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# NENTHEAD MINES CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## Newsletter No 7 4 March 2014

**We need you! Could you volunteer to help the Society this year? There are many opportunities for volunteering at Nenthead Mines. Read on for more details.....**

### NENTHEAD NEWS

#### License and Lease

Members will know that the society has requested a License from Cumbria County Council (CCC). This license would (amongst other things) allow the Society to continue to use buildings on the Nenthead site, to provide Open Days for visitors, to carry out conservation and maintenance work, to enhance the public enjoyment of the site, and to engage in the longer term care of Nenthead Mines. (See Newsletter Number six).

Following our successful season of Open Days in 2013, we have revised our Business Case and re-applied for a License. The Society is now waiting for a response from CCC.

During discussions with the CCC land agent, it has also been alternatively suggested that it may be appropriate for the Society to have a lease of the site and for the buildings insurance cover to be provided via the CCC.

Your committee has discussed the need for the Society to set up a charitable company limited by guarantee. We have concluded that we should wait until we have a definite offer of a license or lease.

CCC have meanwhile agreed that we can continue to operate on the site, providing Open Days and members events and using most of the buildings. We continue to act as caretakers and keyholders.

The society is operating the Assay House bunkhouse and is responsible for the gas bills. CCC is meeting the costs of other utilities.

#### HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP (HLS)

##### Conservation Management Plan

Newsletter Number 6 gave details of the HLS proposals for the site. At the time of writing this Newsletter, the plan is likely to be approved and will be

presented to the public.

A presentation meeting will be held at Nenthead on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 in the Village Hall starting at 1900hrs. This meeting is open to everybody. No prior booking is required.

The agenda will include an Introduction from the Funders (Natural England) and presentations from the Conservation Architects, an Archaeologist and our Society.

The Society has been involved in the helping with the plan designs, providing records and documents and assisting with site meetings.

It is almost certain that the plan will include a recommendation that the North Powder store should be conserved, provided with a new door and interior paneling and reroofed. Labour and skills are to be provided by your Society.

##### Rampgill Level entrance

During the development of the Conservation Management Plan, I had suggested that the entrance retaining wall at Rampgill Level entrance should be repaired. The safety gate is too heavy for the hinges and is pulling the hinge fixing stones away from the rest of the wall. The gate is dangerous by design because it is too heavy for one person to safely open alone and because the method of fixing the hinges will tend to pull the stones out of the wall.

Nick Green suggested an improvement to the method of hanging the gate hinges and then went on to propose a completely new gate with a safer hinge mechanism. CCC accepted Nick's suggestion and Nick has now obtained sponsorship for the costs of manufacturing a new gate.

AAP Metal Fabrication Services of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear will donate the new gate.

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## SITE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The water flow meters in Rampgill and Caplecleugh Low Level entrances have continued to function. The Caplecleugh meter was moved downstream by one particularly heavy flow. The Environment Agency (EA) is interested in sources of floodwater because it is noticeable that there are peaks in flow that may be linked to heavy rainfall on the hills. Theoretically, it might be possible to track the sources of floodwater and then try to prevent floodwater entering the mine network.

If you know of any notable incoming water flows underground, please let me know. Email is [admin@nentheadmines.com](mailto:admin@nentheadmines.com) or phone 07718 385646.

Surface water management has been on the agenda of several site meetings. Following these meetings, Nenthead Hydro Company Ltd have altered the overflow sluices on parts of the leat network that feeds into Handsome Mea reservoir. The objective of this work is to reduce the amount of floodwater that is overtopping the leats during periods of heavy rain.

There is a continuing problem with floodwater flow down the bridleway at the side of the Smelting Mill. We hope to obtain permission to either excavate an old culvert or create a new culvert on the east side of this road.

PJ

## ROCKS AND MINERALS

We have been given a collection of minerals, fossils and rocks from the North Pennines and elsewhere. This collection has been presented by Sallie Bassham and was owned by the late David Thornton. David's collection included minerals from the Eric Richardson collection.

The late Eric Richardson was a well-known Nenthead resident who had worked at several mines in the North Pennines. Together with Harrison Thompson, he held a prospecting mining lease for the Nent Valley Mines in the 1960s and 70s.

Sallie has also presented some display cases. All these items were packed and moved from Accrington to Nenthead. Barry Smith provided a large van and the packers were Helen Wilkinson, Sheila Barker, Frank Bouweraerts, and Hazel Kendrick. Frank and Helen are now sorting and cataloguing the collection at Nenthead.

Thank you to Sallie for gifting the collection to the Society and thanks to everyone who helped to move the collection to Nenthead.

Helen Wilkinson has also worked throughout the winter to sort and catalogue our existing collections, sometimes in very cold conditions in The Barracks. If you have an interest in rocks, minerals and geology you would be very welcome to join the team looking after the collections.

Email [admin@nentheadmines.com](mailto:admin@nentheadmines.com) or phone 07718385646 and we will sign you up!

## SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. We have included a membership renewal form with this Newsletter. We hope that you will renew your membership to the Society and continue to support the cause of Conservation at Nenthead.

For the 2014 membership year the BCA would like to collect members email address details. Email addresses will be used for the purposes of membership administration and the occasional mailing of BCA News items that might be of interest. In accordance with the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations, only relevant messages will be sent, and provision will be made for members to opt out of such communications if they wish. Data will be stored in accordance with BCA's Data Protection Act statement. The BCA shall never pass on any member's personal/private data to any third-party without the prior consent of that member.

Any queries regarding this initiative should be directed to Matthew Wire ([m.wire@british-caving.org.uk](mailto:m.wire@british-caving.org.uk)).

## SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2014

The committee has arranged a programme of Public Open Days and we have also started to arrange events specifically for members. Members are welcome on all these events, particularly if you can help with any aspect of our programme.

We will continue to add to the events dates for members during the year, as the need and opportunity arises. For example, if agreement is reached about the conservation of the North Powder store, members will provide an essential part of the team that will carry out the repair and rebuilding work. We will put notices on the Society website ([www.nentheadmines.com](http://www.nentheadmines.com)) and you may find it useful to regularly check the website for new events.

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## Public Open Days

On all these dates, we will plan to provide visits to Carrs Mine at 1100 and 1345. We encourage visitors to book in advance but we may also arrange a later timed visit on each day if sufficient people turn up and want to go underground.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October

On each day, we need a team that can welcome visitors, lead groups underground, serve tea and coffee, talk about geology and history and so on. If you would enjoy doing any of these roles, please come along and talk to us in advance. If you want to know more, you can phone any of these two committee members who would be happy to talk about what we do.

Sheila Barker 01434381903  
Peter Jackson 07718385646

## Events for Society Members

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

**Conservation in Smallcleugh Mine**

**Leader: Nick Green**

**Contact: email [gnick44@aol.com](mailto:gnick44@aol.com) or phone (evenings) 07971519811**

**Meeting point: Smelting Mill 1030hrs – car parking available at the mill.**

Many people visit Smallcleugh Mine in a typical year. A small minority leaves graffiti and litter, and cause damage to the archaeology. The objective of this visit is to clean up the mine and rebuild damaged features. You will need underground equipment. We may be able to help with providing equipment – contact Nick for more information. Carry food and water and be prepared for some crawling and scrambling. Expect to be underground for around four hours.

This is a good opportunity to have a slow visit to Smallcleugh Mine with plenty of opportunities for “crack” whilst cleaning up the mine.

Green membership card required.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

**Preparing Carrs Mine for Visitors**

**Leader: Peter Jackson**

**Contact: 07718385646 or [p.jackson@ntlworld.com](mailto:p.jackson@ntlworld.com)**

**Meeting point: Smelting Mill 1030hrs – car parking available at the mill.**

After the closed winter period, Carrs Mine needs sprucing up before the visitors arrive. We literally need to sweep the floors in places, clean up the ladderway, remove any fallen rock and “sludge” the drainage channels.

You will need old clothes and a helmet and lamp. We may be able to help with helmets and lamps. Carrs Mine is close to the Assay House kitchen; so regular tea or coffee breaks can be easily arranged.

Green membership card required.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

**Smallcleugh Mine – an Introduction**

**Leaders: Nick Green and Peter Jackson**

**Meeting point: Smelting Mill 1045hrs**

This event is an underground visit to Smallcleugh Mine for those members who have not visited the mine. The journey includes walking through short sections with water up to 0.5 metres deep. The majority of the mine is dry and temperate. There are some short sections of scrambling on hands and knees and there are also some sections that require flat-out wiggling.

Gloves will be useful and old clothes that will get muddy and dirty. If you have tender knees, it will be advisable to wear kneepads.

Everyone will be required to bring and carry food and water. The Society can provide helmets and may be able to provide lamps. Headlights that can be fixed to a helmet are required and everyone must carry a back up headlight or torch.

You must have a green membership card.

To book a place, or to learn more, please phone either Peter Jackson on 07718385646 or Nick Green (evenings) on 07971519811.

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**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Nenthead Village Hall**  
**Starting at 1130hrs**  
**Refreshments will be provided.**

The annual business meeting of the Society, which will update members about progress on the management of the site.

#### Ten-Minute Talks

We would welcome any presentations and short talks about Nenthead, mining in the North Pennines, geology and mineralogy, recent research. Can you deliver a ten-minute presentation? Please let us know if you could deliver a short talk...

Contact Sheila Barker, Nick Green or Peter Jackson – our phone numbers are in this Newsletter.

#### Committee Members....

We could do with some more help on the Committee. We meet as required at times to suit everyone. The venue is usually somewhere in Alston Moor. It would really help to have new committee members who can join in our discussions and help to drive the Society forward. Will you think about being as committee member?

Talk to one of us, if you want to know more.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**  
**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August**

We are planning members' events on these dates. Watch the website and the next Newsletter for more details.

#### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NAMHO)

The next NAMHO Conference is to be held at Bangor in Wales from July 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 2014. The theme of the event is "Technical Innovation in the extractive Industries". See [www.namho.org](http://www.namho.org)

Your Society had agreed to be the host for the 2015 Conference. We are therefore looking for members to lead surface walks and underground trips and to give talks. The theme is "Mining and War".

The Conference will be held on 22,23 and 24 May 2015.

#### NMCS COMMITTEE

Peter Wilkinson  
Nick Green  
Ray Hall – Treasurer  
Sheila Barker – Membership Secretary  
Peter Jackson – Chair and Newsletter

Contact details are at the end of this Newsletter.

#### SOCIETY CONTACTS

Chair: Peter Jackson, 41 Cranswick Close, Billingham, Stockton, TS23 3NH. Phone 01642564100.  
Email: [p.jackson@ntlworld.com](mailto:p.jackson@ntlworld.com)

Membership Secretary: Sheila Barker, The Rise, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DB.  
Email: [membership@nentheadmines.com](mailto:membership@nentheadmines.com)

Treasurer: Ray Hall, 60 The Firs, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3RW. Phone 01434 381098

Events Organiser: Nick Green  
79, Front Street, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5DE  
Phone: 07971 519811  
Email: [gnick44@aol.com](mailto:gnick44@aol.com)

The Society website is at [www.nentheadmines.com](http://www.nentheadmines.com)

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