

Friends of Killhope

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

FEBRUARY 1990

NEWSLETTER No. 17

By the time Friends receive this newsletter our organisation will be almost five years old. We had our official launch on 29th March 1985 in Stanhope Town Hall with the inaugural lecture by our President, Sir Kingsley Dunham.

Coincidentally, it is about ten years since Durham County Council officially began work at Killhope as you will read elsewhere. Members who remember the site in those days with its crumbling buildings and bouse teams, the washing floor (as we now know it) covered with up to a metre of peat and the big wheel itself in danger of crashing down, will appreciate the commitment of all concerned during the intervening ten years.

Friends of Killhope have also played an important part in obvious and not so obvious ways and it is important that we continue to do so. Would anyone care to speculate on what the next ten years will bring?

New Publication

We have already received substantial articles for our Eric Ryan memorial publication and I urge all would be contributors to forward their work to me as soon as possible. Although the launch of the book is to coincide with the commissioning of the Buddle House water wheel on 10th June we must still have our copy with the printer at the earliest possible date. Once all articles are received we still have to edit and assemble the work so writers, please do all you can to help.

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PROTECTION FOR ABANDONED MINES

Ian Forbes

Many archaeological sites in this country are now "scheduled" as ancient monuments and this process is slowly being extended to industrial monuments (see David Cranstone's report in the last newsletter.)

Now English Heritage is, in conjunction with the National Association of Mining History Organisations, considering whether it is appropriate or possible to extend "scheduling" to abandoned mines, with the aim of protecting the best examples in the country.

If this were to happen it might mean that destruction by mineral hunters and removal of artefacts by dealers or collectors would stop (but who would police the legislation?)

It might mean that commercial mining couldn't destroy important remains.

However it is unlikely that scheduling would result in money being made available to preserve mines, and it could stop any mine exploration society clearing falls or propping the roof in a scheduled mine without scheduled monument consent and the presence of an archaeologist.

Protection of our mining heritage is a complex subject worthy of considered debate. What do you think is the best way of achieving a goal we all share?

Ian Forbes, Rockwell House, Wearhead, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham
(0388 537470)

A REPORT FROM DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

David Miller

The arrival of spring at Killhope this year will be the tenth since work began on restoring the site. April 25th 1980 was marked by the arrival of a scruffy site hut followed quickly by a beautifully dressed collection of young men who revealed themselves to be the Community Task Force.

From this hand to mouth beginning we proceeded by way of painfully squeezing modest grants from English Heritage, the Countryside Commission and later the European Regional Development Fund. For those involved, progress has at times been frustratingly slow, but to people who haven't seen the site for a few years the change is dramatic. Really quite suddenly, the view from the roadside is amazingly of a virtually complete Victorian engineering process.

The Visitor Centre building is now complete to the point of being provided with its services and equipment. Getting it ready for opening in the summer is going to be quite a task. Following the death of Eric Ryan last year, the department received another heavy blow with another tragically early death. Peter Bailey, the marvellously creative and able leader of our Graphics Studio has died at the age of 39. Apart from the personal tragedy for Peter's family, it comes at a time when the department is trying to cope with its heaviest workload ever. The design of displays at Killhope are competing with the design of the Gateshead Garden Festival pavilion displays and the equipping of a new Tourist Information Building to be constructed at Beamish Museum by the County Council. These are on top of the normal workload of high quality leaflets, brochures and exhibitions.

Now that the Garden Festival has been mentioned, I suppose I ought to say how work on our exhibit - "The County Durham Garden" - is shaping up. Of course, the downside of the County Council's tremendous support of the Garden Festival is that other attractions in the region including Killhope, are likely to struggle to maintain visitor numbers. We are doing what we can by promoting the County's attractions doubled with the Garden Festival in our promotional literature this year. Also the County Council pavilion at the Festival will have trained staff giving a computerised information service to anyone who wants information about what to see in County Durham. However, we must look to the long term in that the Festival is a showcase for the region and should encourage large numbers of return visits when people see what we have to offer.

So, how are we to keep numbers up this year? The opening of the Visitor Centre will create some very good publicity and should lead to a large number of people from within the region coming to have another look. Also the County Council has allocated £60,000 towards restoring the wheel. A start on that will be very big news and we must hope for this in the Autumn.

The full cost of restoring the wheel is unknown but is estimated to be £90,000. The additional £30,000 will have to come from sponsorship. The existence of an organisation such as Friends can be very effective in fundraising and I am hopeful that the County Council Environment Improvement Sub Committee will agree to an arrangement with you to assist in finding sponsors.

I wonder if I will be able to write in your spring 1991 newsletter that the Visitor Centre has successfully opened, visitor numbers and sales up, the wheel is being restored, Friends have collected £30,000, and not only is the best personal service to visitors in the region being maintained but the best cup of coffee in the North Pennines can be bought at Killhope - well we can only hope!

A page from the catalogue featured in Les Blackett's article on Page 13.

WEARDALE

**MINERAL AND
GEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION**

CHAIRMAN:
Mr. JOHN ROBINSON, Westgate.

SELECT COMMITTEE:
Mr. JOHN WATSON, St. John's Chapel,
Mr. JOHN WILKINSON, " "
Mr. JOHN PHILLIPSON, " "
Mr. JOSEPH PHILLIPSON, Hermitage,
Mr. JOHN THOMPSON, Wearhead,
Mr. WILLIAM ELLIOTT, " "
Mr. JOHN PEART, Lanehead,
Mr. THOMAS FAIRLESS, " "
Mr. THOMAS DENT, Daddry Shield,
Mr. THOMAS PEADON, Sidehead,
Mr. WILLIAM HERDMEN, Westgate,
Mr. WILLIAM EMERSON, " "
Mr. GEORGE RACE, " "

TREASURER:
Mr. JOSHUA TRASDALE, St. John's Chapel.

SECRETARY:
Mr. JOSEPH PEART, St. John's Chapel.

Colours for Prize Winners:

First	Pink	Third	Green
Second	Blue	Fourth	Yellow

I saw a building come down the other day. Nothing special you understand, just a stone built cottage that had become landlocked and unwanted until it was too late to save what for a century had stood for the fruit of a miner's sweat. You know the sort of thing - a stone enclosure of half an acre containing a one up one down shelter and a barn. Home to him and his family, heritage to you and I.

Heritage is all around us and is falling down, being pulled down, changed, transported, marketed, given new meaning. Pockets of resistance leap to the protection of what is perceived to be important so it is listed, venerated and protected. But what of the rest? The dry stone walls, the holes in the ground, field barns, bread ovens, the heather. The past may no longer rest in the past. Our thirst for understanding the lives and skills of previous generations is unquenchable. There is not a corner of history that has not been fictionalized and packaged to satisfy our need to indulge in the roots of anyone's ancestor.

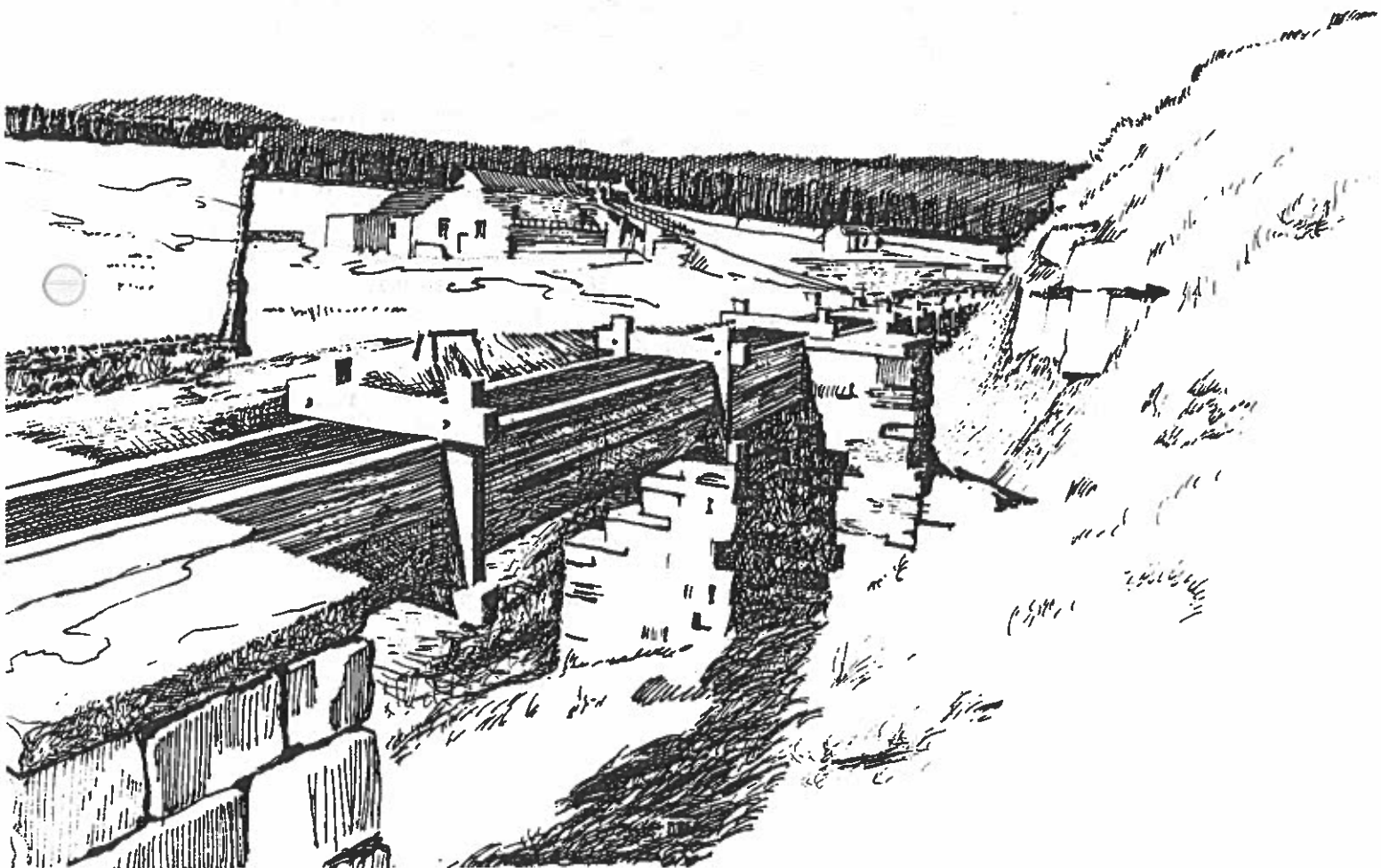
But where is our own history? What are we creating that will fuel the historian of the future. Are we handing on anything of value or substance that will cause the turn of the page of a dog eared document? What skills do we possess and cherish so much that we are proud to hand it down to a child the way they did? The craftsmanship of the miner of the ill-fated cottage, his labour and ingenuity in constructing a home on a tenanted piece of land became a proud monument to himself, his family and his trade. To see such a thing destroyed is always heart searching.

Its a kind of second hand pride that drives the restoration work at Killhope. The hand of a deceptively uncomplicated time reaching across generations to guide the dalesman one hundred years on. There is a respect and understanding of the trades that built a dale above and a lifeline below. Something that is extremely difficult for an incomer to grasp. But it is gratifying for us to be part of the dismembered jigsaw that is Killhope. So many missing pieces. The beautifully ugly Cowhaust Hush water race piers illustrated some years ago in the Friends Newsletter were taken away in the interests of progress - a progress which may yet give moorland where spruce now stand. They carried the Burnhope/Wellhope water race to Killhope. Although crudely engineered you had to marvel at the men's ability to coax huge blocks of stone onto the precarious hush side location which required the piers to climb out of the excavation on two planes. A similar feat was performed on the north side of the Killhopeburn where the tail race was taken south east to Burtree Pasture Mine. To achieve the stringent falls required of the race the creator came up with the novel idea of carrying the water along a cliff face. Constructing the race was not even as easy as that. Beginning at the main waterwheel a stone walled stone flagged race was built with a clay bottom. At the mine portal it was changed to a timber box and was carried under the mine tramway and the road to cross the Killhopeburn on an open timber aquaduct. It then went into a open cut with a stone bottom, was interrupted by a sluice at the cart bridge before going underground beneath the carriers road in stone. When it came out again it found itself 6 metres above the Killhopeburn with nowhere to go. The cliff face.

An old photograph and remnants of stone 'piers' found on the outcrop confirmed the location of cliff face race. The tail race was restored by plotting a line along the rock using a level. The fall to be laid was the same as most of the races in Weardale $2\frac{1}{2}$ " to the chain (about 1 in 316).

After 120m or so of hanging in the air the structure was due to join the open cut, stone lined and topped race by the main road. Unfortunately levels indicated that the water would have run in the opposite direction - a tail race that was a head race! But it has been many years since the old man surrendered the maintenance of the race to nature. The clay heaved lifting the downside of the race about 4 inches to cause the level difference, the stone piers slipped and crumbled and the massive cover slabs proved too heavy and tumbled most of it into the Burn. The timber was robbed and dead sheep blocked the remaining water courses..

The race is virtually complete now, rebuilt by dalesmen. Water can flow again along the cliff face in timber and stone water courses but will not go further than the end of the site. It was reconstructed in the old way - no luxuries like electricity. The men slipped on the same mud, manhandling the timber boxes over the rock outcrop, propped and dropped them until the levels were true. Maybe the old man guided Graham, Hugh and the others or Ossie, who is still working on site but now helping to construct the Visitor Centre, in their efforts. The basic techniques are still there. They may be a little rusty but the ancestral skills lie deep in the bones proud to be part of yesterday's heritage today and watching out for the tomorrows.



View across the restored tail race looking towards the jigger house and big wheel

METHODISM IN THE NORTHERN PENNINES

Colin Short

Part 2 - ESTABLISHMENT (continued from last Newsletter)

Meanwhile things were moving in the south of the region and Teesdale was being evangelised. A shoemaker from Barnard Castle, one Joseph Cheeseborough, had returned in 1747 from Leeds, where he had been converted under the preaching of John Wesley. Fired with the same enthusiasm and conviction as Brown and Hopper, that the goodnews for all people must be spread, Cheeseborough began the Methodist work in Barnard Castle. Soon a society was formed and Methodism was spreading up the dale. An early convert at Barnard Castle was Thomas Hanby, who became a preacher and Methodism's fourth President, i.e. senior minister in succession to John Wesley.

At Middleton, Methodism encountered a rector in residence (John Emmerson 1728-74) who vigorously opposed the new enthusiasm. Emmerson encouraged the Earl of Darlington (the contemporary title of Lord Raby) to turn out tenants who entertained Methodists. Fortunately there was plenty of labour and those turned out soon found other work. This sort of intimidation was not uncommon elsewhere, notably Cornwall and the Midlands, but was very unusual in the northern Pennines. Without being able to form a strong base in Middleton, the work was thrust higher up the dale to Newbiggin and the mining area of Forest and Harwood. Early bases in the Newbiggin area were the farms at Field Head (914288) and then Low Houses (922265.) The London Lead Company and others were intensively occupied in the upper dale at this time. The population, although still in Middleton parish, was totally unchurched. (Although the LLC was a Quaker foundation, and in advance of their time in social conditions, their business in the dales was mining, not evangelism!)

The society at Barnard Castle came initially under the general ambit of the Lancs and Yorkshire work of Methodism, an area known as The Howarth Round. The name is of the Yorkshire village later inhabited by the Brontes but whose Anglican incumbent at this time was William Grimshaw. Grimshaw was one of the small number of Anglican clergymen who were prepared to work with the Wesleys. He travelled the north extensively although independently of the Wesleys, preaching the same good news, and establishing many societies. Assisting him was one of John Wesley's Helpers, William Darney, known to Wesley as 'Scotch Will.' Darney came to Barnard Castle late in 1747 and travelled into the upper dale. The visit was not repeated. Perhaps it was realised that Teesdale was too remote from Haworth! Darney was followed two years later in the upper dale by preachers from Weardale, to which valley we must now turn.

Weardale Methodism owes its origins to Methodism in Allendale and to Hopper and Brown. In late 1748, probably December, for Wesley records in his Journal that it was not until 1749, the two preachers came over into the dale. Hopper's words take up the story.

It was in a storm of snow that we crossed the quagmires and enormous mountains. When we came into the dales, we met with a very cold reception. The enemy had barricaded the place, and made his bulwarks strong. But the Lord made way for His truth. He opened the heart of a poor Scotch shepherd to receive us into his little thatched cabin, where we lodged all night.

The next day I preached under the walls of an old castle (this was Westgage; CCS.) A few children and two or three old women attended, who looked hard at us. When I had done we followed them into their houses, and talked freely to them in their own language about the kingdom of God. They heard, and obeyed the Gospel. The next evening I had a large congregation, who heard with much attention, and received the word gladly. Some time after I preached in private houses, ale-houses, cockpits, or wherever I could find a door open. The fire then spread from heart to heart, and God was glorified.

This was the beginning of a good work in Weardale, which has continued and increased to this day.

At Christmas 1749 Jacob Rowell, not yet a paid Helper but virtually full time as a preacher (John Wesley called much 'exhorters') accompanied by his brother Matthew, travelled into the dale. John Wesley takes up the tale (the spelling is his:)

At Christmas two of the exhorters in Allandale determined to visit Wardale. Before they entered it, they kneeled down on the snow, and earnestly besought the Lord that he would incline some person who was worthy to receive them into his house. At the first house where they called, they were bid welcome, and they stayed there four days. Their word was with power, so that many were convinced, and some converted to God. They continued their visits at intervals all winter.

Apparently Jacob Rowell at least settled for a while in Weardale. He too is later described as a Gentleman, although by that time a paid Assistant (John Wesley's term, indicating a higher responsibility than a Helper. Hopper too became an Assistant.) From the base in upper Weardale in 1749, the Rowell brothers with Hopper crossed the fell into upper Teesdale, to pick up and advance the work of the Barnard Castle pioneers. Among these travellers of the high fells came Matthew Lowes after his return from Leeds. We find him at work in Weardale and Teesdale, where he appears with Hopper and Rowell as the third Gentleman on the first Newbiggin Chapel Trust Deed, in 1759.

In 1757, all the dales work - Wensleydale, Swaledale, Arkengarthdale, Teesdale, Alston, the Allendales and Hexhamshire - was consolidated into The Dales Circuit, under Jacob Rowell, now an Assistant, and charged by John Wesley with making the circuit function.

Thus was Methodism established in the lead mining dales of the northern Pennines. With the possible (but not very likely) exception of Nenthead, both Mr. Wesleys are absent as founders. This is 'second wave' Methodism to which the Wesleys were but followers. There is though no remaining evidence that Charles Wesley ever entered the lead mining areas to preach, although a very particular visit to Hindley Hill will feature later in one of these articles. All the founding evangelists were local laymen, who 'talked freely to them in their own language,' of their conversions under the Wesleys, sharing the good news of salvation and the fulness of life. Thus when John did come, it was to find societies established,

with believers at hand to promote and consolidate his work. In no small measure the success of Methodism in the northern Pennine dales was due to just this. The fact that Methodism's oldest two surviving churches are in Teesdale and Weardale must be connected too.

We must come to John's visits and the founding of the churches (or chapels if you prefer) next time.

Bibliography

The sources of part 1 were standard Methodist histories, John Wesley's Journal, F.C. Gill 'Charles Wesley' Directories.... all blended with my own information.

Part 2 is my gleaning from

John Wesley's Journal

T. Jackson 'The Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers' 1871 and earlier.

A. Steele 'The History of Methodism in Barnard Castle and the Principal Places in the Dales Circuit' 1867.

L.F. Church 'The Early Methodist People' 1948

H.L. Beadle 'The Beginnings of Methodism in Upper Teesdale' 1980.

G.E. Milburn 'The Travelling Preacher' 1987

'John Wesley's Itinerary in the North east'
private publication

conversation with the author

THE GRAHAM LETTERS Part 9

Regular readers will know that the Graham letters are a series written from Killhope to Joseph Graham who had emigrated to the United States in 1852. Joseph's great grand-daughter Mrs. Jean Cripps still has the original letters, and is allowing us to reprint them.

Since the winter of 1854 Joseph's brother William has been seriously ill with spinal abscesses. On 20th May 1856 he died, two days before his 27th birthday.

No letter telling Joseph of his loss survives and the next letter in the series is incomplete, but must date from the early autumn of 1856. It is from brother John and is extremely valuable as it gives a long list of staple items and their prices. Don't forget when reading this that the only money a leadminer could be sure of was his £2 per month "subsistence". Anything he earned over this was paid out yearly. It is a sobering experience to try to prepare a budget for John and his young family - he had a wife and probably three young daughters by now - using the prices in this letter.

You then begin to appreciate how vital their small farms were to families like the Grahams in supplementing their income.

"My Mother has only been meddling (middling - not very well) this spring. she got up sum more Blood about when William died but she is quite better now And your Daughter Jane Ann is in very good hielth and is very like her Mother, And all the rest of the Famiely is very well. Thay (that is brothers Christopher and Jonathan) are dowing very well with farming. Thay have thair farm full stocks. thay have a cow thay gave £15 for this spring and thair is growing more hay than when you left and Christopher and Jonathan and myself all worken together yet. In the beginning of this year we got on with Adam Peart and 4 partns which made us 8 Partns (i.e. a partnership of eight men who worked together in the mine. It is interesting that the three brothers worked together as a family group) to Drain the hard level East over in the killhope head vain (vein) at the top of the limestone and will do very little this year but I will let you know more about the Pays the next time I write. thair was the best Pays in Weardale the last year that ever I new in my life. thair very few mist a pay last year. (John means nearly everyone earned more than their basic £2 per month subsistence, and so received a cash payment at the annual "Pays") But times is very hard hear now, it has been three years of the dearest liven that ever I new. Flour 3s and 2d per stone Mutton is 8d per lb Beef is 7d lb Veal 8d lb Butter is 10d lb and was 14d the last Winter. Bacon is 20d lb you cannot get a store pig 8 or 9 weeks ould under 21s or 26s and even 30s. Newmilk cheese is 7½ to 8d per lb. Coals is 5 pr cwt at stanhope and 6 per cwt at Weastgate. we have got the Train what you call cars up as far as westgate with coals and thay take the Ironstone back with them to stanhope. (This was the Weardale Iron Company's private mineral line which snaked over the hills and round the fells from high above Stanhope, into Rookhope and on to the ironstone deposits above Westgate: thus reaching further into the dale than the railway along the valley bottom which had got no further west than Frosterley.)..... you cannot get a good cow under £10 to £18 each, a good Horse Three or Four years old is £25 to £30 so you may think how a man with a small family can lieve. I would think the Fa(r)merns boath hear and in America will be geten rich fast..... So I must end my lines in Good Hilth boath myself and Famiely and hope thay will find you the same.

Yours sincelly

J. Graham"

A COLLECTION OF RECOLLECTIONS

BY

BRIAN SHORT

My last article "Memoirs of a Modern Miner" was, by all accounts, well received among "Friends", and when I was asked to write a follow-up I had no hesitation in agreeing to do so. These stories are told by a fellow Friend of Killhope, Lennie Willis, a resident of Rookhope who, although it is a number of years since he was a miner, still has many vivid recollections to share with anyone who is interested. Obviously I am one of those people and Lennie has kindly asked me to write this article on his behalf.

One day, while working at Grove Rake, Lennie and two fellow miners were descending in the cage to the lowest level in the mine. Unknown to either them or the winchman, the pumps had stopped sometime beforehand, and there was a build up of water at the bottom of the shaft. At first when the cage hit the water they thought they had reached their destination but soon realized what was happening when they felt a swishy feeling as the cage was sinking. They had begun to scramble up the inside walls of the cage to avoid getting wet when one of them had the presence of mind to reach out and pull the wire which rang the return bell in the winch house. Immediately the cage was hoisted back up to the top of the shaft where they emerged wet, shaken but unhurt.

In those days horses were used to pull the tubs and each "drawer" used and looked after a particular horse. Lennie's horse was called Tommy, a good horse, and after years of working together, knew every move Lennie wanted him to make, without any orders being given. Unfortunately that knowledge worked against Lennie when it came to harnessing time at the beginning of the shift, when Tommy took some catching after a night of freedom in the field, because he did not want to go underground.

Lennie always walked behind the tubs and often the horse's light was snuffed out by a "dripper" from the roof. The horse would then have to make do with the light from the front tub, but sometimes that too went out or dropped off its hanger, and after stopping had to be searched for in the sometimes deep and always cold water.

One day, when Tommy had lost a shoe, Lennie used another horse which had been trained to follow its normal driver, and when they set off into the mine, with the horse behind, he soon realized that the faster he walked, then the faster the horse walked also. To keep out of the horse's way, the walk soon became a run and as Lennie tired, he ran into a crosscut to get out of the way. As could be expected, considering how the horse had been trained, it followed him, pulling the tubs off the rails and bringing about extra work to put everything right again.

Around 1958 a drawer was paid about 2/3d (11p) per tub or 9/- (45p) per rake, and to save time, sandwiches were often eaten while on the move. Out of that pay wellingtons, lamps, etc. had to be bought, and the drawer's aim was to get as many tubs out as possible. Lennie's best figure was 36 tubs, but normally 28 was a good average. It was hard work for the horse, especially starting from standstill with 4 loaded tubs, weighing altogether 4 tons, fighting for grip among the rail sleepers and spillage on the level bottom.

One of the chargehands at Grove Rake used to wear a large aluminium American oil well drillers type safety helmet. In his early days there Lennie remembers that the corn for the horses was kept in a storage bin in the office block. The helmet was more versatile than the chargehand realized, because being large it was useful as a corn scoop as one helmetful filled the feed bucket for Lennie's horse.

In a stope in the mine one day, that same chargehand eyed, somewhat warily, a large carbide lamp which was hooked some 12 feet up on the side of the workings. After some time he decided it was safe and moved in to talk to the miners working beneath the lamp. The lamp obviously thought differently, and duly fell on his head just as he approached, and although his safety helmet protected him admirably, it still caused him to utter a few choice Anglo-Saxon expletives!!

That particular vein was a good one, being 35 feet wide. Unknown to the modern miners, it had been worked at a lower level by the "old man", and one day the level sole dropped out into his workings, revealing old stables cut out of the side wall of the level. The floor of the stable had been 18" above the main level, so as to keep the horses clear of the mine water, and most of the hay rack was still in place across the back wall.

In order to explore in depth a ladderless underground shaft, it was decided to lower a carbide lamp on a string. The "string" was made up of several pieces of blue safety fuse tied together, and just as the lamp had been lowered the necessary amount, it parted company with the safety fuse and was heard to plop into the deep water at the bottom of the shaft. The owner of the lamp revealed that he had just bought it that week at a cost of 18/- (90p). It was never recovered and, to say the least, he was not a happy man that day.

On one occasion Lennie was responsible for boiling the kettle for dinnertime. That particular day the stove in the bait cabin was out of order and the only alternative was the flame from an oxy-acetylene cutting torch. The torch has a lever which, when depressed, boosts the flame considerably for cutting steel and this lever was accidentally operated whilst the flame was being directed onto the kettle. The kettle in this case was the old cast iron type, a material which doesn't take kindly to fierce localised heat and as a result the bottom dropped out of it and nobody got any tea at all that day. Someone else was given the job next day!

The normal filling point for the kettle was outside, around to the rear of the bait cabin, where a pipe protruded from a wooden box which was filled with natural spring water. The man responsible for making the tea that day was distracted whilst filling the kettle, only turning to replace the lid when it was full. The kettle was duly boiled and the tea made. Someone decided to refill the teapot from the kettle, but, although it was still half full, nothing came out when it was tipped up. It wasn't until it was tilted further that the reason for this became clear, a nicely boiled frog's leg appearing at the spout! Of course, everyone immediately felt ill and Lennie is still amazed to this day as to how they all vacated the bait cabin through such a narrow door in such a short time.

That same bait cabin became a scene of confusion when a suspended drying rack loaded with dirty clothes collapsed, showering everything and everyone with thick dust.

At Grove Rake, one man always rinsed his tea cup in the water flowing from the mine entrance, not a very hygienic practice, considering horses were in use at the time and everything dropped by them found its way out of the mine in the same water!

At Stottsfieldburn Mine the long established underground bait cabin was quickly abandoned when a large water filled stope was discovered directly below during pumping operations to explore lower levels. The stope had been back filled during earlier operations in the mine and the water had taken most of this away, leaving a 2 feet thick crust on which the bait cabin was built.

There was a hot water tap in the fitting shop at the washing plant in Rookhope which, even on the best days, produced no more than a trickle. One day, in an attempt to clear the pipe of a suspected blockage, a compressed air hose was inserted into the tap and turned on. Upon removal it was discovered that the situation had worsened considerably in that no water came from the tap at all. The next action was being decided when someone from the offices came rushing in to say he'd just had the fright of his life when the copper hot water cylinder split open in the building. Needless to say, nothing was said by those responsible, except comments like "How strange, what do you think caused that?".

Despite bad conditions, many happy times were had at the mines and to use Lennie's own words:- "They were a grand bunch of lads who would never see you stuck, somebody would always give you a hand when you needed it".

I'm now looking forward to visiting Lennie next year, again around Christmas and even if he doesn't tell me any stories, then at least I will get to sample more of his wife Marjorie's beautiful home-made sweet mince pies!

Editor's Note:

This is the second article of this type we have published recently. I hope readers will accept such repetition since not only did the first prove very popular (and even attracted the attention of the local press) but also the material is unlikely to be found in the County Records Office! Many will find the material just as interesting and valid as mine production figures and leases for example and I am pleased we are able to record these bits of social history for future generations.

Mineral Exhibition of 1887

A recently acquired copy of the catalogue of entries for The Grand Mineral and Geological Exhibition of 1887, kindly donated by Mr Alex Elliott, a Friend from Hexham makes fascinating reading.

The Exhibition, held at The Town Hall, St. John's Chapel was officially opened by Mr Walter Beaumont (brother of The Weardale Mines' owner) on Christmas Eve and ran for 13 days.

There were 35 different classes of ores, spars, rock samples, mosses, fossils and clays including such exotic titles as best pieces of "steel, peacock, potter and brangle ore". Could anyone cast any light as to the difference in these ores which are totally unheard of today?

A grand total of 480 entries were received. The vast majority coming from Weardale itself, with only the odd ones coming from out of the Dale. In one class, "Class 6", for the best spar diamonds, no fewer than 32 entries were received. Prizes for each class ranged from 15s - First Prize, down to 2s 6d - Fourth. A silver cup was presented to a Mr J Thompson from Hill Top for the best collection of minerals and one wonders whether this cup is still in existence today.

Such an exhibition nowadays would be hard to envisage but 100 years ago they were fairly common, the earliest one being The Great Exhibition of 1851 at The Crystal Palace were various "specimens, sections and models" exhibited by Thomas Sopwith, Mr Beaumont's Chief Agent (see Newsletter No.14 - Mr Beaumont's Mines).

To end with, it seems that the organisers were looking after the locals, admission being 6d per adult but a paragraph states,

"Strangers can be admitted, on application to the Secretary between the hours of 10am and 3pm on payment of one shilling each."

A copy of the Exhibition Catalogue has been presented to The Friends Library.

For many years, -spar boxes were kept below St. John's Chapel Town Hall but unfortunately most of these were damaged when The Town Hall was destroyed by fire in 1951.

by Les Blackett

The following is a page from the Exhibition Catalogue .

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Class 11.—continued.

- 165. J. Brown, Gate, St. John's
- 166. W. Gleason, St. John's
- 167. W. Hornaby, Daddry
- 168. T. Phillipson, St. John's
- 169. A. Ritson, E.B. Dean
- 170. G. Raine, Westgate
- 171. J. Walker, Rookhope

Class 12.—Best collection of Sulphur.

First, 16s; Second, 7s 6d; Third, 5s; Fourth, 2s 6d.

- 172. J. Rutherford, Barnthills
- 173. J. Wilson, St. John's
- 174. Joshua Watson, St. John's
- 175. J. Watson, St. John's
- 176. J. Pettinson, Lowrigg
- 177. E. Dawson, Burdholpe
- 178. T. Gardiner, Stonehead
- 179. J. Coulthard, Fairhills
- 180. W. Elliott, St. John's
- 181. F. Peart, Burnholpe
- 182. W. Wallace, St. John's
- 183. G. Harrison, St. John's
- 184. T. Gleason, St. John's
- 185. L. Walker, Rookhope

Class 13.—Best collection of B. Jack.

First, 15s; Second, 7s 6d; Third, 6s; Fourth, 2s 6d.

- 186. J. Peart, St. John's, Weardale
- 187. T. Gleason, St. John's
- 188. W. Heatherington, Nenthead
- 189. T. Angus, Nenthead
- 190. G. Rutherford, Nenthead
- 191. C. Peart, Weardale
- 192. G. Raine, Westgate
- 193. W. Hill, Lanehead

10

Class 9.—Best Spar Case.

First, 15s; Second, 7s 6d; Third, 5s; Fourth, 2s 6d.

- 140. C. Allwood, Ireshope Burn, Weardale
- 141. J. Carrick, Wearhead, Weardale
- 142. J. Fairless, Cowhill, Weardale
- 143. J. Fairless, Lanehead, Weardale
- 144. J. Rutherford, Nenthead
- 145. J. Egglestone, Huntshieldsford
- 146. J. Dawson, St. John's, Weardale
- 147. R. Fairless, Copt Hill, Weardale

Class 10.—Best Spar Model.

First, 16s; Second, 7s 6d; Third, 5s; Fourth, 2s 6d.

- 148. J. Fairless, Cowhill, Weardale
- 149. J. Watson, St. John's
- 150. J. Phillipson, St. John's
- 151. J. Peart, St. John's
- 152. W. Heatherington, Nenthead
- 153. T. Angus, Nenthead
- 154. W. Featherstone, Lanehead
- 155. T. Phillipson, St. John's
- 156. J. H. Phillipson, St. John's
- 157. J. Phillipson, E. B. Dean

Class 11.—Best collection of Barytes.

First, 16s; Second, 7s 6d; Third, 5s; Fourth, 2s 6d.

- 158. M. Dowson, Frosterley
- 159. W. Hill, Lanehead
- 160. J. Maddison, Daddry
- 161. S. Stout, Harwood
- 162. J. Deighton, Westgate
- 163. G. Featherstone, Langriggs
- 164. J. W. Wearmouth, St. John's

We are delighted to print the following article not only because I believe it is our first from north of the border but also because it offers an exchange of information, plans and drawings which is very much in line with our constitution and our raison d'etre.

The Lawsons have sent us a copy of part of their plan No. 13 which is of particular interest to Friends. Page 1 of their plan list is also printed for further information.

Maps and Plans of Alston Moor Mines.

Over the past 30 years there has been an increasing interest in the lead mines of Alston Moor, but unlike Derbyshire where account books are fairly readily accessible, there has been little in depth historical study of the area.

All recent writers have concentrated on the mines of Nenthead and particularly on the mines that were worked by the London Lead Company. Fortunately many lead mine plans have survived, but these are widely scattered across the Record Offices of the North of England and in the Mine Record Office at Bootle. Some plans are still in private hands, and others in public libraries.

Two years ago, my son and myself made a determined effort to obtain copies of as many available Alston Moor lead mine plans as possible. We could readily carry this out because, the majority of the Record Offices are well equipped with A3 photocopyiers, and from these a tracing of a whole mine plan can be made. The tracing can then be turned back into a plan using either a large photocopier, a dyeline machine, or a diazo machine.

By this process, new plans can be made of groups of mines, which interconnect, such as Rampgill, Scaleburn, Scaleburn Cross Vein, and Rampgill Sun Vein. The new combined plan can indicate to a mine explorer, where a major effort or "dig" would be most productive and in the case of the mine historian, how an area has developed. (Since many of the plans have dates on them, you can work out when a certain area was being worked).

We have found that some mines have several plans of them, made at different times and sometimes by different owners, and by comparing them over the time period, we have an even better idea of the dates and ways of working a particular mine e.g. Smallcleugh Mine, we have found, has 5 different plans, each are differing from the other according to the workings carried on.

New plans have also been constructed from surveyers notebooks and compared to existing ones. This again helps us to understand how and when mines were worked. Such information is invaluable, if we are to piece together the history of Rampgill Mine for example, which was worked continuously for nearly 200 years.

Although plans are well preserved in the Record Offices, they are not immune from the ravages of time and by photocopying plans now, we can ensure that at least some copies will survive into the future. One of our interesting finds in the Cumbria Record Office was a very fragile tracing of a section of Guddamgill Vein (1), which indicated a large zinc stope where KC Dunham (2) had thought none

existed. Subsequent exploration underground proved its existence. If this exercise had been carried out in a few years time, it is just possible that the section may have disintergrated, before anyone realised that it was there.

Although the majoritory of the London Lead Company plans were deposited in the Institute of Mining Engineers at Newcastle and subsequently passed onto the Northumbrian Record Office. By comparing the list of plans deposited there with that published in Mining Statistics (3), it is obvious that a number of plans are missing.

These include:-
 Browngill, a plan and Section,
 Carrs and Hanging Shaw,
 Bentyfield Sun Vein-West End
 Guddamgill Plan, (there is an early
 plan in the N.R.O but this would
 not reflect work done upto 1881)
 Cowperdyke Heads
 Fletcheras

Numerous smaller companies plans have not yet come to light of which the most important is the Brownley Hill Plan. The author only knows of two Complete plans of this mine, both made by the Vielle Montagne Zinc Co (4). It is just possible that no earlier plan of the mine now exists, but other plans exist of the Guddamgill Mine, which of course is part of the Brownley Hill system. For example, there is an extremely fine plan of Guddamgill Mine (5) in the Cumbria Record Office which shows part of the Brownley Hill system. We also know from the V.M. plan (4) that the North indicator is copied from a plan dated 1836.

In a similar way, no early plans of Nentsberry Haggs Mine have "surfaced", yet they must have existed for Wallace (6) illustrates a plan in his book (pg182).

If anyone knows the whereabouts of any of the "missing plans" listed above, or wishes to ask about the plans we hold copies of, please write to us at the address above:

References.

1. Plan of Guddamgill Vein by W. Holmes, about 1876 ,
Walton Collection, Cumbria Record Office.
2. Dunham K.C. Geology of the Northern Pennine
Orefield (pg173), HMSO 1948.
3. Mineral Statistics, R. Hunt editor 1859-1881
4. Plans 16 and 57, authors collection.
5. Plan of Guddamgill Vein by Thos Wallace Aug 1851,
Walton Collection, Cumbria Record Office.
6. Wallace W. 1861 "The Laws Which Regulate the
Deposition of Lead in Veins".

John and Robert Lawson
 36 Robb Place, Castle Douglas.
 Kirkcudbrightshire DG7 1LW

Plan No.	Details	Copy	Origin	Size	Scale
1.....	Composite Plan Middlecleugh and Smallcleugh Mines	Tracing	LLC Comp	29"x45"	2 Chns =1 Inch
2.....	Composite Plan Middlecleugh and Smallcleugh Mines (C97/Jackson 20/1/74 & 5/5/71)	Tracing	Copy C97 & R143c	22"x33"	2 Chns =1 Inch
3.....	Composite Plan Rampgill & Scaleburn Mines	Tracing	LLC Comp	33"x52"	2 Chns =1 Inch
3A.....	Nentsberry Mine Abandonment Plan 31/12/58 Surveyed by G.E Hornbrook	Dyeline	Copy P.J.	30"x55"	1:2500
4.....	Ashgill and Priorsdale Estate by G Sarel Oct 1821 Photocopy of D/Bo/B8345	Copy	Durham R.O.	A3 x 6 Sheets	8 Chns =1 Inch
5.....	Rampgill Mine (No Date) Northumbria Record Office Photocopy	Copy	LLC Copy	A3 x 4 Sheets	2 Chns =1 Inch
6.....	Rampgill Sun Vein Photocopy Northumbria Record Office	Copy	LLC Copy	A3 x 4 Sheets	2 Chns =1 Inch
7.....	Rampgill Mine Plan & Section Gutenberg 8/1904	Dyeline Copy	Copy P.J.	25"x40"	1:2500
8.....	Nenthead-Allendale Weardale Lead Company	Dyeline Copy	Copy P.J.	37½"x21"	6 Inch =1 Mile
9.....	Rampgill Shaft. Section Section : V.M. by Holby 11/1908	Dyeline Copy	Copy P.J.	21"x20½"	1:500
10.....	Nentsberry Mine Eastern Part and Section on 1 st Sun Vein Surveyed by Holby	Dyeline Copy	Copy M.L.	24½"x48"	1 Inch =100 Ft

PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Winter is traditionally the time when Friends retire to the warmth of their own homes or to Record Offices. I am assured there is no truth in the rumour that some hibernate in old mines.

This year, during yet another unseasonal winter, a certain amount of outdoor work has been possible.

This has concentrated on the Buddle House waterwheel installation. We now have a deadline to work to, for Eric's wheel will be "launched" on Sunday June 10th. I hope a large number of Friends will want to attend on this day; mark it in the diary and more details will follow later.

Work in Park Level is progressing satisfactorily; we are now very close to the end of the arching and the beginning of the fall itself. I renew my plea for anyone with a first-aid certificate to share the burden of being on duty while we dig.

Friends are still gathering artefacts; Brent Stephenson who owns the old mill at Middleton-in-Teesdale very generously offered us some more line shafting and pulleys for the jigger house (see last newsletter) so we had some more dismantling and transporting to do.

Thomas Wall has donated a flat belt tensioner which came originally from the Settlingstones mines, and was used at Stanhopeburn.

A group of Friends have erected some scaffolding in the jigger house to enable them to offer the line shaft hangers up to the joists but this work has had to be suspended temporarily as one of the beam ends was found to be rotten. It is hoped to get specialists to strengthen and repair this.

Two evening meetings have been held since the last newsletter. In Barnard Castle John Pickin gave a revealing and knowledgeable account of recent work on prehistoric copper mining, and the Members Night at St. John's Chapel was treated to a superb video of charcoal fired blast furnaces in Sweden taken from film shot 60-80 years ago, as well as to some very high quality slides from members. Unfortunately the evening was marred by the only genuine snow of the winter and only a hardy few managed to attend.

Donations to the library continue; we have received geological and mineral processing textbooks from Dr. Goldring and George Pickin, and a copy of the latest AIA Review from Colin Short. This contains Colin's research on the Brunton Buddles which you read first in our Newsletter.

Alex Elliott has given a photocopy of the catalogue of mineral exhibition held in 1887, and special thanks go to Judith Pickin who spent many hours carefully redrawing plans of Sedling and Burtree Pasture for the archive.

It is our intention that all the Friends library material should be more readily available for consultation when the visitor centre opens, for it should be a resource for all Friends to consult.

..... SOME YOU LOSE

Ian Forbes

Davison's of Hexham were a typical small town foundry, such as could be found in many Northern towns. One can assume they produced a wide range of cast iron items; certainly I have seen kitchen ranges with their name on.

The company goes back to at least the 1820's, and, unusually, is still in existence today, under the name of Davison Tyne Metal.

In the 1960's they supplied the headgear to the new shaft on Redburn fluorspar mine, and their involvement in metal mining goes back at least 100 years for they supplied winding wheels for shafts at WB lead mines.

However Davison's are best known to mining historians for their ore separation equipment; cast iron Davison jigs were widely used locally.

At Killhope we have bought two Davison jigs: a two compartment one which bears the legend "Davison and Co. Hexham 1890" and a more recent three compartment jig.

The Weardale Lead Company used Davison jigs, and recently the foundry supplied castings for froth flotation cells.

Thomas Wall, who used to work for the Weardale Lead Company, and who gave me the above information on Davison's, remembered seeing some years ago patterns for parts of jigs and trommels in their pattern shop.

Clearly if we could obtain patterns, making new castings for jig and trommel parts would be comparatively easy.

So one day last November Thomas Wall and I went to Hexham with high hopes of progressing the Killhope restoration.

You can imagine our feelings on being told we were about a month too late; pressure on the pattern shop stores had resulted in a clear out of old patterns and two skips full of Weardale Lead Company patterns had gone away to be destroyed.

We shall now never know what those patterns were