



Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth
Mwynfeydd Cymru

NEWSLETTER - JULY 2003

At long last here is the latest Newsletter, published much later than I would have wished. Unfortunately publication has been delayed waiting for some positive news on the situation with BCRA Insurance. I am afraid that this newsletter is a bit light on content, as I have received very little news.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Trust has dropped quite a bit since last year, this is due to the Secretary deleting from the membership list thirteen members who have still not paid 2001/2002 membership subscriptions. Members who were behind with their subscriptions were reminded on their membership renewal form that was enclosed with the last newsletter in November 2002. There are still ten members who have not paid their subscriptions for 2002/2003 (if you are one of these you will see this underlined in red), if subscription of £5.00 is not received by 30 September 2003, you will also be deleted from membership list. I am sorry that we have had to make this stand but the Trust relies on your membership subs to exist. As an example the Trust paid out £5.00 per head to insure its members for the year 1 October 2002 to 30 September 2003. The 13 who have not paid for 2001/2002 & 2002/2003 and the 10 who have not paid for 2002/2003 still had their insurance paid by the Trust, that is 23 members at £5.00 per head a cost of £115 to the Trust, that has not been recovered. I am sure you will agree that this situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Enough of my whinging but it had to be said.

On a positive note, following the Local History Forum at Lampeter in May attended by George Hall and Peter Claughton on behalf of the Trust and a recruitment drive by our Chairman Terry Evans, at the WMS weekend in Pembrokeshire in June we have 10 new members of the Trust.

Welcome to you all:-

John & Daveleen Alder

Roy Quilliam

John Hine (Mole)

Robert Ireland

Alan & Helen Holmes

David James

Jeremy & Alison Wilkinson

Secretary: Graham Levins

1 Stonecrop Close, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9EP.

☎ 01293-510567, Mobile: 07880-817370, email: graham.levins@virgin.net



Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth
Mwynfeydd Cymru

- 2 -

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – METAL MINES STRATEGY FOR WALES

I attended a meeting arranged by the EA at Llamdinam earlier this month on behalf of the Trust, Peter Cloughton attended on behalf of the Welsh Mines Society. I am most grateful to Peter for allowing me to publish his report on the meeting. Which is printed below:-

Environment Agency Wales, the Metal Mine Strategy for Wales - an update.

The consultative group meeting originally scheduled for March took place at Llamdinam on 15 July and I attended on behalf of the Welsh Mines Society. We were updated on progress with Phase II of the Strategy and received presentations on a number of related issues.

Phase I of the Strategy was realised with the publication of the Metal Mine Strategy document - available from the agency's offices and accessible on their website www.environmentagency.wales.gov.uk - and its recommendations for further action. The primary driving force behind the Strategy is poor water quality, particularly heavy metal loadings, in Welsh rivers, with Acid Mine Drainage (AMD), leaching from tailings and erosion of spoil, as the principal causes of the problem. At Phase II it is intended to prioritise the mine sites identified as problematic, the 50 sites listed in the published Strategy document; maintain a dialogue with interested parties, the 'stakeholders', including the Welsh Mines Society; commence remedial design on key sites; and seek funding for the implementation of remediation. As part of this phase detailed monitoring of mine and river metal loadings on waters flowing into Cardigan Bay is being carried out, due to be completed in September this year.

For Group 1, sites with no diverging issues where remediation might be effected without a conflict of interests, there was only one mine identified - Llanfair - and there river quality problems are not clearly related to the mine. No further action is envisaged on that mine at present.

Of the higher groupings, mines where there are potential conflicts, three sites have been identified for further investigation - Cwm Rheidol, Nantymwyn, and Parys Mountain.

At Cwm Rheidol the removal of the ineffective filter beds, originally designed to intercept discharges from Aldersons and the No. 3 adit, has already been considered in consultation with stakeholders. Consultants, SRK (UK) Ltd of Cardiff, have been engaged to provide for feasibility and design options for remediation of the site. The contract specifies liaison to take into account stakeholder views. They have 6 months in which to report but that is expected to be extended to at least 12 months if metal loadings under winter flood conditions are to be taken into account. Work on Cwm Rheidol has the potential to significantly reduce the pollution of water in the Rheidol as the AMD from it, and the mines around Ystumtuen which feed into Aldersons, account for 60 percent of the metal loadings in the river. Potential threats to the mining archaeology will probably come from any scheme to reduce the inflow of surface water into the mines around Ystumtuen, many of which have 18th century features.

Secretary: Graham Levins

1 Stonecrop Close, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9EP.

☎ 01293-510567, Mobile: 07880-817370, email: graham.levins@virgin.net



Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth
Mwynfeydd Cymru

- 3 -

Nantymwyn is the subject of a MSc research project, involving an Environment Agency Wales (EAW) employee, designed to examine the impact on the Towy, determine the need for remediation and develop a cost effective strategy. Here the major problem is believed to be erosion of dumps and tailings. There is no reference to stakeholder liaison in the project but full consultation on the research findings would be expected.

Drainage of water from above the Joint Access Level at Parys Mountain is near future (July 2003). The meeting was given a detailed presentation on the progress of work which was initiated independently of the EAW metal mine strategy. With concerns for the integrity of the concrete dam in the Joint Level, constructed in the 1950s as part of a scheme designed to provide copper rich water to the precipitation process, dewatering of the mine was seen as the only viable remedy to a potentially catastrophic flood risk to the Afon Goch and the town of Amlwch. Preparations were made for dealing with a high metallic content, including the impounding and settlement of the discharge water. However, water quality was relatively consistent with fairly low acidity and discharge through the existing reedbeds on the Afon Goch was found to be adequate, with continuous monitoring provided on the outflow into the sea and its effect on the marine environment. Lowering the water to the Joint Level has removed the seasonal inundation of the main opencast pit and curtailed the flow of AMD to a number of streams around the Parys Mountain and Mona mines. Future effective treatment of discharges can now be centred at the Joint Level portal and the outflow into the Afon Goch. Dewatering has also provided an added benefit in the access to the lower workings below the main opencast. Monitoring of the volume of water removed during the scheme has revealed that the workings were five times more extensive than original estimates based on surviving documentation.

The work at Parys Mountain is co-ordinated by a working group including all the interested parties, including Amlwch Industrial Heritage Trust, Parys Underground Group, Anglesey County Council, EAW and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). Co-operation is planned with other sites experiencing similar problems with AMD for copper mining, with Avoca in Ireland, Co. Wicklow, as an example cited in the presentation.

Presentations were also given by Kevin Hallberg, University of Wales Bangor, highlighting the microbiological research resources present in AMD waters - countering the view that such waters were 'dead'; Bob Mathews, West Wales Area Geologist with CCW, on the case for geological / mineralogical conservation on mine sites; and Louise Austin, Principal Archaeologist with Cambria Archaeology, on the archaeological potential on mine sites. Simon Hughes was to make a presentation on the historical perspective to the Cwm Rheidol site but was unable to remain for the full duration of the meeting.

After the presentations there was opportunity for comments on them and the Strategy in general. This allowed for emphasis on the need to address the protection of access to significant underground features during remediation work, picking up on reference to scheduling of mine sites in Louise Austin's presentation and the need to build in to any contract for remedial work an allowance for a halt on work to investigate / record unexpected archaeological features. It was stressed that most of the surface features on the sites in the Strategy's 'top 50' list represent the peak of non-ferrous metal production in the mid 19th century, yet they may very well conceal earlier, possibly medieval, features.

Secretary: Graham Levins

1 Stonecrop Close, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9EP.

☎ 01293-510567, Mobile: 07880-817370, email: graham.levins@virgin.net



Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth
Mwynfeydd Cymru

- 4 -

The level of consultation on two of the three sites selected for further investigation is a cause for concern. Whilst the Parys Mountain project is co-ordinated through an active working party, for Cwm Rheidol it is left to the consultant to liaise with stakeholders and no formal consultation is evident in the investigations at Nantymwyn. The latter is not expected to result in remediation in the near future but the design consultation on Cwm Rheidol could quickly develop into a remediation scheme. SRK's representative at the meeting was quite open on their role and keen to identify stakeholders in the site. Progress towards full liaison will have to be monitored to ensure mining history and archaeological interests are reflected in the design for remediation.

A further meeting is proposed for next year to update stakeholders on progress.

Peter Cloughton

SOUTHWOOD ESTATE – NATIONAL TRUST

Another item of interest has been received from Peter Cloughton

The Southwood Estate in Pembrokeshire, the venue for the field meet on Saturday of the recent WMS field weekend, has been bequeathed to the National Trust. Much of the Nolton / Newgale coalfield is covered by the estate, including possible medieval / early modern coal pits, and the modern collieries at Southwood (Gouts) and Trefrane Cliff. I will be advising the National Trust archaeologist on the extent and historic value of the collieries, and there is the prospect that prominent sites like Trefrane Cliff might attract funding for conservation work.

Peter Cloughton

WMPT WORKING WEEKEND AT CATHERINE & JANE CONSOLS MINE

We are planning to hold a working weekend 27/28 September 2003 at Catherine and Jane Consols Mine near Porthmadog. Permission has been obtained from the owners. Come and join us for a weekend clearing undergrowth and tidying up this famous mine site. It does not matter how young or old you are, there will be something you can do, even if it is making the Tea. Bring whatever tools you have. We are hoping to arrange a meal at a local Hotel on the Saturday evening. If you are interested in helping out please contact me, details at bottom of page, as we need to have an idea of numbers attending. I can also provide you with details of Hotel's, B&B's and Campsites. I am very grateful to Harold Morris for help in obtaining permission and providing a list of Hotels, Campsites etc. If you wish to read the history of this famous mine it can be found in David Bick's Old Copper Mines of Snowdonia. Which by coincidence has been republished by Landmark (very good it is too), copies available from David Bick, The Pound House, Newent, Glos. GL18 1PS, price £9.95 (That's a pint you owe me David, for the advert).

Secretary: Graham Levins

1 Stonecrop Close, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9EP.

☎ 01293-510567, Mobile: 07880-817370, email: graham.levins@virgin.net



Welsh Mines Preservation Trust
Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth
Mwynfeydd Cymru

- 5 -

BCRA INSURANCE

At long last I have received a letter about changes to insurance starting in October this year. Details are still not finalised but the highlights are as follows, I quote from their letter:-

“The basic need for changes in the way caving insurance is administered comes about as a result of two underlying factors. Firstly, the cost of insurance has risen substantially over the last few years and looks set to rise substantially again on renewal in October. As a working figure, £10 per head is expected to be the cost this autumn.” *[The cost this year was £5.00. Ed]*

“Secondly, changes in the way BCRA [*British Cave Rescue Assoc.*] and NCA [*National Caving Assoc.*] are structured, aimed at producing a single unified caving body, mean that it is more important for the new national body to be responsible for running a national caving insurance scheme. The proposed changes are a major step in the establishment of a new national caving body, the British Caving Association, to which the DCA [*Derbyshire Caving Assoc.*] is also committed.”

“From this autumn insurance will be sold to individuals rather than clubs. As a result, people who are members of more than one club will only pay once for their cover, not multiple times through each of the clubs of which they are a member. It will be up to individuals their insurance direct from the new national scheme, subject to club policy. Each individual will be issued with a membership card, which they can use to prove they are insured.”

The Trust directors will be meeting in the near future to discuss the insurance situation, and decide ‘club policy’ as referred to above. As soon as decisions are made and final details of new scheme are received from BCRA, I will issue a special newsletter to members.

All articles written by the Secretary, unless otherwise stated.

Graham Levins
Secretary
WMPT

Secretary: Graham Levins

1 Stonecrop Close, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9EP.
☎ 01293-510567, Mobile: 07880-817370, email: graham.levins@virgin.net