks used in buildings in north Staffordshire, I now have more information, and a number of photographs I took in late July this year.

I have known this area for most of my life, and I suppose it would have been in the 1970s when I first noticed the blocks. Initially, I found information on them in W.J. Thompson's book 'Industrial Archaeology of North Staffordshire', published around 1975. This included the first photo I had seen of a building constructed from slag blocks, in Whiston.

Moving on to this year, John Barnatt suggested I take a look at Lindsey Porter's 2004 book 'Ecton Copper Mines under the Dukes of Devonshire 1760-1790'. This contains a useful chronology, which indicates that the Ecton Mines' smelter at Whiston was constructed in 1770, and extended in 1780. And while the book does make reference to the cast blocks which can be seen in buildings close to the site of the smelter in Whiston on pages 85 & 127, I could find no information on the many blocks I had seen in nearby Cheadle.

I then turned to John Barnatt's own book 'Delving Ever Deeper: the Ecton Mines Through Time', published in 2013. I couldn't find any specific reference here to the slag blocks, but on page 229 there is a mention of the 'Whiston account books'. I guess these are in the Duke of Devonshire's records; perhaps they might tell us something. In the very same sentence John also mentions 'records relating to Patten's, a smelting company in Cheadle'.

Returning to Thompson's book, I see he too refers to this company. This makes me wonder now whether the slag blocks to be seen in Cheadle, while also derived from the smelting of Ecton ore, are a product of Patten's works, rather than coming from Whiston. Thompson says Patten's Cheadle works closed about 1828 to 1830. It was at Brookhouses, and one of the locations where slag blocks have been used in roadside walls is just 300-400 metres away.

I've taken several photos showing the use of slag blocks in both Whiston and Cheadle. The Whiston examples are all on Black Lane, which ran past the smelter, whereas the Cheadle examples are more scattered.

I've just noticed that Thompson says there are examples in Oakamoor and Froghall too; I'm unaware of these so will have to take a look round some time.

Photos 1 to 5 are all taken on Black Lane in Whiston, and all the buildings are shown on the 1880s O.S. map.

1. Stable House, and beyond it a building now converted to residential use and named Coach House

2. Looking the opposite way (west), Coach House in the foreground with Stable House at the far end.

A photo of this in Thompson's book shows that the window nearest the camera was previously a similar-sized wooden door at the top of mounting steps.

3. This building too has been converted to residential use and is now known as Shires Barn.

Again, the window at the road end was once a wooden door at the top of mounting steps, according to the Thompson photo. The windows facing the camera may have been inserted with the conversion, but I have no old photo for comparison

Round a left-hand bend further along Black Lane, on the opposite side of the road to the previous locations, and backing onto the smelter site, is Bridge House.

The house name refers to the bridge close by where Black Lane spans the course of the Whiston inclined plane on the 1802 tramroad from Caldon Low quarries to Froghall Basin on the Caldon Canal.

While the main part of Bridge House is stone-built, a single-storey lean-to extension at the north end is built from slag blocks.

4. The single-storey lean-to extension at the north end of Bridge House

5. Close-up of the blocks at the Bridge House extension

I wonder whether the blocks for this extension may have been recycled from a demolished building nearby?

Photos 6 to 11 are all in Cheadle.

6. Looking north up Butler's Hill on Leek Road, Cheadle (A522), bedrock gives way to four courses of slag blocks, with several courses of masonry above

7. Opposite photo 6, the revetment on the east side of Butler's Hill on Leek Road is part slag block, part masonry

Further up Leek Road, the same four courses of slag blocks topped with masonry courses continue to the corner of Prince George Street, on the way passing under the outbuildings of a big house named Rockcliffe.

8. The outbuildings of the big house Rockcliffe, on Leek Road

9. Opposite Rockcliffe, an un-named track leads east to a spot named on the map as Windy Arbour. The wall on the north side of the track is composed of slag blocks for a short way

10. At No.90 Queen Street (B5417) a few blocks have been used at the foot of a brick wall. I would imagine these may have been recycled from elsewhere

11. On the west side of Cheadle town centre, another revetment at the junction of Dilhorne Road and Town End (A521) is made of slag blocks. This is the location which is close to the site of Patten's works

Tim Jeffcoat, Uttoxeter, October 2024

Mining Today around the British Isles

Directory of Mines and Quarries 2020

The Directory of Mines and Quarries 2020 covering active mineral operations from 2019 - 2020. This covers quarrying, mining, oil and gas extraction and major mineral handling sites in the UK, giving details of the location, operator, commodity and end use of the mineral as well as geological information for the site. Information is extracted from the BRITPITS database.

Available for Free Download from BGS (10.47Mb) at https://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/download/directory-of-mines-and-quarries-2020/

British Geological Society
Thanks to Malcolm Street

British Geological Survey

BGS has reached the halfway mark on its ambitious ground-source heat pump project - James Naish, MP for Rushcliffe, visited BGS's headquarters in Keyworth, Nottinghamshire, on Monday 16 September 2024, to look at the ongoing installation work of BGS's ground-source heat pump system. He was also given a tour of the National Geological Repository, the largest collection of geoscience samples from the UK. Work began on the £1.8 million, Government-funded heat decarbonisation project in February 2024. When finished, it will be the largest and most high-tech system of its kind, providing new scientific data to the public and will demonstrate how low-carbon heating technology can be applied to both new and existing public sector buildings.

Scanning of a 240 m-long rock core taken from the site has been undertaken using instruments developed for medical research, providing unique insights on the composition of the ground and the source of natural heat. The results are expected to be published soon, with the installation of the ground-source heat pump system involving 28 boreholes and five heat pumps, providing 360 kW of clean heating power, due to be completed by the end of 2024.

Once complete, the project will heat two large buildings and deliver a 'living laboratory'. Equipped with state-of-the-art sensor technology in the boreholes and on the heat pump devices, it will provide data in real-time to help increase both industry and public understanding of ground-source heat pumps and show how they can be an effective solution for heating buildings in the UK.

The project is majority funded by the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) with a further contribution from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). The scheme is run by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and is delivered by Salix Finance. The heat pump project is being delivered with partners Cenergist, Welltherm Drilling Ltd and Pick Everard.

BGS Press, 19th September

BGS joins new initiative supporting technical career paths - A new action group has been formed to drive positive change for technical careers in the higher education and research sectors.

Currently, technical career paths in the UK vary across the sector and there is a significant technical skills gap. Challenges around recruitment, retention and clarity of technical career paths in academia and research have also affected the long-term sustainability of the technical workforce. The UK Institute of Technical Skills and Strategy's Technical Career Pathways Lab, funded by Research England, is tackling this issue by working in partnership with organisations to innovate and implement recommendations published in the TALENT Commission Report.

Forty-four technical and human resource professionals, representing twenty-two UK universities and research institutions, have volunteered to join a Career Pathways Action Group.

Together, the group will experiment with new ways of working within their institution to cultivate change that improves career pathways for technical professionals. Projects will commence between October 2024 and January 2025 and the Technical Career Pathways Lab intends to share best practice with the sector by July 2026.

BGS Press, 23rd September 2024

I haven't listed the twenty-two UK universities and research institutions. I am surprised that Exeter University/Camborne School of Mines are not represented. (Ed)

Alba Mineral Resources plc

Alba reports the successful completion of the first blast on 28 August 2024 at the Llechfraith Target at their Clogau Gold Mine in north Wales - The first blast took place at No. 4.5 Level. Eight blast holes were drilled. All detonated successfully, producing several tonnes of broken vein ore. This material will be removed to surface in due course and processed.

The next sequence of blasts is expected to proceed at No.5 Level. While the Company will provide periodic updates on the progress of operations on site, it will not be providing reports on each individual blast.

RNS, 30th August 2024

Albion Stone plc

Albion Stone always recommend that their clients and design teams visit them in Portland to get a complete understanding of their operation and Portland Stone's unique qualities. A site visit offers an unparalleled opportunity to explore their mines, providing a firsthand view of the underground extraction processes. Visitors will also tour the factory, gaining insight into the production journey from raw stone extraction to finished product.

Albion Stone, 10th September 2024

In a world increasingly focused on sustainability and eco-friendly construction, traditional building techniques are making a comeback. For centuries loadbearing structural stone was the backbone of architectural design, its sheer strength and durability ensuring the structural integrity of cathedrals, monuments, and civic buildings. It is gaining renewed attention for its environmental benefits and durability compared to modern alternatives like thin stone cladding. Replacing structural concrete with loadbearing stone offers immense environmental advantages. The production of concrete is a significant source of global CO2 emissions, while stone, a naturally occurring material, requires far less energy to process. Stone also has a much longer lifecycle, reducing the need for repair or replacement over time.

Albion Stone, 19th September 2024

Anglesey Mining plc

Anglesey Mining announced that it has reached an important project milestone with the formal submission on 31st July 2024 of the Parys Mountain Mine Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report to the North Wales Minerals and Waste Planning Service as part of a formal EIA Scoping Opinion request - The Scoping Report forms part of the first stage in the EIA process and comes after almost two years of extensive studies and work by the Anglesey team on site. Cumulative expenditure on the EIA process in that timeframe is almost £300,000. The scoping report sets out the project's perceived impacts, specifically identifying any crucial and significant impacts which will be assessed as part of the final EIA report, the compilation of which will require further environmental and ecological work. At this EIA scoping stage, the project description remains indicative and will be refined following ongoing mining engineering studies, economic analysis and discussions with neighbours, the wider community and other stakeholders. The mining at Parys will be carried out by underground methods; there are no plans for an open pit or opencast mine extraction works.

Anglesey Mining, 16th August 2024

Anglo American Crop Nutrients Ltd

Anglo American to reduce head-count of contractors and subcontractors working at the Woodsmith mine by 60% - Anglo American confirmed in June that around half of the jobs at its Woodsmith mine would be lost amid plans to slow down the project and cut costs.

Now the company has revealed the full-scale of the impact on the wider workforce with a spokesperson stating: "The Anglo American workforce has been reduced by half to 160 people. However, across all the contractors and subcontractors on the project, the workforce will reduce by approximately 60% to around 900 by mid-2025. We have implemented a social response plan to support people affected with training, re-training or business start-up opportunities in

collaboration with our local employment support providers. This has been really well received."

The Scarborough News, 9th October 2024

Boliden - Tara Mines

Europe's largest zinc mine, Tara Mines returned to full operation during the week ending 25th October 2024 - This follows an 18-month period where the majority of the workers were laid off. During that time 50 workers retired or took early retirement, while there were 160 voluntary redundances. 405 workers have returned to the mine.

RTÉ, 21st October 2024

Bryn Bach Coal Ltd

Bryn Bach Coal wants to remove 85,000 tonnes of anthracite from a proposed 10-hectare extension at its Glan Lash open cast site near Llandybie - although it said just under six hectares would be excavated.

A design and access statement submitted to Carmarthenshire Council on its behalf said the "premium quality" anthracite would be marketed for water purification, brake pad manufacture, brick-making and other "high-tech activities" and would not be burned for energy.

It said removing the 85,000 tonnes would be done via six "box cuts" and take nearly five-and-a-half years. Material would be backfilled and the site restored and maintained for 10 years. The statement said the project, combined with mitigation measures at the adjacent Tirydail tip restoration site, would result in a considerable gain in overall biodiversity compared to what was there now.

In September last year the council's planning committee unanimously turned down an application by Bryn Bach Coal to extract 110,000 tonnes - subsequently reduced to 95,000 tonnes - of coal from the proposed Glan Lash extension. The committee heard there were 826 objections to the proposal and a small number of letters of support, including from clients of Bryn Bach Coal. Speakers at the meeting included a Friends of the Earth representative and a planning agent on behalf of Bryn Bach Coal. Cllr Peter Cooper said people living in the area had endured opencast operations for too long. "I don't think people should have to put up with this again," he said. "We have moved on."

The company is hopeful its new application has addressed the six previous reasons for refusal. It plans to avoid any extraction from an area of marsh fritillary butterfly habitat, and said there would be no losses to purple moor-grass and rush pasture. Although trees and hedgerows would be lost initially, Bryn Bach Coal said there would end up being two-and-a-half times as much once the restoration scheme was completed. "There will be an overall 47.25% increase in biodiversity value, mainly of woodland and scrub habitat as a result of the scheme," said the design and access statement.

A consultation on the new plans took place during the summer. Bryn Bach Coal said it acknowledged concerns from people living in the area and said that it had commissioned various reports. "These specialist reports conclude that there will be no adverse impact on the neighbouring properties, with specific regard given to visual impact, flooding, subsidence and dust and noise pollution," said its response to the consultation. A small number of objections to date have been submitted to the council on pollution and habitat grounds.

Wales Online, 14th October 2024
Thanks to Roger Bade

Camborne School of Mines, University of Exeter

The Camborne School of Mines has relaunched its undergraduate mining engineering degree after a five-year hiatus - The first intake of Mining Engineering undergraduates will begin in September 2025.

President and vice-chancellor, Prof Liza Roberts said, "We know that one of the largest concerns in recent years of the mining industry is the recruitment of new graduates and I am delighted to be able to announce the relaunch of our undergraduate Mining Engineering degree."

Andrew Fulton, president of the Mining Association of the UK and chairperson of the UK Mining Education Forum, said the reintroduction was "extremely positive news for the UK mining industry". "We as an industry will support this programme to ensure its long-term success," added Mr Fulton.

University of Exeter, 5th August 2024
Thanks to Barbara Sutcliffe

A pioneering new research centre, designed to accelerate critical mineral extraction in Cornwall and Devon, has received a multi-million-pound funding

boost - The new centre, called the Critical Minerals Accelerating the Green Economy Centre and based at the University of Exeter's Penryn Campus, has received £4.5 million in new Government funding, it has been announced. The centre will not only help experts address the challenges faced in sustainably securing fresh and innovative access to critical minerals – crucial for the delivery of clean and digital technologies – but will also have the potential to create 2-3,000 new jobs in the region.

The new centre has been created in partnership with multiple businesses, including Cornwall Resources Ltd, Petrolab Ltd and Geolorn Ltd, who co-lead transdisciplinary work packages, Cornwall Council and other South West local government and organisations who have committed considerable time and resources to the proposed research and innovation.

University of Exeter, 7th October 2024

Cornish Lithium plc

Cornish Lithium and German company HELM AG, through its subsidiary LevertonHELM Limited, form a new partnership to further develop the lithium supply chain in Europe - The parties have signed a MoU, agreeing to jointly work together to produce battery-grade lithium compounds from Cornish geothermal brines.

Cornish Lithium and LevertonHELM, UK-based producer of speciality lithium chemicals, will join forces to advance the production of battery-grade lithium compound. Furthermore, Cornish Lithium will closely work with HELM regarding the sourcing of reagents, both for its Trelavour Hard Rock Project and its geothermal projects, as well as possible off-take arrangements for some of the by-products Cornish Lithium expects to produce in the upcoming years.

Cornish Lithium, 17 September 2024

Cornish Lithium's demonstration plant near St Austell is set to start producing lithium hydroxide – The plant is key for making batteries for EVs and other technology, from granite extracted from an old China Clay pit. It is part of Cornish Lithium's Trelavour Hard Rock Project which aims to produce 10,000 tonnes of sustainable domestic lithium a year by 2027, to reduce reliance on importing carbon-intensive materials from places such as China.

The company says the demonstration plant will confirm, at a semi-industrial scale, the viability of extracting lithium from rock in Cornwall, and hopes the first samples of lithium from the project will be ready to send out to car manufacturers in November 2024.

The Standard, 18th October 2024

Cornish Metals Inc

Cornish Metals report the results from the last eight drill holes of the recently completed 14-hole / 8,993m drilling programme at its Wide Formation target, located approximately 1km south of the South Crofty mine - The programme successfully tested the geometry and continuity of tin mineralisation within a 2,500m by 800m extent of the Wide Formation, located between and sub parallel to the past producing Great Flat Lode to the south, and the Dolcoath and South Crofty mines to the north. In addition to the Wide Formation, drilling also intersected tin mineralisation associated with the Great Flat Lode and the Great Flat Lode Splay identified earlier in the programme, as well as the interpreted eastern extension of the Great Condurrow Mine's Main Lode, and several strongly mineralised steeply dipping zones locally referred to as 'Droppers'

Cornish Metals, 19th August 2024

Europa Metals Ltd

Europa Metals Ltd has signed a conditional term sheet to acquire Viridian Metals Ireland Ltd and its Tynagh brownfield Pb/Zn/Cu/Ag Recycling and Rehabilitation Project in County Galway, ROI.

The Europe-focused lead-zinc and silver developer said the proposed transaction would constitute a reverse takeover, meaning it would need to apply for re-admission of its shares to AIM of the London Stock Exchange.

The Tynagh project in ROI comprises an advanced recycling and rehabilitation project that has 6.65 million tonne surface mineral resource comprising 3.96 million tonnes in the Indicated category and 2.69 million tonnes in the Inferred category, as reported in a NI 43-101. Over the last 5 years, Viridian has completed substantial processing and technical studies using independent third parties to provide a clear path to production.

Europa expects to commence a definitive feasibility study post completion of the transaction as the next steps towards construction.

Europa Metals, 17th September 2024

Thanks to Alastair Lings

Fluorsid British Fluorspar Ltd

On the 22nd July 2024 the High Court of Justice, Birmingham ordered Green Land PD Ltd, formerly Fluorsid British Fluorspar be wound up under the Insolvency Act 1986.

Companies House, 12th August 2024 2024

Does any member know what is happening at the Hope Valley mine and plant now? Is it under care and maintenance or have Green Land walked away? (Ed.)

Galantas Gold Corporation

GGC announces a Planned Solar Power Generation Facility at its Omagh Gold Project – GGC has agreed in principle to a proposal from G&F Phelps Ltd. to develop a solar power facility at the Cavanacaw Gold Mine at the Omagh Project in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

The 2MW facility, with battery storage, is expected to significantly boost power generation on site and provide lower cost power than existing diesel generation, at a significantly lower carbon footprint.

The proposal anticipates G&F Phelps renting rehabilitated land comprised of former tailings cells and a filled southern section of the former open pit. G&F Phelps is expected to provide the majority of capital required for the project, recouping the cost from the power generated. Surplus power from the solar facility is expected to be exported to the local grid.

The proposal is subject to a detailed cost study, impact assessment and planning permission from regulatory authorities.

G&F Phelps is a shareholder of GGC, to which it has also provided loan finance.

GGC, 10th July 2024

Hartham Park Bath Stone

Hartham Park Bath Stone is part of the Lovell Stone Group. Over the past 8 years they have invested in significant capital projects at Hartham Park, Corsham, Wiltshire to improve the day-to-day operations and environment underground. The have purchased state-of-the-art equipment such as electrically powered Fantini chain saws, constructed a new drive-in drive-out shaft, and developed innovative quarrying techniques specific to Hartham Park.

Their quarry team has decades of experience working at Hartham Park; Bath Stone is in their blood. Their specialist knowledge of the stone beds and unique extraction methods, developed by the team, ensures the on-going supply of high-quality Bath Stone blocks.

The historic seam of Hartham Park is located 20m underground with a network of over 235km of tunnels. HPBS employ a pillar and stall method of extraction; stone is cut from the quarry face using the Fantini chain saw which has a 1.7m blade with tungsten teeth. The stone is cut horizontally and then vertically from the working face before blocks are extracted and pillars of stone are left in situ to act as roof support.

Bath Stone blocks, up to 10 tonnes, are removed to be trimmed, cleaned, and stored underground to season, which is a process to reduce quarry sap and harden the newly extracted stone. Seasoned blocks are then winched to the surface for further quality control – every block is visually inspected and they still use the age-old traditional method of ringing the stone to check for faults. They then measure, tag and record every block of bath stone before adding to stock above ground or for customer orders.

Hartham Park Bath Stone website

Lochaline Quartz Sand Ltd

A man has "tragically died" following a serious incident at a Scottish sand mine near Oban - Emergency services were called to Lochaline Quartz Sand Mine at around 12.25pm on Monday due to concerns for a man.

The worker was pronounced dead at the scene.

Lochaline Quartz Sand said its "deepest sympathies" were with the man's friends and family following the incident.

A spokesperson said: "A serious incident occurred at Lochaline Quartz Sand Mine on October 21, 2024.

"As a result of the incident, a colleague tragically lost their life.

"Our deepest sympathies are with our colleague's family, fellow employees, and the local mining community at this time.

"We are working closely with Police Scotland, the Mines Inspectorate and others to investigate this incident."

STV News, 24 October 2024

Northern Lithium

Northern Lithium announce that it has successfully completed a 30-day lithium brine pump testing programme – This is a further step forward to proving the commercial viability of its lithium-in-brines development project in the Northeast of England. The tests, which were conducted at two litres per second, also provided indications of long-term yields significantly in excess of the Company's own production modelling at commercially viable flow rates of 30 litres per second.

Having further demonstrated proof of concept for the project, over the next twelve months Northern Lithium will now proceed with key next steps towards commercialisation, including:

- the installation and trialling of an in-field Direct Lithium Extraction (DLE) demonstration plant,
- the delivery of a new 60-day pump test at significantly higher flow rates,
- the drilling of further production capable and feasibility boreholes in 2025, and

Northern Lithium has been funded to date largely by private investors alongside UK Government support through a feasibility study grant from the Automotive Transformation Fund, run by the Advanced Propulsion Centre UK. To achieve these new milestones, the Company will be raising in the region of £6 million, commencing with an initial tranche to accelerate the near-term DLE demonstration plant trials and further pump tests. Funds will be raised from a combination of strategic, high net worth and, for the first time, retail investors via a Crowdcube offering, reflecting the fact that the project has now been significantly de-risked.

The 30-day continuous testing process, utilising two existing boreholes drilled by Northern Lithium, successfully demonstrated the achievement of a number of key milestones:

- it proved the consistent presence of commercially viable concentrations of lithium, at sustained and significantly high flow rates, throughout the testing period,
- it showed a steady increase in abstracted brine temperature as the tests progressed, providing further evidence that the brines are being recharged from depth, and
- it demonstrated the ability to simultaneously abstract and re-inject lithium brines using separate boreholes, providing a pathway to delivering a viable closed loop lithium brine processing system, maintaining the status quo in the deep groundwater system, and meeting all environmental requirements.

Northern Lithium, 8th September 2024

New Age Exploration Ltd

NAE have signed a binding share sale agreement with UK registered Paladar Trading Ltd for the sale of 100% of the issued capital of its wholly owned UK subsidiary, Lochinvar Coal Limited (LCL). LCL holds the 40-year Underground Conditional Licence (January 2022) comprising the Lochinvar Coal Project. The licence area straddles the border between Scotland and England, from Dumfries and Galloway to Cumbria.

Lochinvar coalfield was discovered in the 1950s by the National Coal Board and was subject to drilling but never mined. In 2014 NAE started exploration on the coalfield as far north as Evertown, near Canonbie, in Dumfries & Galloway, and as far south as Longtown in Cumbria.

In October 2014, (updated in March 2017) NAE completed a scoping study which confirmed the potential for a low cost long life 1.9-million-tonne-a-year long wall mining project to deliver 1.4-million tonnes a year of coking coal to UK and European markets.

Various sources
Thanks to Alastair Lings

Nuclear Waste Services

Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR), near Drigg, Cumbria - NWS which manages the disposal of the UK's low level radioactive waste, is carrying out the final capping of legacy disposal trenches and vaults which are now full and ready for permanent closure.

Capping is a key part of the disposal lifecycle and will provide an engineered protective cover over the waste that has been disposed of in the trenches and vaults. Comprising of layers of material, totalling up to 10m thick, the cap will permanently protect people and the environment.

Work is now starting on the Southern Trench Cap Interim Membrane (STIM) which will involve placing a new membrane, or protective layer, over the legacy disposal trenches. It will also include placing other

construction materials to progress towards the final cap.

Civil Engineering firm GRAHAM Construction, has been awarded a four-year contract and started work this August, with major works commencing in February 2025.

During WW2 a Royal Ordnance Factory was built near Drigg. UKAEA opened the LLWR on the 110ha site in 1959. (Wikipedia)

Alongside this, NWS has also completed the design of the final cap, the extensive enabling works and the rail transport arrangements that are necessary for procuring, importing and emplacing thousands of tonnes of materials, whilst complying with the conditions imposed by the Planning Authority.

NWS, 15th August 2024

Peak Nickel Ltd

The February 2024 newsletter gave an extract from the public version of Peak Nickel's introductory presentation. Their website now has a number of news releases. (Ed)

PNL announces the results from its maiden 2023 drilling programme at the advanced Rodburn Ni-Cu-Co Project, Aberdeenshire, Scotland - More than 2,600m of drilling investigated a 900m strike length of a variably mineralised basic-ultrabasic unit intruding gabbroic and metasedimentary rocks. Sulphide mineralisation consists of pyrrhotite, chalcopyrite and pentlandite. The main zone of mineralisation discovered remains open to depth and along strike. Maximum analytical grades, were as follows: Ni = 3.55%, Cu = 3.97%, Co = 0.24%, Ag = 12.0ppm, Au = 0.92ppm, Pd = 0.11ppm.

PNL, 21st February 2024

PNL provides the results from the maiden resource at their Rodburn Project – 4.3Mt @ 0.72 Ni Eq (%) including 2.9Mt @ 0.9 Ni Eq (%) - wide open

The higher-grade zone doubles the previous 1973 estimate by Exploration Ventures Ltd. (RioTinto-Consolidated Gold Fields joint venture). The resource was compiled using PNL's recently announced drill results. The global resource contains 23,100t Ni, 12,100t Cu and 1,560t Co and remains completely open to depth and along strike in most directions. The resource block model indicates a higher-grade plunging shoot raking NE on the main mineralised zone, which strikes NE-SW and dips at approximately 50° NW.

PNL, 2nd March 2024

PNL provide an update on exploration activities at their Rodburn Project where the 2024 drill programme is now underway - PNL will drill a minimum of 1,000 metres during the coming weeks and, funding dependent, may expand the programme significantly.

PNL, 7th August 2024

Portland Stone Firms Ltd

Portland Stone Firms own 5 limestone quarries and a mine on the Isle of Portland with over 150 years of reserves - They have donated significant land areas for nature reserves and are currently working towards creating a green corridor across the Island.

The Perryfield Large Stone Quarry is their main production site with net reserves of 48 years. The Perryfield mine is a natural continuation of the quarry floor. This allowed them to directly saw into the Perryfield quarry face to form the mine. The already exposed quarry face allows them to mine directly into the whitbed, mid-tier and roach limestone beds. This gives them access to over 680,000m³ of reserve with 2 portal entrances. The main limestone bed they are extracting from mining is Perryfield whitbed, with further beds following on in a phased extraction. The mining operation removes the excavation process, found in open cast quarrying, allows them to reach suitable stone. Mining lets them access future reserves whilst reducing their impact on the local community and environment.

PSFL website, October 2024

Scotgold Resources

Police warn people illegally entering the Cononish Mine that they are risking serious injury or even death amid a spike in online postings of "urban exploring" - The warning follows an increase in reports of people trespassing at a mine in Cononish, near Tyndrum, in Stirlingshire. The gold mine was operated by Scotgold Resources which fell into administration last year, and it is unclear who now controls the site. Police have said it is still operational.

The National, 9th September 2024

The Coal Authority – Ground Engineering Services

The Coal Authority provide a comprehensive service, recognising that remediating the impacts of historical mining is key to reducing risk on any project.

They say "We bring a depth of experience and ingenuity to the challenges posed by developing on sites that have seen mining activities in the past. The ability to remediate ground affected by mining requires an expert understanding of ground conditions and the risks from historical mining. Specialist engineering principles are required to stabilise ground suitable for development.

Our engineers are experienced in ground engineering and interpreting the requirements for the end use of your site. Working with our contractors we provide a one stop shop to take your project from the feasibility stage through to site works.

We do this by offering:

- assessment, inspection and management of mine shafts, adits, shaft caps, tips and other mining structures
- assessment of hazards – such as contaminated materials and mine gas
- emergency planning and response advice – including a 24-hour call-out service
- design and implementation of engineered solutions – including capping, grouting, drainage works, gas venting, plus ground and slope stabilisation

They currently have ongoing work at seven locations, for details and latest updates see:
https://www2.groundstability.com/locations/

The Coal Authority annual report and accounts 2023 to 2024 are available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-coal-authority-annual-report-and-accounts-2023-to-2024#full-publication-update-history

The Coal Authority website
Thanks to Alastair Lings

Tungsten West plc

It's getting busy at Tungsten West's Hemerdon Tungsten-Tin Mine, near Plymton, about 7 miles NE of Plymouth in Devon. In September they were recruiting for a Senior Mining Engineer, Plant and Plant Maintenance Managers, an Environmental Advisor and clerical positions. Looks like all the positions have been filled.

Tungsten West on LinkedIn

West Cumbria Mining

It looks like the two recent 'politically directed' decisions mean it's the end of the road for WCM's Woodhouse Colliery project.

The Coal Authority decision

On 26th September 2024 the Coal Authority (CA) published the Woodhouse Colliery Decision Notice of its Refusal to Grant conditional underground coal mining licences (3 No.) to WCM.

On 2nd October 2024 the CA published the Woodhouse Colliery Recommendation Report, with its Reasons for Refusal: **Recommendation** (extract)

166. As a result of the above concerns, it is recommended that the Applications are refused for the following reasons:

166.1. The proposed mining operation of WCML is not best calculated to secure, so far as practicable, that an economically viable coal-mining industry in Great Britain is maintained and developed. The Authority is not satisfied that WCML is able to finance the proper carrying on of the Project that they propose to carry on, through these applications, and the discharge of liabilities arising from the carrying on of those operations, and

166.2 It appears that subsidence damage may be caused to any other land or other property that does not consist in unworked coal or in a coal mine at or in the vicinity of the proposed mine, but as a result of the material inadequacy of the subsidence assessment submitted by WCML, the CA has been unable to discharge its duty to have regard to the extent of damage which is likely to be caused to any land or other property in question and to the uses to which it is or is likely to be put. The CA is not satisfied that persons to whom obligations are or will be owed in respect to subsidence damage caused by the proposed operations will not sustain loss in consequence of any failure by WCML to make such financial provision to meet present and future liabilities as might be reasonably required of WCML.

The Coal Authority; September/October 2024
Thanks to Alastair Lings

The High Court decision

The decision to grant planning permission for what would have been the UK's first coal mine in 30 years has been quashed by a High Court judge. Mr Justice Holgate said in a ruling on Friday that giving the go-ahead for the development at Whitehaven in Cumbria was "legally flawed".

To 'climate campaign' groups took legal action over the decision by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government, then led by Michael Gove, to grant planning permission in 2022.

While the Government withdrew its defence in July, the developer of the proposed site, West Cumbria Mining (WCM), continued to oppose the claim.

At a hearing in July, lawyers for the climate activists said the decision "smacked of hypocrisy" given the UK's "vocal international advocacy" over the phase-out of coal in energy systems.

Lawyers for WCM said there had been "repeated mischaracterisation" of the plans and the development would have a "broadly neutral effect on the global release of greenhouse gas".

In his judgment, Mr Justice Holgate said: "The assumption that the proposed mine would not produce a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions, or would be a net zero mine, is legally flawed."

After permission was granted in 2022, the Government withdrew its defence of the claim after the general election in July this year following a Supreme Court decision in June which said emissions created by burning fossil fuels should be considered when granting planning permission to new extraction sites.

At a hearing in London, lawyers for the 'climate activist' groups said in written submissions that there is "no significant need for the coal" in the UK given statements from British Steel and Tata over their moves to electric arc furnaces, and that granting permission for the mine "whether purportedly net zero or not" would lower the country's status as a "global climate leader".

In a 48-page ruling, Mr Justice Holgate said the Government "failed to deal" with the fact that "a positive precedent effect of a net zero mine leading to other similar projects would depend upon further offsetting arrangements; that would be undesirable because offsets are a finite resource".

A spokesperson for WCM said: "West Cumbria Mining will consider the implications of the High Court judgment and has no comment to make at this time."

The Standard, 13th September 2024

Update: It appears that West Cumbria Mining has not appealed the High Court's decision to quash planning permission. The company has failed to file any papers with the Court, missing the deadline to appeal against the ruling.

News & Star, 14th October 2024
Thanks to Barbara Sutcliffe

Western Gold Exploration Ltd

WGE announced the results of the recent 779-line km helicopter magnetotelluric (MT) geophysics survey within the Lorne Porphyry District, Argyll, Scotland. The survey demonstrated strong depth and near-surface potential at both Lagalochan and Ardlochan prospects and identified other possible porphyry-related centres across WGE's Crown Mines Royal License. CEO, Ross McLellan commented "these results clearly demonstrate an association between known porphyry mineralisation and geophysical anomalies, confirming scope to extend to depth and along strike. The survey also indicates a developing porphyry district with numerous untested anomalies. An update will be issued regarding the next stage of exploration once we have finalised our plans."

WGE, 4th November 2024
Thanks to Alastair Lings

Article: Return to the mines of Loch Fyne

By Ron Callender

The visit of 1976

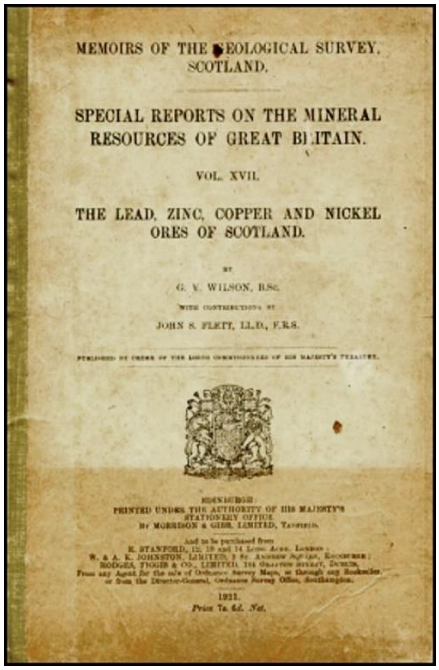
The visit took place in the days when Kodak Ltd awarded bursaries. I was fortunate to receive a bursary to investigate the lead mines of Scotland and my coverage was extensive by visits to Islay, Sutherland, Strontian, Lanarkshire and those of Galloway in southern Scotland.

As the bursary funds dwindled, Jim Macauley and I published **British Mining Monograph No.24, 'The Ancient Metal Mines of the Isle of Islay, Argyll'**, describing the mining sites there, not only of lead but also of copper, manganese, iron and silver.

The bursary ended with a small exhibition and Geoff Downs-Rose, curator of Wanlockhead Mining Museum (which had supported my application), brought bad

news. “We have omitted the metal mines on the shores of Loch Fyne,” he said whilst we were viewing the exhibition’s texts and photographs.

Geoff had unearthed a long paper by Mr G V Wilson who had been commissioned by “The Lord’s Commissioners of His Majesty’s Treasury” in 1921. Rumours inferred that Wilson’s research had been authorised to determine the extent of Britain’s mineral resources following the First World War.


MEMOIRS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, SCOTLAND.

SPECIAL REPORTS ON THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

VOL. XVII.

THE LEAD, ZINC, COPPER AND NICKEL ORES OF SCOTLAND.

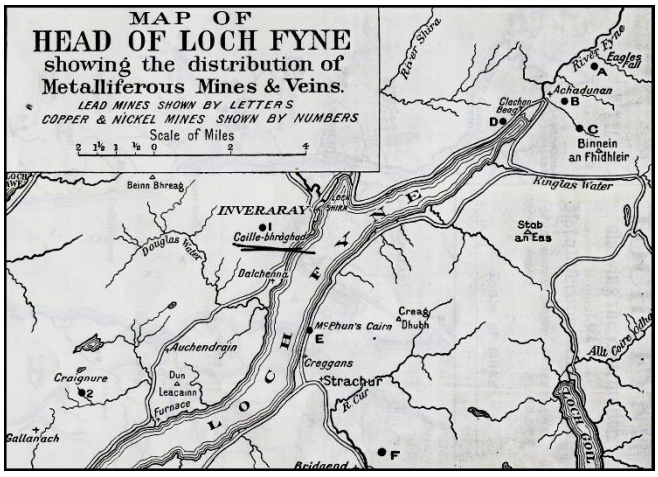
BY

G. V. WILSON, B.Sc.

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

JOHN S. FLETT, LL.D., F.R.S.

Cover of volume number seventeen, carrying G V Wilson’s reports on the metal mines of Scotland, 1921

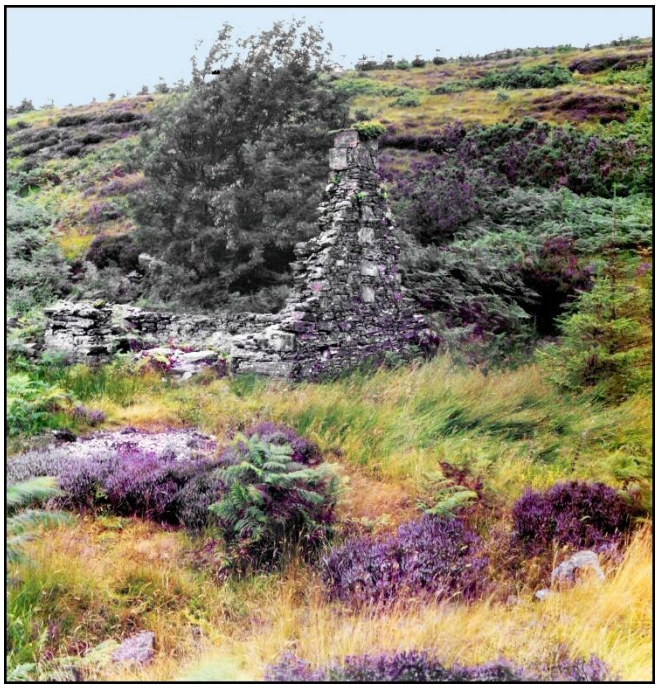


The site map in Wilson’s report and found by Geoff Downs-Rose who marked Coille Bhraghad as a starting point

Faced with our reliable source, we decided on an on-site investigation and, making an early morning start, we tackled the 80-mile journey to Inverary where we began our search … by driving cautiously southwards on the A83 road towards Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre, with frequent stops. When Geoff spotted some promising evidence on the hillside, we parked and our investigation began.

A 1976 view from the roadside of the hillside which hinted at the possibility of the former mining activity

We trudged up the hillside and reasoned we were at Coille Bhraghad, a disused silver mine that the Duke of Argyll started as a copper mine in 1851, but by 1867, the mine was producing an acceptable tonnage of nickel ore. Nearby was a dilapidated cottage or ‘bothy’; its position suggested it was associated with the mine workings.



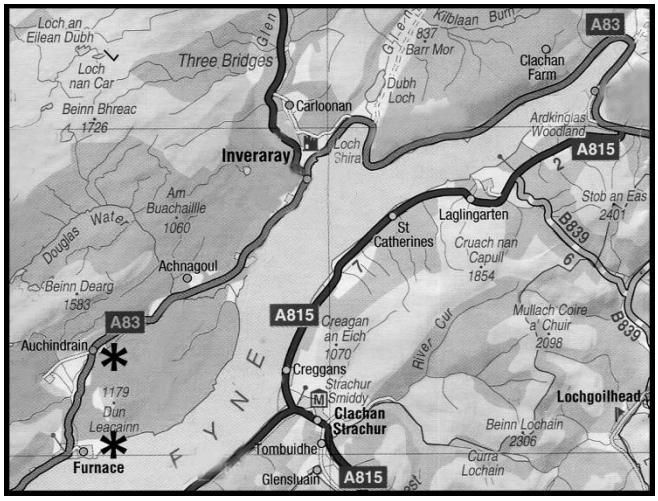
The dilapidated cottage or ‘bothy’ adjacent to a possible access for a trial exploration

Close-up of the possible trial close to the ruined cottage

Our investigations and photography took up time and mindful of the return journey to Wanlockhead, we called it a day.

Fast forward to 2024

My wife and I had planned a holiday on the Isle of Gigha, which lies to the west of the Mull of Kintyre, and in planning the route from Cheshire, we introduced two overnight stops en route. The moderate pace provided us with two opportunities to search for mining activity, as well as making enquiries at villages, such as Furnace and Auchindrain.



A modern map of the studied area with Auchendrain and Furnace indicated. Furnace is 8 miles from Inverary and Glasgow is a further 83 miles on the A83

It was September, and the first impression was that the landscape was overgrown by vegetation. In addition, Scottish Power had created rough tracks whilst inserting obtrusive pylons and a Scottish water company was active in harnessing supplies for onward transmission to Inverary. The manager in the Furnace Village Store was very informative on ancient mines and suggested a starting point should be at the next village of Auchendrain.

Following discussion with the manager in the Furnace Village Store, it was appropriate to scan the hillside with binoculars. Possible traces of former mining activity are marked with stars

However, conversing with the villagers we found they were keener to relate stories about the furnace in Furnace.

The furnace in the village of Furnace is now deteriorating, and its condition is of great concern to the villagers

In early days, the Furnace furnace had processed limestone to produce quicklime for the local farming community. The source of limestone was from an ancient quarry that is visible on the mountainside bordering the village. Nowadays, quarrying continues by Breedon Aggregates Ltd.; the appropriate evidence is also revealed adjacent to the ancient quarry.

The view of the 19th century quarry workings when viewed from Furnace

Photographic opportunities were minimal but an unexpected pleasure awaited me and my wife when we checked into our accommodation in Furnace. The house had an extensive garden and, nearby, there was a sequence of buildings. No notices, no gates, no fences; we were entitled and encouraged to investigate the former powder mills, which provided explosives for the 19th century quarry.

The exploration of the powder mills in Furnace begins with the magazine where powder was once stored, some distance from the 'factory'

Photography was not easy due to the extensive vegetation and the profusion of shadows on the derelict buildings. On the other hand, it was possible to view the different areas of the works, as well as an underground passage, which was not dissimilar to the passageway described in my Paper, **'Tyddyn-Gwladys, Merionethshire: Mining and gun powder production'** published in **British Mining Memoir No.109**. Bearing in mind the structures were licenced to make gun powder in 1841 and that an explosion in September 1883 severed the leg of the manager, it was pleasant to have the freedom to view and imagine the activities of the 19th century.

At a comfortable distance from the powder store, compartmented building of four units can be studied, in spite of the overgrown trees and shrubs

Relying on electronic flash to penetrate the gloom, a passage is revealed that runs below the units of the powder mill

And finally … Nowadays it is easier to locate specific information about mining sites than it was when society member Downs-Rose unearthed the paper published in 1921. In particular, the Scottish Cave and Mine Database is worthy of acknowledgement.

Dr Ron Callender (NMRS Honorary member), October 2024

Heritage News

Walter Lambert & Sons, Ltd., Spring Bank Saw Mills, Nelson and their Cornish Boiler.

This well-known Methodist family, serving independent family run funeral directors since 1877, had in the 1908 Barrett's Directory of Burnley & District set up manufacturing works at Spring Bank Works, Manchester Rd, Nelson. According to Mike Rothwell's "Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Nelson, Barrowford & Brierfield", it was built around 1906. There was also a skating rink adjoining the works. It was situated on the right-hand side as you leave Nelson heading for junction 13 of the M65 just beyond a row of houses where some of the workers lived. This site, long gone, was just above the Leeds to Liverpool canal and was still heated in 1990 by an old Cornish Boiler, fired by wood off cuts, shavings and saw dust.

Lambert's Cornish boiler during a general overhaul around 1989. Photo Alan McEwen

In the late 70s I used to go there to get shavings for my children's guinea pigs but I never saw the boiler. According to Alan McEwen this boiler was one of the last working Cornish boilers in Northern England, the other being at Thompson's wood Turners in Sutton-in-Craven. For around twelve years McEwen Boilermakers carried out repairs at Spring Bank including rivet replacements, valve overhauls and the annual preparation for the insurance boiler's survey. It was in September 1990 Alan McEwen heard that the saw mill was to be closed and demolished later. His firm persuaded the Manager to allow them to paint the Cornish boiler's front plate and polish all the brass valves and fittings. However, because the boiler was in a room below the saw mill (being on a slope) and out of reach of an ordinary crane the demolition men dropped the concrete floors and brick wall. This meant the Cornish boiler was buried for ever.

Incidentally the firm is still in existence, still run by family members, and now operating from a former mill in Nelson and still manufacturing coffins and accessories.

The firm also made tennis racquets and cricket bats. I had one of the former but the photo below is of a willow bat c. 1920 endorsed by Wilfred Rhodes (1877-1973). He scored more than 30,000 runs for Yorkshire and amassed over 2,000 runs for England.

Willow Bat c. 1920 endorsed by Wilfred Rhodes

Barbara Sutcliffe, 24th August 2024

Burnley Library to take all of Jack Nadin's historical photos and research for their archives

Burnley library have kindly accepted to take all of Jack Nadin's endless amount of wonderful historical photos and research for their archives. His legacy and all his work lives on.

We, at NMRS, were pleased to publish several of his books including the last one he wrote, BM No.117, "Cliviger Coal Mines" which you all received in May.

Barbara Sutcliffe, 4th September 2024

Ffos-y-Fran mine mistakes 'must never happen again'

The 'epic mismanagement' of the Ffos-y-Fran mine saga must not happen again to any community in Wales, according to a Senedd Committee.

Today, a report by the Climate Change, Environment & Infrastructure Committee calls for lessons to be learnt in how sites are restored after mining permits end.

Ffos-y-Fran

Ffos-y-Fran mine in Merthyr Tydfil is the last opencast mine in Wales and the most high-profile site examined by the Committee in its report.

The license to extract coal from Ffos-y-Fran expired in September 2022 but local residents reported that the mine was still operating – illegally – many months after this before the site was closed in November 2023.

When it first opened, the company running the mine, Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd, pledged to fully restore the site after it finished operations.

The Committee heard evidence that since 2017, the company has paid out nearly £50m in dividends and royalties out of the business.

But with current restoration costs estimated at between £50m to £120m, and despite the original restoration promises, the company now claims that they are unable to afford this.

The local community is now looking at a permanent scar across its countryside as it fights to see the land restored as much as possible.

Alyson and Chris Austin live near Ffos-y-Fran and are long-term campaigners on the issue. They said, "The whole process has been awful and the communication from both the Council and the mining company has been appalling throughout. They will only tell us anything when they're absolutely forced to; the local community seem to be at the bottom of their list of priorities.

"We feel like we've been hung out to dry by our Local Authority, the Welsh Government, and government agencies at all levels. The mining company should be keeping to its promise of full restoration and the council shouldn't let them get away with leaving us with dangerous and derelict land.

"This restoration of derelict and dangerous land was the only benefit to us suffering 17 years of opencast coal mining on our doorsteps. It's simply not fair that the community is now left in a worse position than we were in before this started."

More transparency

This series of events has led the Committee to call for the Welsh Government to use stronger enforcement measures when planning controls are breached, for example, when mining continued at the site after the licence expiration.

The Committee is also urging more transparency in all aspects of the mining process so that the public is aware of how plans develop.

It calls on the Welsh Government to require local authorities to ensure that all planning reports and restoration plans are available online and available to the public.

The Welsh Government should also encourage the use of citizens' assemblies as forums for discussing the future of restoration sites, especially in cases where restoration has failed to meet the original plan and compromises may be necessary.

Coal tips

The Committee's report also explores the controversial issue of coal tip reclamation and who should pay for securing the safety of over 2,000 coal tips which blight many communities across Wales.

While the UK Government has provided some extra funding in the last few years to mitigate the risk from **nearly 300 high-risk tips**, as the matter is devolved, they say that the issue should primarily be dealt with by the Welsh Government.

However, many Welsh politicians have argued that, as coal tips are a legacy of the country's industrial history which predates devolution, the UK Government should bear the costs of the longer-term work to make coal tips safe.

The Cafée's report urges the Welsh Government to engage with the UK Government to seek funding for coal tip remediation.

Mines across Wales

Today's report not only focusses on Ffos-y-Fran mine but also other opencast mines in Wales and the broken restoration promises made to communities.

An opencast mine in Kenfig Hill, Margam, was closed over fifteen years ago yet the restoration work "has fallen woefully short of what was promised", according to the Committee.

Margam residents told the Committee that "local communities were forced to accept an alternative restoration which in fact, was no restoration. The so-called alternative restoration of the site used £5.7m of money – instead of the £40m needed to restore the site properly as was promised."

The Co–mittee states that during discussions between local authorities and mining companies, the site operators often "held local authorities over a barrel" with authorities facing huge costs if the operators walked away if held to their original promises.

Recommendations

To ensure local support for any future developments, the Committee recommends making a degree of community ownership a requirement for opencast and coal tip reclamation sites.

Llyr Gruffydd MS, Chair of the Committee, said, "This report details some of the most egregious examples of the broken promises made to communities across Wales. There has been an epic mismanagement of these mines, by all parties, from start to finish.

"Mining companies have racked up enormous profits but when it's time to fulfil their restoration promises, the wallet is empty. They do as they please and local communities foot the bill.

"This is why it's so important for community ownership to be considered in any new development, which could lead to more responsible management of mining sites.

"Transparency has been a real problem with residents struggling to get answers from their councils when they have asked legitimate questions about mining near their homes.

"Time is quickly running out to secure what was promised for the local community in Ffos-y-Fran. We urge the Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, and other local authorities, to learn the lessons from this report, so these mistakes are never repeated in opencast mines or coal tip reclamations."

Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament, 8th August 2024

Thanks to Alastair Lings

Plans revealed for next phase of upgrade of the F-Pit Museum and Park on the site of the old New Washington Colliery

Sunderland City Council has announced the second phase of the £4.6m project at the F-Pit Museum and Albany Park in Washington. Plans include building a visitor centre and café with a community space, as well as creating an external exhibition area, a dog park and refurbishing play areas.

The council said it expected work on Albany Park would start in the spring, with building work on the visitor centre and café in the summer.

The F-Pit Engine House and the attached headgear are a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the only surviving structures of New Washington Colliery, which closed in 1968

The first phase of the project was completed in June with woodland management and wildflower planting carried out.

BBC News, 10th September 2024

Britain's dirty secret: The 'absolutely vile' toxic sites damaging the environment

A Sky News investigation back in 2021 found there were 34 Acid Tar Lagoons officially recorded by councils across the UK, but the Government has a record of only two in England. During the 1960s and 70s disused quarries and open cast pits were used as dumps for tar residues and other waste from oil refineries. No remediation or capping has taken place and the sites are now extremely hazardous, corrosive, poisonous gunge swamps detrimental to the environment, controlled waters, and in some instances, public health.

Many of the companies who once owned the land and dumped the waste are long gone and now no one is taking responsibility.

Hoole Bank Tar Pit

Sky News visited the lagoon at Hoole Bank, Cheshire West and Chester. Containing 60,000 tonnes of toxic waste it had been sat bubbling away for decades. The local authorities over time since the late 1970s have been trying to get the site remediated, but the Environment Agency (EA) has for some years banned all visits and objected to any research into methods of remediation as they have been concerned for safety of any person on site. The site security has for years been the responsibility of the EA.

Fast forward to February 2024 when British Petroleum (BP) announced that they will take responsibility for the pit, although to date it appears they have not started remediation activities.

Cinderhill Acid Tar Pit

However, there is hope for the future. Sky News also visited another site at Cinderhill, near Denby, Derbyshire, where Dr Harvey Wood of the Clean Rivers Trust (CRT) has found a cheaper natural process by which the toxic waste has been neutralised – Phytoremediation. Dr Wood said: "We wanted to plant willows on this site because we know willows like acidic conditions. We covered the tar with a layer of spent mushroom compost, we then planted the willows and they've rooted into the tar down 18 inches to two feet and now that is no longer acid." Dr Wood hopes this new process can be used across the country at other hazardous lagoons.

Sky News, 25th June 2021

Cinderhill – Harworth Group and the Clean Rivers Trust

Such is the success of CRT's ongoing rehabilitation at Cinderhill that, finally in July 2024, Amber Valley Borough Council granted Harworth Group plc outline planning permission for the development of an Industrial & Logistics complex and up to 300 new homes on land adjacent to the tar pit site. The brownfield site has a long history of industrial uses including an iron foundry and opencast coal extraction. Harworth's proposal includes land remediation, site servicing and installation of the infrastructure to facilitate the construction of the complex and housing. The regeneration of this site once complete is expected to create over 1,000 new jobs and the whole scheme has been carefully designed to incorporate infrastructure capable of supporting sustainable living and provides connectivity via cycle paths, footways and bus routes.

Harworth Group, 23rd July 2024

The Clean Rivers Trust has worked with Harworth for more than 6 years on Cinderhill. Prior to that research was carried out at the suggestion of the Environment Agency who then saw the Tar Pits as one of the largest environmental problems in the Midlands.

Cinderhill Tar Pit when Dr Harvey Wood of the Clean Rivers Trust first visited the site in January 2018

In 2018 CRT carried out a growing trial for six weeks. The surface of the tar was covered with spent mushroom compost to a depth of 6 inches and wands of willow either formed into mats or laid individually onto the surface. The site was watered.

The growing trial site after the first winter 2018/2019 (Source CRT)

After the first winter there was found to have been a 35% mortality of willows due to the severe drought during the exceptionally scorching summer of 2018, although there had been irrigation several times a week during that time.

The site had another layer of compost applied and a small amount of lime was scattered about the plants.

The site in 2024 (Source CRT)

Harworth's Planning Application – Considering the Parish Council Objections

This set of objections included flooding, mine water, surface water run-off from the tar pits via Morels Brook entering the Bottle Brook. All good points if you are not aware of the complex conditions of the site and its linkages below ground and at the surface. In one instance the pumping of mine water a number of miles distant to remedial activities influence the water regime below the area.

Mine workings, many of which receive surface drainage from land to the west, north and south of the site flow naturally with the dip of the strata towards the east and southeast depending on the seams of coal at varying depths. Research conducted over the last six years has traced mine water movements to the Coal Authority (CA) Pumping Station at the former Woodside Colliery, Heanor, Shipley. This research was helped by the CA and its maintenance program as when the pumps were not functioning for a brief period water was observed to rise to the surface at a number of mine entries in the area.

The CA pumping station at the former A Winning Colliery, Blackwell, Alfreton is also influencing part of mine water flow north of the tar pits site. The pumping of the mines at the two locations ensures no serious surface water flooding via the historic workings. The concerns that contamination may enter the workings beneath the site is highly unlikely as the lagoons that were filled with tars were not lined with clay but are set in clay. This clay bed will not separate or crack, both possible if the lagoons had been purely lined.

Surface water flooding to the parishes close to the site is unlikely due to the work that CRT have undertaken at their research site which is now holding all its water on site due to the tars breaking down into soils to a depth of four to seven metres with a large and growing diverse earthworm community. Prior to the remedial work being undertaken the runoff from the tar was pH1. Today the soils and water are a pH7.8.

The tar pits receive constant vibration from the heavy traffic on the A38 and have now done so for many years. This has had no effect on the tar/acid is matrix housed in the lagoons. The clay in which the lagoons are set will not be adversely affected by either the construction proposed by Harworth or future traffic. No surface water or contamination leaves the site by any route.

Demonstration of Success or Failure

Regarding the Tar Pits project and the use of phytoremediation on the scale already undertaken has been verified independently by Harworth who commissioned two independent overviews of the work so far undertaken. One was conducted by the University of Nottingham who are still actively monitoring progress. The other being Paul Nathanial, a leading expert in contaminated land remediation who practices globally.

We have also brought the Middle Lagoon which was an acidic lake (pH3) to a standard of water quality never expected. An environmental consultancy had put forward an option to drain the water body and fill it in. This last week a survey showed that duck, geese, and grebe have all successfully nested at its margins and a sustainable young fish cadre is developing in its water. None have been present in the lake water for the last 40 years since it was formed.

https://www.cleanriverstrust.co.uk/cinderhill-acid-tar-pits-denby-derbyshire/
Clean Rivers Trust website
https://www.cleanriverstrust.co.uk/cinderhill-raises-question-what-happened-to-part-2a-sites/
Clean Rivers Trust, June 2024

The Clean Rivers Trust is a Registered Charity. Its objectives are to advance the education of the public and in particular by the promotion of research into

inland and estuary waters and the publication of the useful results of such research

The persistent human costs of deindustrialisation: Lessons from the collapse of the British Coal Industry

Few countries in the developed world have seen such stark increases in regional inequality as the UK, the country with the fastest deindustrialisation in the developed world. Deindustrialisation has persistently affected living standards in the UK.

This Paper focuses on the collapse of the British Coal Industry, one of the starkest cases of industrial decline in the 20th century. Coal mining employed more than 700,000 people by the end of the 1950s. That number halved within a decade, following the industry's most dramatic shrinkage post WW2. Pit closures continued with coal production falling until its virtual disappearance in the 1990s. Today, the former coalfields consistently rank among areas with the highest levels of deprivation in the country.

The recent decline in industrial jobs has been linked to worsened health, the disintegration of family ties, and the formation of a geography of political discontent. Previously prosperous places are now 'left behind', with worse relative living standards, education, and productivity.

This research documents the effects on the health, wealth, and living standards of those who grow up under industrial decline. These effects persist even if people migrate out of affected regions, and they carry over generations. Industrial decline thus not only affects those who work in endangered industries; their children and their grandchildren are also durably worse off. Deindustrialisation thus directly threatens equality of opportunities for future generations.

Let's not forget that Free School Meals-eligible White British pupils are the largest disadvantaged group in the UK. ('Forgotten' White working-class pupils let down by decades of neglect, MPs say'; UK Parliament – Education Committee; 22nd June 2021) (Ed.)

The paper estimates the impact of mine closures on those who experienced this economic shock as children. The authors leverage longitudinal data that follows all children born during a week of 1958 and of 1970 (UK Longitudinal Studies). Using the data people are tracked throughout their life and information gathered on their parents and their children. **This information was combined with data produced and shared by the Northern Mine Research Society giving information on all coal mines that have operated in the UK.**

The authors then compare outcomes, at each life stage, between counties and cohorts, depending on their exposure to mine closures and conditional on a rich set of controls. They ensure that their findings are not driven by unobserved confounders of pit closures and living standards in a variety of ways. In particular, they verify that before the shock, children are comparable: at birth, there is no relation between health outcomes and socioeconomic conditions depending on later exposure to the shock.

Björn Brey, Norwegian School of Economics & Valeria Rueda (University of Nottingham; The Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR); 1st September 2024

Tin Ingot Study – Wheal Jane Laboratory

As a laboratory that has a particularly close relationship with tin mining, smelting and analysis, it is possibly no surprise that we have recently been asked to undertake a study into the purity of tin ingots destined for scrap. These were discovered in a garage with some known provenance indicating they were from two wrecks salvaged from around the Cornish coast in the mid-nineties, but originally date from much earlier. What was a surprise was the quantity and quality of surface blisters containing abhurite, identified after XRF and microscopic analysis.

Abhurite is a tin hydroxy chloride ($Sn_{21}Cl_{16}(OH)_{14}O_6$) named after a wreck found in the Sharm Abhur Cove, Jeddah in the Red Sea. Officially classified as a mineral in 1985, it is known from only a handful of locations worldwide, including two famous wreck sites around the Anglesey and Cornish coasts. The *SS Liverpool* sank in January 1863 en route from London to Liverpool, and the *SS Cheerful* sank in July 1885, eighteen miles NNW of St Ives, also en route from London to Liverpool. Both ships had stopped in Cornish ports to pick up tin ingots, and these have produced well-documented abhurite specimens.

The ingots supplied to Wheal Jane Laboratory for testing consisted of a batch known to have come from the *SS Cheerful* salvage, including some with readable smelter hot marks. However, the second batch of ingots are more of a mystery, believed to have been salvaged at approximately the same time as the *Cheerful* ingots but from an un-documented wreck.

The unknown wreck site ingots were not from local Cornish smelters of the 19th century but were from the same period. After cleaning and identification, it appears the ingots were from Sydney Australia, Singapore and Penang Malaysia. Included were "Kangaroo" smelter ingots which gives a probable date for the wreck of 1874 to 1877 as the smelter only operated during that three-year period.

So why would a ship containing a cargo of tin ingots from the other side of the world be wrecked off the Cornish coast in a period when Cornish tin mining and smelting was at its peak? It seems, from documentation in Australian newspaper articles of the time, that for a short period Australian and therefore probably Malaysian tin was shipped to Cornwall to be re-smelted and mixed with Cornish tin. The tin ingots were then stamped with Cornish hot marks and sold at a premium of over twice the original price due to the reputation of Cornish tin being the best in the world. However, the practice was relatively short-lived as it became clear that Australian tin was actually as good as, or of even better quality than, the Cornish tin.

It was during the cleaning process of ingots from the unknown wreck that possibly the most interesting find was made. As well as blisters containing abhurite, free tin crystals were found amongst the waste material. Further examination appears to show tin crystals in the abhurite blisters. Indeed, even though the exact mechanism that triggers their formation remains unknown, it appears that these different blisters were in various stages of showing metallic tin in the process of gradually changing to abhurite.

Wheal Jane Laboratory, 8th August 2024

Cornish History in the Making

A previous Wheal Jane Laboratory blog item entitled "The Last Cornish Tin Smelter" back in March 2024 included plans to smelt the last South Crofty tin concentrate from ore mined in 1998, using a single new hot mark "WHEAL JANE MINE BALDHU – SOUTH CROFTY TIN". These 10kg ingots are being produced for the South Crofty Collection jewellery business and will eventually be processed into quality jewellery items. The production of these ingots has now largely been completed with only limited concentrate stocks remaining.

However, the volume of interest raised from the article, and the historic importance of what will almost certainly be the last significant quantities of Cornish tin smelted in Cornwall, has prompted a further plan. To commemorate the end of a historic tradition, a limited edition run of tin ingots will be smelted with two hot marks in the traditional Cornish pattern. One will be the new hot mark described above and the other will be an original "Lamb & Flag" hot mark. The ingots will weigh approximately 28lb (12.7kg), which is the traditional size from the 19th century, and will be available to collectors in early 2025.

Even if South Crofty mine restarts production in the next few years or other Cornish mines re-open in the future, it is extremely unlikely that commercial tin smelting will resume in Cornwall. Therefore, by producing collectable ingots from the last Cornish tin, from the last Cornish tin mine, with the last Cornish hot mark, Cornwall's mining legacy will be preserved for posterity.

Wheal Jane Laboratory, 24th September 2024

Stonehenge's Altar Stone origins reveal advanced ancient Britain

New research led by Curtin University has revealed Stonehenge's monumental six-tonne Altar Stone, long believed to originate from Wales, actually hails from Scotland.

Furthermore, the findings point to the existence of unexpectedly advanced transport methods and societal organisation at the time of the stone's arrival at its current location in southern England about 5000 years ago.

Curtin researchers studied the age and chemistry of mineral grains within fragments of the Altar Stone, which is a 50cm thick sandstone block measuring 5 x 1 metres, that sits at the centre of Stonehenge's iconic stone circle in Wiltshire.

"Our analysis found specific mineral grains in the Altar Stone are mostly between 1000 to 2000 million years old, while other minerals are around 450 million years old," Lead author PhD student Anthony Clarke said. "This provides a distinct chemical fingerprint suggesting the stone came from rocks in the Orcadian Basin, Scotland, at least 750 kilometres away from Stonehenge.

"Given its Scottish origins, the findings raise fascinating questions, considering the technological constraints of the Neolithic era, as to how such a massive stone was transported over vast distances around 2600 BC.

Curtin University, 14th August 2024 *(AL)*

After almost 60 years, a quarry is set to re-open on the Scottish "island that once roofed the world"

Luing in the Inner Hebrides is forging ahead with its proposal to revive its slate industry for which it was famed. The Isle of Luing Community Trust has been given planning permission to start production once again at Cullipool Quarry, developing a small-scale slate enterprise, with the search now on for funds to get the £1.3m project off the ground.

Supporters hope the enterprise will rejuvenate the island - which has a population of around 150 - and attract new families to its shores.

Luing, which sits to the south west of Oban, boomed with slate production in the late 19th Century, when more than 600 people lived on the island and 15 quarries met global demand for the high-quality building material. Now, the island is set to become the only place in Scotland where slate is produced with the quarry plan winning the support of Historic Environment Scotland given the need for new good-quality slate to furnish the properties in its care.

Colin Buchanan, director of the Isle of Luing Community Trust, said: "We have had a great response to the news and there has been some terrific interest from tradespeople and folks involved in conservation work. "There is a huge market for Scottish slate for historic buildings. Nobody in Scotland is producing roofing slate.

"Historic buildings such as Glasgow Cathedral, Glasgow University or places like Iona need it. When the old stuff goes, there is no new stuff. Everyone is just swapping about the old slate.

"Our plan is here to take off the top of the hill, go through the face of the existing old quarry and then access the fresh slate. That makes it quieter for the people who live here and gives us relatively easy access."

It is estimated that, once up and running, around 200 tonnes of slate will be produced on Luing every year.

Mr Buchanan said: "We know that the slate is good and there is more than enough for 25 years so this is a long-term proposition and that is why it is so good for jobs

The Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland has described Scottish slate as "the most critical area in the supply of traditional materials" with a new supply an "immediate priority".

Luing is one of a number of "Slate Islands" in Scotland with others including Seil, Easdale and Belnahua although imports from Brazil and Spain have long cornered the market.

The Scotsman, 14th August 2024 *(AL)*

What steps are the Department for Culture, Media and Sport taking to safeguard and promote mining heritage?

Josh Newbury PM, Labour, Cannock Chase asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Lisa Nandy), what steps her Department is taking to (a) safeguard and (b) promote mining heritage.

Replying, Christ Bryant, The Minister of State for DCMS wrote, "Our mining past has shaped the lives of people, communities and landscapes across the country. It is essential we record mining heritage, and crucially share it with future generations, in order not to forget its fundamental impact on our society, country and indeed the world. My department, working with our arm's length bodies and the heritage sector, promotes and safeguards our rich mining heritage in a variety of ways.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded more than £39 million to projects focused on the history of mining across the UK since 1999. This includes investing in internationally important heritage sites such as the Mining Institute in Newcastle, restoring landscapes impacted by mining, and funding grassroot community projects to collect oral histories of those involved in mining. In Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, the Heritage Fund has invested more than £120,000 in projects focused on the area's important coal mining history.

As the Government's expert advisor on the historic environment, Historic England has also advised on and instigated a range of projects to record and preserve the history of mining. For example, the former mining village of Elsecar in South Yorkshire was one of the first places in England to be awarded Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) status by Historic England. Working with the community and the local authority, Historic England looked to document the tangible and intangible aspects of this area's rich mining heritage. Between 2016 and 2018, Historic England also funded The Chase Through Time project which explored the history and landscape of Cannock Chase, including its important mining and industrial heritage.

The National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield receives funding via the Science Museum Group, an arm's length body of DCMS. The museum is a centre of mining heritage for England, preserving and promoting the history of mining heritage and the stories of the people and communities affected by mining across the country.

Through our designation and planning system we will continue to protect the mining heritage of national and international importance. This includes the Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which spreads across 20,000 hectares in the South West. The region used to produce most of the world's copper, tin and arsenic, and the World Heritage Site looks to preserve aspects of this history for local communities and visitors."

TheyWorkForYou, 10th October 2024 *(AL)*

Chris Bryant only gives examples of what has happened in the past. The final paragraph tells us that they (I assume he means his Department) will continue to protect the mining heritage of national and international importance. Choosing to cite the Cornwall and Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site as an example. I assume he felt that would be the icing on the cake. However, while in opposition he must have missed the closure of the Heartlands site in Redruth after only 12 years of operations and millions of funding. (Ed.)

Restoration of the Ballingarry Copper Steeple under way

Earlier this year the Heritage Council of Ireland offered funding of €25,000 from the Community Heritage Grant Scheme towards the repair of iconic steeple.
The works need to be funded and completed in one as the Steeple is 96 feet (29.3 metres) high - built in 1863 and needs to be scaffolded to the top for the heritage stone mason to consolidate the structure.

The scaffold is up and Heritage Stonemason, Tom Pollard, is now hard at work at the top of the chimney.

The Copper Steeple is one of a number of ventilation shafts erected during the time The Mining Company of Ireland was working the Slieveardagh Coalfield, County Tipperary, ROI. Over time it has become a type of folly, and is the landmark structure of the Slieveardagh Area - It was built but never connected to a shaft!

This lovely Irish gentleman tells the story on YouTube https://www.tipperarycoalmines.ie/mine-location/copper-steeple - Tipperary Coalmines

Tipperary Live, 24th October 2024 *(AL)*

Thanks to Alastair Lings (AL) for the 4 articles above

Article: Colliery Engine Houses of North-west Derbyshire and North-east Cheshire

By David Kitching

Following on from David's article in the August Newsletter the tour continues and looks at the engine houses of the pits at the Whaley Bridge Colliery in NW Derbyshire and Redacre Colliery, Lyme Handley in NE Cheshire.

Whaley Bridge Colliery

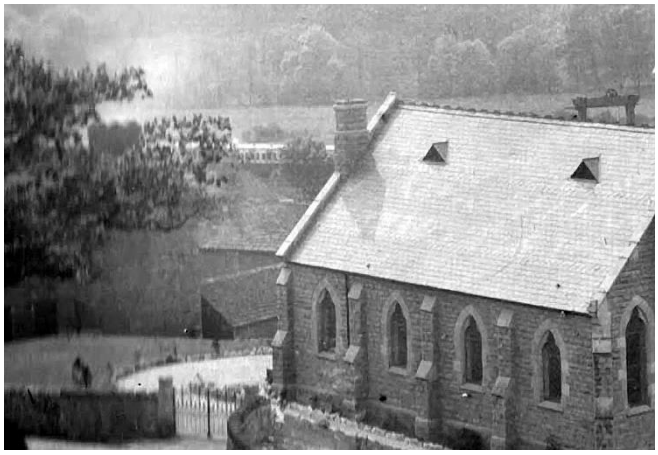
Waterloo Pit, Chain Pit and Gisborne Pit

The former Waterloo Pit engine house is the only surviving engine house from the Whaley Bridge Colliery. It has since been converted into a residence.

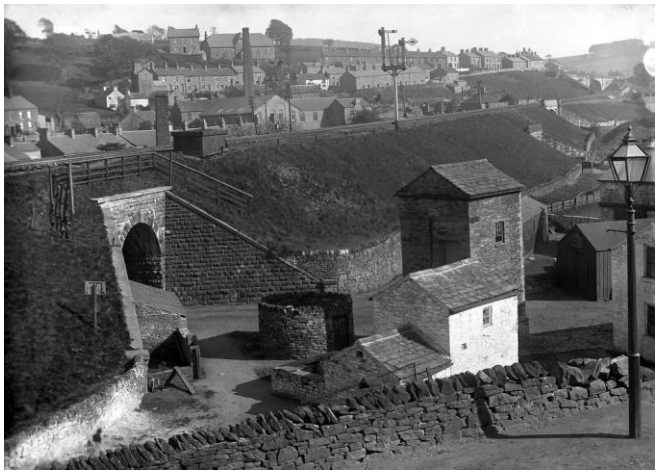
The Waterloo Pit Engine House as it is today

Gisborne Pit and Waterloo Engine House

The Waterloo shaft engine house was later used for the flue of the furnace placed on this pit.



This image shows smoke issuing from the furnace chimney - top left. Gisborne Pit just showing above church



Whaley Bridge Chain Pit engine house with Gisborne Pit and Waterloo Engine House in background

Wharf Pit

Wharf Pit as seen in this early photo showing the Engine House on the left. Chain Pit engine house is on the right between railway and cottages

The Wharf Pit Pumping Engine House hardly looks large enough for the massive 78-inch engine it housed, but it managed to just fit in the building.

Wharf Pit Pumping Engine

The May 1866 sale of the Whaley Bridge Collieries of the late John Boothman included: a massive and powerful condensing beam steam engine, of extraordinary size (for pumping), the cylinder about 78 inches bore, stroke 10 feet, together with the beam, pedestals, and chains at each end, of 1½ inch wrought-iron, 12-inch links, air and ram pumps, large cisterns, and the requisite brasses and fittings: this engine is the manufacture of the well-known firm of Peel, Williams, and Peel, and will be found in excellent condition, the cylinder having been newly bored at a great cost, since which time it has never done any work; an excellent-working well-constructed pumping beam engine, cylinder 26 inches bore, stroke 6 feet, massive fly-wheel. 18 feet diameter, fly-wheel shaft and spur wheel, condensing cistern, air and feed pumps; a beam steam engine, which has been used for winding, with cylinder 14 Inches bore, stroke 38 inches, fly-wheel 9 feet diameter, wrought-iron shaft, pedestals, and spur wheel; two cylindrical tube steam boilers, 30 feet long. 6 feet 6 Inches diameter, quite equal to new, manufactured by Ormrod and Sons, of Manchester, in a superior manner, of the best seven-sixteenths plates; ten other egg-ended, cylindrical, tube, and waggon steam boilers, from 15 to 21 feet long, and from 5 feet to 6 feet 6 inches diameter, most of which are in good working condition, and are by Hill, of Heywood, Wood and Wilding, of Openshaw, and other makers ; two lifts of excellent pump stocks, about 80 yards each, 20½ inches bore, with the working barrels, clack and bucket pieces; three lifts of pump stocks, 12½ and 14 inches bore, winding and pumping gear, head gears, powerful capstans and strong hemp ropes.

Wharf Pit after conversion to a winding shaft

The Wharf Pit Pumping Engine House was demolished apart from the bob wall on which the headgear was fixed when Wharf Pit was converted to a winding shaft.

Redacre Colliery, Lyme Handley

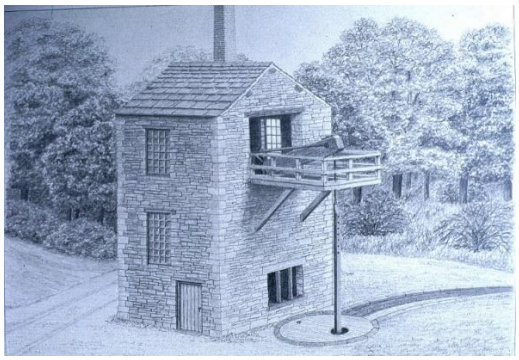
Bengee Mine

About three miles west of Whaley Bridge Colliery are the remains of the Redacre Colliery Engine House.

Not a lot is known about this colliery. It seems to have been sunk before 1800 and in the first decade of the 19th century it was being run by the Trustees of J & J Dodgson. The plan of the workings from the 1830s shows the pumping engine pit – circled.

Plan of the Bengee Mine showing the Engine House at Hagg Farm

The truncated engine house still stands along with the spillway for the water raised from the workings. It is believed that the building housed an atmospheric pumping engine and the architecture supports this theory with a chimney built into the corner and a blocked entry for the cylinder at the rear.



This drawing gives an idea of what the original building looked like, showing the bob wall on the right with the beam, shaft and spillway

The building as it stands today. As can be seen the building has had quite a lot of height removed; this includes the part of the bob wall where the beam was situated. The shaft is located to the left of the bags with the spillway out of shot to the right

Picture showing the chimney and the bricked-up entry for the cylinder

As it stands today showing location of the chimney with the entry for the cylinder on right side wall

David Kitching, April 2024

Book Review

Mines of the Lake District Fells
by John Adams

Reviewed by Barbara Sutcliffe

Written by NMRS member John Adams. This book, the third edition, is updated and enlarged. When it arrived, it was obvious it was enlarged as it is now A4 instead of the original A5.

It should appeal not only to our members (*see below for a generous discount) but to general fell walkers and anyone curious about the history, nature and extent of the old and fascinating workings in this area. It can be dipped in and out of depending on individual interests. The aim of the book is to provide a comprehensive catalogue and history of numerous mines, including trial levels to be found in and on these famous fells.

Various b&w and colour photos, maps and illustrations help to tell the story in this 168-page paperback edition. Preceding the index at the back is a map showing the breakdown of regions used in the index, and explaining to the uninitiated how to use the grid references. The actual index runs to 5 pages with the mine name (in alphabetical order for ease), page number (in red to make it stand out), the group name and the region and grid reference.

Even the introduction at the beginning is interesting, how John became interested in the area both below and above ground, various sources - our Society is mentioned several times, not forgetting how mines can be dangerous places! Then follows a general introduction to mining terms accompanied by drawings and a brief overall history of Lake District and several pages of colour underground photos.

The main part of this edition is given up to the various regions, with the mines listed alphabetically. There are plenty of plans and illustrations with some colour photos. Each mine mentioned has a description of where it is situated within its region, mining details and a history of the mine. Much research has become available since the previous editions and this fact has helped to add more detail to the main body of the book.

In my opinion it fulfils its aims and is an excellent introduction to the mines of the Lake District And we must thank John for being encouraged to go ahead with this edition.

* Members of the following societies can purchase the book at a discounted price of £20.00 post free. NMRS, CATMHS, CWAAS, Cumberland Geological Society, Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society'.

Email dave@p3publications.com stating '£20 Offer', to which society you belong, the book title and how many copies you would like. Dave will take it from there.

Barbara Sutcliffe, 17th September 2024

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If you are in or near Burnley why not check out NMRS's very own retail outlet for pre-loved books at:

Stand 905, KarLen Antiques and Collectibles, Unit 5, Kings Mill, Queen Street, Harle Syke, Burnley, BB10 2HX

Open 7 days a week Monday - Saturday 10am- 4pm, Sunday 11am-4pm. There is a free car park with an overspill one next door.

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Don't forget to checkout our NMRS Facebook Page. The page is curated by Barbara Sutcliffe and updated daily

https://www.facebook.com/NMRSenquiries/

and our NMRS Publications Page

https://www.facebook.com/publicationsnmrs

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From the Newsletter Editor

This is the final Newsletter for this year. It is the fourth that I have edited. As my first year as Newsletter Editor, Committee Member and Trustee draws to a close, I want to express my thanks to those who have supported me throughout the year.

To Mike Gill for his help and encouragement in what was a flawless handover that made getting my first newsletter to press drama free. Best wishes Mike and take care. Mike's regular contributions to our newsletter will be sadly missed.

To Barbara Sutcliffe for always being there with help and advice. Many of you may not know that Barbara is the one, along with support from her family who packs and mails the two British Mining books that members receive plus the Newsletters with the same mailing for those members who take the paper copy. As

Newsletter Editor I am meant to do the mailing for the other two newsletters. Due to circumstances, I am not always able to do that so Barbara steps up and does it for me, as she did for the February issue. Thank you Barbara.

To our Chairman Len Morris, and my fellow Committee Members and Trustees Barbara Sutcliffe, Sallie Bassham, Malcolm Street, Dr Richard Smith, Tim Cook, Guy Hindley, Steve Grudgings and David Nicholls. They all need your support, especially during these difficult times for our society.

To James Cleland who stepped up as temporary Honorary Secretary but sadly had to step down in May due to personal reasons. Take care James.

Our newsletter would be very thin if it were not for the submissions I receive from you, our members. A big THANK YOU to our Committee Members and those members who have contributed during the Year: Alastair Lings, David Kitching, Dr Ron Callender, Tim Jeffcoat, Roger Bade, Stephen Moreton, Robert Lawson, Chris Jones, Peter Holmes and Robert Yates. (E&EO)

In closing I wish you all a joyous Christmas and good health and happiness for the coming New Year, our Society's 65th Anniversary.

Please note that the deadline for inclusion in the February 2025 Newsletter is the 30th January 2025

Submissions that will interest members of the NMRS are welcome. They may be forwarded to me by email, or by post (Document or USB Flash Drive) to:

Newsletter Editor
Paul Gidley
1 The Crescent,
Princes Risborough, HP27 0HT
Email: Editor.NMRS@gmail.com

Photographs, plans and drawings must be reproducible in monochrome. Colour photos will appear as such in the electronic version. **If you want anything returning, please ask**

In a mine! In a mine!
Where a million diamonds shine!

Photo: Géry Parent (Public Domain)

The Legal Stuff

"The Law of England, nothing to do with me"

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of its correspondents and are not necessarily agreed with or shared by the Northern Mine Research Society, its Officers or the Newsletter Editor. The accuracy of statements made in articles submitted for publication will not normally be checked for validity by the Newsletter Editor. The responsibility for the contents of articles submitted by individual members, or groups, remains with the authors and cannot be accepted by the Society, its Officers, or the Newsletter Editor.

Data Protection Act

Members are reminded that the NMRS maintains a list of their names and addresses solely for the purpose of printing labels for membership cards and posting newsletters and publications. Such details are deleted from the database for any member who leaves the society, either after the committee has been notified, or after it has been determined that an overdue subscription has not been paid for several months.

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