Cumbria Industrial History Society



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EDITORIAL

We are well into another summer and the meetings to date have been well attended. This is always appreciated by the meeting organiser and the committee. The committee haver a number of ideas for meetings next year but we are always glad to hear of ideas for day meetings or for speakers or topics for conferences.

The project to digitise the Mike Davies-Shiel slide collection is now nearing the end with the last slides having been scanned. Thumbnail images are now being loaded on the Cumbria Archives CASCART directory where anyone will be able to search for images of subjects in which they are interested.

As a finale to the project the committee has decided that a selection of the best images should be put together and produced as a glossy book to help promote the collection and the Society. Helen has valiantly gone through all the images and extracted a large selection of the most informative, best images etc. We are now trying to put these into some form of order and the idea will be to write a short paragraph about each photo. If anyone feels they have a special knowledge of a subject and feel they could help in describing photos please contact Helen.

It is hoped that the book will be published next year with a launch at the Autumn conference 2016.

For those of you who are in to electronic technology you can receive the Bulletin in a pdf form via email. This helps us keep the cost of membership down. If you would like this service please contact Helen details on last page.

GIFT AID The Treasurer thanks members who signed a Gift Aid mandate in respect of their annual subscription. A claim for the years 2014/15 has just handed a payment to the Society account of £504.67 from HMRC

Front Cover Photograph. The newly restored Rushton steam navey as viewed by the Society at the June evening meeting Threlkeld Mining Museum.

SOCIETY EVENTS 2015

CARROCK MINE SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH 2015 11.00 am.

Meet at end of the Mosedale Rd. NY 326 326.

A look around the only Wolfram mine in Cumbria and at the work recently done on the site by CATS. To be led by Warren Allison

OCTOBER CONFERENCE SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER. 9.30 am

To be held in Market Hall Egremont. To look at the industries in the Egremont area.

Booking form enclosed with this mailing.

NOVEMBER 17th EVENING MEETING 7.30 start .KESWICK QUAKER MEETING ROOMS.

A talk by John Mather. Sir Thomas Bouch was born in Thursby, near Carlisle, and became one of the most celebrated bridge builders and railway engineers in Victorian Britain.

As well as designing over 300 miles of railway and large bridges throughout Scotland and Northern England (including the Cockermouth, Keswick & Penrith line) his greatest achievement was building the Tay railway bridge in 1878. This bridged the two miles wide mouth of the river Tay near Dundee. National recognition and a knighthood followed.

Bouch's good fortune, however, did not last. The Tay bridge collapsed the next December, dragging a passing train and passengers into the River Tay, with tragic consequences. His reputation lay in tatters. He remains to this day, the main scapegoat of the disaster.

John talks about Bouch's fascinating life and times. He also wishes to take the opportunity to examine if he was unfairly judged. He intends to examine the issues leading up to the tragedy and then also discuss whether he was a victim of circumstances or the author of his misfortune.

SPRING CONFERENCE APRIL 16TH 2016 SHAP WELLS HOTEL.

Topic to be Foreign influences on Cumbrian Industries.

BOOK REVIEW

BARROW SALT

This new book by CIHS member Brian Cubbon tells the story of a little known industry on Walney Island.

Small scale salt production by evaporation of sea water has taken place around the Cumbrian coast for centuries and is reflected in local place names such as Saltcoats in Ulverston and Arnside and Salthouse in Millom, but on Walney Island a substantial deposit of Rock Salt was found by chance when boreholes were made in the search for coal under the St Bees Sandstone strata. The extent of the deposit was established in 1889, but although negotiations to form a viable company to exploit the resource started almost immediately, it was not until the mid-summer 1896 that the Barrow Salt Company was incorporated and the necessary leases signed.

Progress with building the necessary works for extraction of the salt as brine, piping it to the south of the island and evaporating it, then continued apace, and within a year some salt was being produced and grandiose plans were afoot for a 'Brine Baths Hotel' as well as a village of 40 dwellings with a shop. However, the market for the salt never fulfilled its promise and in July 1902 the Barrow Salt Company was wound up. The works were sold to Coulton Hunter who had the adjacent gravel extraction business and salt production restarted in 1906, but finally ceased in 1909.

The book is well illustrated with old photos and sketch maps and has a comprehensive index. A little more detail about the open pan evaporation process would have been welcome - how does Butter Salt differ from Common Salt and Lump Salt? However, I reckon that it is a sign of a good book if it stimulates one enough to initiate a Google search.

Barrow Salt is available from bookshops in South Cumbria or from the author at Finch Field, Rectory Road, Edgefield, Norfolk NR24 2RJ. £16 + £1.50 p&p

THE WHITEHAVEN COLLIERY THROUGH TIME

Author Alan W Routledge. Published Amberley books ISBN 978-1-4456-400-7 price £14.99.

This is in the tradition of Amberley books with two photographs on a page one old and one modern with a short text describing the original photograph. This is the authors third book in this format on the subject of Whitehaven. The author states in the introduction there is a shortage of old photographs of the coal workings in the Whitehaven Colliery and there is even less of the structures remaining to allow a modern day photograph of any meaning to be placed with it.

The shortage of original photographs has lead the author to divert away from a purely coal mining book into looking at other industries associated with Whitehaven, for example it looks at the pottery industry and its link to the Wedgewood family, Ship building and its link to the coal export trade, the iron and steel industry and its use of coke in smelting again as a link to the coal industry.

This book is ideal as a first introduction to the industries of Whitehaven, but as in the case of all these 'then and now' picture books it does lack in detail.

KIRBY STEPHEN. ESSAYS ON THE HISTORY OF TOWN AND LANDSCAPE

By Peter McWilliams ISBN 978-0-9928045-1-0 Published Kirkby Stephen Press £15.00

This book is split into three parts. The first is a series of essays on aspect of history and there role in the history of Kirkby Stephen. One of these chapters deals with the mills and manufacturing industries of the area.

The second section is a series of reproductions of sketches by the 19th century artist Thomas Fawcett from the area.

The third section looks at the uplands that surrounds the town from stainmore in the north to Mallerstang in the south. There are comments on the evidence that remains to be seen of industry in this area such as lead and coal mining and quarrying.

WRYNOSE PUZZLE

Two of our Dublin members – Helen and Fred Andrews – while on one of their regular visits to Langdale have been mystified by a metal structure they had encountered beside the footpath to Blea Tarn near the eastern side of Wrynose Pass. On the fellside a few hundred yards north of the road out of Little Langdale on to Wrynose Pass and about a quarter of a mile past Fell Foot Farm [GR 293034] stand three heavy iron panels held upright by six steel rods. Arcs are inscribed on the surface of the panels. A little below and to one side of the structure are the remains of what appears to have been a small drystone hut.









A SERIES OF VIEWS OF THE STRUCTURE.

Eleanor Kingston of the National Park Authority was able to report that she was made aware of this structure in 2008 by a member of the public. This gentleman had provided photographic images and the information that the iron plates were targets for a rifle range, possibly dating from the 1860s. While the plates themselves were not rare what made this example significant was that it would seem to be unique in the North West as an instance of iron target plates having survived in their original setting since the early 1860s.

Eleanor's informant had suggested that the nearest Volunteer unit which might have been using the range appeared to have been the 6th Westmorland Rifle Volunteer Corps, which was formed in Grasmere in 1860. It is possible, he suggested, that the Blea Moss site was their early range, abandoned later in favour of a new range at Wyke Plantation, west of Grasmere.

By any standard the range is located in a remote spot and a long way from any present day population centre. A great deal of effort would have been required to transport and assemble the structure but at the supposed date when the target was erected the slate workings at nearby Hallgarth and Tilberthwaite were enjoying a mini-boom and Little Langdale would have been a vibrant hive of industry.

Alan Postlethwaite.

CUMBRIAN CONCRETE AFLOAT

What must be quite the most unprepossessing exhibit of the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port began its life in Cumbria. FCB18 is a concrete barge built by the Wates Building Group at Barrow in Furness around 1944. When donated to the Museum in 1985 by the Manchester Ship Canal Company, the shabby appearance of the barge drew objections from the Ellesmere Port Council to the vessel becoming a permanent feature of their local landscape.

The application of concrete to naval architecture had to counter many of the same reservations as faced the replacement of wood with steel in the nineteenth century. The first recorded concrete craft was built in 1849. During the late 1800s ferro-concrete was employed in the construction of several barges for use on European rivers. What was described as 'Britain's First Concrete Ship' was a pontoon built in 1911 for use on the Manchester Ship Canal. The builders were the Yorkshire-Hennebique Company to a

design of L G Mouchel & Partners. The MSC pontoon served until 1973 as a base for a floating pumping station for discharging dredgings from the canal to deposit grounds on adjacent banks. Restrictions of supply of iron ore at the onset of World War 1 gave the impetus to a serious recourse to ferro-concrete to meet the need for additional coastal and inland waterway vessels without eating into already scarce supplies of iron and steel.

An ambitious Admiralty programme of steel-saving barge building began for the Royal Engineers' Inland Waterways & Docks Section. Nineteen shipyards around the UK coast were involved in the project, among them Barrow. In total 52 sea-going barges and 12 tugs were delivered although their completion was entirely after hostilities had ended. The whole fleet was distinguished by each vessel being given a name beginning Cretexxxx – the suffix sometimes denoting the intended cargo – eg Cretecoal, Cretecoke, Cretoleum, Cretejoist. The three Barrow-built boats were named Creteglass, Greteground and Greteguard. Construction at Barrow was in the hands of the Ferro-Concrete Ship Construction Ltd. This entity, like most of the other builders, lasted only for the duration of the project. With the end of hostilities the specially built barges and tugs were speedily disposed of to a wide variety of ship-owners both in the UK as well as Greece, Algeria, Norway and Brazil. In an entirely separate initiative a small number of canal narrowboats of concrete construction were completed during WW1. One of three Birmingham Canal day boats built by A H Guest, house-builders of Stourbridge, in 1918 is now the property of the National Waterways Museum at Gloucester.

Further concrete craft had to wait until steel-saving became vital again to the next war effort. During the 1939-45 War concrete barges and lighters were built in great numbers. Late in 1939 the Ministry of Shipping inaugurated a programme of reinforced concrete shipbuilding, including 273 barges designed by Messrs L G Mouchel & Partners, in conjunction with Mr E F Spanner, on behalf of the Admiralty. They were known as FCB vessels (FerroConcreteBarges) and were generally used for local lighterage and storage. The application of ferro-concrete technology to marine situations contributed to the subsequent development of the Mulberry Harbours for the Normandy Landings. Once the need passed, as with the Crete- boats of WW1, so the FCBs of WW2 were quickly sidelined from capital stock. Some remained in use as dockside storage space but many sooner or later ended their days as bank protection on the River Severn, as floating mooring berths on the Thames and as foundations of the Otterspool promenade at Liverpool.

FCB18 is a remarkable if not especially elegant survivor. In length she is 84ft and 22ft in width, with a capacity of 105.77 tons net. A concrete barge of 200 tons dead weight required only 18 tons of steel as compared with 56 tons for a steel barge of identical capacity.

So, there she lies - economic, modest, redundant, Cumbrian!

Alan Postlethwaite.

KESWICKS WINDMILL.

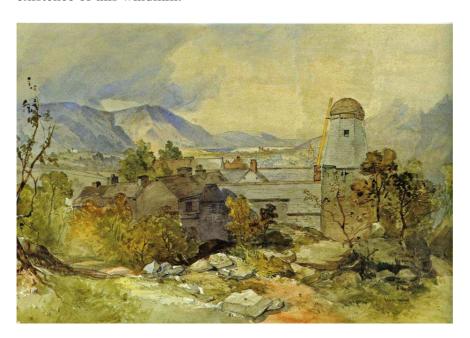
Member Fred Lawton has a query about a possible windmill in Keswick. There is documentary evidence that the German miners built a windmill on one of the islands in Derwent Water. But Fred is interested in the mill depicted in two 19th century pictures of Keswick.

The first in a 'View of Keswick' by J.A.H in 1849 clearly shows a mill near St. Johns church. (In Keswick Museum.) The second is an earlier view of the 'Vale of Keswick' by W Westall painted in 1836. Clearly showing a mill in a similar position.

J Hughes in his paper on Cumberland Windmills in the Transactions of the C&W 1972 does list this mill but gives the only evidence for it as the two paintings. He describes the mill as 'a fine timbered smock mill with domed cap'. The single broken sail would suggest that it is no longer in use. He does comment that the 8 sided type of mill is not seen in any other part of the county but they are quite common in other parts of the country.

He does pose the question was the mill added as a part of artistic licence? With the number of powerful rivers in the area and the number of water mills that developed along them (See Cumbrian Industrialist vol 8 for details) what was the need for a windmill?

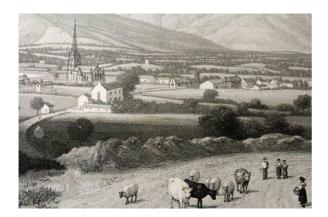
Fred would like to hear from anyone who can shed any documentary light on the existence of this windmill.



J.A.H View of Keswick 1849.



Vale of Keswick W Westall 1836.

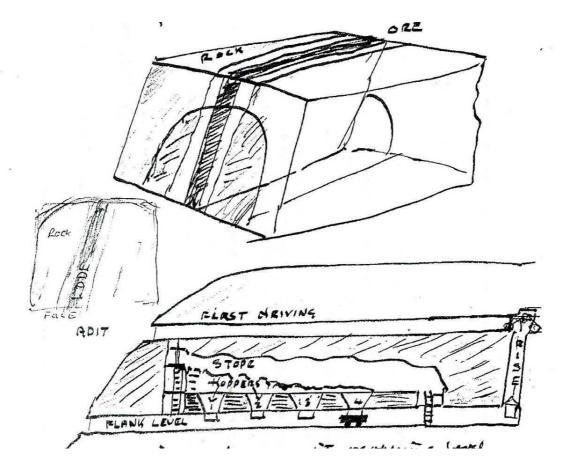


Enlargement showing mill.

Please pass any information to the editor.

BENEATH LAKELAND FELLS PART 3

Lead runs in a vein through the fell rather like a sandwich. The miners make an adit or opening level following the vein. He may then sink a small shaft or winze and drive a flank level maybe 25 fathoms below. In this he puts box holes for the hoppers. He will then then rise and drive a sub level over the boxholes cutting over them so that the holes are exposed. The debris is dropped into the hoppers and he stands on his debris to work, n0othing be0i0ng drawn for a day or two. He then begins to out his roof, rising on his debris until he has cut out the vein of lead. This is shrinkage stoping, in Greenside some of the stopes were very long, deep and wide. Once a stope was emptied of ore it was called a "dead hole" and filled with "deads" tipped in from above. Deads were rock debris that had no metal in of any value.



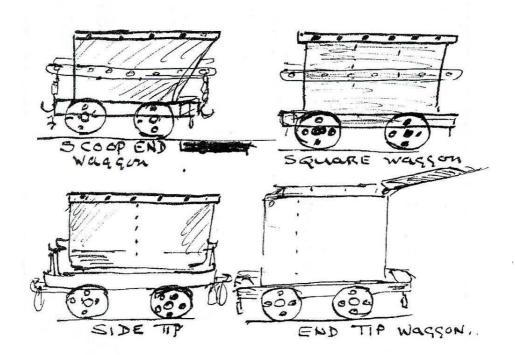
A mining company of one driller, one spannerman who assisted hi0m and perhaps one or two tramnen was usual. There were hoppermen who filled waggons from the hoppers. Fillers or trammers usually shovelled the ore from the "sole" or floor of a driving and if no other transport was available trammed their waggons to the shaft, ore pass or "dead hole" as was necessary. As distances became increasingly longer ponies and later electric battery locos were used. Greenside mine had an electric loco about 1898. The first in any metal mine in the country. The loco was still running in the 1940's when a new battery was bought.

TRANSPORT

As I have mentioned, when the miners followed the vein for any distance transporting the ore or spoil became more difficult. Probably at first wheelbarrows were used, they were still used in the stopes when I was there. Later waggons were introduced and rails were laid, these would be hand trammed and as the distances became longer to either a shaft or ore pass or even a dead hole ponies would be used to pull up to three waggons. Later small battery locos were used and they pulled three of four waggons. The big Loco could carry about 25 waggons.

Greenside Mining Company made their own waggons at one time and there were still scoop end waggons and "square" waggons over 50 years old still in use, made at

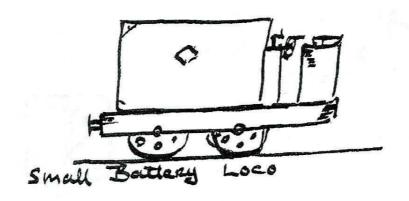
Greenside when I was there. The Company bought a lot of side tips and end tips which did not las anything like so long. They had roller or ball bearings which made for better running. The old wagons had solid axles which were greased and they could be pretty stiff and hard to push. Waggons were taken by pony or loco to the shaft.

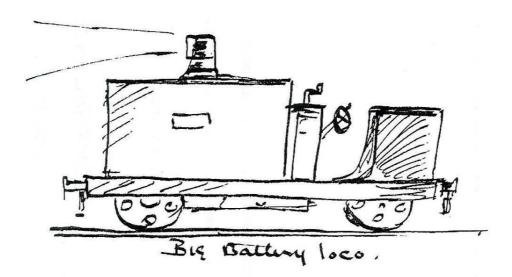


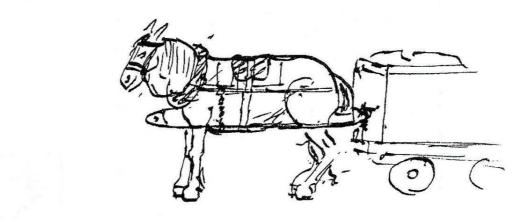
Greenside had three shafts in use when I left in 1961. The Smiths Shaft a vertical shaft 90 fath0oms deep. The next was Murrays Shaft which was 85 fathoms deep and was an incline shaft. Then at 175 fathoms North there was the North Shaft which was 143 fathoms deep. Thus making the mine from the top of Smiths shaft 318 fathoms deep. When I went to work there in 1937 I think the mine was sunk down to the 150 fathom level.

Drivings were made at 40 and 60 levels in the Smith Shaft and at 104, 120, 135, 150 and 175 levels. There were also sub shafts known as winzes, No2 winze on 1500 to 175 level, and further north the 9400 winze from 175 fathom level. Sub levels at 200, 217 and 318 fathoms.

Once ore was raised to surface and taken out, it was run into the crushing plant, where the waggons were tipped into bins. Here the ore was crushed and rendered smaller and smaller. Then when small enough was sent to the mill to be washed and crushed until it was as fine as sand. There after chemical treatment the deads were pumped on the "dead heap or tip" the ore run off into a bin ready for transport to the smelter. For Greenside Mining Company had ceased smelting ore shortly after the First World War.







PONIES

Ponies were used at the Greenside mine when I worked at the mine. I worked with them for a while and found out what grand little animals they were. They had their little ways, some would not work unless they got an apple or a chew of tobacco – none of mine got tobacco as I did not use it. These ponies came out of the mine at the end of the shift, were stabled in winter and let out in the fields in summer and any pony man had to go early in order to catch his pony. They would not come at first but after a good deal of coaxing a halter could be slipped over their heads. They could count. Three waggons was the load they had to pull – and that is all they would pull. They knew when it was break time to the minute and knocking off time. Miners put their bait bags well out of their reach – or they would get eaten with the pony.

They were grand workers and I remember them with gratitude. Kipper, King, Eric, Billy, Baldy Star – poor Stan got killed and was buried in dead hole – Joe Bell Park whose pony it was broke down and cried. We were all sorry when the firm bought battery locos. As one miner said you could talk to a pony and he understood you, loco;s are nobbut a lot of scrap iron.

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MY PONY

(In remembrance of Duke)

He's an owd fashioned rascal, as fly as can be
If he gets howd o' mi bottle
he'll sup awme tea
An' ah daren't leave me bait bag
where he can see
Or he'll hav that too
An' leave nowt for me

On a brigt summer mornin I've to bring him fra' t fell, He'll start tryin to bite me An' kick me as well But its noobut his game An' when I do catch him He pretends to go lame.

When I hook him till t waggons He pulls 'em up, one, two, three Then looks at me as much To say – that's enough for me. He knows whenits breaktime Better nor watch or clock And until he's had his nose bag He stays as firm as a rock

He's nobbut yan speed and That is varra slow, I canna mek him hurry No matter what I do Till the end of the shift Then as a matter of course He flies down the level Just like a race horse

He's a grand la'al pony
And he like me I know
An' ah wadnt swap t auld rascal
For any other I know
I reckon we're boath used tull each others ways
An' he awlus lets me ride
On him when I tek him to graze.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MINER

Most miners lived in Glenridding or Patterdale, but at one time miners travelled from Threlkeld and Penrith. About 40 miners lived in the hostel and a number lodged with miners families.

Shifts ran from 8am till 4pm, 4pm till 12 midnight and from midnight to 8am. Saturdays miners began at 6am till 12 o'clock. What was it like to work in the mine? The miners would rise have breakfast and be standing in groups waiting for the mine lorry to pick them up. The lorry would come to a stop and the men would clamber in. Someone would knock twice on the floor of the lorry and it would go to the next group and them on up the rough winding road to the mine. (When I first went there everyone walked to and from work) Once he arrived at the mine yard he walked up to the Lucy Level, where there was the lamp cabin and change rooms with showers. I remember when there was no change rooms or washing facilities and miners went home in their dirt. The miners drew his lamp, ready charged, then changed into his working clothes and putting his safety helmet and bait bag on was then ready for the mile long journey into the mine to the shaft top. Some walked in and most rode in in the waggons. The journey through the level took about 15 minutes. The men got out of the waggons and walked to the top of Smiths Shaft to await any orders for the day if necessary and to enter the cage which would take them to the 90 fathom level. There some would go up the 90 fathom north end level others go further down to 120 - 135 - 150 and 175 fathom levels. By eand by they would reach the "bait spots" usually a hollowed out part of the rock with a few planks where they would later partake of a few sandwiches. Men would take sandwiches of cheese, brown sugar and raisins, jam, occasionally meat or bacon, Though some did not like meat as it was not easily digested. Water or tea was carried in bottles – tin or enamel was preferred, glass or Thermosflasks were to easily broken.

The miner and his mate would climb up the ladder known as a gateway into the stope, unless he was driving or making a drift or tunnel. They would get their drill and other tackle, set up their machines, turn on the air and water and commence to drill. Hoppermen would go to the hoppers and begin to draw the ore filling the waggons. The loco would commence to take rakes of already filled waggons to the shaft. Soon the mine was a hive of activity. The onsetter sending waggons up the shaft, all would be noise and turmoil. About halfway through the shift men would stop for bait, during which they eat, talk and prepare a fuse for firing and then return to finish off any drilling, charge the holes with gelignite and fire their rounds. Once they had lit their fuses the miners would shout "FIRE" and then get to a safe place, counting each shot. Then it was time to go home and soon men were clattering down the level making for the shaft. They rode out or walked out and getting to daylight handed in their lamps changed out of their work clothes had a hot shower and dressed in their clean clothes went home for tea.

That was roughly the days work in the mine. Some people think miners were rude ignorant men who spent their wages on beer and gambling. My experience was that miners were a very highly intelligent men, they had to be, it took years to make a good miner and although there might be some less intelligent than others, the miner was no worse mentally or morally than his brethren aboveground. Often he was his equal or his superior. Another thing miners would do anything to help a workmate – even to laying down his life if need be – and I will tell you later how some did just that.

At home the miner and his family enjoyed life much and probably more than their contemporaries in town or city. Glenridding village built in a valley adjacent to Ullswater surrounded by the fells on three sides brought mny visitors, and some used to say to me, "oh its all right in summer time but it must be deadly in winter". Did they but Know! At home most homes had radios, gramophones, pianos and other musical instruments. There was the "Jerry" a public house whose proper name was the Travellers Rest. The White Lion often called the Township and the Patterdale Hotel usually referred to as "Fishy's" because the owner William had a fish business as well. Where miners often resorted for a few drinks or a game of darts or dominos. Many had gardens which were a joy to see and which provided fruit, vegetables and flowers for their homes. Those who were musically minded could join the village silver band – I did so myself and we had many enjoyable times together. There was the choral and dramatic society which gave some very good performances – plays, comedies and the choral society won the Mary Wakefield Festival trophy more than once. There was a good British Legion - both men and women branches- there were scouts – which I started and ran for 25 years, often acting as host to scout troops from all over the British Isles and other Countries. There were Girls Friendly Societies and at one time Girl Guides. First aid classes, YMCA youth club, whist drives were popular. Many went hound trailing, hunted with the Ullswater Fox Hounds, enjoyed fishing, climbing, fell walking and other outdoor activities. I think they led a fuller life than many people imagined. The church and chapel catered for the spiritual needs of the

people. The Church of England had St Patricks church at Patterdale and there was the Methodist chapel which was built by the miners and their families. Mention must be made of the Band of Hope run by the Mine Secretary Mr Matthew Place. The villagers attended this children and grown ups, many brining their own musical instruments and after a few gospel temperance songs, would entertain those present with solos, monologues, readings and generally showed their talent. Pledges were signed, some, alas broken before the next meeting, but I believe a good work was done. The chapel had local preachers as well as the superintendent ministers who were centred at Penrith. I served myself for 25 years or so as a local preacher and found fellowship with many fine people in the Penrith circuit.

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