
NENTHEAD MINES CONSERVATION SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

FROM THE CHAIRMAN – a personal view

The latest Government plan suggests that we might be arranging activities on site from 17th May, and we possibly could be re-opening to visitors in late June. Clearly, there will be many changes in circumstances between now and May but let us hope that we will be able to restart our efforts to share our knowledge and enjoyment of Nenthead Mines.

Peter Jackson



Carrs Level entrance January 2021 by Gavin Stewart

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The current legislation now allows virtual AGMs to be held until 31st March 2021. The Charity Commission guidance was last updated on 8 January 2021.

The current Covid "Road Map" suggests that we may be able to consider an in-person meeting no earlier than 21 June 2021. Hopefully we may be able to hold the AGM sometime after June.

NEWS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS (WG)

SITE WG

Allan Richardson

The Site Working Group has met several times by Zoom to discuss some of the more pressing issues with the structure of the site. Prior to the current lockdown, there

were several site visits to look at the issue of flooding and what could be done to alleviate the problem, the current lockdown put a stop to this work but some useful information was obtained.

At the end of the last meeting, it was generally felt that there were three areas of pressing concern at present, prevention of flooding in the Lower Barracks as happened early last year, a collapsing wall outside Hodgsons Shop and the condition of Middlecleugh Compressor House.

Since the last meeting the roof over the Brewery Shaft building has been found to have extensive rot problems which will have to be addressed sooner rather than later.

The Lower Barracks has been cleared of wet sand, the flags lifted and the area dried out, we now await a date from the contractor to come back and relay the flags, this is being delayed by the lockdown.

SMCs are currently being drawn up to alleviate the drainage problems around the Lower Barracks, to sort the collapsing wall next to Hodgsons Shop and to sort out the damp ingress into Hodgsons Shop.

The Middlecleugh Compressor House is a different matter, currently it contains stored archaeological material from excavations in the past. The building needs to be cleared out and the stored material relocated, possibly into the Stamps building which was floored out and had shelves installed last summer. Once this is done and whilst allowing for its current fragile condition, the Compressor House will be made as secure and weather tight as possible. It is planned to get a local builder to give an opinion on what can be done once restrictions are lifted.

A Section 17 proposal has been put together by Nick Green, this when ready will be sent to Historic England, once granted this will allow us to carry out a wide range of tasks on site without having to raise an SMC each time.

The need for effective Project Management has been shown to be an increasingly important aspect of works on site, to this end a management spreadsheet has been assembled by

Anne Hopkirk, this lists a wide range of jobs from a list prepared by Nick Green et al.

Each job is given a weighting depending upon a wide range of factors, this will create a more structured approach as to which works are carried out on site and when.

Once we can get on site again, then we can start to progress works, at that point we will be looking for volunteers to restart our regular work days.



Barracks ground floor with the floor slabs stacked to enable drying December 2020

CONSERVATION WG

Rosemary Vidler

As part of their vision for the Nenthead site now that the Society own it the Trustees have been looking at possible conservation/refurbishment projects. The Conservation Working Group will be involved in detailing and obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England.

If lockdown regulations are eased and allow us on site with suitable controls in place then it may be possible to carry out some conservation related surveys or other conservation tasks. When will this be? June-July-August would be nice, it maybe later. Just keep watching for news.

In the meantime, the Conservation Working Group is looking at what can be planned or otherwise organised through home desk working off-site.

We would welcome any member who would be interested in helping with this work.

COLLECTIONS WG

Andy Hopkirk

The new Collections Working Group is finding its feet. We're working through what we can do remotely off-site and what we can on site at Nenthead while complying with the pandemic regulations and guidance.

We're working remotely on improving and extending the web presentation of the Society collections and other archive materials. Watch this space on the public website www.nentheadmines.com over the next few months. We plan to streamline what is shown there now and link to new things we're working on elsewhere.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE WG

Joyce Jackson

The Visitor Experience Working group is Rosemary Vidler, Graham Derbyshire and Joyce Jackson. We have been working on publicity material and the timeframe for getting the site ready for when we might be open to the public again.

We have set up an Instagram account and currently have 105 followers (Account name is nenthead_mines). We have also been using time over the winter to review and revise the material for our Carrs Mine guides. A geology trail is also being developed and we have asked Colin Fowler to join this group to help with this. A much broader topic that we are looking at is the interpretation across the site - what we need, how much we need and where we want it.

INFRASTRUCTURE WG

Andy Hopkirk

We're scheduled to meet with a BT Openreach engineer very soon - hoping to get a connection made live in the Barracks building. Fingers crossed. If successful, it opens up opportunities for remote monitoring of the environmental conditions inside the buildings and remote viewing webcams for members and others who like to watch Nenthead's plentiful snow, wind, and rainfall from afar.

MEMBERSHIP

Anne Hopkirk

Welcome to our new members:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| Chris Curry | Healough |
| Chris Little | Threlkeld |
| Graeme Farrer | Darlington |
| Michael Butler | Stockton |
| Matthew Nayler | Alston |
| John Stout | Durham |

TIMBER STOCKS ON THE STAMP MILL SITE

A voluntary group within Nenthead village have drawn up plans to develop a series of raised garden beds next to the Children's Playground. We have donated some surplus timber to this project and the group moved the timber to the new site in early March.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PROJECTS

We continue to work with the Agency and the Coal Authority who are considering water treatment projects in the Nent Valley. Construction of the treatment works for the water from Nentsberry Hags Mine has proceeded throughout the winter. We are expecting to work with the Agency about the siting of a treatment works for the Caplecleugh Low Level mine water

TRUSTEES MEETINGS

Peter Jackson

Your Trustees have continued to meet regularly. The Covid restrictions about meeting in-person have required us to meet virtually. In January and February of this year we have met four times and we have also met separately in the Working Group meetings.

We have held detailed discussions about planning what should happen over the next 2-3 years and have agreed that we should set out our objectives.

LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

We will begin to work towards erecting a new building as a long-term objective. The location and function(s) of the building are undecided for now.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

First, we will reinstate the workshop and stores in the Barracks basement. The office and archive will be relocated from the Assay House to the back room of the Workshop building. The Workshop building will be repaired and refurbished to accommodate the Office and Archive in the back room. The front room will continue to be used as the Lamp Store.

When mine tours restart, we will experiment with using Carrs Mineshop as the tour assembly point and equipment store instead of the front room of the Workshop building.

STORAGE OF THE NMCS ADMIN DOCUMENTS

Trustee's meeting documents and some other administrative files are now stored on-line. We have taken this action in order to ensure that we are able to work cooperatively on files, and also to ensure that we can operate a better storage and back-up system

LOST FRIENDS

CHRIS BUCKINGHAM

Our member, Chris Buckingham died on 28th January at Carlisle Hospital. Chris's career included the Royal Army Medical Corps, Scarborough, Keswick and Carlisle hospitals from where he was expecting to retire in 2021. He had planned to spend more time at Nenthead as a member of the Carrs Mine Guide team and to share his medical knowledge with NMCS.

His partner, Louise, and his brothers Duncan and Craig, decided that donations in Chris's memory should be made to NMCS. The total is approaching £500. The Trustees will decide how the Society should use these donations. Suggestions are welcomed.

Peter Jackson



Chris Buckingham

ROGER REDFEARN

Roger Redfearn, a long-time member and supporter of NPHT and NMCS died in January. Interested in all things historical, he will be remembered for his special knowledge of the Teesdale area. The Redfearns originally came from Derbyshire with several other families to work in the local lead mines.

He was born in a snowstorm at Cock Lake Farm in Forrest in Teesdale and was a farmer in the upper dale for most of his life. He moved to High Park Wall in 1981, retiring to Barnard Castle in 2001. Here he continued his involvement with all the Teesdale Historical societies.

Along with others I enjoyed participating in many of his informative local talks and walks. The photograph shows Roger (on the right in grey jacket) attending the NPHT official opening of Middlecleugh Level in 2007.



Roger Redfearn

BROWNLEY HILL MINE

NMCS owns the freehold of the land around Brownley Hill Low Level. Are you interested in leading the work to conserve the entrance and develop some interpretation? We are looking for ideas about how we should care for and develop this site. If you want to know more, you are welcome to phone or email Peter Jackson. 01388 527532 or admin@nentheadmynes.com.

NAMHO

The latest edition of the NAMHO newsletter can be viewed on their website at <http://namho.org/index.php> under the Newsletter tab. Nick Green continues to be our representative.

WE WELCOME ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER – including short history items and news of mines in the North Pennines.

COPY DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Friday 23rd April 2021

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NMCS is a charitable incorporated organization, number 1166281.

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NMCS TRUSTEES

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You can contact any of the Trustees via 14 Kirk Rise, Frosterley, Bishop Auckland, DL13 2SF
07718385646/ 01388 527532 admin@nentheadmynes.com

The reply will be from an email address ending with "nentheadmynes.org".

When in Nenthead.....

Visit The Hive – an Arts and Visitor Centre with Cafe

<https://hivenenthead.co.uk>

Best to phone in advance 01434 408040 to confirm opening times and services. The Facebook page usually has current opening times.

Use the Community Shop – Mon-Fri 0800 to 1730, Saturdays 0800-1500, Sundays 0900-1400. Post office weekday mornings. (The Shop is a community cooperative).

The Hive and the Shop both have Facebook pages.