

Friends of Killhope

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

MAY 1985

NEWSLETTER No. 2

It seems only a week or two since we completed our first Newsletter and yet here we are assembling the second edition so that it can go out early in May. Perhaps the reason for the apparently swift passage of time is that the Steering Committee have been so involved in the various aspects of the setting up of the Friends and the launch in particular. Some progress has been made and I am pleased to report, for example, that our Treasurer has already registered over 70 members which is surely a promising start. In addition the following have very kindly agreed to be Vice Presidents of our group.

Mr. B.D. Crane, Works General Manager, Blue Circle Cement, Weardale Works.

Mrs. D.A. Irvine, County Councillor representing Weardale area.

Mr. G. Laurie, Cumbria County Councillor representing Alston area.

Mr. R.J. Marshall, Works Manager, Weardale Minerals Ltd.

Major J.G. McGowan, Agent, Bywell Estate Office.

Mr. R. Pendlebury, Durham County Councillor representing Crook area.

On the other hand we are still negotiating on such matters as Friends insurance and charitable status but these should be resolved in due course.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REQUEST

I have been asked by the Committee to compile a file of newspaper cuttings and photographs or any other publicity material connected with Killhope and the Friends. Indeed any item of a leadmining nature in the Northern Pennines may be useful for our records. We can copy original items and return to the senders if required. Members of the Steering Committee receive Weardale and Alston newspapers but material outside of these areas would be welcome.

Finally, I would again welcome from Friends any suggestions for inclusion in the Newsletter or changes in format etc. Items could be anonymous if required. Please give me a ring on Durham 68491 or write 18 Cheveley Walk, Belmont, Durham.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE FRIENDS

As many Friends will know our organisation was successfully launched with Sir Kingsley Dunham's lecture in Stanhope at the end of March. In spite of foul weather about 100 people, including most of our Vice Presidents enjoyed our President's talk which was followed by questions on subjects as varied as gold mining in Scotland and the dumping of nuclear waste in disused Weardale lead mines!

Explanatory material on Killhope and the Friends was on display in the hall and the public were invited to join our group. This resulted in a doubling of our membership (including one gentleman who had travelled from Blackpool.)

Proceedings on this enjoyable evening were concluded with a presentation to Sir Kingsley of a small oil painting of the Killhope Wheel.

The Steering Committee would like to thank all those people who carried out the various unsung tasks which ensured the smooth running of the evening - their efforts were much appreciated.

THE GEOLOGY OF THE NORTHERN PENNINES OREFIELD VOLUME 2 STAINMORE TO CRAVEN

Friends who attended our launch will remember that Sir Kingsley has completed Volume 2 of his work on the Geology of the North Pennine Orefield which is concerned with the area Stainmore to Craven. This has now been published by H.M.S.O. Further welcome news is that the revision of Volume 1 is almost complete but Friends will be disappointed to learn that Sir Kingsley does not expect publication for some years but hopefully in the 1980s! Apparently this is due to the pressure of work on H.M.S.O. from Hansard, Government reports and so on. Our President recalls that the original Volume 1 was printed promptly due to a question in the House by a local M.P. who knew the work was complete and wanted to know when it was going to see the light of day!

Anyone know a friendly M.P.....

ALSTON LECTURE

We are pleased to announce final details of our lecture by Mr. Harry Parker Publicity Officer of the Peak District Mines Historical Society. This will be given in the Samuel King's School in Alston at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 8th May. Mr. Parker who is a press photographer has visited the Alston area for many years and was a friend of the late Mr. Eric Richardson the local leadmining expert. The talk will be on The Fascination of Lead Mining History and will obviously be a "must" for us all. Please spread the word and ensure a good attendance and hopefully a further increase in our membership.

REPORT OF WORK CARRIED OUT BY EARBY MINES RESEARCH GROUP IN PARK LEVEL
KILLHOPE

This project is to investigate the level and to consider the feasibility of the public being able to go underground. Mr. Dave Carlisle very kindly gave us a potted report which was as follows:-

"On the weekend of 23/24th March an average of 12 members were employed on the project, putting in a total of 140 man hours. There were four basic jobs and I'll deal with each in turn.

1. On surface, some members diverted water which was running through the arching about 50yds from the mouth.
2. A gang was employed on clearing silt from the bottom of the adit and tubbing it out. A total length of about 120ft. was cleared but the operation was hampered by too-heavy-a-tub and, of course, poor track. Many of the lengths of rail are bowed in a vertical plain so no matter how you pack them up, they still move vertically at the joints! We hope for a smaller, lighter tub with bigger wheel flanges next time. Nevertheless progress in this area was very satisfactory.
3. There are three lengths of bad arching about 200ft. from the mouth. Our timbering gang has erected cap and leg supports under the worst two of these. There is no point in working on the fall beyond, if you don't protect your access.
4. The worst working conditions involved the work on the fall itself at 105 yds from the mouth. A properly supported pilot drift 10ft. long has been carried through along the west cheek of the adit crosscut, which is in shale at that point. The roof fall consists of boulders and clay. There is a considerable quantity (over 10,000 g.p.h.) of water coming through the fall, it hampers us considerably by shooting out of the breast or forehead and running down through our timber supports. The advantage is in the easy removal of waste! The quantity of water, coupled with the distance which we have mined through render it prudent to leave operations now until our next weekend in May."

I am sure Friends will agree this is very exciting reading and will look forward to the report of the next phase which hopefully will appear in the next Newsletter.

WHY DID THEY NEED COAL?

There is a tantalising entry in one of the Weardale Lead Company's notebooks, written in 1898, towards the end of the life of Killhope mines. It is this: "Killhope Feb. 9th 1898 Coal - began with 28cwts at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 Tuesday morning. Finished at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 on Wednesday morning - total 30 hours."

This suggests coal was being burnt continuously, which might well imply that a steam pumping engine was in use. But was it? And if so, where?

Can anybody shed any light on this?

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF KILLHOPE WASHING FLOOR - Ian Forbes

Over the last few years, as restoration work at Killhope has continued it has become more and more apparent that our earlier views in which the importance of the site was seen to lie largely in the wheel and the three main buildings were oversimplifications.

Thus, the area in front of the house teams until two years ago excited little comment - we saw it as an area for preliminary sorting of ore, but little more.

Then in the summer of 1983 a team of Archaeologists led by Dave Cranstone began stripping the silt of the last 70 years off this washing floor area.

In the summer of 1984 Dave completed the work on the western half of the washing floor and despite hopes that he might not find much and therefore simplify restoration we began to realise that a considerable amount of ore-dressing must have taken place here. Far from being a rather dull part of the site the excavations revealed part of a tantalising complex of troughs, tanks and platforms, whose exact meaning is as yet unclear.

This year Dave Cranstone and his team will be working on the eastern half of the washing floor and this promises to be every bit as interesting as last year's dig. As far as I know, no other comparable site in the country has been excavated properly like this, so pioneering work in industrial archaeology is being done here at Killhope.

Dave starts work on June 17th and will be at Killhope for at least a month. He welcomes voluntary help from Friends who want to come and work under his direction uncovering parts of the Killhope jigsaw which have not seen the light of day for many years.

Moreover he has very kindly agreed to show Friends round his dig to discuss the finds as they are made. This visit will be on Wednesday 3rd July at 7 p.m. and should not be missed by those interested in ore-processing and washing techniques.

Meet at Killhope. If July 3rd turns out very wet, please ring me on Weardale 537470 for an alternative date.

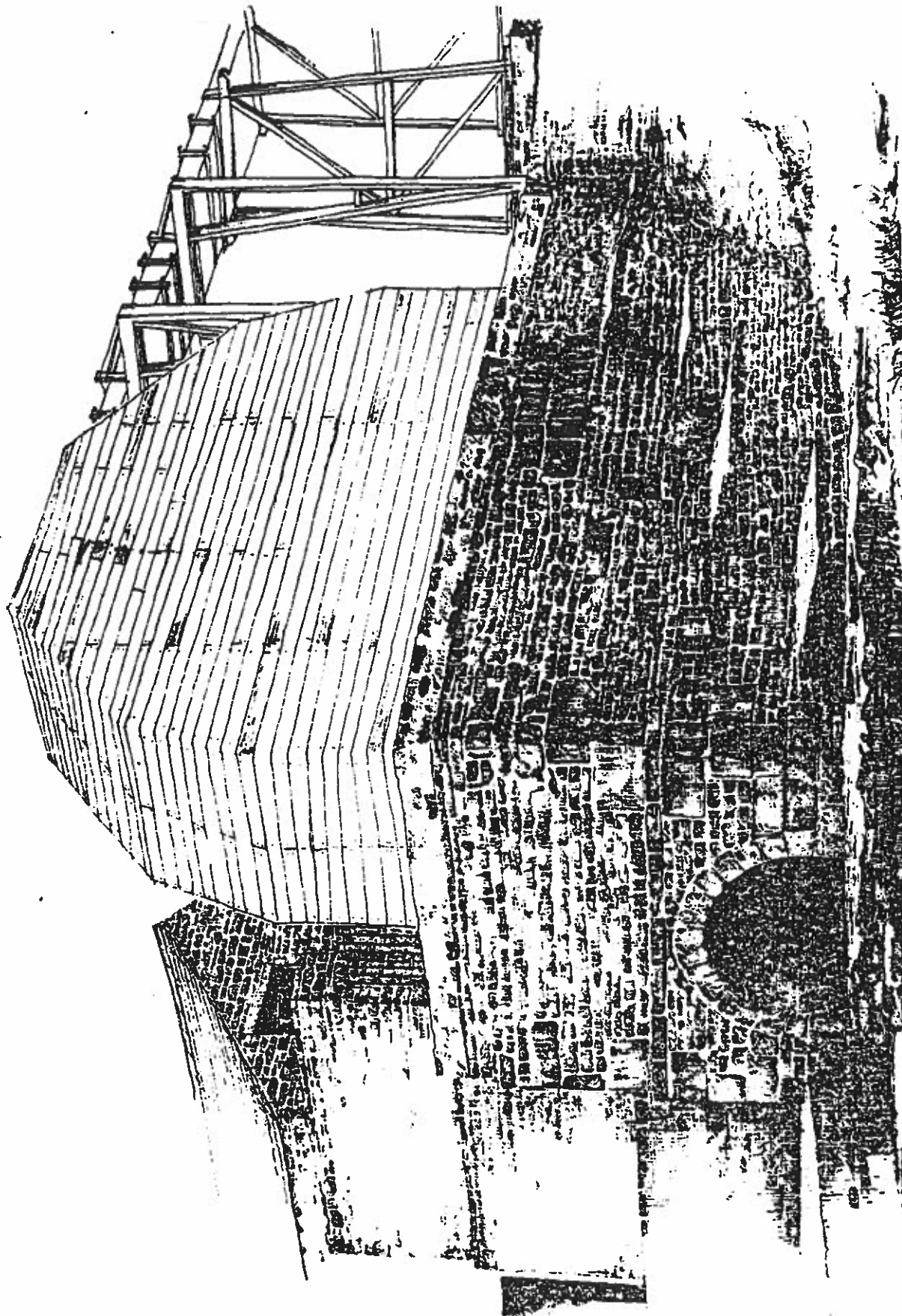
CAN YOU HELP?

Many people have already contributed generously to the displays at Killhope but the leadmining centre needs your help if it is to have a true air of authenticity. This means we would like to hear from anyone who has lead-mining relics they could loan or give; in particular we are looking for more jumpers (steel boring chisels) and some pricklers (iron or copper needle shaped rods used to make a hole through the wadding and powder for a fuse when shotfiring.)

Other items on our "shopping list" are buckers (flat hammers for smashing large pieces of ore,) pony harness, mine tub wheels (so we can make replica tubs,) iron wheelbarrow wheels, picks, shovels and hammers and carbide lamps.

If you think you can help, contact the Projects Secretary, Ian Forbes on Weardale 537470 or the Secretary, Dorothy Chambers on Durham 68491.

DATE	Nov 21	ASSIGNED	Project	DWG No.	REV.
		Drawn	Checked		
COUNTY PLANNING OFFICE - 01			1961		



WHAT PRICE AUTHENTICITY? Friends might compare the picture of the wheel in our first Newsletter which showed it as it will be this summer, with the above which shows it as it was during its working life - all boxed in for protection from the elements. Not nearly so impressive is it?

A PECULIAR KIND OF ANIMAL?

One of the veins in the Killhope complex is called Old Moss Vein. On the first edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1858) the workings on this vein are "Amos workings."

Picture the scene: the gentleman from the Ordnance Survey in Southampton has done his work with his instruments, and now wants to know what the local features are called. So he consults a grizzled old Killhope leadminer. "That there - why that's A'ad Moss workings."

We can speculate whether the same conversation resulted in Cowhaust Hush, just east of Killhope Wheel, being fixed on the map as Cowhorse Hush, and whether the gentleman from Southampton went off scratching his head about the kind of animal they were breeding in Weardale.

Incidentally, although hushing (opencast mining using water to strip away the overburden) is generally considered a rather early leadmining technique, it was still in use at Killhope at least as recently as the 1840s. We have records from that time of men hushing both in Cowhaust Hush and in Middle Grove Hush to the west of the Wheel.

Thus, for example, at Cowhaust Hush in September 1847 we find Joseph Lows and partners "working in the hush sides in consequence of the extreme dry season. They have no water to hush with. The vein is from 1 - 2 feet wide, but poor in ore." Around the same time John Kidd and partners were hushing in Middle Grove vein - it seems likely that it was this John Kidd who gave his name to Kidd's dam, the westernmost of the four reservoirs in the Killhope water system. This dam is above Middle Grove hush and could have been built specifically for hushing.

FRIENDS DONATIONS

Our Projects Secretary has informed me that one of the Friends, Charlotte Caplan from London has very kindly donated a cart saddle and harness to the leadmining centre which is very appropriate as the collection is in need of improvement. It is indeed pleasing to report this example of the Friends helping Killhope in such a positive way since it is an early confirmation that the organisation can be worthwhile. In addition it shows that distance need not be a bar to Friends involvement with Killhope. So thanks are due to Charlotte on several counts.

Killhope has until recently been a crushing mill without crushing rollers. Now thanks to the Friends of Killhope the first step has been taken towards putting this right. An enthusiastic Friend, Don Clegg, warden of the Carrshield Field Study Centre, on behalf of the centre, donated to Killhope a fluted crushing roller of the type used at Park Level Mill, as well as the remains of an old lead-ore tub and a more modern mine tub. The lead-mining centre is most grateful for this generous gift which will add considerably to the impact of the displays.

Now we need someone to copy the lead-ore tub (of the sheet metal type with timber framework) to give us a replica which can stand in the mine mouth, and someone to cast a copy of the crushing roller to give us a pair.

Any offers?

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EYESORE OR HERITAGE - A REAL DILEMMA - Ian Forbes

The visible remains of the Pennine's leadmining heritage mean different things to different people.

Often to those born and brought up in their shadows they are too visible a reminder of hard times and grinding poverty best forgotten. To Councils they can be eyesores to be cleaned up, tidied away with grant money. To landowners they can be a headache with problems of safety and delapidation, or a source of revenue as stone quarries.

On the other hand to the growing band of leadmining enthusiasts those old heaps of rubble are things worthy of study and preservation; detailed examination can help build up our knowledge of the region's industrial past. Many sites are important not only in themselves, but for comparison with others; close examination of one site can help explain another.

These opposing viewpoints are not easy to reconcile, and there will always be conflicting interests.

Nevertheless we are losing more and more of this heritage every year, and often the first an interested person knows about the loss of one of his favourite sites is when he visits it one day and finds nothing left.

This is really a plea for increased communication between those who want to demolish and those who want to preserve. Clearly not everything can, or should, be preserved. But where things have to go, prior knowledge can at least mean photographic records can be made, or if the site is sufficiently important, measured drawings and notes can be taken. It is the enthusiast who knows the relative importance of sites - can his expertise not be harnessed?

Two recent examples of demolition can be noted here.

Last summer a Killhope Friend visited the impressive Great Egglehope mineshop in Teesdale to take photographs. The building was no longer there. Does anyone have an adequate record of this important "shop?"

Earlier this year I learnt, by chance, of the impending demolition of the impressive row of buildings over Nentsberry Haggs shaft on the Nentforce Level halfway between Nenthead and Alston.

This was a good example of the dilemma faced. On the one hand a redundant building with great and growing safety problems - structural instability in places in the walls and a huge shaft filling most of one room. Worth nothing as a building, it had value for its large quantity of good quality stone. On the other hand to those concerned with the mining history of Alston Moor this was one of the few industrial buildings left between Alston and Nenthead, its importance compounded by its prominent roadside position, and its unique internal shaft.

Because I had heard beforehand that the building was to go and because I don't live too far away, I was able to pressgang the family into holding tapemeasures and we measured the building as fully as we could in the time available as well as making a photographic record (although many of the internal shots did not come out.) Close examination revealed the building had had different uses over its lifetime; blocked-up openings suggested an early industrial use (an engine for winding in the shaft?) was followed by conversion into cottages. An Italian name scribbled on the plaster recalled the use of imported labour by the VMZ mining company early this century.

Thus I have some record of this site - other Friends may well be able to add more photographs and information, and provide documentary evidence to interpret the remains as recorded. But should we be leaving things to chance quite so much?

As a postscript I can add that the stone from Haggs was bought by Durham County Council and is being used in reconstruction at Killhope.