



# Peak District Mines Historical Society Ltd.

Newsletter No. 136

October 2010

## To All Members

Notice is hereby given that the Thirty Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Peak District Mines Historical Society Ltd. will be held at 6.00pm on Saturday 27th November 2010 at the Peak District Mining Museum, The Pavilion, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire.

The Agenda will be distributed at the start of the meeting.

By Order  
D Weston  
Hon. Secretary.

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## The Companies Act 1985

As required under Article 24 of the Articles of Association of the Company, the following Directors will retire at the AGM:

The Hon. Secretary  
The Hon. Editor  
The Hon. Recorder  
Two Ordinary Members

The Committee that was elected at the Thirty Fifth AGM, which was held on Saturday 21st November 2009, is as follows:

Chairman	Mr. A. Wood
Deputy Chairman	Mr. J. K. Gregory
Hon. Secretary	Mr. D. Weston +
Hon. Treasurer	Mrs. E. Dixon
Hon. Recorder	Mrs. K. Harvey +
Hon. Editor	Mr. R. Shaw +
Ordinary Members	Mr. D. Webb *
	Mr. A. Russell
	Mr. J. Barnatt
	Mr. P. Turner *
	Mrs. P. Pick
	Mr. I. Bunting

Those whose names are marked with + are retiring as required by the Articles of Association and are eligible for re-election. Those whose names are marked \* are retiring and are not eligible for re-election.

Fully paid up Members of the Society, who are aged 18 and over, are invited to nominate members of the Society (who are themselves fully paid up members and who have consented to nomination) for the vacant posts on the Committee.

Nominations are required for the positions of:

Hon. Secretary  
Hon. Editor  
Hon. Recorder  
Two Ordinary Members

A Nomination Form is enclosed with this Newsletter for you to use. Any nomination will be accepted provided that it is in the format prescribed. All nominations must be received by Mr. D. Weston (Hon. Secretary) by 13th November 2010. Proof of postage cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

All nominations should be accompanied by a brief written resumé that will be included in the Agenda of the AGM if a ballot is required to elect Directors.

To save postage, nominations for the Committee may be sent with your **Miners' Buffet** bookings, details below.

D Weston  
Hon. Secretary

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## AGM and Social Evening Saturday the 27th of November 2010

The programme will commence at 15.00 when there will be two or three talks of about half an hour to forty minutes, followed by a break for tea, coffee and biscuits.

The AGM will begin at 17.30 and last for approximately one hour. It will be followed by the **Miners' Buffet** which will be served at 19.00, and then David Webb will be showing his latest film production.

The buffet will cost £17.50 per head, and you will be issued with a ticket for your meal when you arrive at the Museum. Food will not be pre-ordered this year, but selected from the buffet menu on the day. See Page 12 for the programme of talks and the full menu. We have a drinks licence for the sale of beer and wine at the event.

To make your food reservation either send an e-mail to [mail@peakmines.co.uk](mailto:mail@peakmines.co.uk), telephone the Museum on 01629 583834, or write to the address on the last page. Payment in full must be received by the Museum by **Saturday the 13th November 2010**. Cheques should be made out to Peak District Mines Historical Society.

Keith Gregory and Robin Hall



## Obituary:

### Herr Professor Dr Gerd Weisgerber

Deutes Mining Museum, Bochum, Germany.

I have been informed, by Professor Dr Rainer Slotta, Director of the Museum, of the death from cancer, of Gerd Weisgerber.

Gerd Weisgerber was probably to the first ever professional specialist mining archaeologist, appointed to the post around 1980 at the Deutes Bergbau Museum, Bochum, Germany. He established mining archaeology underground as a discipline, drawing on his training as an archaeologist and working with professional mining engineers, initiating the training of the modern generation of German mining archaeologists. He excavated widely in Germany, and was associated with the Grimes Graves excavation in England. He made major advances, especially in Israel in understanding the early mining there for copper, and went on to excavate mines in Greece (Syphnos), Jordan, Iran, and, his favourite, in Oman. He was still working until recently, in his retirement, in the mountains of Oman.

He became Assistant Director of the Bochum Museum and was later appointed the first Professor of Mining Archaeology there. I first met him as a visitor to the Bochum Museum, and he was later to attend the 1288 Quo Warranto, 700th anniversary celebrations at the Peak District Mining Museum in 1988, and we subsequently published an article by him in our Journal. A small party of us made a visit to the Bochum Museum later and toured a range of German sites with him, including Rammelsberg, then just closed but forming itself into a museum.

He was to pay me my most treasured compliment by asking me to contribute a section on the theory of firesetting in a joint article on early mining in Iran (in *Paleo-Orient*). I still receive occasional requests for specific information on Iran, though I never went there!

His death at what is still an early age nowadays is a great loss, both to his friends, and for the contribution he was still making to his chosen discipline. A ceremony in his honour is to be held at the Deutes Bergbau Museum.

Lynn Willies

## Barmote Event 2010

This year's Barmote Event will take place on Wednesday the 20th of October 2010 in the Mining Museum at Matlock Bath, and will begin at 11.00am prompt. There will be two presentations during the event, followed by the presentation of clay pipes to the new members.

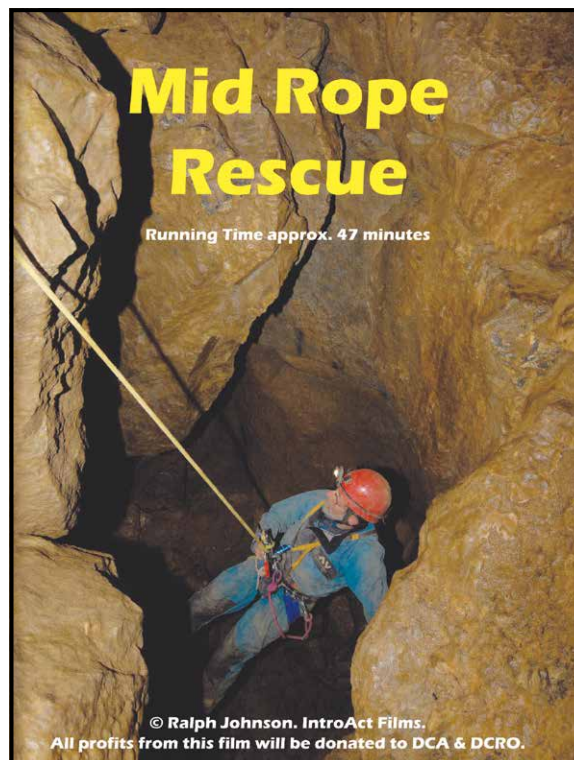
Food and drink will be provided. As usual the new members will receive their own invitations, the usual suspects will need to phone or call in at the Museum just to give an idea of the numbers for food. There will be a chance for new members to take a tour of the Mining Museum and Temple Mine as well.

Tony Wood, Barmote Event Organiser.

## DVD Review:

### Mid-Rope Rescue by IntroAct Films

As Ralph says in the introduction, the techniques used in this film aren't for the faint-hearted, and judging by the title, this wasn't going to be the sort of video to watch with your mates while enjoying a glass of pop. This DVD demonstrates and discusses various techniques for assisting cavers who are unable to ascend or descend a rope by themselves – a very sobering thought indeed.



The film is split into three sections; hauling techniques, lowering techniques and a final section on passing re-belay and deviations. Each section covers a variety of methods to achieve the same goal, and nearly all of these require no special tackle.

The first demonstration does use a Mini-Traxion (a locking pulley), which isn't found in the average caver's tackle-bag because it's quite expensive (soon be Christmas, hint, hint). Alternative methods using standard kit are discussed; the pulley-jammer arrangement, for example, is shown but not fully demonstrated. It would have been nice to see this method in use, along with all its inherent problems.

Filmed both underground and on a climbing wall, there are still times where the jumble of rope and tackle makes for difficult viewing, but Ralph gives a clear and precise commentary and with an occasional photo of the set-up, he does make the best of a complex subject. However, watching this DVD is no substitute for practical tuition and practice.

To benefit from this production you'll need to have a good understanding of SRT and rigging, plus the desire to add a few rescue techniques to your repertoire. I've watched this film a few times now and it's certainly whetted my appetite, so for me, this one gets a thumbs-up.

Martin Long

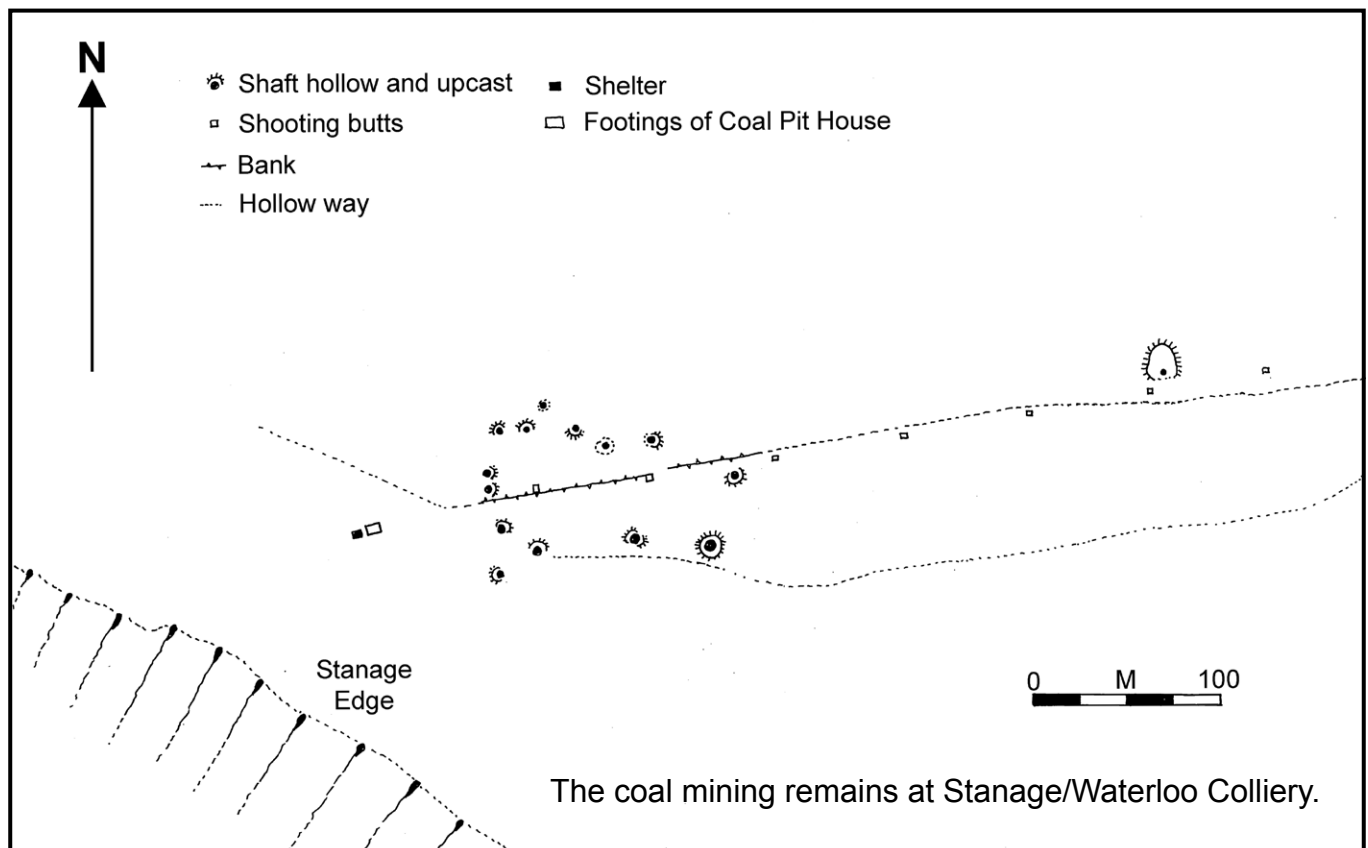
## Peak District Mines – Observations and Discoveries – Part 35

### Stanage/Waterloo Colliery, Hallam Moors, South Yorkshire, main group centred SK 2320 8530

In a particularly isolated spot above Stanage Edge, east of High Neb, there are the remains of a small 18th/19th century colliery exploiting the Ringinglow Seam. This mine, known to some of the authors for several years, was only recorded systematically for the first time in June 2010 using Google Earth satellite imagery with superimposed sketch plotting of features made during our site visit.

impression was gained that the seam was not far below, perhaps at only 3-5m below ground level. One shaft to the southeast has a somewhat larger shaft-sinking hillock, reflecting the increased depth of the dipping seam. In contrast, the easternmost shaft hillock in the cluster is small, perhaps suggesting it was abandoned before it was completed.

The shaft hillock further east is different in character, with a large diameter but flat top at only about 1m high. At the northern end the mound has a slightly raised lip. While no clear horse walk can be made out it may well be that there was a whim gin on the mound top. This may well have given the name to the walled plantation on the raised ground further east, which is free of coal mining shafts but has long been known as



It comprises a discrete cluster of 14 shaft sites, each with hollows at the shaft top with sinking dirt to the side(s), located not far behind the scarp and just beyond a small stone building associated with a series of seven stone-lined shooting butts running east, with an isolated single shaft just over 200m further east close to one of the butts at c. SK 8550 8525. The main cluster of shafts would have all been relatively shallow, as they lie a short distance east of the outcrop, the exact line of which is not now known. How the coal was discovered below what originally a peat-covered landscape is unclear; large areas of the ground have had the peat removed at a date unknown, leaving irregular islands of peat, but whether this was cut away (no obvious cut edges were observed), or was removed by a moorland fire is not known. One shaft hollow to the south-west is relatively deep and has exposing rock overhangs, and during a scramble down to inspect a small drafting hole the

Gin Piece. The shaft top itself is probably indicated by a slight hollow, at a point where the hillock slopes down gradually southwards, the profile giving the impression that the shaft has been purposefully filled, with this part of the hillock 'landscaped', but with minor subsidence taking place later. It is unusual in a local coalmining context to find an isolated shaft at a distance from others, sunk to a position where the seam has dipped significantly, in this kind of small colliery. Where they do occur, such shafts would normally be associated with ventilation of workings which are accessed by a drainage/haulage levels and parallel updip airways. However, in the case of the Stanage venture, there are no known level entrances and the topography is such that driving a long level from below Stanage Edge or from lower land to the north would be a costly exercise, there are no identified remains to suggest such levels ever existed. Thus, it may be that the shaft was sunk as a trial

at the beginning of a proposed and relatively ambitious venture, which was soon aborted.

The extant stone shelter at the western end of the shooting butts lies next to the footings of a larger rectangular stone building, which was already standing in 1840 but was ruined by 1854, and was named Coal Pit House; whether this remote building was directly associated with the mine (which would be atypical), or was a gamekeepers lodge or shooting cabin, is not known. The shelter is built from stone from the 'house' and as well as a path/track leading between the butts, there are also parts of an old boundary bank close by. A slight hollow way running parallel to the south may be earlier and could perhaps be associated with coal removal.

Little is known of the history of this mine, Farey, writing in 1811, named it Stanage Colliery and it was still active in his day. Ward, writing in the mid 20th century, passed on various snippets of local information, including that the workings were known as Waterloo Pit and were active in the time of George 1. From this it seems likely that work started here in the early 18th century if not before, and that the mine name was changed sometime after the battle of Waterloo in 1815. One of the shafts at the south-east end of the main cluster was shown as active on the Ordnance Survey one inch to a mile map published in 1840, which also marks Coal Pit House. In contrast, the Ordnance Survey six inch to a mile sheet of 1854 shows all these shafts as disused, but the solitary large shaft further east was active. Only the shafts in the southern half of the main cluster are marked on this map, perhaps indicating six of those to the north were earlier and already filled, re-vegetated and not obvious to the map surveyors. Given the small area of extraction and the wide range of potential working dates suggested by the various sources just noted, it seems likely that the mine was only worked intermittently, with more than one phase of coal extraction with abandonment between.

#### References:

Farey, J. 1811 General View of the Agriculture and Minerals of Derbyshire Vol. 1, p. 210.

Sissons, D. (ed.) 2002 The Best of Sheffield Clarion Rambler's Handbooks: 'Ward's Piece', p. 184.

Halsgrove.

Present – John Barnatt, Chris Heathcote, Phil Shaw,  
Steve Thompson, Dave Williams

Reported: John Barnatt

### **Maury Sough, Millers Dale, Taddington. SK 1508 7308.**

Last year, as reported in Notes 32 (Newsletter No. 133, January 2010), an underground trip here found interesting tramway rails. A return evening jaunt, in early July 2010, found the sough with very little water and there are new observations to make.

In the last note it was mentioned that much of the water in the sough falls into it vertically, where there is an

iron chain hanging down a winze. This has now been explored by the braver individuals in our party and proved to lead up to a second level that followed the vein about five to six metres above (estimated), which originally went outby, but with the roof at the way on having collapsed. In the inby direction the level is walled across. Be warned, the chain that looks 'useful' for the ascent should not be used – it is fastened at the top to a rotting stemple with deads above, which was reported as potentially very dangerous. Further rotting stemples hold up the upper level roof in the short section that had not yet collapsed. The water came in from the outby side of the winze before the top.

We also noted the remains of a 'tub' near the forefield. On our second visit this was reached by Adam Russell, John Beck and the author. The final part of the sough is in solid toadstone, while some way outby, just before the limestone is left, there is a small stope which includes a small area of natural passage, and a small winze rising up. In front of the forefield the last two metres or so of the passage are filled with 'sediments' to relatively near the roof, ending at a steep face with the 'tub' remains lying in the adjacent stooping area. These are placed against one passage side and include metal pieces attached to two or more once sturdy (now rotted) timbers. One piece of metal comprised a round-section 'handle' with long straight part and curved ends (too long to fit at a tub end). A separate piece had two straight bars, the longer attached to the timbers at two short cross pieces. At one end there was a hinged joint, and the attached short bar had washers on its far end. There were no remaining axles or wheels. What the original form of the timber and iron object was, and whether it was a tub, is unclear. On the other side of the passage was a bent and displaced piece of iron tramway rail, different in form to any of those *in-situ* nearer the entrance; it has a cross-section similar to normal bullhead rail but with only one prominent bulbous part (to the bottom?).

Coming now to the main reasons for this second note – apologies to all, but I made a mistake in our first report – in the innermost section of the tramway what were described as 'timber rails' (as illustrated) are no such thing (and one rotted timber further in is not certainly a rail)! Much to our surprise, hammering away the stalagmitic coating in a couple of places has shown that inside a very thick cemented sediment are the same metal rails as further out; the 'coating' makes them appear three times as wide as they actually are! Thus, while the outer section of the sough has timber rails with thin metal strips nailed on top, this followed by a long inner part of the sough with metal strip rails, including straight sections. Beyond the metal rails there is long stretch of sough to the forefield, including the raise that issues water, and various stopes where the passage is partially silted, with collapsed deads on top. Thus, we do not know what form any tramway took. In the large stopes and beyond there is an increase in average shothole size when compared with the outer parts of the sough, but this is not pronounced enough to give positive support to any of this work being of markedly different date.

A close examination of the junction between metal and wooden rails raises questions. As would be expected, both sections of rail have a common gauge, now measured at fifteen and a half inches. But were they laid together or at different dates? As the metal rails are approached, there is a length of timber rails, both sides still with their metal strips, which is much shorter than the norm. This is curious and not easy to explain. If the timber and metal rails are of the same date, then perhaps the short section was put in to bring the rails up to the beginning of a bend where the metal rails were used to negotiate this more successfully, but this argument seems to evoke rather a lot of special pleading, for it only makes a difference of about 3 feet. Alternatively, if the bend was originally railed with timber this would have been done with short straight sections of timber, each one set at a slightly different angle to the last. These may not have worked particularly well, leading to derailments, and thus the rails here may have been replaced (but then why replace the rails in the straight sections beyond?).

The metal railed tramway changes subtly in the way it is laid as it goes towards the forefield. At the start there are bends and the iron shoes (for which we still have no date) are commonly used, whereas further in the rails are normally fastened directly into slots in the wooden sleepers. Here, in one place, a shoe had been used adjacent to such a fastening, to hold two of the metal strips together rather than secure them to the ground. One way of interpreting these changes is that the rails and shoes were being reused from elsewhere and there were not enough shoes, another is just that the changes in fastening method reflect a desire to minimise costs.

Ironically, these observations were made one day before this author saw Jim Rieuwerts' observations on the dating of the Maury Sough tramway which appeared in the last newsletter. Our new findings do not negate his conclusions. However, I think the evidence is still open to debate; while ore output is a good guide to the scale of operations at a mine, this throws no light on the common possibility that investment was made in installing such things as a tramway only to find subsequently that there was little ore to be had.

Present – Niki and Mat Adlam-Stiles, John Barnatt, John Beck, John Hunter, Les Riley, Sam Riley, Adam Russell, Richard Shaw, Karen Slatcher, and Terry Worthington.

Reported: John Barnatt

## Sourcing Lead used in the Peak District during Prehistory.

Prehistoric lead objects are rare in Britain. However, two are known from the Peak District. The first, shaped like a bronze axe and dating to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age, was found at Mam Tor during archaeological excavations in the 1960s (Combes and Thompson 1979; Guilbert 1996). The other is a uniquely designed lead object, which may be one terminal of a torc, found in the late 1990s in a pit in the centre of the site of a large Early Iron Age house on

Gardom's Edge, during excavations that to date have only been reported in summary (Barnatt et al. 2002).

To add to growing lead isotope data which can potentially help source the metal used, samples were taken from both objects (by RD), analyses were organised by Jane Evans at the British Geological Survey (for technical details of the method employed see Pashley and Evans) and kindly paid for by the Cultural Heritage Team at the Peak District National Park Authority.

The results show that the lead is likely to be derived from either the Southern Pennines or the Mendips, but not the Northern Pennines nor Ireland. Given that both objects were found within only 1 to 4 km of their nearest local ore sources and that the limestone plateau of the Peak District is one of the main lead orefields in Britain, it seem most probable that ores mined here were used, although this cannot be currently demonstrated from the lead isotope data.

For the benefit of future researchers who analyse further samples, the details of our results are:

Mam Tor (batch P470:10):

$^{206}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 18.4718	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.011
$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 15.6469	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.013
$^{208}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 38.4619	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.021
$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$	= 0.84707	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.003
$^{208}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$	= 2.08219	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.011

Gardom's Edge (batch P470:9):

$^{206}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 18.4880	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.011
$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 15.6434	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.013
$^{208}\text{Pb}/^{204}\text{Pb}$	= 38.4599	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.022
$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$	= 0.84614	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.003
$^{208}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$	= 2.08025	% at $2\sigma$	= 0.012

## References:

- Barnatt, J., Bevan, B. and Edmonds, M. 2002 Gardom's Edge: a landscape through time. *Antiquity* 76, pp. 50-56.
- Combes, D. and Thompson, H. 1979 Excavation of the hill fort of Mam Tor, Derbyshire, 1965-69. *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 99, pp. 7-51.
- Guilbert, G. 1996 The oldest artefact of lead in the Peak; new evidence from Mam Tor. *Mining History* 13.1, pp. 12-18.
- Pashley, V. and Evans J. A. n.d. The Lead isotope composition of artefacts from the Peak District and Cu alloy from Greece. NIGL Report Number R239.

Reported: John Barnatt and Roger Doonan

(Roger Doonan lectures in archaeology at the University of Sheffield and has a keen interest in the history of metals and mining.)

If you have information on any of the sites noted or would like to contribute to future issues of this series of notes, please contact:

Chris Heathcote, 15 Links Road, Chapel en le Frith, High Peak, Derbys SK23 9TX (01298 814822) or John Barnatt, 21 The Front, Fairfield, Buxton, Derbys, SK 17 7EQ (01298 77923), email: [john.barnatt@btinternet.com](mailto:john.barnatt@btinternet.com)

## The Watergrove Mine Project

By the time this notice is in print we will have well and truly started our new PDMHS archaeological excavation project, at Watergrove Mine near Wardlow Mires. For those that know the site, we are not at the main suite of buildings, but on the other (southern) side of the main road, part way up the hill heading towards Stoney Middleton (SK 190 757). Here, in a farmer's field, is an isolated stretch of ruined wall flanking a hollow to the side of a capped shaft.

Our first session, in May 2010, as agreed with the farmer, saw us erecting a sturdy post-and-wire stock-proof fence around the excavation area (for which we are grateful to Natural England for providing a grant of £120 towards the cost), designed to keep the livestock safe from any drops we create and prevent them from becoming bellanded by the material we are digging up. We started digging on the second session, in early June (as usual we are working one day a month). Our main objective is to excavate what remains of the 1790s Newcomen engine house known to have once stood at this shaft. Parts of what we interpreted as basement walls were visible poking out of the grass and the primary aim of the project is to learn about the design of this building, what type of boilers, flues and chimney it had and where they were placed. To date (mid-August 2010), after three digging sessions we have exposed what we thought would be the back wall of the engine house, at the opposite end to the visible bob wall, to find that it was too flimsy a structure. This is now thought to be a small one-storey stone shed abutted to the end wall proper (the footings of the latter are still to be exposed). This small room has a floor which is paved in an area inside a west-facing door, while the other half is cobbled. This discovery makes the footprint of the engine house smaller than originally anticipated and may add weight to the theory that the building, in common with many other late Newcomen engine houses, had an external boiler; only time will tell if this is correct. Meanwhile, another wall base, not visible before we started digging, leaves the excavation trench to the east side, in an area with burnt soils and stones under much demolition debris, and an extension to the trench has been started to investigate where it leads and what it is part of.

Over the duration of the project, it is our intention to also be working elsewhere in the Peak on small conservation tasks that need doing, such as scrub removal or minor consolidation jobs. For example, on the first day some members of the team went to High Rake Mine to undertake a clean up operation which entailed the removal of flaked mortar from the walls, cleaning out the engine house base of stones people had thrown in and weeding the site in general. If you know of any mine sites that would benefit from a clean up or consolidation please let us know – if we think we can help, and if appropriate permissions can be gained and a workforce is available, we will do what we can. However, please don't set anything up on our behalf before talking, because the last thing we would

want is to be seen to be letting site owners down if it is a job we cannot undertake for whatever reason.

The Watergrove Mine excavations are only small in extent, therefore we have only a limited number of tasks on each day. Unfortunately there are currently no spaces available for new volunteers but we will keep a 'reserves list' which you are welcome to join (and there may be places for the other conservation tasks – but we need to be flexible here and be able to call people out when needed rather than having all turning up regularly and then be twiddling their thumbs).

We will be very pleased to receive visitors to the Watergrove excavations for a 'tour' or chat, on the first Saturday of each month (weather permitting), anytime between 11am and 2pm (earlier and later we are always busy getting tasks organised and finishing off). There is no deadline on this project and we are taking our time – if the weather is likely to be poor, particularly in the winter months, check we are going to be there by contacting us the day before (see the 'Observations and Discoveries' section for contact details). If coming to see us, don't under any circumstances park on the main road, this is a dangerous race track and there is a significant chance you or your car will be wiped out, but go to the hilltop and turn right along the minor road towards Cavendish Mill and park at the first straight section – there is a stile into the field at the bend you have just passed.

John Barnatt and Chris Heathcote  
Project Leaders on behalf of the Watergrove Team

## New Members

Please welcome the following who have recently been elected as new members of the Society:-

Peter Crabb & Family, FAREHAM  
Karl Skinner, LINCOLN  
Iain Barker, SHEFFIELD  
Claudia Harflett, BRIGHTON,  
Dr Stephen K Donovan, HOOFFDDORP,  
The Netherlands  
Phil Wolstenholme, SHEFFIELD  
Rex Cook & Barbara Sutcliffe, NELSON  
Ray Robinson & Family, BUXTON

I am sure we all hope that their membership will bring them many enjoyable and rewarding experiences.

Wes Taylor

## Mine Exploration Hazards No. 37

I recently asked a farmer about the possibility of lifting a sleeper out of a shaft cap to take a look down it. "No problem, he said, just leave it safe like you always do." Then he added "Only thing is when we are shooting we put the trap for launching the clays on that cap" You can just imagine it - "Pull!" **BANG!!** "Waagh!!!!" Perhaps a shaft to be approached cautiously...

Steve Thompson

## **Meets List: Autumn/Winter 2010-11**

### **1. Moultridge Mine, Pikehall.**

Wednesday 13th October 2010, Evening Meet. Leader: Paul Chandler.

Easy grade, dry trip. Wear Oversuit or Boiler suit, knee-pads are optional. Mostly walking or stooping mined passages with an crawly bit, including the Banana Slide! An ideal novice trip, but also of interest for more experienced mine explorers. A quite complex mine worked on several levels. Reference: PDMHS Bulletin Volume 9, No 2 (1984). Party size limited to eight, plus leader. To book your place(s), and for details of time & place contact Paul Chandler.

### **2. Peak Cavern**

Sunday 24th October 2010. Leader: Paul Chandler.

Enjoy a classic caving trip, one of the best in the Peak District and indeed Britain! The awesome entrance to Peak Cavern is a sight to behold and once beyond the impressive Show Cave the fun begins. A good soaking in the Mucky Ducks is followed by large passage, then we explore a short side passage, containing an impressive calcite vein, which leads to two connections to Speedwell Cavern. Retracing our steps, a short vadose section of passage and we reach the magnificent stream way, and much, much more!

A very wet and muddy moderate grade trip taking about five hours, with fixed ladders & ropes to climb. Oversuit or wetsuit essential, wetsuit socks advisable, as is some food and drink. Electric lighting only. Party size limited to 12 including Leader, all of whom must be over 18 years of age. A £4 charge is payable.

For a clean, dry trip into Peak Cavern join us at the Society Film Evening on the 24th of November - see below.

### **3. Great Masson Cavern, Matlock Bath.**

Tuesday 26th October. Leader: Tony Wood, meet 7.00 pm in the car park at the side of the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath.

Another Society visit to this ever popular, extensive, part natural part mined complex. If you haven't been before, well you are in for a treat. In brief, there are large and impressive natural caverns, it is full of interest, from very early "woodpecker" pick working to hand picked coffin levels and relatively modern mining artefacts, and it is interesting from both the geological and mineralization perspective. Worth bringing a camera!

With thanks to the Heights of Abraham for allowing access to the Masson system via the show cave.

Reference: See "Lead Mining in the Peak District" edited by T D Ford & J H Rieuwerts (2000 edition).

### **4. Tearsall Pipe Caverns No 2, Sump and Pool Series.**

Sunday 7th November 2010. Leader: Martin Long.

The underground part of this trip is graded easy to difficult, depending on how far you want to go. Sump shaft (18m approx.) will be rigged for SRT and Pool

shaft (15m approx.) with ladder and line, offering a great opportunity to explore this interesting mine. You will need ladder and line skills as a minimum for this trip, and a pound or so for the trespass & parking fee.

For details contact Martin Long (email preferred)

### **5: Ashford Black Marble Mine (Rookery Mine).**

Tuesday 9th November 2010. Evening trip, Leaders: Paul Chandler and Tony Wood.

Another opportunity to visit this popular Derbyshire mine which, if you have never visited it, is quite extensive, easy to explore and totally different to a typical Derbyshire lead mine.

Easy grade, dry apart from puddles. Mostly walking size passages. An ideal novice trip, but also of interest to experienced mine explorers too. Access conditions limit party size to 15 including Leader. For those Society members & guests attending this meet, there will be a unique opportunity to view a genuine historic item made from Ashford Black Marble.

Reference: "Derbyshire Black Marble" by J M Tomlinson (PDMHS Special Publication No 4, 1996).

To book place(s) or for more details contact Tony Wood.

### **6: Deep Ecton Mine and Salts Level, Ecton.**

Saturday 20th November 2010. Leader: John Barnatt

An easy-grade trip into this spectacular mine. Wear oversuit or boilersuit. Helmet and appropriate lighting are essential. Wellingtons are recommended as some passages are wet underfoot. The trip will concentrate on the history and archaeology of the mine. The ladderway between the two workings is currently out of bounds so both workings will be visited separately, coming out of Deep Ecton for sandwiches before going in Salts Level Trip limited to 10 places, plus leader and backstop.

A donation of £2 per person for the Ecton Mines Educational Trust will be requested. To book your place, and to get the meeting time and place etc. contact John Barnatt: Tel. 01298 77923.

**Note:** As demand may be high, bookings will be taken on a first come, first served basis from Monday the 1st of November onwards (Please to not contact John before that date – the answer will be "Phone back on the right day!").

### **7: Pretoria Chert Mine, Bakewell.**

Sunday 21st November 2010. Leader: Paul Chandler.

Another opportunity to explore this fascinating mine, with its impressive pack walls, artefacts and, in places, more holes than rock! Trip grade easy. Mine is dry, therefore oversuit, boilersuit or old clothes are fine. Access into mine involves a 15ft fixed ladder climb, so belt or helmet mounted light essential. Optional short crawl into more mined passages. Party size limited to 8, plus Leader. To reserve your place(s) or for further details contact Paul Chandler

For more information: See Mining History (PDMHS) Vol.13, No. 5(1998).



## **8. Film Evening: Underground in the Peak District.**

Wednesday 24th November 2010. Presenter: Paul Chandler, meet 7.00 for 7.15 pm at the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath.

The film programme will last approximately 1½hrs. with a refreshment break.

Programme: Exploring Peak Cavern at Castleton. Another opportunity to view this film, produced by IntroAct (Ralph Johnson), which visits Moss Chamber, The Trenches, Lake Sump, Top Sump, Buxton Water and other sites of interest to cavers and non-cavers alike. It follows a typical club trip through passages ranging from the tight squeeze of the Twin Eyeholes to the lofty Upper Gallery. A list of other IntroAct productions will be available on the evening.

After the break: High Rake Lead Mine. A tour of the site with archaeologist John Barnatt, and a descent of the great Engine Shaft, followed by a short film on Ashford Black Marble which includes underground footage in Rookery Mine. Watch your presenter being filmed by for ITV by Carlton Television, who in turn were being filmed by David Webb! A few short film clips will complete the evening.

During the evening a collection for the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organization will be held.

## **9. Film Evening: Bellamy's Wild Britain, The Peak District - A Precious Wilderness.**

Wednesday 8th December 2010. Presenter: Paul Chandler, meet 7.00 for 7.15 pm at the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath.

This film programme will also last about 1½hrs. with a refreshment break.

A unique opportunity to see a film, with the kind permission of Duke Video, exploring both above and below ground in the Peak District. (Duke Video have also kindly given permission for "Manx Mines and Minerals - The story of mining in the Isle of Man." to be shown at a future Society film evening in 2011.)

For more details of Duke Video productions please visit [www.dukevideo.com](http://www.dukevideo.com).

## **10. Heritage Walk – Around Middleton by Wirksworth.**

Tuesday 28th December 2010. Leader: Tony Wood, meet 10.30 am at the Rising Sun Inn, Middleton by Wirksworth. Walk off the Turkey and Christmas Pudding with this walk taking in The Cromford & High Peak Railway, the site of Middleton Wharf, the quarries around the National Stone Centre, the old lime kilns on Ravens Tor, the Barmote Hall at Wirksworth, the George and Bage mines, the course of the Bole Hill branch of Meerbrook Sough, Brandricks and Dove Gang mines, and back to Middleton via the Killers Branch of the above mentioned railway. Once back in the village we will also look at the site of Middleton Mine. Optional food and drink at the Rising Sun afterwards.

## **11. Heritage Walk – Matlock Area.**

Sunday 9th January 2010. Leader: Tony Wood, meet 10.30 am, Duke of Wellington, Wellington Street, Matlock.

A walk around old Matlock, looking at the old trades, pubs and hydros along the way. Two Second World War sites will be visited: Bailey's Tump, an anti-aircraft emplacement; and Toplis the Tailor, the top secret Ground Station Zero. We will also walk down Bank Road, the site of the former tramway which took passengers from Crown Square to Rutland Street. There will be a stop in Hall Leys Park to look at the tram shelter which once stood in Crown Square. Optional food and drink at the Duke Wellington afterwards.

## **12: Merry Tom Mine – Via Gellia.**

Tuesday 18th January 2011. Leader: Martin Long. Courtesy of Wirksworth Mines Research Group.

**To Be Confirmed** - Contact Martin Long for details.

## **13. Heritage Walk – Matlock Old Town.**

Sunday 23rd January 2011. Leader: Tony Wood, meet 10.30 am, the Duke of William at Starkholmes.

This walk will take us around Old Matlock Town, centred on the parish church of St. Giles. We will look at the former pottery, originally the Wheatsheaf public house, then down Stoney Way to some of the oldest houses in the Matlock area, passing the pinfold and looking at how Causeway Lane was built. We will cross Hall Leys Park to take a look at Matlock Bridge, onto Dale Road, past the old Post Office and Town Hall, and see how Dale Road has changed over the years with the help of old photographs. We will then follow the A6 into Matlock Bath, passing Dale Cottage and telling the story of Phoebe Bown who built it in the 1800s - later we will visit St. Giles Church and view her gravestone. Finally we climb up onto High Tor to take in the views before heading back into Starkholmes village. Optional food and drink at the Duke of William afterwards.

Forthcoming Meets:-

### **Pretoria Chert Mine, Bakewell.**

Tuesday 1st February 2011. Leader: Tony Wood.

Limited to a party of 12 including guide, so advance booking essential. Contact Tony Wood for full details.

**North Wales Mines Weekend** - 19th and 20th March 2011. See the January 2011 Newsletter for details.

The Mining Heritage Walks are a great way of getting out to meet new members and old friends. Buffets are optional and cost between £1.50 and £3.00

### **Contact Details:**

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Tony Wood

## Changes on the Conservation Front



Photo: Steve Thompson

It is with deep sadness that I announce that I have retired as PDMHS Conservation Officer. I had been worried for some time that due to family and work commitments I was no longer able to do an effective job of championing conservation of the mining heritage. This was brought into focus in May when urgent input was needed

at Carsington Pasture with regard to the planned wind farm there, which due to immovable commitments over several weeks I was incapable of responding to, although others kindly worked on the problem in my stead.

On the positive side, I have pleasure in recommending Adam Russell who has stepped into the breach and taken on the job; he also has training as an archaeologist and a deep interest in conserving the mining heritage.

All things being equal, I still intend to offer advice and support whenever asked (and perhaps sometimes when not asked – those who know me will agree that I have a great problem with being quiet!), to continue as a Society Director, to sit on the NAMHO Archaeological Research Agenda steering group, to be the Ecton Mines representative, edit the notes in the newsletter, and last but not least to run the Society excavation projects (currently Watergrove Mine). The last is where I want to concentrate most of my efforts. Part of the general problem with my time, which has been (is?) spread far too thinly, is that past projects – High Rake Mine and Silence Mine - are still needing documentary research and working up for publication and, while very enjoyable to do, this takes up many more hundreds of hours than most who have not been there perhaps realise.

John Barnatt

I wasn't surprised when John told me he wanted to step down as Conservation Officer, knowing just how busy he is, but it was something of a surprise, as well as a compliment, to be asked by him if I'd consider offering to take on the role! For those of you who only know me through my contributions to the short notes and mentions in the conservation team reports, here's a brief biography:



Photo: Steve Thompson

I live in the middle of the Peak District orefield at Flagg with a wife and six Dales ponies. I have long been interested in industrial archaeology and did volunteer work on some alum works sites in my native North Yorkshire, before taking a degree in archaeological science at Bradford University. I worked intermittently as a research assistant there for some time after graduation, specialising in archaeometallurgy but the

need for a regular income stream eventually forced me to seek other employment.

I was fortunate enough to be able to take a year's course in blacksmithing at Hereford College and unsuccessfully tried my hand at self-employment in this field whilst living in the Skipton area. This meant going back to clerical work, although a stint in Bradford Council's document processing unit gave me good insights into the planning process which are now useful as I will be called upon to comment for the Society on planning matters that affect mining remains.

I moved to Derbyshire in late 2003 and came across High Rake Mine whilst out walking in spring 2004. Noting the sign about excavations happening on the first Saturday of the month I went out to the site on the next possible opportunity and offered my services as a volunteer. Six years later, I'm pleased to say John trusts me sufficiently to do jobs like producing the Silence Mine rocker pit wall drawing, and more pertinently, to take over from him as the Society's champion in protecting and promoting conservation of the mining heritage of the Peak District.

Adam Russell

## Owlet Hole Mine

### New Lock Fitted. July 21st 2010

Following reports that the lock on the new lid fitted to Owlet Hole had disappeared and had been replaced by a nut and bolt, a small team, Richard Halford, Martin Long



Richard and Martin at work on the lid, surrounded by their mobile workshop. Photo Dave Webb

and Dave Webb, was assembled to investigate.

Although the nut and bolt provided a reasonable level of security, the proximity of the lid to a public footpath rendered it imperative that the lock and key should be replaced. This

did not prove to be quite as simple as we expected as the original holes were too small for the robust modern lock we had purchased for the job.

A return visit with a drill and a multitude of tools failed to accommodate the reluctant lock, but a further visit to Twiggs and some selective filing finally completed the job to our satisfaction. We have also fitted a swivelling aluminium panel over the access hole to protect the lock from the worst of the elements.

In my report following the fitting of the new lid (*The Derbyshire Caver Issue 128*) we recommended a thorough clean up of the entire mine to remove the old timber, plastic and steel from earlier work. Sadly this has still not been done, as a visit to this superb little the mine is marred by the presence of so much rubbish, which is inevitably linked to our own organisation.

Dave Webb

## Book Review

### The Riches Beneath our Feet: How Mining Shaped Britain

Geoff Coyle, Oxford University Press: 2010, 267 pp. £20  
ISBN 978-0-19-955129-3

An attractive cover and promotional blurb which hits all the right points, but does it come up to expectations? The story of mining and quarrying from the perspective of a mining engineer and leading on the geology: these should be ingredients for a useful informative book but *The Riches Beneath our Feet: How Mining Shaped Britain* falls somewhat short of that goal. Geoff Coyle's book is set out in a logical sequence in reviewing the geology, the products of mining and their history, from tin and copper, through stone, coal and iron, to gold and silver, with a glance at the mechanisation of mining along the way. It then addresses the human aspects of the industries before concluding in an assessment of its potential for the future.

Coyle writes in a style which is evidently intended to appeal to the general reader, he admits that the book is only outlining the subject and much of the detail has been omitted. Yet when he does enter into the detail of mining it is riddled with errors and some of the generalisation is very misleading. Is the reader to believe that the 'bucket' pump was just that, lifting and tipping water to the next level, when it was, in reality, a colloquial name for the relatively sophisticated 'suction-lift' pump, an Italian invention used in Britain by 1480, contemporary with its introduction into the central European mines. The author also appears to be susceptible to some of the stories and 'myths' attached to mining, including some generated for the benefit of tourists. When, on the first page, he says of Solomon's Quarry under Jerusalem that 'bronze tools were all that was available for cutting the stone' he misses the fact that any connection between King Solomon and the quarry which bears his name is circumstantial. There is evidence to suggest that it was worked at the time of Herod and at intervals over the next two millennia, and iron tools would have been used over that period. That is not to say that we should not marvel at these, and other underground quarries closer to home, which were worked using relatively primitive hand tools. A suggestion that 'anyone who mined anything had to pay a royalty to the king' is far wide of the mark even as a generalisation. The position of the Crown was restricted by its own actions and the strength of common law in England and, outside its demesne, was confined to gold, silver and copper bearing ores. I could go on - the first introduction of drainage adits and explosives, the concept of 'bell pits', 'German' hard rock expertise, the perception that the Dukes of Devonshire had an

interest in the Greenhow mines, or the link between metal kibbles and the price of hazelnuts, all of which are either inaccurate or, at best, misleading.

It was not until Chapter 11, and the social aspects of mining, that I warmed to the book. The author is perhaps on safer ground when recounting the recent history of mining and the impact it had on the miners themselves, particularly in the coal industry with which he had personal experience. There is, never the less, a temptation to view some aspects of mining employment out of context and forget why men and women became miners. Coyle draws on the valuable personal account of Bert Coombes in the mid 20th century, taking up

the life of a collier as it was better than life on the farm. Go back 100 years and examine the economic structure of the mining family, particularly in south-west Lancashire, and the author would encounter resistance to the idea that women and children should not work underground. It was a matriarchal society with unmarried women as key elements in the ability of the family to earn a living wage.

The final chapter, *Epitaph or Revival? The Possibilities for Britain's Mining Industries*, is perhaps the most informative. It provides a reasonably balanced view of the future for mining, highlighting the technological advances in large scale production, the potential if the economic climate is favourable and the resistance which might be expected in some areas. The successes in some aspects of mining for minerals which do not necessarily feature high on the list of interests for the mining historian is to be applauded. The evaporites, such as anhydrite or potash, have an important role in the modern economy and their recent history deserves the attention of mining interests and the general public.

Geoff Coyle writes with an enthusiasm grounded in his training and his personal experience. The failings in the detail of the account he gives of mining history in Britain should be set at the door of the publisher, and a defective review process, as much as that of the author himself. No one person has sufficient knowledge to provide even a general account on such a wide ranging subject. There has been no new research in the production of this book, it is based entirely on secondary sources some of which may have been misinterpreted or were in themselves defective. Effective review at the manuscript stage should have rectified the situation.

If this book attracts some readers to take a deeper interest in the subject it will have provided a useful service but it is not a book I would recommend to a reader seeking to expand his or her knowledge of mining.

Peter Cloughton



## Society Trip Report: Spinney Level, Via Gellia.

Just a few feet from the Hopton road near Nimblejack Corner, and well hidden behind a hillock, is the entrance to a mine known as Spinney Level or Anglo-Saxon Mine. On Wednesday 14th July, eight society members enjoyed an evening visit to this little gem.

It was nice to find that the small area where you can usually park a few cars has gained a layer of tarmac, making the act of gearing-up a lot cleaner, so fairly quickly we were ready to start exploring. The mine starts with a low stoop under a stone lintel, the water being only a few inches deep at this point. After a few feet you can walk upright, and the water deepens to just over welly-depth. At this point we discovered where all the flying insects from the Via Gellia go for the evening. A short paddle later and we're at the collapse, which is negotiated by crawling over the top. This collapse acts as dam, so the water level doesn't vary much, but it does mean that it's a fair bit deeper.

While wading chest-deep in the cold water, stone stemples can be seen overhead, glued together with a thick calcite coating and festooned with flowstone curtain and stalactites a-plenty.



Gour pools and cave pearls

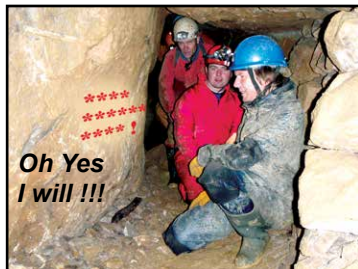
Photos: Martin Long

The passage slowly rises, and beyond the water the floor becomes a maze of gour pools and cave pearls, requiring very careful steps to avoid damage. Some of the gour pools have a

strange rectangular shape; one can only assume that the rails seen in other parts of the mine must have had an influence.

Leaving the water and formations behind, easy progress is made in a passage very typical of the area; in it a winze, which we did not explore, drops about 20 feet and a branch leads to a partially explored, but slippery, climb, the passage eventually ends at a fore-field. Back at the junction, an inscription is chiselled into the wall.

Scraping the mud away where most people have only brushed past, the words which give the mine its Anglo-Saxon connection (bet you won't print the photo, Steve) can be made out.



Time for just a few more photos, then back through the water to daylight, where the insects have re-grouped and joined forces with other species to form a welcome-out party.

Finally, many thanks to Rich Halford who came along as back-marker but ended up leading, thus allowing a few of us to dawdle and faff-about with cameras.

Martin Long

## AGM and Social Evening Continued. The Afternoon Talks Programme

The programme of talks which will precede the Annual General Meeting will be as follows:-

Peter Harrison - Blue John

John Wilmot - Assisting the Police (searching for a murder weapon)

Paul Deakin - Recent Underground Photography

Keith Gregory and Robin Hall

### Miners' Buffet - The Menu

Baskets of Mixed Rolls from a local bakery

Carved to Order: Topside of Beef  
Whole Roast Butter Basted Turkey with Stuffing, Pigs in Blankets & Cranberry Sauce

Decorated Poached Salmon Fillets

Home made Cheddar Cheese and Onion Pie

Roast New Potatoes with Rosemary and Garlic

Bowls of Mixed Chunky Salad

Red Cabbage and Beetroot Salad

Cheese Board with Chutneys and Seasonal Fruits

Terrine of Pate, Crackers and Butter

Selection of traditional hearty puddings such as:

Fruit Crumbles, Bread and Butter Pudding, Strudels, served with Cream or Custard.

*For full details of the event see the front page.*

### PDMHS Newsletter, January 2011

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is Wednesday the 24th of November 2010.

Articles, photographs, letters etc. should be sent to:-

Steve Thompson

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Registered Charity No 504662

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Museum: [www.peakmines.co.uk](http://www.peakmines.co.uk)

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