

# Friends of Killhope

President: Sir Kingsley Dunham, F.R.S.

OCTOBER 1988

## NEWSLETTER No. 13

This edition of the newsletter contains items held over from last time because of lack of space and I apologise to the contributors who have had such a long wait to see their work in print. I particularly welcome the non-urgent type of article since these are useful when seeking to achieve a balance of subjects or trying to make the optimum use of space for example. I am sure all our members are grateful to all our contributors for their efforts on our behalf.

The opening sentence of Julie Goodhart's item reminded me of our own holiday in eastern France this summer where I noticed in an information leaflet about the chateau in which we stayed that previous owners had "depuis 1469 on exploite des mines de plomb a Chitry." The local Michelin map showed Chitry les Mines only a few kilometres distant so, of course, we had to explore. A rail/canal trans-shipment point was immediately obvious and we were able to trace the line back for some distance past disused lime kilns and some rough pasture which contained familiar looking humps and hollows which may have been from early workings. The railway disappeared into thick woodland and being unsure of French laws of trespass we thought it unwise to investigate further. This was rather frustrating but does illustrate as Julie suggests, Friends of Killhope are never "off duty!"

B. Chambers, Newsletter Editor, 18 Cheveley Walk, Belmont, Durham.  
091 3868491.

## PLEASE NOTE

The venue for the next Friends' meeting on 12th October has been changed and is now in the Montalbo Hotel, Barnard Castle, which is at the north end of the town on the main road from Staindrop a few hundred yards south of the junction with the road from Egglestone/Kininvie and not at our usual and previously advertised venue of the Black Horse. This change is due to circumstances beyond our control. Rob White will talk on "Mineral Extraction in the Yorkshire Dales - An Aerial Perspective." Mr. White is an archaeologist who has made a speciality of taking aerial photographs. He has recently supervised the consolidation work at Grinton Mill near Reeth and is currently involved at Old Gang and Surrender Mills.

## STOP PRESS - KILLHOPE VISITOR CENTRE GETS THE GO AHEAD

Eric Ryan

The radical changes in the Training Commission's regulations have meant that Community Task Force will still have a labour force at Killhope until early 1989 but with a declining number of workers. Some men who have been on site for a long time and contributed a great deal to the scheme have had to leave - Michael English, Herbie Gray, Roy Robinson, Ossie Jones and Mel Nichol. Despite the loss of their skills work will go on restoring the crushing mill and developing the woodland displays.

The problem which this change created was to put in jeopardy the building of the visitor centre with its sales and display areas, classroom and audio-visual room, cafe, staff accommodation, workshops and much-needed flushing toilets. Without C.T.F. labour, the County Council would have to find far more money to complete the building. The appropriate County Council Committee has now agreed to the extra finance so the building work will continue.

### A SUMMER DAWN AT KILLHOPE

Peter Buchanan

As the dwindling stars slowly fade into the light of a new day, the clouds to the east are tinged with pink, while the dale is swept by a chilly north westerly wind brings a touch of desolation even on one of the better summer days. Greeting the new day, a dipper stands as sentinel, bobbing on a stone in the middle of the ford before being startled by an early morning lorry rumbling downdale, making it fly upstream, seemingly chased by its 'zit zit zit' flight call. Downstream, beside the visitor centre, a family of Pied Wagtails cavort around the stream and the washing floor. A look at the washing floor reveals the onset of the passing of summer. Only the Scurveygrass remains in flower. Spring Sandwort is long past its best, and with the reconstruction of the last few months, much of the flora on the washing floor and in the surrounding area has been trampled and gone. Beside the incline, the delicate dark pink petals of Autumn Gentian are just beginning to unfurl, while beside the stream running into Killhope Burn, a few bedraggled yellow flowers adorn a few members of the buttercup family.

From the moorland comes the cry of a curlew, a late straggler as today marks the start of the grouse shooting season. A yet more distant 'quee' marks the probable estuary-bound direction of this long billed shy and gangling bird. The meadow pipits do not seem to be quite so frequent, but perhaps the merlin which has been feeding on these tiny birds has seen them off. Downstream the only sound is the bubbling of Killhope Burn. Already the Common Sandpipers have left before the arrival of the chill of Autumn.

As the sun rises, the pinky clouds take on an angrier hue which so quickly fades as the sun rises above bringing a semblance of warmth to the ground. From the woodland rises the ever present piping of Goldcrests. Drawn by their tinkling, a quick look at the woodland floor reveals a wealth of late summer mushrooms. The brown coloured milkcaps predominate, with a few larch boletus making me think of breakfast.

The small reservoirs are silent now, after the traumatic early summer which saw a successful breeding attempt by a pair of duck ruined by their death. Was it a rat, or was it moronic man? We shall never know, but their death was a sad end to such a hopeful start for the reservoirs. Surrounded by the Soft Rush and Jointed Rush, their still waters are protected by the surrounding spruce and larch from the main force of the wind. The ground flora of the woodland has now died back and the possibility of deer brings me towards Hazely Hush. A few yards ahead, a flash of white rump and scarlet reveals a Bullfinch, before this timid bird disappears into the woodland. The rowan trees are rich with unripe golden berries, which will later make a delicious jam. For now, the small strawberries and tiny blue-black bilberries are there to mark the success of yet another year.

Ambling back towards the car park, a bus roars through the ford, as the workmen arrive to carry on reconstructing the site. The peaceful serenity of night is gone as man calls the dale his once more.

Friends will know from the last Newsletter that Steve Race joined our group after his talk in Durham and visit to Killhope last spring. As luck would have it, the first newsletter sent to Mr. Race contained Peter Lanham's item on his visit to the Science Museum to see the recently acquired "Leadmining Scenes." This prompted Mr. Race to write to me as follows:

"I was fascinated to read the report on the Science Museum's recently acquired "Leadmining Scenes, c.1805-1820" in your May Newsletter, and especially the description of Item 49 in the collection: "Effects of Alston Brewery" showing men fighting in front of an inn-sign reading "J. Dawson, dealer in foreign spirits, wine, ale, beer!"

Joseph Dawson was an ancestor of mine, and he was the innkeeper at the Black Bull in St. John's Chapel, which is now the co-operative store. The famous fight which took place in front of the inn was on 7th December 1818, and led to the famous "Battle of Stanhope" outside the similarly-named pub there (now the Phoenix.) The whole episode, and the Ballard of The Bonny Moor Her to which it led, is described in "A History of St. John's Chapel in Weardale" and elsewhere. The reference to Alston Brewery led your correspondent Peter Lanham to suppose that the fight took place there, when in fact it happened at a spot only a few yards from where your A.G.M. was held this June!

I have been in touch with the Curator at the Science Museum, Miss Sheridan, who is amending her information on Item 49 accordingly. How strange that my very first Friends of Killhope newsletter since joining should bring news of one of my own ancestors!"

#### TWO DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The final meeting of the season will be in the Allenheads Inn on Wednesday November 9th at 7.30 p.m. It will take the form of a "Members Night" and you are invited to bring along some slides to show. Roy Curry will start the proceedings with some of his underground pictures.

Underground Trip - this autumn's mine visit is to Rampgill Mine at Nenthead and Roy Curry has again kindly agreed to lead it.

We will meet in the new car park at Nenthead on Sunday November 13th at 10.30 a.m. Numbers, as always, are limited, so to reserve a place ring Ian Forbes on 0388 537470 after October 9th.

THE FURNACE AT ALLENHEADSIan Forbes

In the March newsletter I appealed for information about the ventilation furnaces at Burtree Pasture and Allenheads mines.

This led Peter Wilkinson to come up with a plan and section of the chimney of the "proposed furnace" at Allenheads, which Judith Pickin has redrawn for the newsletter. As you can see, the plan shows no details of the actual furnace - presumably it was at the base of the chimney - and the chimney is only about half the height given it in my article - my information coming from the 1864 "Kinnaird" report.

However the plan does locate the furnace definitely at Plantation shaft top, Plantation shaft being about half a mile south of Allenheads; just to the west of the Weardale road (GR.858445.)

Quite how bad working conditions were in parts of Allenheads mine before the furnace was lit can be seen in the following extracts from the monthly mining reports sent by William Curry (agent at Allenheads) to Thomas Sopwith the chief agent.

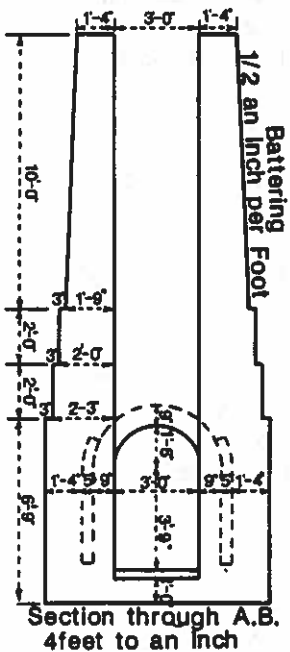
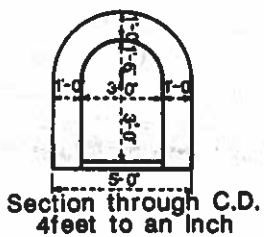
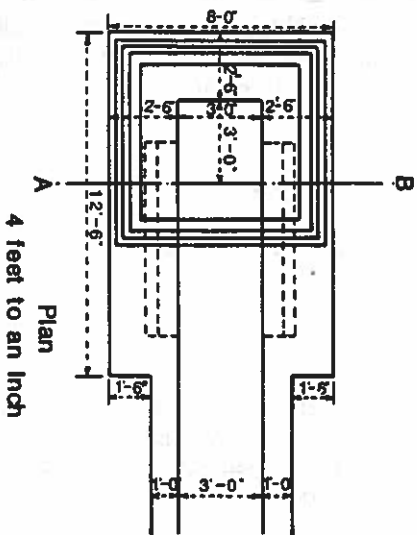
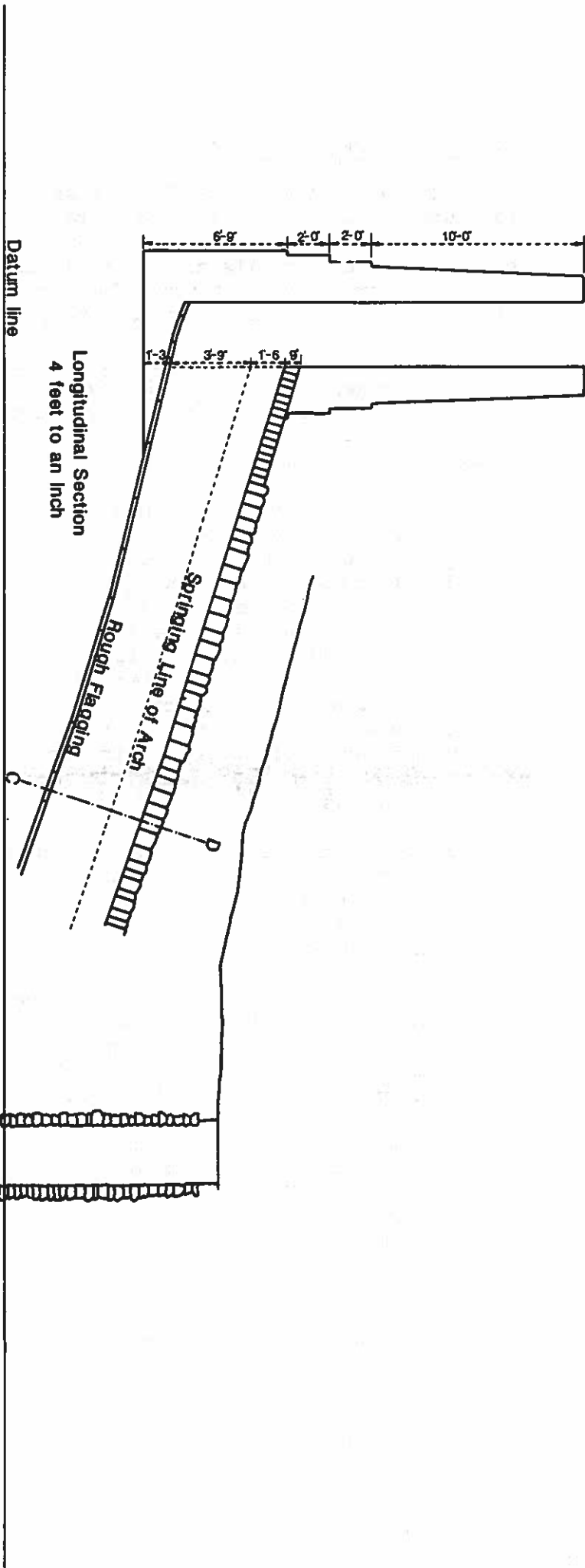
"Allenheads July 5th 1861 ..... no material change in the other workings in this part of the mine; during the last 4 or 5 weeks the air has been very bad in those and the quarry hazle workings more particularly the last fortnight for few if any of them have got a full day worked during that time thereby causing a very great loss and injury to the mens health besides causing great difficulty in getting men to work in that part of the mine. 5 men have given up their bargains this quarter-end and left the works for the above cause. E trial drift has not been worked during the last quarter for want of men and the E trial crosscut has shared the same fate this quarter end.

The last partnership declined going back again and have been divided amongst other partnerships where men have given up mining for surface work which seems quite in the ascendant to mining ...."

Only a month later, in his report written on August 3rd, Curry's tone had changed dramatically:

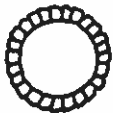
".... workings in this vein (Victoria) are without change except in air which is very good at present and in my opinion mainly attributable to the furnace erected at Plantation shaft top, for after a few days at first, the principal part of the men have been able to work regular altho the wind has been blowing from one of the most unfavourable quarters for air. This arrangement as far as tried has every appearance of having beneficial effect in this part of the mine."

It is worth noting that the workings referred to by Curry were under the headwaters of the Rookhope valley at the other end of Allenheads mine, about a mile as the crow flies from the Plantation shaft.



*Proposed Turnace at Plantation Shaft Top.*  
*Scale 4 feet to an inch*

1861



A Visit to Cymystwyth.Don Wilcock.

The Cymystwyth mine (SO 803746) is situated high up the river Ystwyth; the name in fact means the coombe or valley of the Ystwyth, similar to our use of 'hope'. It is the river, from which Aberystwyth the 'mouth of the Ystwyth' gets its name. But it can be somewhat confusing to learn that the river flowing through Aberystwyth is the Rheidol, the Ystwyth creeps in to the south of the main town.

The mine can be reached by road from Aberystwyth taking the A. 4120 to Devil's Bridge, and then the B.4574, this takes you out of the Rheidol valley over a ridge on to the minor road running up the Ystwyth valley, or you can travel in from Rhayader via the Elan valley and its magnificent dams and reservoirs.

It is the sheer size of the site that is overwhelming. The first thing you see is the huge wooden framework of the crushing mill bereft of its corrugated iron covering, except for one or two sheets which not only flap in the constant wind but produce a metallic screech as they rub together, producing the correct sound effect for this eerie and desolate site. The foot-square posts of the main frame of this building are gradually been hacked away by the colony of 'hippies' who squat on the site, and as they are apt to take chunks from the base then someday the whole structure will no doubt collapse, if it has not already done so, my visit was in 1984. Close by are the stone and brick foundations of the crusher with odd bits of wire rope, and broken machinery lying about, too tangled and smashed up for anything to be recognised for what it once was.

Overshadowing the whole site is the enormous white gash in the hillside above and to the right of the mill, it is an open cut leading up the mountain to Graig Fawr the most spectacular opencut workings in mid-Wales. There is nothing small about this mine whatsoever, everything is on a larger than life scale. The open cut gash up the side of the mountain contains huge boulders and deep clefts; to walk up it would require mountaineering skills. Instead we followed the flat trackbed of the tramway for about half a mile to the foot of Copa or Copper Hill, passing on the way two inclined planes and the remains of at least four levels or adits. Running up the hill were traces of at least two inclines, one heading directly up while the other ran off to the left on a less steep slope. Our route was to traverse the side of the hill to look at some open cuts and then to head for the top. It was here where the discovery of stone implements had indicated that the hill was worked by a pre-Romano-British society. The size of the waste heaps connected with this early mining indicates that it was done on an extensive scale, and that the search was most likely for copper.

At the top of the hill are traces of hushing, a reservoir fed by water collected from the hinterland was discerable, and from it radiated four or five channels, which deepen and divide as they go, producing enormous gashes in the hillside almost as far as the valley floor. It was reported in 1788 that hushing was being practised by the first known owner of the site, Thomas Bonsall, who worked it until 1808. The results have been regarded as the most impressive example of hushing in Britain.

Whoever was responsible for that judgement has yet to see some of the Northern Pennine examples. However, it was a dramatic sight.

We headed from the top down to the visible remains of Herberts Stope, a huge gash in the hillside dropping into the dark depths of the mine below. The two holes are separated by a narrow grassy shelf from which one can peer into either hole. It was not until you have left the site and looked back that, to your horror, you see that the narrow grassy shelf is debris resting on timbers and iron girders. The whole site contains open unguarded levels and vertical entrances. Across from this pit we noticed a newly excavated pit, which on examination, with, need I say, great care, turned out to be collapsed workings. You could clearly see the timbering of the stopings which had apparently stopped only yards from the surface. It is reported that the whole of Copper Hill and the immediate area is a honeycomb of old workings.

In his book *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Part 1., Cardiganshire - South of the Devil's Bridge.*, David E. Bick, gives a potted history of the Cymystwyth mine from the late C18 to its closure in 1921. He relates that in 1844 after several companies had exhaustively worked the mine it was feared that it had reached the end of its life. The mines, for the workings at that date were quite unconnected, continued to be developed by an Abel Gower for another four years when the lease was acquired by the famous John Taylor \* and Company and within a few years they were producing over 1,000 tons of galena annually. Development work in some of the levels brought success, a very rich hoard being found only 20 to 30 fathoms below the surface; "the kind of bonanza which featured often at Cymystwyth" states David Bick.

From 1899 to 1909 the site was developed considerably by the then owner, Henry Gammon. The visible remains today, the mill, the tramways and inclined planes were all his doing. Unfortunately the low price of ore and the high overheads and costs for transport reduced Gammon's fortune. In 1905 the mines were worked by Kingside Zince Blende Company for four years, then by Brunner Mond for a further two, Kingside Mines Company until 1915, and finally Cymystwyth Mines Limited until circa 1921 when the whole system was closed down leaving the site to hippies and industrial archaeologists.

\* John Taylor has northern connections being at one time, from 1823 onwards, in charge of the Greenwich Hospital mines in Cumberland.

References: David E. Bick, *The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales: Pt.1.* (1976)  
W.J. Lewis, *Lead Mining in Wales* (1976).

BROADLEY HILL HIGH LEVEL (Lead)Harold L. Beadle

Mining has been widespread on both Newbiggin and Ettersgill Commons which without doubt began in ancient times as witnessed by the spectacular hushes which can be seen on both sides of the road leading over the moor from Newbiggin-in-Teesdale to Westgate-in-Weardale. The largest area, West End Hushes, Flask, Pike Law and Leonard's, all made from dams which can still be traced. The remains of the sluice can also be seen in some of the larger dams. On the north side of Leonard's Hush is Broadley Hill High Level (NY 906 316.) Not to be confused with Broadley Hill Low Level which commences in the bottom of the valley near to where two sikes named Three Folds and Bropery Gill join to form Flushiemere Beck. The High Level is probably one of the most important lead mines to be worked from a level in that area, though it is probable that the ore from some of the adjacent mines is included in the statistics applicable to the mine(1) and may in fact have been dressed there having regard to the facilities which were available.

A document dated 20th December 1877 deals with the offer for sale of the remaining mining and dressing plant as it stood at the mine for the amount of £85, which seems by coincidence to be the same amount as the cost of the crushing mill without framework and carriage when new.(2). It is clear from the statistics that the machinery was being offered for sale when the mine was in the hands of Newbiggin Mining Company but at that date idle.

The sale was being handled by 'A. Bainbridge, Iron & Metal Merchant and Broker, Exchange, Stockton-on-Tees' who had either bought the lot from the mining company or was acting on their behalf.

Attached to the document is a 'List of Machinery' which I include. No prizes for a correct transcription and description of the items including the crushing mill.

## References:

- (1) The Durham & Northumberland Mineral Statistics. Published by The Department of Economic History, University of Exeter in association with The Northern Mine Research Society and The Peak District Mines Historical Society.
- (2) Document in my possession.

9

# List of Machinery

- 2 Good Water Subs & 1 Donkin Kibble
- Large Crowbar 5 st weight
- Blacksmith's Bellows & Anvil
- Ore Weighing Machine, Scales & weight
- Iron Wagon in good order
- Nearly new wood Wagon
- 5 Double Subs for Ore Washing
- 4 Series for do
- 3 Stangs for do
- About 60 fathoms Hemp Rope
- 4 Chains
- About 60 fathoms Metal Air Pipe  
(for which  $\frac{3}{8}$  per fathom is already offered &  
purchase to be at expense of removing)
- Brushing Mill - 20 feet diameter
- & 3 ft 6 in Rod including all the  
frame work.
- 8 New Brasses for do
- 2 Used Rollers for do
- 2 " Pinions " "
- (Crushing Mill without framework or conveyer  
cost \$85)

THE GRAHAM LETTERS Part 5

For the benefit of members who have joined us since the introduction of the Graham letters in Newsletter 9 (September 1987) I give below a brief review of the background to these important papers.

One of our members, Mrs. Jean Cripps of Delaware, U.S.A. is the great grand-daughter of leadminer Joseph Graham who left the Killhope valley with his friend John Peart to start a new life in America in 1852. Mr. & Mrs. Cripps visited Killhope last year and most generously gave us copies and transcripts of many letters which her ancestor received from England over a period of about 25 years. We are indeed privileged to reproduce this fascinating insight into life in the valley more than a hundred years ago. Ian Forbes introduces the latest in the series.

A year after Joseph Graham and John Peart arrived in the New World to start their new lives they were in a position to set up on their own as farmers. Mrs. Cripps, Joseph Graham's great-granddaughter takes up the story:-

"On May 23rd, 1853 Jonathan Brown sold 50 acres to Joseph Graham and John Peart for 450 dollars reserving the rights to the sawing timber with the privilege of taking it within 10 years.

Joseph & John chose hill country for their farm. Joseph's grand-daughter recalled being told that there was bottom land available but he had chosen the hills because they reminded him of home. The implication was that he had made a poor choice, since by the 1930's hill farms were nearly worthless. But during Joseph's lifetime his farm prospered."

These two young men were only a tiny part of an explosion of emigration from the lead dales to Canada, United States, and Australia. In these huge empty lands there were opportunities for hard-working ex-miners to prosper as pioneer farmers.

A letter of August 1854 to Joseph Graham is full of news of people leaving Weardale - emigration must have been the talk of the dale.

Although unsigned, the letter is in John Graham's handwriting.

Burnt Hills 1 August 1854

Dear Brother,

I forward you another letter which I would have send sooner had I not been delayd by expecting an answer from you to my last letter which I wrote to you on the 11th March which I have not recived no answer from yet for we long to hear from you again.

I received a letter from you on the last week of March to answer to the one I sent before which astounded me very much to hear so much disencouragement from you of us going to America for I am led to think that you are in the worst state thair is in America for the labourien man for a great many men cannot get no father (i.e. west) for want of money which make a heaver weight on the labour market which give the employers a great advantage over the labours. for I am led to think so for because thair is a greate number of Famiales in America now which has goin from Weardale and many of them Neighbours to us which writs very encourageing letters back to us again And I will give you as many of thir Names as I can at prisent. Jonathan Emmrison Burnhope, Walton Elliot Seadlon, Joseph Thompson Burnhope, Watson Lowe Copthill, Wm Patison Wearhead, Jane Walton Cornriggsgate, Joseph Hodgson Wearhead, Jos Wearmouth Tlaversrest (i.e. Travellers Rest, the pub at Cornriggs) Walton Gibson Wearhead, John Fleamen Blackdeen, Featherstone Phillipson Irsupburn, who was one of Thomas Milburn partains (i.e. partners in the mine) who left hear for America this spring has cent a letter back saying that he has bought a portion of land in Upercanada Weast of Hamelton near Lake Erie which he say he can live very well on without the assistance of any other work. Fleamen and Wearmouth has bought 100 aers(acres) of land about the same place and soeaks heightly of the place. they say that thir is plenty of work to get of all sorts to get ther and good wages to. it is grandest and flourenshing Counteys they ever so. We had a man the name of John Featherston who went from this Countery Twenty years ago who is a relation to many a one in Weardale who is very rich in prosperity now and when thay went first thay wair a great Familey of them. thay had not a penny left when thay landed and I think that is encouragement and all the names that I have mensed over has goin into Upercanada and a great deal more not mensed for thair was above a hundred of Men Women Children left this spring all for America and John Feathirston who went to America about a year ago write they will very soon have a littel Weardale thar. And their is a vast more prepairen to go this Autaum Jos Thompson who I have mensed before was Married to Besse Emerson of Wellhope and John Emerson her Brother to all came to America. they have goin to Upercanada. And thy comrade John Peart sister Hannah has got landed to Newyork..... I understand that the vassel that she sailed in made a passage of eighteen day over the Atalantic Ochen and I know nothing more about her..... And I have not don with the Emegratation yet for we have had a great many goin to Australia this spring again and a few of thir names I will give you over. Prehaps you may know them. Wm Crage St Johns Chapil, John Milburn Burnthills, Thos Peart Westfall, Edward English Burnt Hills, Joseph Peart Lightgreen, Jonathan Featherston Lanehead, Weardale and we had a party got back again after an abstinence of thirteen months from home and I understand with A fortune of 12 or 1300 pounds each which has encouraged a great deal to go.....

LEAD MINING ON THE GRUFFY GROUND

Julie Goodhart

It could only happen to a Friend of Killhope, to inadvertently stumble upon Lead Mining remains after a trip to Weston-super-Mare and Bath! We were in fact heading for Cambridge and stopped innocently at Prudies Mineries Reserve for a picnic. There were tell tale signs, of course, hadn't we just passed The Miner's Arms? Then, at our feet Spring Sandwort, noted for its lead tolerance. The landscape was familiar, rough grassland, damp patches of heath and purple moor grass. Indeed we had discovered a well known lead mining site and consequently cancelled our travelling for the day to explore.

The Mendip Hills, where we were, are another of Britain's former lead mining sites. The altitude was roughly one thousand feet and the reserve was on the edge of the moorland and situated on Gruffy Ground. We were immediately taken with this wonderful description of land which has been worked and re-worked for lead. Here in Durham we have our own Gruffy Ground, the hummocks and lumps and dips which have been covered over by the grass and mosses.

After lunch and a short time looking around at the vegetation we back-tracked to the Miner's Arms, in search of further evidence and information. The Miner's Arms had been an inn for sheep drovers and miners until the decline of the lead mining of the 1900's. At this time, in line with other poverty stricken miners in the country, the families were starving and poaching was undertaken. There are similarities to our own story of The Bonny Moor Hen, except the Mendip men were poaching The Bonnie Bunnie! To rid the area of men of such poor character as to poach, for whatever reason, the Miner's Arms had its licence revoked in 1913 and became a small holding, offering accommodation to hikers and bikers. Today the Miner's Arms is a restaurant which serves the famous "Mendip Snails" and there is also a bed and breakfast facility.

Close by is Charterhouse-on-Mendip where the Mendip Hills Mining Company worked. Although they dug shafts from 1847-1885 they found no new veins and made profit only through employing the consultant Nicholas Ennor and re-worked lead-rich waste from former lead mining times. There is evidence on the Charterhouse site of buddles, reservoirs, masonry flues and smelting. When the control of the work passed on to Treffry's, a Cornish smelting firm, further profits were made. The site is another example of the craft of the Cornish miner, and their building skills.

Tales of conflict and confrontation stir the imagination, in Weardale we have the Bonny Moor Hen and hear of the Washer Boy's strike. At Charterhouse, just when there was an upturn in the company's fortunes, there was a riot. The following extract is taken from Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society, 1984, Vol 17 No. 1

### The Riot

At a special meeting on the 22nd December 1848 Chairman Barwell made a "statement of the extra expenses which had unavoidably occurred from extensive breakages of the leats and launders, and that during their repairs they were unable to continue operations.

A court case ensued Barwell v the Hundred of Winterstoke. Captain Horpur was the main witness who described the mine and the troughs carrying water to dress the ore, "In some places the troughs are supported at a considerable height above the ground by wooden legs. On the night of 9th June the troughs were injured and the repair of them cost £60-£70. In consequence I set Cole to watch the troughs on the night of 23rd June. About 1 o'clock I was awake by Cole. I heard the report of firearms. I was afraid and, therefore, did not go to the spot at that moment, but the next morning I went to the troughs and found that they were broken to pieces in every direction for more than a mile, and the cost of reparation is £140."

The defence contended that the aggrieved people of Cheddar were simply exercising their right to prevent the poisoning of the water, but the Mendip Hills Mining Company won the case. The underlying anger which resulted in vandalism, was the company practise of slime washing, as recorded by Nicholas Enor in 1873.

"The company had adopted a plan.... of washing out the slime and picking out the old slags by hand. The slime was then washed for miles underground and came out into Cheddar fish ponds and filled them, for which the company had to pay damages. I have taken samples from these ponds since, producing 8% lead."

The Mendips not only have lead and other geological sites of interest like the Cheddar Gorge but there are other places of interest. Within fifteen miles there is Axbridge (King John's Hunting Lodge,) Bristol, Chewton Mendip Cheese Farm, Bronze and Iron Age forts, Wookey Hole and Wells cathedral.

For meals and accommodation at the Miner's Arms, telephone Wells (0749) 870217. Address - Priddy, Nr. Wells, Somerset BA5 3DB.

HAREHOPE GILL LEAD MINE.by BRIAN SHORT.

By the side of a quiet picnic area just off the Bollihope Burn at the "top end" of Harehope Quarry, Frosterley, are the scant remains of the once celebrated Harehope Gill Lead Mine. Surface remains amount to the ruins of the mine shop, an earth closet and a water-wheel pit. The water-wheel must have been used to drive a crusher as it is in the wrong position to pump water from or drive air into the mine. In the next field above the wheel pit is the site of a reservoir, although to the untrained eye this is just a depression in the ground. These remains afford very few clues to the casual passer-by of the toils and hardships endured by that group of craftsmen known generally as lead miners all masters in their own right, whose coming together brought about the extraction of that much sought after mineral, commonly known as lead ore.

One Sunday my son and I set off to explore the underground workings of the mine, but to our dismay, 300 yards into the level we encountered a build-up of material almost to roof height, backed up by 1,000's of gallons of water, effectively ending any thoughts of a detailed underground survey. A walk up the gill to the Day Shaft revealed that the shaft is open for about 120 feet with a build-up of rubbish possibly on some staging at that depth. At about 70 feet there seems to be a passage leading off to the west along the line of the vein. As this is not shown on the redrawn plan, it must be part of some later development.

This project, researched with the help of Les Blackett, was to have been a complete history, albeit condensed, of the mine and associated operations at Harehope Gill, but despite visits to Durham and Newcastle Records Offices and conversations with various people, there are still many gaps to fill in and any information other Friends may have will be very much appreciated. The earliest material we have found is a plan dated 1796, closely followed by a plan from 1800 and already the vein (Slit Vein) had been reached from the "new" water level and development amounted to 100 feet west and 528 feet east. The level was 2,175 feet long, driven on top of the Great Limestone. Workings eventually extended to 1,050 feet west and 1,500 east of the level head. Winzes gave access to deeper ground carrying down to the 4 Fathom Limestone.

There is in existence a good, although undated, plan and section from some time later than 1800. I have redrawn this plan from a photograph which the staff at Durham Records Office so kindly allowed me to take whilst researching there one day. The plan dated 1800 shows an old hush just north of the vein and two old level mouths which can only mean that operations started long before this date, the present level obviously driven to win ore below the old level horizon where water would be a problem otherwise.

Records show that prior to 1800 the land belonged to the Earl of Burford. The next recorded entry is dated the 29th June, 1847, when the estate was handed down to a certain Henry A.B. Coventry by his father. Obviously there is a gap of some 47 years unaccounted for and whilst the Earl of Burford may have been related to Henry A.B. Coventry there are no records to prove that this is the case.

The Beaumont Company operated the mine from at least 1818 until 1864. During this time production of lead concentrates amounted to 741 tons from 352 fathoms of development, giving a return of 2.10 tons per fathom, compared to the Weardale average of 3.75 tons per fathom. Production figures are very scarce but the following are available:- 1836 - 7 bings : 1837 - 109 bings : 1840 - 128 bings : 1842 - 222 bings : 1849 - 149 bings.

On 14th May, 1864, the following article appeared in the Mining & Smelters Magazine :

Harehope Gill Lead Mining & Smelting Co.

A prospectus has been issued of the above Company with a proposed capital of £100,000 in shares of £5 each with the object of purchasing the plant and residue of 17 years of Lease of a mining estate of about 900 acres. The consideration of the purchase is to be £40,000, half in paid-up shares and half in cash, which will include preliminary expenses.

No other information is available for this period.

On 19th April, 1882, the landowner, H.A.B. Coventry, leased the mine to a Mr. Robert Cross-Aitken for 21 years, backdated to 25th December, 1881, at a cost of £50 for the first 3 years, then £200 for the rest of the Lease.

The Broadwood Mines Syndicate Limited began working the mine on 18th May, 1882, after issuing 10 shareholders with 100 shares each at 10 shillings per share. This venture was short-lived because on 6th October, 1883, the Company was wound up due to debts of £200.

The mine was then sold at a later date to William Vickers-Thompson for £250.

Unfortunately we have no further information after that date, other than the following overall production figures. Lead concentrates: 1818 - 1866 and 1888 - 1891 - 1,165 tons. 192 tons of flourspar were obtained from dumps between 1918 - 1920.

As time allows the search will continue for more information to conclude this project, hopefully to appear in a future Newsletter, but no promises!!!!

Thank you to Sir Kingsley Dunham for supplying production figures in his book "Geology of the North Pennine Orefield", Peter Wilkinson, Ian Forbes and my wife, Alison, who although pushed for time, did the typing and photocopying.

May I also take this opportunity to ask for any information on Nenthead Smelt Mill, as this will be the subject of my next project. Anything submitted would be photocopied and returned, whilst being treated with the utmost care. Please forward any information to:- Mr. Brian Short, 8 Glebe View, Frosterley, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. DL13 2RS. Tel: 0388 527994.

A  
Plan  
of  
HAREHOPE GILL LEADMINE,  
in the Parishes of Wolsingham.

Draught in August 1800, by T. Crumhall.

The Vein appears on the Surface

Harehope Farm House

Scale of Chains



Scale of Fathoms



Bollhope Burn

Harehope

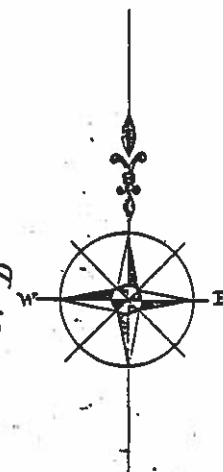
Harehope

Burn

HAREHOPE GROUND

WOLLSINGHAM GROUND

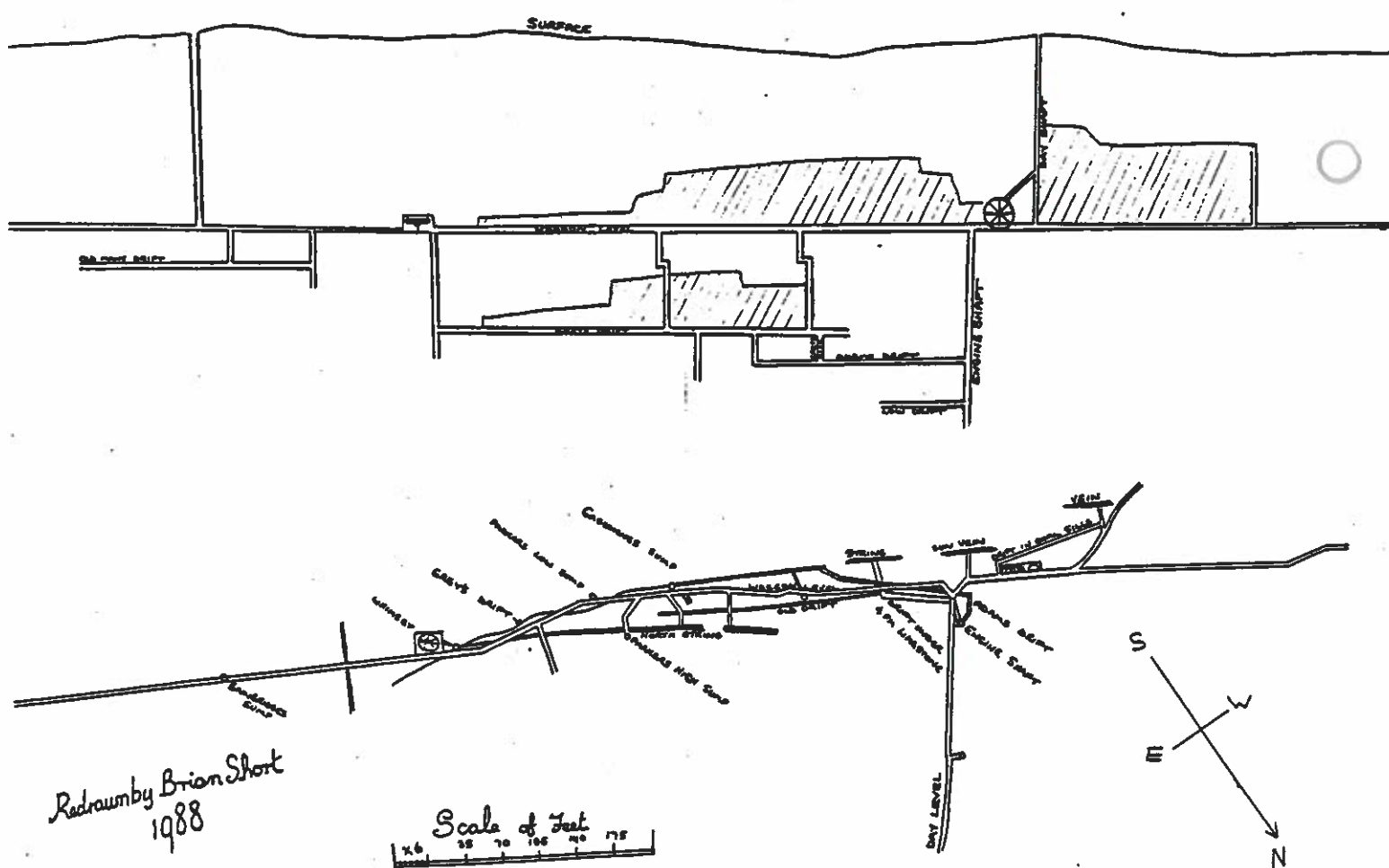
BIGGINN



REFERENCE

- AAAA. Stones erected by Lord Burford as Boundary Stones - Marked L.B.
- B. The Engine Sump
- C. Sluice to receive the Water that drives the Engine
- D. The Top or Foremost Shop
- E. Represents the Shop Sluice
- F. Represents the Sump in the Workings

Plan & Section of Harehope Gill Lead Mine



Redrawn by Brian Short  
1988

Scale of Feet  
0 25 50 75 100 125

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORTIan Forbes

Much work by the Friends this summer has been concentrated on the rehabilitation of Park Level and a report on this project appears elsewhere in the newsletter.

In this resume of the summer's activities I want to touch briefly on the other things Friends have done.

Since the last newsletter came out we've held the Killhope Open Quoits Championship, had three guided walks and two indoor meetings, all up to the high standard we've come to expect. My only regret is that the walks have not been as well attended as I would have hoped; all I can say is that those who didn't come were the losers.

So, thanks to those who have shared their knowledge with us : to Peter Wilkinson who led a walk up the Nent Valley to Priorsdale in June and gave a slide presentation of many of his favourite North Pennines sites in September, to Bryan Chambers who led a walk to Cornish Hush mines, to Peter Natrass who again organised the quoits championship at Killhope when Neville Bainbridge regained the shield he last won in 1986 and to Eric Carter who took us up the Hudeshope valley in September

It is invidious to single out any one meeting, but I must comment on the treat that Sir Kingsley Dunham and Mr. Foster-Smith served up at the A.G.M. with their Brains Trust. I thought last year's session was exceptional, but it proved to be a warm-up for this year's event when our guests' conversation - the stories, the experiences, the expertise - made us all feel privileged to have been there.

At the A.G.M. Steven and Julie Goodhart and Russell Parkin were elected to your committee and we extend to them a warm welcome.

The big story for Friends this summer has been the finishing off of the Brunton buddle waterwheel project. Friends made and erected the boxes to bring water to the wheel and it was a great moment when, late one Sunday evening, the first water flowed over the wheel and it began to turn under its own power. Staff at Killhope have run the wheel for many days in August and September, and the sight of a turning wheel accompanied by its characteristic sound have transformed an otherwise rather uninteresting part of Killhope. Russell Parkin and his men are now looking at the feasibility of making a Brunton buddle to give the wheel something to do.

Other Friends have helped with interpretation of the site to the public, Andrew Discombe in particular putting in a number of days in the last summer.

Donations from a number of sources have helped the work of the Friends along, and our thanks go to those who have made and supplied the tie bars for the waterbox to the waterwheel, a rail gauge, two tub stops, a pair of sleeper braces and a metal grid for the minemouth area.

We have been given a bag of dog nails for the rail track and some typed labels for a mineral display. Tony Marsden supplied drawings and information on shake holes and with Leslie Blackett investigated and reported on a hole which suddenly appeared in the riverbank upstream from Park Level, swallowing most of Killhope Burn, the stream re-emerging from Park Level mouth! The hole which proved to be is yards long and 2-3 feet high, appeared to be natural, and has since been blocked up.

Peter Jackson loaned us an iron pricker (a miner's tool) for display, Russ Parkin made and fitted the ironwork for another stub point in the railtrack and Peter Ryder carried out a survey of Park Level and the falls on it.

George Pickin located some fine material at Whiteheaps, suitable for filling the settling tanks and conducted the negotiations with Weardale Minerals which enabled the County Council to get the material.

Just on the point of going to press I received on behalf of the Friends, a superb donation of five miners' lamps with their own charging rack and transformer which will greatly help the work in Park Level as I will no longer need to scrounge lamps for volunteers who don't have their own.

Not all Friends, of course, have been actively involved at Killhope but I hope that all of you, whatever you do, even if it is no more than mention Killhope to your friends, will continue to feel a part of the project.

#### BOOK NEWS

It is difficult to keep track of all the new books and reprints on metal mining and local history, but readers might be interested in the following either to give or to hope to receive as Christmas presents.

"Two Centuries of Industrial Welfare" by Arthur Raistrick. This classic work on the London Lead Company is being reprinted by Davis and Kelsall and will be out in November. Costing £16 this will be a reprint of the second edition, with a new preface and more photographs. It will be available from Davis Books in Westgate Road, Newcastle or from the North Pennines Heritage Trust, c/o Dick Phillips, Whitehall, Nenthead, Cumbria. If you buy from the North Pennines Heritage Trust they will get the normal retailer's margin on the book, so you will be helping to support the work of the Trust.

The North Pennines Heritage Trust has itself reprinted two booklets of local interest. "Through the Ages: The Story of Nenthead" by Louise Thain first appeared in 1957, and "Jubilees Story of Nenthead Co-operative Society Limited 1869-1919" was published in 1919. The reprints cost £2.30 and £1 respectively from Dick Phillips.

"Spartylea, An Upland Leadmining Community" by Jennifer Norderhaug. The author is one of our members and she has written and published this book about her part of Allendale. Mrs. Norderhaug has spent a long time researching the written records and talking to, and recording, the people of Spartylea. This book is based on that work with chapters on The People, The Winter, St. Peter's Church, The Chapels, St. Peter's School, Green Roads and the Properties. "Spartylea" is available from the author at St. Peter's, Spartylea, via Hexham and costs £6.50 including postage and packing.

"Weardale, Valley of the Prince Bishops" by J.S. Goodhart. Another book of a Friend of Killhope, this one is a tourist guide and history of the Wear Valley, linking the dale to the theme of the Prince Bishops. A Dalesman publication, it costs £1.50 from bookshops, or from Killhope.

### PARK LEVEL MINE

Work parties of Friends have been continuing with the rehabilitation of Park Level under the supervision of Angus Oliver on Sundays for most of the summer. Progress has been steady and so far volunteer Friends have put in nearly 500 man-hours on this one project.

There have been frustrations, particularly with the second-hand rail track we are laying in the level. Much of this has needed straightening, and we are very grateful once again to the Blue Circle works at Eastgate who not only made a fine job of repairing our Jim Crow when over-enthusiasm broke the threaded piece, but who also lent us their own much larger Jim Crow while ours was out of action. Not only was the rail bent, but it soon became apparent that there was at least eight slightly different sections of rail in the heap - and these different sections would not bolt together. This occasioned much sorting, after which we could send for Alan Blackburn with his burning gear to adjust the bolt holes.

However progress has been made in the level; so far the floor has been thoroughly cleaned down to the rough cobbling for 74 yards and track has been laid for 20 yards outside the level and 140 feet in the level. This track has been ballasted.

The temporary timber supports put up by Earby Mines Research Group at the piece of poor arching 74 yards into the mine have been altered, so the level can be thoroughly cleaned out and the floor level established beneath this section before the arching is repaired.

The water which was pouring through the roof at about 95 yards in has been stopped by diverting the stream above. However, much water still flows along the level (usually over 150 gallons per minute) making all jobs doubly difficult. Have you ever tried placing wooden railway sleepers at correct intervals across a fast flowing stream?

KILLHOPE - A REVIEW OF 1988 and LOOKING TOWARDS 1989

In reviewing the success of Killhope during 1988, solely on the basis of the number of visitors, it seems to be the same old story. We had hoped for more visitors than came, but, despite the absence of a recognisable summer, we did reasonably well and certainly better than last year.

So far, from March to September, the record at Killhope has been broken for every month. Although April and May in 1987 were outstandingly good months we managed slight increases in 1988. June and September have seen very many more visitors. It is likely that we will have 29,000 paying customers this year.

During the spring and summer visitors have been surveyed to find out where they come from, how they find out about the place, what decided them to come, what other places they had visited or intended to visit, where tourists were staying, etc. Similar surveys in 1987 showed that the number of day trippers was less than in some previous years but that the large increase in the number of tourists more than made up for this. The pattern of an increase in tourists continued in 1988. Almost 60% of all visitors were tourists. There has been a large increase in the number of visitors from the south and south east and we seem to be getting more than our fair share of customers from East Anglia. A surprisingly high proportion of these tourists, almost one quarter, were wandering around the area without having booked accommodation in advance. In previous years this would have posed no problem with far more bed spaces than visitors to fill them. This year many hotels and bed and breakfast establishments were turning visitors away.

It looks as though we will have about 240 booked-in parties during the year, a quarter more than last year. Killhope has been much more successful than previously in attracting parties from outside the region and from Tyne & Wear. It has been possible to allocate all these parties at least one member of staff to show them around, and usually two staff. This personalised service has become a feature of Killhope which is our hallmark almost as much as the wheel itself. Of course, if "Friends" are visiting the site, we would hope that they would help with this approach by talking to visitors about Killhope and lead mining. Many of our visitors go away delighted that someone has bothered to spend a few minutes answering their questions and pointing out various features of interest.

The signs already look good for 1989. We have already had far more bookings for next year than we had for 1988 last February. Coach operators from outside the region have enquired about the site, there have been far more groups of teachers visiting Killhope to see what it has to offer and next January Weardale House at Ireshopeburn re-opens as a field study centre. This last factor should help Weardale Museum and Killhope.

Eric Ryan, Durham County Council.