

Friends of Killhope

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

OCTOBER 1989

NEWSLETTER No. 16

Prestigious Award for Killhope

Members may have seen on local television and in the press that Killhope has been commended in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors/The Times Conservation Awards made in London recently. The commendation was made in the Educational and Residential section. As the press reported Durham County Council were delighted with the award and a representative commented, "Its not the end but a significant point in the development of the project." David Miller reports more fully elsewhere. Certainly all concerned can be proud of this national recognition of their efforts and we must hope that this latest publicity will increase attendances again next season.

A New Publication

Friends may recall that we had under consideration something more substantial than our newsletter to be offered for sale to the general public. This publication was to be made up of items from past editions and any other suitable material which might be submitted. Those who knew Eric Ryan will know he was always keen on disseminating information and his widow has suggested that a publication of this type would be a fitting memorial from the Friends. A Working Party has been set up with a view to putting the book on sale next season. We still need items for inclusion, however, and this is an opportunity to submit longer articles which might be unsuitable for the newsletter. This does not exclude shorter pieces, of course, and we welcome anything on our subject for consideration.

Final Demand (!)

Our records show that a number of our long standing Friends have not renewed their membership this year. We feel sure that this is due to oversight - or the vagaries of the mail. Reminders will be sent to defaulters who should note that our new Treasurer is Mr. W. Grigg, Heather Lea, East Blackdene, St. John's Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. We regret we will not be able to send further newsletters to lapsed members.

A Report from Durham County Council

In the few months since Eric's death, it has become even more apparent that his vision and energy on behalf of all things Killhope can never be replaced. All we can do is to try to do the best we can to bridge the 36 mile gap between Killhope and County Hall.

In case there is anyone in any doubt, the County Council's commitment has never been more clearly seen than its willingness to get the visitor centre completed. The Council accepted the major increase in costs arising from the demise of the MSC Scheme and gave the go-ahead on the £375,000 project. Work has been proceeding over the summer and hopefully all will be wind and weather-proof before the winter. Equipping the building and putting in the displays will take place in the spring and early summer and it is intended that it should be open to the public in July of next year.

Other work around the site that has a high priority includes investigation of the level to ascertain if it is feasible to open a short length of it to visitors. Progress is being made to complete the exhibits on the washing floor, and next year attention will be turned to completing the remaining displays along the woodland trail. The other remaining major project at the Lead Mining Centre is the restoration of the main water wheel and its associated machinery. Its feasibility is being considered, but such a project will inevitably have to compete for scarce capital resources across the whole range of the County Council's activities. Meanwhile the search for a major sponsor continues.....

(As reported on Page 1) a reward for the painstaking restoration work at Killhope was received on 27th September when Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee, Councillor J. Knox, David Newbegin and I attended a presentation ceremony for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors/The Times Annual Conservation Awards scheme. The judges in making their commendation (which was one of only 3 in the region and the only local authority award) made the following comment:-

"Now the best preserved lead mining site in Britain, Killhope is also a memorial to Thomas Harrison, who was killed in a mining explosion, and to the men who worked the lead veins of the North Pennines. In an area with a fragile economy, the rehabilitation of the collapsing lead mine and crushing mill has created much needed employment and has established an excellent tourist attraction. During the reconstruction, the research stimulated the formation of the North Pennine Heritage Trust and a local authority strategy for the conservation of lead mining in the area. The Council initiative, with help from the Friends of Killhope and the Community Task Force, has resulted in the conservation of a unique example of industrial archaeology."

David Miller, Assistant Director of Environment.

(Material for the aforementioned publication should be sent to Bryan Chambers, Newsletter Editor, 18 Cheveley Walk, Belmont, Durham DH1 2AU, Telephone 091 3868491 as soon as possible please.)

All too many issues of this newsletter have contained the sad news that yet another mine or smelter site in the area has been damaged or destroyed. It is pleasing to be able to report a development that will, I hope, go some way towards preserving what is left.

The normal method of giving legal protection to an archaeological site (as opposed to a standing building, which is 'listed') is by 'Scheduling'. This means that damage or alteration without consent from the Department of the Environment becomes a criminal offence, and in some circumstances grant aid for conservation or management is available from English Heritage. To be scheduled, a site must be of sufficient importance in some respect to be regarded as part of the national heritage.

The Schedule of protected sites has grown up in an ad hoc manner over the past century, and it has been realised for some years that it formed a very patchy representation of the actual archaeological heritage. English Heritage have therefore set up a major programme (the Monuments Protection Programme) to revise the Schedule, so that the best surviving monuments of all types and periods are systematically protected.

In general, this programme works by extracting information from the county-based Sites and Monuments Records (which in theory is an inventory of all the archaeological sites in each county, though in practice many SMRs are far from complete). For industrial sites, this has proved impossible, since the coverage in SMRs varies from the incomplete to the non-existent. They have therefore taken the Lead Industry (defined as mining, ore processing, smelting, and the lead manufacturing industries) as a pilot topic for industrial archaeology. The procedure adopted has been to commission a report (from the Institute for Industrial Archaeology at Ironbridge) to set out the history and technology of the industry, and to prepare a shortlist of sites to be considered for Scheduling. This report was prepared last winter, and it is fair to say that it has attracted considerable criticism, many of the problems stemming from a decision not to consult local experts in the various mining areas.

I have now been commissioned to undertake the second stage of the process. This involves visiting and reporting on the shortlisted sites in Northern England (from the Scottish border to the Trent); I do have some flexibility to add extra sites to the shortlist, and of course I am free to recommend for or against scheduling. I have found it essential to ask the advice of those who know the individual areas best (even in the North Pennines, the area I know best myself), and have been very impressed at the quality of the advice and help that I have been given. My brief excludes underground mining remains, but includes all surface aspects of mining, as well as ore processing and smelting.

I am working on a very tight timetable (I started in late August, and finish in November), so my method is to write to a very limited number of local experts in each area (including of course Ian Forbes for the North Pennines), add their recommendations to my list, then do a whistle-stop visit to each site (armed with current 1:10,000 map and, where possible, 1st edition 1:2500). The product is a single sheet of assessment, composed of a brief description of the site, a list of visible components, and an assessment including a recommendation for or against scheduling. I also outline the area concerned on the map. I have to cover about two sites per day (including research, travel, and writing-up), so obviously I confine myself to the immediately-visible features, and to sites where the case for scheduling is obvious. There are bound to be important sites that I miss, and it will be possible to get those scheduled at a later date. I very much hope that this survey, superficial though it is, will be the means of extending legal protection to the most important of our mining and smelting sites.

CAVE (AND MINE) SPIDERS

Anyone who ventures underground must be prepared for the unexpected. Even so, it is unnerving to bump into a big cave spider, particularly if one meets face-to-face.

In Northern Britain there are only two large spiders that frequent caves and mines. Both belong to the genus *Meta* and they are similar in appearance to the closely related Garden or Cross Spider. The smaller species, *Meta meriana*, can be found in the half-light zone round mine entrances. Its big cousin, *Meta menardi*, is only found in the dark depths of caves, mines and tunnels. Both species spin elaborate orb webs to catch their prey, though goodness knows what *M. menardi* finds to eat in the depths of most mines. Surely they cannot survive on a few Cluster Flies.

The deep-cave species, *Meta menardi* is an impressive animal. Its body is a dark chocolate brown with lighter orange markings. Its legs are gaily banded in the same colours and in the female they span well over a 2p piece. This may not sound very large, but I can assure you that's big for a British spider, especially if you have an unexpected close encounter! Like fish that get away, spiders always seem much bigger in retrospect.

Meta menardi is by no means ubiquitous but there does not seem to be any rhyme nor reason for why it should occur in one mine yet be absent from the next. I would be interested to know of any mine where it occurs. With more information on its distribution, we may be able to begin to understand its ecology.

NOEL JACKSON



Meta menardi ♀

MEMOIRS OF A MODERN MINERBrian Short

Having submitted several articles for publication, each one requiring an amount of time consuming research, I found this one a pleasant change from the norm in that all I had to do was sit and listen. The source of my information is my father-in-law, Harry Fairless, who was a miner until he retired in 1982.

During his career he worked at various mines for different Companies, e.g. Stanhopeburn, Grove Rake and Whiteheaps to name but a few. He saw hard times during his early years but life became slightly easier when he started on "piece work," with the better pay packets, although that is not to say he was well off, only better than some. He had the misfortune to be trapped by a roof fall in Stanhopeburn Mine, sustaining a broken leg and, towards the end of his career, when he was at Grove Rake, a ladder in a rise pulled away from the wall while he was on it carrying a water pump. As a result of the fall, some 25 feet, he suffered a serious neck injury which brought about six months in a Sheffield hospital, early retirement and much discomfort. He has many stories to tell, some funny, some serious, but all interesting. Some of them I would like to relate in this article.

While at Stanhopeburn Mine, the Manager asked to be shown what progress had been made in a particular place underground. This meant descending a shaft in a kibble. Carbine lamps were the order of the day and these were cap mounted. When they were both in position the kibble was lowered down the shaft by the winch man. The kibble descended at quite a good rate causing an up current of displaced air. The Manager was wearing a silk scarf at the time and this was caught in the up draft and ignited by the flame from the lamp. Unfortunately he was too nervous to leave go of the kibble rope, even with one hand, to extinguish the flames, but Harry, however, was used to descending this way and calmly reached out to muffle the flames. The Manager emerged with nothing injured but his pride.

Another story relates to the period when a fall in Widdley Water Level was being removed in order to improve the drainage in Stanhopeburn Mine. A group of Canadians had been contracted to do the job and their theory was that if the fall could in some way be lifted and loosened, then the water backed up behind would carry the material out with it. After ignoring advice against it, they inserted a 4" steel pipe into the fall and after packing with dynamite retired to a safe place to detonate it. Unfortunately the pipe behaved like a cannon and at the time of detonation, although the fall was about 1,200 yards into the level, the trees on the other side of the river were seen to move with the force of the blast. The inspection which followed revealed that instead of removing the fall, the blast brought down more of the roof and worsened the situation considerably. Eventually, when the Canadians had departed, Harry was sent in to drive a loop around the fall and this operation went without a hitch, raising inevitable comments like "You should have listened to us in the first place!"

Fish were often seen, sometimes at considerable distances into water levels, making one wonder how they survived on apparently next to nothing to eat. These fish were invariably looked on favourably, only being disturbed when necessary. Bats presented slightly more of a problem in that lamps had to be carried at waist height to lessen the risk of having one fly into the miner's face while heading for the light, thinking it was daylight.

Harry worked alongside all characters of men, some good, some bad, others with certain peculiarities. One was a Welsh man named Claude, who didn't like to part with his money. In those days dynamite and fuses had to be paid for, so Claude always cut his very short in order to save money. Many were the times when his charges would detonate before he was far enough away and he would crouch down in the level with a shovel protecting his face from flying material. One day when he had some other business to attend to he asked Harry if he would fire his charge for him. Harry agreed to do this only if he fitted normal length fuses, a request that Claude said he would carry out. He was working up a rise at the time so Harry climbed the ladders and lit the fuse. Unfortunately Claude let him down and the charges went off as Harry was descending the ladders and all he could do was take refuge underneath a bunning until all the debris had fallen down past him. Needless to say, Claude was told in no uncertain terms, to light his own fuses in future. Another of Claudes economical measures was to wear his trousers back to front when the knees became worn out. Also, to save washing clothes so often he would wear a clean shirt under his dirty one so as to keep it cleaner longer.

Sometimes Harry would be called to the surface to do minor jobs, one of these was to blast out some rocks to make way for a machine bed. It was in the vicinity of the Manager's office, which had a light fixed to the wall outside. Every time blasting was done nearby, he would come out beforehand and tell the men to be very careful not to damage his wall light. Harry became tired of this and tried every time to line up the charge hole, and possible blast pattern, with the wall light, the theory being that if the light was knocked off once and for all then the Manager wouldn't need to come out every time with his warnings. However, the light must have been lucky because it survived every time.

As stated before, Harry was on piece-work a lot of the time. He and his mate were driving a new development in a quieter part of the mine, and after doing their allotted days work they would climb a nearby rise to the day and enjoy the fresh air. That particular summer was a good one and they earned the title "sunshine miners", the only ones in Weardale with a sun tan.

I must end the article at this point, but I look forward to some winter nights by the fire listening to Harry as he tells his stories, so that I may pass them on to those interested.

As promised in the last newsletter we print below the poem held over from Julie Goodhart's Richard Watson article.

THE FELLOWS by Richard Watson

I dearly love the mountain, for 'tis there
 Dame Nature in her wildest form appears;
 The purple waving heath, the brooklet's sheen,
 The mossy swamps, and hoary cliffs adorned
 With bilberry shrubs and graceful ferns, -
 All have their pleasing charms for me.

Oft have I
 At the mine shop door, at early morn,
 Stood, as the rising orb of day
 Was peeping o'er the eastern horizon,
 Tinging with gold the mountain tops,
 Watching the becking grouse, as they each other chas'd
 In sportive play; and merry, soaring lark,
 As from its dewy bed it mounted high,
 Carolling sweetly as it rose, till like
 A speck it seemed amid the downy clouds,
 Blending its lively song with the shrill notes
 Of plover and curlew, and the horse croak
 Of the dark raven sailing in the air,
 And scanning with anxious eyes the ground
 For the dead carcass of some sheep, to ease
 The pressing craving of a hungry crop.
 Thus have I spell-bound stood, until my mind
 To darker bygone days has wandered back,
 When stranger scenes appeared to the eye,
 And stranger sounds rose on the mountain breeze, -
 Sounds of fierce men in deadly combat met,
 Like tigers thirsting for each others blood; -
 When Douglas and Randolph the border cross'd
 With brave and hardy followers mounted well
 On nimble steeds, well train'd to pace the moss,
 And burning to avenge the many wrongs
 Their country suffered from our hands, over
 The peaty swamps they rode and like a flood
 They swept the vales below, and left behind
 A blacken'd scene of woe to mark their track.
 How thankful we should be that such fierce broils
 No more disgrace our isle, and in peace
 Both nations were united in a bond
 Of brotherhood, and bound together with
 A Gordian knot, - a happy junction,
 Which by the sword could never have been wrought.
 Since then, how swiftly has our isle progress'd
 In knowledge, power, and in enterprise
 How has the aspect of the landscape chang'd!
 I still can trace the ancient path, with bent
 And stunted ling O'ergrown, which formerly
 Was the chief way across the mountain bleak
 From Teesdale high unto the river Wear,
 Where from Newcastle merchandise was brought,
 Pack'd up in sacks, strapped on to ponie's backs;
 The drivers drest in thick, warm, home-spun coats,
 Arm'd to the teeth; for well they knew
 That danger in their path did often lurk.

Fierce banditti did the mountain sore infest,
 And from their hiding places they rush'd forth,
 And stopp'd the travellers journeying past;
 Vilely stripp'd them, and left them almost nak'd
 Their journey to pursue.

But times have changed; -
 No more those bloody villains pace the moss;
 Justice, once tardy in her steps, moves now
 With stride more rapid in the path of crime.
 Pack horses now no longer bring our goods, -
 They now are swiftly whirl'd on iron rails
 From place to place, by steams strong agency;
 And news from distant parts is borne on wires,
 Swift as the lightning passes through the sky,
 So that we now can conversation hold
 With all the nations round about.
 Could I look forward but two hundred years, what strange
 Things should I see! Perhaps as great a change
 Will have been wrought as has been since this moor
 Was one vast forest, where stately oak trees
 Flouris'd and spread wide their giant limbs,
 Whose trunks now lie embedded in the moss.
 Perhaps tall trees will again may rear their heads,
 And fields of yellow grain wave in the breeze,
 Instead of rushes, bent and ling. Though wild
 The scenery be, - and wilder still when
 Winter resumes his regal sway, and keenly
 The bitter, frosty wind doth pierce the frame,
 And thick and fast descends the fleecy snow,
 No flower or blade of grass to meet the eye. -

Yet to a Briton's heart 'tis dearer far
 Than all the spicy, fragrant orange groves,
 Where beauteous flowers perfume the air,
 Which Spain and sunny Italy can boast.
 Though bleak our native hills, yet they are free!
 for Britain is by Britons only ruled;
 And may it still continue so!
 May the supreme,
 Who holds the nations in His hand,
 Still watch o'er and protect our native isle.
 May noble, virtuous hearts be rear'd still,
 To guard our shores 'gainst the invading foe, -
 Men who revere their country and their God.

METHODISM IN THE NORTHERN PENNINES
Part 2 - ESTABLISHMENT

Colin Short

Readers probably noticed that somehow the order got a little shuffled in Part 1 : the third sheet (pl6) should have preceded the second (pl4). Also, a silly slip of the pen made me write at the end, 'begins in 1747' where I should have written 'begins in the 1740s'!

The actual establishment of Methodism in the mining dales, although undoubtably inspired by John and Charles Wesley, was not their work. In the north of the region it all began in a very uninspiring way at Tanfield Lea, near Stanley (now in Derwentside) in 1742. John Wesley's second visit to Newcastle occupied mid November and December of the year and on November 28 (a Sunday) we read from his Journal

"We then walked over to Tanfield-Leigh: (about seven miles from Newcastle.) Here a large company of people gathered together, from all the country round about: to whom I expounded the fifth chapter to the Romans. But so dead, senseless, unaffected a congregation have I scarce seen Whether the Gospel or Law, or English or Greek, seemed all one to them!"

Hardly encouraging! But wait - brother John goes on from this Sunday note to record

"Yet the seed sown even here was not quite lost. For on Thursday morning, between four and five, John Brown, then of Tanfield-Leigh was waked out of sleep by the voice that raiseth the dead. And ever since he has been full of love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It is to this same John Brown that we must look for the first bringing of Methodism to the mining dales. From Tanfield he journeyed back to the Derwent valley to join the Methodist society at Low Spen in 1743. From there he established a society at Newlands near Ebchester. This is farming land, and we may surmise that John Brown was a farmer. Newlands certainly seems to have become his first base. Travelling as an unauthorised lay preacher up the valley, he came to Blanchland, where he established a society among the lead miners. In the 1740s both Shildon mine to the north and Jeffrey's Rake to the south were at work, and, unusually, the Church of England provision was adequate : a parish church at Hunstanworth and a chapelry at Blanchland (the old abbey as then standing.) Notwithstanding this, the miners were unchurched, and Methodist meetings were established at farms at Newbiggin (OS ref 950498) Allenshields (965495) and Ropebarn (Rape Barn on current maps; 967500.) It must be remembered that the population of Upper Derwindale in the 1740s was probably far more than today. Wesley later wrote of John Brown ...

"O what may not a man of small natural talents do, if he be full of faith and love?"

For our next establishment, that in Allendale, we must needs return, curiously, to Tanfield Lea (remember though: it was an area of some importance; Causey Arch was built to get wagonways thither) and to the story of Christopher Hopper. With Hopper though we come to not an unpaid enthusiast, spreading the good news out of the concern of his heart alone (as in John Brown's case), but someone who, although sharing that concern of the heart, became in time one of John Wesley's most reliable paid Helpers. Born at Ryton in 1722, Hopper was of farming stock, although an educated man (the first Trust Deed of the Newbiggin in Teesdale chapel describes him as a Gentleman, no casual term in the eighteenth century,) who was at work in Tanfield when Charles Wesley arrived in Newcastle in the autumn of 1742, preceding his brother's second visit. Hopper writes of the occasion

"Charles preached at Tanfield Cross. I ran with the multitude to hear this strange preacher.... (Hopper was impressed) ... I found I was in danger of being called a Methodist and was glad to dismiss the conversation with a smile and a piece of drollery."

The early Methodists were often derided, not infrequently attacked (Hopper himself later talked of 'dirt, rotten eggs, brickbats, stones and cudgels') and always the subject of ribald humour. But they thrived on it - those who came to mock often went away converted. Not so immediately Christopher Hopper, but happen it did, and

"I then found a glorious and undeniable change.... I found love to my God, to His yoke, to His cross.... The whole tenor of my life and conversation was new.... My heart, my tongue, my hands were now, in my little way, employed for my loving God."

Employed indeed. Hopper spent all he had to travel and preach, and then subsisted on the meagre allowance of a Methodist Helper (plus the good will of the Methodist people.) More than that, as one of Mr. Wesley's Helpers he was liable to be sent almost anywhere (a discipline we are still under, ultimately,) and thus his ministry touched Scotland and Lancashire as well as Durham, Northumberland and Cumberland.

In about 1746 Hopper came to Hindley Hill farmstead in Allendale (803578.) This farm was the home of the Broadwoods, a Quaker family and it became an early Methodist base in the dale. At this time the one parish covered both Allendales. In mining, the Beaumont company was active. Soon several Methodist societies were established. Hopper's methods are worth recording.

"Our plan was to visit a town or village, and ask permission to expound the word of God in one of their houses or cottages; if the people did not invite us to lodge and break bread with them, after repeating our visit two or three times, we took it as an indication that we were not called to such a place."

Interestingly this is not open air preaching. The early Methodists used all the opportunities they could. It seems too that there might have been an existing network of Quaker farm-kitchens-for-meetings in the Allendales. Among those converted under Hopper's preaching in Allendale two deserve mention. Matthew Lowes became one of John Wesley's paid Helpers, who was appointed to Leeds in 1751. However, ill health forced his return in 1753, although his preaching continued. He will reappear in this story, as too will Jacob Rowell, who became another paid Helper. Rowell was converted in Allendale Town on his way to a cockfight from his home at Whitfield above the West Allen. Here was an occasion when Hopper did take to the open air.

Hopper it seems was a man of good humour - and some words of his are well worth repeating

"The promised land from Kilhope top
I now exult to see.
My hope is full (O glorious hope!)
Of good spice cake and tea."

Later John Brown joined Hopper at Hindley Hall.

Some of these details are sketchy; I find my information on Nenthead even more so. Wesley was at Nenthead in 1748 (we'll come to Wesley in part 3) and I have a reference to Hopper sometime before, being unsuccessful in the Alston Moor area, but finding welcome and establishing a society 'in the next village.' I cannot believe Hopper made no attempt at Nenthead, although in 1760 the only society reported on that side is at Alston. (to be continued in the next newsletter)

THE "BEAUMONT BUILDING SOCIETY?"

Ian Forbes

The London Lead Company was, rightly, praised for their policy of building homes for their key workmen to rent, particularly at Nenthead and Middleton in Teesdale in the 1820's. In comparison WB Lead (the Beaumonts) have not received a good press.

It was interesting, then, to receive from Dr. J.K. Almond a photocopy of part of the "Rules of the Allendale and Weardale Permanent Building Society" dating from the establishment of the organisation in 1853.

This was clearly one of Thomas Sopwith's ideas - for he was President and one of the three Trustees. The object of the Society was "to raise a fund to enable any member to receive in advance in full of a share (£60) or shares, for the purpose of purchasing..... or of erecting any dwelling house"

The £60 was to be paid back over eighteen years and five months, at the rate of 5/- per lunar month.

In other words Sopwith was trying to promote among the miners what we now think of as a modern idea - widespread property ownership!

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD.....

As we learn more about the 18C working of the W.B.Co, we find that there was a considerable willingness to adopt new technologies. Well known examples are the first use of rails in mines, and the invention and use of the hydraulic engine. However there was one proposal that was put to them that was so unlikely it certainly must have created some confusion within the company. The extracts from two letters below clearly outline the proposal, but a little extra background information will help to set the scene.

On 10 July 1792 Sir Thomas Blackett died, and control of the W.B.Co passed out of the Blackett name, to that of Thomas R Beaumont, via the inheritance of his wife Diana. At that time the Chief Agent was John Erasmus Blackett, who was not a recognised mining expert, and who had definitely not risen through the ranks!

Normally the owner of the company relied on his Chief Agent for the efficient operation of the business. However, in this case, perhaps because of the change of families, Thomas Beaumont who lived in Bretton Hall near Wakefield, Yorks appointed an advisor, a Mr Skelton, of Birthwaite Hall, also near Wakefield.

This made John E Blackett's life doubly difficult, as he had to be diplomatic to his new boss, and put up with irritating questions about the operation of the business, and the following unlikely proposal from Mr Skelton.

The letters are from the Chief Agents letter books, and as no other relevant correspondence has survived the story is inevitably one-sided, being his replies only.

Mr Skelton
Sir

8 Nov 1792

..... I observe what you say respecting a Waggon Way for the purpose of leading lead to Blaydon.....

The laying of a Waggon Way from the several lead mills to Dukesfield, from thence to Blaydon, and bringing the lead and ore by that convenience considering the numberless difficulties etc. I look upon it as to be almost impracticable, and at present I am rather inclined to think that a Waggon Way from Dukesfield to Blaydon would be attended not only with great expense but with very great difficulties owing to the variety of property through which the Way must necessarily go (for it cannot be laid upon the Common High Way or lane, beyond a certain distance, nor is there room for it in many parts of the road,) the impossibility of preventing others leading on that Way unless it is to be inclosed, the expense of Way Leaves through private property, the keeping of the Way in repair. These and other objections will I think act forcibly against the scheme.

Your most obedient servant
J.E.B

Clearly the Chief Agent considers the scheme unviable. That there had been many wagon ways built locally to carry coals from the mines down to the staithes on the Tyne in the previous 30 or so years presumably meant that the problems associated with them were well understood. However, to build one many times longer than these, over wet peat moors rising to 1500' or more, would clearly be met with crippling costs in its execution.

It would seem that Mr Skelton did not accept all these objections, as in the next letter the Chief Agent has consulted his stewards for their views.

Mr Skelton
Sir

29 Nov 1792

I had conversation with the lead stewards respecting the proposed Waggon Way for lead and ore. They look on the scheme as impractical considering the country it must go through, the great length (above 40 miles) as well as the immense expense attending it. The interest of the money would far exceed the annual expense of the carriage, exclusive of the way leave rent for a part of the distance, and keeping such a Waggon Way in repair, which would be very considerable. However as soon as will admit of it, the lead stewards will take a view of that part of the road which they may think the most practical for it, and make their report of the same.

Your most obedient servant
J.E.B

There are no further letters on this topic, so perhaps this was the end of it, though there was a financial crisis in Newcastle shortly after this, with many Banks having to close their doors, and at least one becoming insolvent. This naturally occupied everyones attention for some time, and The Great Waggon Way was, perhaps conveniently, forgotten.

[Northumberland record office, Allendale MSS, Chief Agents Letter
Books 1777-1799 NRO 672/2/50] Alan Blackburn 5/4/89

GRAHAM LETTERS - PART 8

In the last letter John Graham was concerned with the health of his family. Through 1855 William's condition continued to distress the family at Killhope.

Burnt Hills 1855

Dear Brother. I now take up my pen to Answer your last letter which I recived on the last of August which informs me of your good hilth and of your posspriety in America. Well Dear Brother Myself and Family are in good hilth when this letter leaves us and I hope it will find you boath the same and you will want to know how all your Friends are. well I think they are all in good hilth for any thing that I know. All of them, except William who is very poorley yet. he has got no beter yet. he is allmost confiend to his bed and is reduce allmost to a skelicton. he has neve(r) been abel to work since the begeening of last March; he begun then with a great lump on his back, which rose to a great cise and then the Doctor opened it, and many a Bason full of Matter has been taken from it. it has run ever since but it is nearly dry now. it has run many a quart of Matter. and he has another Lump begun on his Abdoman, that is what we call the lisk. it has lade him up from walkon but the Doctor says it will drain his back which will make his Chance better for he has a very fair Apeatite and is sound of his lungs and I think thair is a chance of him geten better yet. thay are what is calld Abcesses. They seem to work on him as long as he has flish left but I hope he will soon get a turn for better. And Dear Brother you will want to know more perticklers about your Friends. I cannot write all I have Advised different ones of our Friends to write to you for them-selves and thay have not I (think) thay are very carless about writen to you. when I recive a letter from you thay are all very sharp to hear what is in it and is very please to hear from you and they all told me when I write again I must send thair best respects and best wishes to you. I think that is a very poor way of keeping up communcation with so distant a Friend as you. I think if I had been as carless you would had very few letters from hear but I will answer all the letters you have a mind to send me with plasuer for I am keeping up communcation with more than you for I recived a letter from Walton Gibson about a mounth after I got yours and I am going to post one for him when I post this for you and Newspaper with it and a Newspaper to Bill James and I intend to send him a letter to. you will want to know how Bill is coming on. well Joseph Vickers had a letter from him about

Mrs. Jean Cripps, by whose permission we are reprinting this series of letters, writes "the remainder of this letter is lost unless the following fragment is from it..... it is in John's handwriting and was undoubtedly written to Joseph."

.....which will be a great Blessing for him for he has had very poor adling (adle - a dialect word meaning to earn) since you left And myself and Christopher and Jonathan and Isaac Peart are working together..... but we will have very littel pay this year.

Thomas Millburn is still working Wagerworking yet at Pastergrove (i.e. at Burtree Pasture - "wagerworking" meant he was doing one of the jobs such as timberman or tracklayer which were paid per day rather than through the quarterly bargain system) - and Joshua Stobbs is a Masterman washer yet and Thomas Dalton is still working in the Pastergrove yet and Nicholas Padon is a minder of a new Boudel (buddle) at Pastergrove Washing pase and as regards the pays I cannot tell you any things more for thair has been no Reckenons yet but they will be very soon. I will tell you more in the next letter what Pays thare will be. You will want to no how liven is. it has been two years hardest liven that I never I so in my life time. Flour has been from 3s. to 3s and 6d. all this time and is 3s 6d. now.....Butter is 1s per lb Bacon 9d per lb Beef..... 6d to 7d per lb.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sunday 5th November - Underground trip, Nenthead.

Roy Curry's much postponed trip of last autumn will take place on this date, or if you would like to go, please ring Ian Forbes for further details.

Wednesday 8th November - 7.30 p.m. "Prehistoric Copper Mining"

An illustrated talk by John Pickin, County Antiquities Officer at Turks Head Hotel, Market Place, Barnard Castle (near Market Cross.)

Wednesday 13th December - 7.30 p.m. "Members Night"

King's Arms Hotel, St. John's Chapel. Bring your own slides, photos, etc.

Force Crag Mine Visit

Could those wishing to go on this visit, which will include a trip underground as well as a tour of the jigging plant, please ring Ian Forbes to reserve a place. Force Crag is near Keswick, and there will be a small cost for the tour.

Ian Forbes' telephone number - 0388 537470

THE KILLHOPE 'HOT'A. Nonymous

Those Friends privileged enough to see the Ironbridge report on the lead industry (see David Cranstone's note elsewhere in this issue) will have read the entry on Killhope with interest, and will have learnt much from the components list. For those not so fortunate, the list is as follows:

LEAD MINE: adit
 sough
 bouse team
 crushing house
 water power installation
 buddle
 slime trunking machine
 hot
 dolly tub
 dressing wastes
 railway.

Most of these features will be familiar to members (if not always from Killhope), but the nature of the 'hot' (yet alone its use at Killhope) has remained obscure, to the extent that our Project Officer has doubted its existence at Killhope. Urgent research on the Ironbridge archives (the 'Bog Papers', from their alleged findspot) has however elucidated not only the nature and function of the 'hot', but also a previously unknown aspect of the operation of the Killhope mine, and I am grateful to the scholarship of the Ironbridge team for making it possible.

An initial hypothesis, that the 'hot' was a misplaced component of the Killhope climate rather than of its archaeology, was rapidly discarded on the basis of local knowledge. A suggestion by a member of the Visitor Centre staff, that the term referred to the reception given to the Ironbridge team at Killhope, proved to be the vital clue that set research in the right direction.

Most of us are now familiar with the concept of ore flow through the Killhope washing floor, and its North Pennine terminology from 'bouse' to 'bingstead'. It can now be seen that a similar process and terminology was applied to the flow of visitors through the site. The raw unsorted inflow ('mob') was subjected to an initial linguistic separation procedure. This consisted of two almost-identical horizontal tunnels, the right hand one being identified by a large sign as the 'adit', and the left hand one as the 'gallery'. The main bulk of the visitor inflow (in Weardale argot the 'punters', from their mode of transport on wet days) gravitated automatically to the right hand tunnel, from which they were fed successively (by a 'spoon' feed) through the 'ticket desk', the 'audiovisual', and the 'display', to the 'exit' (these features were known collectively as the 'brain washing floor', to distinguish them from the 'ore washing floor' outside. However the much lighter visitor component (the 'experts', or 'floaters') derived from the Ironbridge Vein gravitated automatically to the 'gallery'. This component had proved extremely difficult to treat, being impervious to most forms of information transfer, and the device finally adopted was a masterpiece of Weardale ingenuity.

The 'experts' were fed from the 'gallery' into a tub set in a shaft (a 'hopper', from the Weardale custom of dropping it onto the feet of the 'experts'). From this they were fed into the 'hot' itself: a large reverberatory furnace fuelled with pure sulphur and vitriol, designed to reduce the produce of the Ironbridge Vein from 'experts' to 'deads'. The 'hot' was supervised by a skilled workman (the 'hotwasher'), much of whose skilled consisted in manipulating the charge of 'experts' with a long iron rod (the 'bargepole'), which was never allowed to come into direct contact with the 'experts'. The shrivelled 'deads' were then decanted from the 'hot' into a rotary drying oven (the 'spindryer'), and thence to the 'deads heap' or 'Gorge'.

As a sidelight to this technology, it should be noted that the post of 'hotwasher' appears to have been hereditary., belonging throughout the life of the mine to the Forbes family of Wearhead.

This research into the 19th century technology of Killhope has one important practical implication. So far as I know, the plans for the new Visitor Centre do not as yet contain a 'hot', though the other components of the visitor flow process are already under construction. Since suitable raw material in need of 'hot' treatment is still seen occasionally on lead mines (albeit very rarely), and can be readily separated linguistically from any normal visitors, it is clearly essential that this important feature be incorporated into the plans, and the post of 'hotwasher' returned to its rightful hereditary holder.

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORTIan Forbes

Over the summer Friends have continued to be an invaluable part of the Killhope community. I use that word advisedly because I am constantly struck by the friendly atmosphere between staff, Friends and visitors at Killhope which for me is a great part of the pleasure of being involved with the place.

I shall sketch out briefly the achievements of Friends since our last newsletter with the observation that if any of the projects interest you do come and join in; there are no closed shops and everyone is welcome. My phone number is 0388 537470.

Eric's wheel (see elsewhere in the newsletter) - the 10' waterwheel for the buddle house - has been fetched from Devon, cleaned down, painted, and the tie bars for it made up. Blue Circle, helpful as ever, welded up the crack in one of the hubs, drilled out the old shaft and turned a new one. Buckets are currently being made for the wheel and reconstruction should start shortly.

Other Friends have been particularly interested in the technology of the jigger house and have started to put back the machinery in the building. Some excellent line shaft complete with hangers - each still with its own glass oil bottle for lubricating the brass bearings - was collected from Middleton and some flat belt pulleys tracked down and collected from Teesside. It is extremely satisfying that the line shaft will bolt up into the roof using the existing bolt holes in the beams - in other words it is exactly right for the job.

The jigger house itself has been much enhanced this summer by the exhibition of underground photos by Brian Short and Lennie Willis, we put on in there and which has excited considerable interest among visitors, particularly when Friends have been in the building talking about the pictures. The exhibition will be taken down at the end of the season - come and see it if you haven't already done so.

Other Friends have been involved in many parts of the site - they have painted the woodwork of the Buddle house, taken part in several thatching gangs carrying on with heather thatching the stable block in the woods, started cleaning out the watercourse that ran from Killhope to Burtree Pasture mine, and have dug a long drain and constructed a silt trap to divert the water that was coming through the roof of Park level.

We have now got the go-ahead to carry on with work in the mine, and we will be making a determined effort to clean out the level over the coming months. Give Pam or myself a ring if you want to get wet and dirty and put in a shift or half a shift - shovelling muck.

At home a couple of Friends are rebuilding a spar box which was donated to us in a sorry state some time ago.

Recent donations have included a collection of old blacksmith's tongs for the smithy, a coil of wire rope, and a lot of track for the mine. NEI Parsons have cast some more tub wheels and railway chairs for us. Stan Pike gave us his old bellows when he moved his smithy from Whitfield; they are a beautifully kept set of old pear-shaped bellows.

Leslie Blackett discovered a strong spring of water on the Killhope site which looks likely to solve the seemingly intractable problem of a water supply to the new visitor centre - even in this very dry summer 'Blackett's spring' has run consistently.

We have on several occasions provided refreshments for important visitors, particularly for the very successful visit of the Countryside Commissioners to Killhope when Sir Derek Barber and the Chairman of the County Council laid the foundation stone of the visitor centre.

The annual Friends quoits championship was very closely fought, and in a nail-biting final Neville Bainbridge beat Joe Bean. Once again many thanks to Peter Nattrass for organising this event.

Off site we have had two good meetings - the Annual General Meeting at which we were once again privileged to listen to Sir Kingsley Dunham and Jim Foster-Smith sharing their vast knowledge and wealth of experience and Richard Turner's photographic "Walk Around Alston" at Allenheads.

ERIC'S WHEEL

Ian Forbes

In the last newsletter I said that Eric Ryan's memorial at Killhope would be the reinstated water wheel for the buddle house.

With the help of John Gall from Beamish Museum the Friends acquired a 10' water wheel - in sections and without buckets - suitable for the project. The fact that it was in Devon was no deterrent to Russ Parkin who went and fetched it as part of his contribution to the project. Reconstruction of the wheel is currently under way; the water supply system will follow.

The wheel is of Welsh origin; it was made at the Bridgend Foundry, Cardigan. This may at first seem inappropriate, but in fact it was not uncommon in the 19th Century for waterwheels - particularly second-hand ones - to be used far from their place of origin. Thus for example it is reputed that the Boltsburn waterwheel came from Aberystwyth.

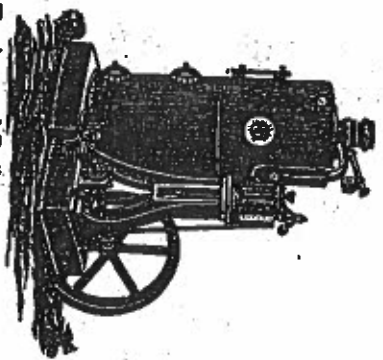
Dyfed Record Office sent me the following note on the Bridgend Foundry:-

"The Record Office has some record of the Bridgend Foundry, Cardigan but nothing earlier than the 1930s by which time the foundry had ceased to produce cast iron products and had become a garage. According to later newspaper advertisements, the foundry was established in 1854. In 1869 Timothy Thomas of the foundry invented a combined grinding and crushing mill. I enclose newspaper advertisement from the local newspaper the Cardigan and Tynside Advertiser for 1892 and 1902 showing the range of products made at the Foundry." (see overleaf)

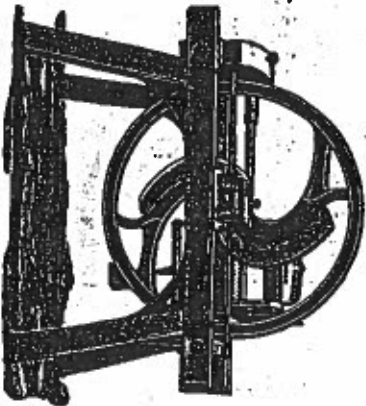
The wheel and its water supply will be rebuilt by Friends over the winter. We have obtained generous grant aid from the Countryside Commission towards this project, which will be completed early next summer.

BRIDGES-STEIN'S PATENT

S. F. KENTLEY



Engine and Boiler, Design No. 1.



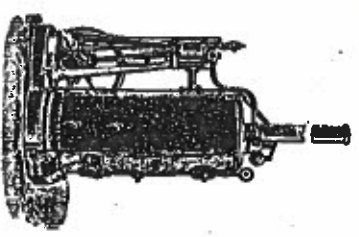
Chafcutter, A.



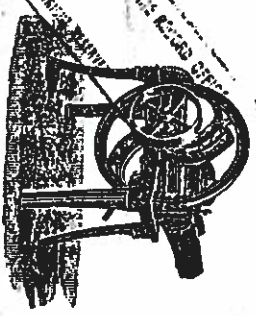
Chafcutter, B.



Threshing Machine.



Engine and Boiler, Design No. 2.



Chafcutter B.



REGS to acknowledge the kind and ever increasing patronage that has been extended to him by the inhabitants of the District since he has been in business, and respectfully solicits a continuance of the same. Special attention has been given to adapting Machinery to the requirements of the country, and the general appreciation that has rewarded his efforts has been very gratifying. This will particularly apply to the

VERTICAL STEAM ENGINES & BOILERS, described in the "Cardigan and Tivy-Side Advertiser" a few weeks back, which have been supplied to the following gentlemen, amongst others, viz.:-

- W. Evans, Forest, Silgerran
- Robert Lewis, Fishguard
- Wilson, Begelly
- John Lewis, Penryn, near Cardigan
- Capl. Harris, Mynydd-y-Croft, Cardigan
- Griffith Lewis, Faulerton, St. Dogwells

- Bryan Phillips, Mabae Mill, Narberth
- Jones, Plasberlan, Bonmahon
- Harvard Bros., Craggan, Myer
- John Jones, Goodworth, Glynarthau; and
- D. G. Davies, Castle Green, Cardigan

A large number of WATER WHEELS

have been erected in various parts of the country and have given general satisfaction, and reference has been permitted to

- J. James, Trevelin, Cardigan
- Capl. Harris, Cwmporthman, Aberporth
- W. Pugh, Penryn-mawr, Aberystwyth
- David Griffiths, Cefn-y-dill, New Quay
- J. Evans, Peneggon, Pontresan, Pen.
- Capl. Phillips, Penryn-y-dill, Aberporth
- John Owens, Troedryth, Llangoedmore

- D. Jones, Cwmllyn, Moyddu
- Mrs. Griffiths, Bromre, Clogau & yrr
- T. Jenkins, Moyddu-lawr, Llanybydder
- T. Davies, Penllyn, Llanybydder
- Benjamin Richards, Cefn-y-dill, Llanybydder
- Nantgwyn, Clogau
- John Lewis, Clogau, Whitland

And to the following Factories:—

- Samuel Williams, Dyffryn, Velindre
- Capl. Jones, Aberbank, Llanyrsant
- John Clarke, Cym-morwg, Newcastell-Banyn
- Daniel Lewis, Bronnig
- David Lewis, Peneggon
- John Phillips, Coodmore

- Samuel Davies, Parbont
- David Davies, Gilsch, Velindre
- David Lewis, Trebeder Factory, Llanyrsant
- Lewis Lewis, Sunny Hill Factory, Llanyrsant
- And a number of others.