



Mining, Archaeology and the Historic Environment

Editor's Letter

This Newsletter is issued with the specific aim of informing the membership of our constituent organisations on a subject for discussion at the Council meeting to be held on 15 November. **Representatives, secretaries and newsletter editors are asked to circulate the contents as widely as possible.** Digital copy of the text is available on request – just contact P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk or go to the website www.namho.org – allowing you to paste the contents directly into your group's newsletter.

Towards a research framework for the extractive industries

Peter Claughton, Conservation Officer

Introduction

During 2006 the National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO) was approached by English Heritage with an enquiry as to whether we would be interested in developing a research framework for the archaeology of the extractive industries. Martin Roe, then Conservation Officer, did preliminary work on a

design for such a project which I inherited in March 2007 when taking over as Conservation Officer. English Heritage offered to fund the project in two stages – up to £2000 towards the cost of preparing a full project design and further funding, to be negotiated, for carrying out an assessment of the resources, developing an agenda and a research strategy, and then writing up the full research framework.

After discussion at the Threlkeld council meeting, 10 March 2007, a bid was submitted for the initial funding and that has now been approved by English Heritage. The delay has primarily been due to the lack of available time on my part but there is now the opportunity to take this project forward to the next stage.

What is the purpose of the research framework?

Over the last two to three decades English Heritage has become aware of the need for detailed information to inform it on the future direction of archaeological research. The implementation of planning guidelines, PPG 15 and PPG 16 (*Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Notes*, covering Archaeology and the Historic Environment), in the early 1990s has resulted in significant changes in the way that archaeological work is undertaken and accentuated the need for coherent objectives. Archaeological investigation is now led, and funded, by developers. The planning requirements for assessment and investigation of the archaeology in advance of new developments, from major pipelines and supermarkets through to small domestic buildings, has resulted in an expanding number of new discoveries and a wealth of additional data. In order to prioritising archaeological investigation and target future research a better understanding of current knowledge, and the gaps in that knowledge, was required.

The need for an informed strategy for archaeology in Britain had been recognised by the early 1980s and a number of interest groups

had already started to address the problem. The Prehistoric Society published a document on *National priorities for prehistoric archaeology* in 1981, updated under slightly different titles in 1984 and 1988, and others followed – *Priorities for the preservation and excavation of Romano-British sites* in 1983-85 (Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies), *Archaeology and the Middle Ages* (Society for Medieval Archaeology, 1987), and *Resources priorities for post-medieval archaeology* (Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, 1988). A number of regional groups were also considering the research priorities in their areas and it was to the regions that English Heritage looked for the initial round of consultations which could provide it with an informed strategy for future research.

Amongst the first, if not the first, regional research framework sponsored by English Heritage was that for the East Midlands; Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. The results were recently published as N.J. Cooper (ed.) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands*, Leicester archaeology Monograph 13 (2006). Others were to follow and that work is on-going. The South West Archaeological Research Framework provides a good example of the progress in development, commenced in 2004 and in a position to complete in the next year or so having just published the research agenda. Their web-site on the Internet (<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/cultureheritage/heritage/swarf/>) provides an example of the project design, the development timetable, and links to other research frameworks.

English Heritage has also sponsored a small number of research framework projects by specialist interest groups – *Understanding the Workplace*, published by the Association for Industrial Archaeology in May 2005, and *Metals and metalworking: a research framework for archaeometallurgy*, to be published shortly by the Historical Metallurgy Society. The former covered the period post 1750 and excluded the extractive industries, referring the reader to an early

study, Barker and Cranstone (eds), *The Archaeology of Industrialization* (2004), which include a small group of papers on mining by Willies, Blackburn, and Mighall et al. Those papers, whilst extremely useful in their own right, do not address the problems of developing a research agenda for the future of mining archaeology. The work of the Historical Metallurgy Society will touch on mining, albeit only the extraction of metals, from pre-history through to the modern period but its primary focus will be on metal working and it cannot be expected to address the future for the extractive industry as a whole. In 1992, at the request of the short-lived Institute of Mining History and Archaeology (IMHA), David Cranstone prepared a short article on *Mining Sites in Britain: Priorities for Research and Preservation* (published in the IMHA Newsletter, 3, 6-8) and in 1996 *The Archaeology of Mining and Metallurgy in South-West Britain*, edited by Phillip Newman and published by the Peak District Mines Historical Society, did go some way towards addressing aspects of current research.

It is against this background that English Heritage has requested a research framework study for the extractive industries: mining and quarrying. The regional studies are either incomplete in their coverage of mining and quarrying or fail to recognise the unresolved issues. For example the Draft Research Agenda for the Industrial and Modern Period published as part of the *North West Region Archaeological Research Framework* (July 2005) emphasises the need for further work on the production of textiles and ceramics but makes no mention of the coal mining which underpinned both those industries. The resource assessment for the medieval period in the same region, on the other hand, does highlight the lack of archaeological evidence for mining in Cumbria but fails to fully identify the strong documentary and statistical evidence for some sectors of mining, particularly silver, at that period.

NAMHO and its constituent members, with their long experience in both the history and the archaeology of mining and quarrying, are well placed to provide a comprehensive assessment of these

industries for all periods. We can draw on this experience and that of other researchers, published and unpublished, to inform the direction for archaeological research over and beyond the next two decades. The topic list for the framework could be wide ranging (see Appendix C). It is not confined to the archaeology and the physical environment: it includes the history, the documentary evidence for mining, which must inform those areas where the archaeology is absent or inconsistent.

What about Wales and Scotland?

The initial project design funding is for England alone. Once the project design has been finalised, Historic Scotland and Cadw/Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales will be approached for funding to complement that from English Heritage with a view to extending the Framework study to both Scotland and Wales. Whilst the regional framework studies initiated by Cadw in Wales are well advanced, Scotland is at an early stage in the process. Neither has initiated specialist studies although the Historical Metallurgy Society's *Metals and metalworking: a research framework for archaeometallurgy* will address the relevant archaeology outside the confines of the English borders.

For any archaeological research framework on a wide ranging subject such as the extractive industries it would be detrimental to confine the study to within the English borders. It is inevitable that the resources in Wales and Scotland will be considered and any strategy for the future must take them in to account. There will, however, be limitations on the depth to which the archaeology outside England is addressed without supplementary funding.

How should we go about developing the framework?

There are three stages to an archaeological research framework study

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- 1) **Resource assessment** – what do we know about the archaeology?
- 2) **Defining an agenda** – what we would like to know?
- 3) **Developing a strategy** – how do we address the questions?

It is expected that this process would take about three years, involve one, probably two, major national conferences and a number of regional seminars. Timing of the meetings might favour the quieter months of autumn through to early spring. The bulk of the work would be carried out by individuals from within NAMHO's constituent organisations, although it might be necessary to bring in some specialists from outside the Association, all co-ordinated by a small steering group. For the first stage, resource assessment, it would probably be necessary to allocate the work on a wide regional basis with additional researchers looking at some specialist areas (see suggestions at Appendix B). Those involved would be paid their expenses. Travel and, where appropriate, accommodation costs would be provided for attendance at working groups and seminars. At the second and third stages it might be appropriate to break the tasks down on a product / time-period basis to maximise understanding of the weak points in the archaeology. It is possible that one person might be commissioned to write the final document.

A draft outline for the framework timetable is provided at Appendix A but it should be pointed out that this is only a suggestion and can, and no doubt will, be modified as a result of discussion. The initial funding provided by English Heritage is for NAMHO to work out the detail on how the framework will be developed and write the project design. Reference to the project design for the South West Archaeological Research Framework will provide an example of the work involved.

Accessible at -

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/cultureheritage/heritage/swarf/>

Drafting a project design, and costing the project, will take three or four months commencing in November, when the timetable will be discussed at the Council meeting to be held at Caphouse Colliery (the Coal Mining Museum for England), Wakefield, on 15 November – see page 12 below for full details. The circulation of this document as a special issue of the NAMHO Newsletter is designed to inform representatives and allow constituent organisations time to circulate details to their members in advance of that meeting. Consultation with interested parties will take place over the following two months with a working meeting for those interested in taking part in the research framework, probably being held at a central location early in the New Year. Completion of the project design might be expected in February.

Summary

The archaeology of the mining and quarrying industries is a relatively understudied subject area. In addition, it is evident that some areas of mining history are under-represented, in terms of documentary research, whilst there is evidence to suggest there might be significant survival of physical remains. Unfortunately there are no statistics or relevant examples to illustrate the state of mining archaeology in Britain and that fact must encourage us to look to the first two stages of a research framework as a process of self education. One particular aspect which a research framework must address is virtually unique to mining and quarrying - the underground archaeology. Its practitioners are few in number, but it has enormous potential. It is but one of the areas to be covered by the proposed project which will touch on every aspect of the extractive industries. Taking on that project will be time consuming but rewarding. Publication of the working papers and the full research

framework will provide the Association, the mining history and archaeological community, with a blueprint for the future.

In developing an archaeological research framework for the extractive industries NAMHO, the members of its constituent organisations and the expertise inherent within mining history interests, have the opportunity to inform the future direction of research into the historic environment in England, possibly in the UK as a whole.

Appendix A

Outline timetable for a research framework project for the extractive industries

February 2009	- submit project design.
April/May 2009	- commence project, subject to English Heritage approval of funding
May 2009	- initial working group meeting(s)
May – July 2009	- visit constituent to explain the workings of the project
June 2009	- introduce the project to the wider membership of constituent groups at the NAMHO conference in Matlock
Sept. /Oct. 2009	- initial conference – invited papers providing examples on the state of our knowledge on the archaeology of mining and quarrying – publish working papers

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| Sept - May 2010 | - trawl of the Historic Environment Records and literature searches. |
| June/July 2010 | - presentation of preliminary results at the NAMHO annual conference |
| Oct. 2009 | - call for regional papers on the archaeology of mining and quarrying |
| Autumn 2010 | - series of regional seminars – suggested venues - Exeter, Newcastle, south-east England, and Shropshire |
| Winter 2010/11 | - working meetings to discuss the research agenda |
| Autumn 2011 | - second conference – invited papers on the direction for future research – publish papers (?) |
| Autumn 2011 on | - commence drafting a research strategy |
| Completion in the first half of 2012 | – publication of the full research framework. |

Appendix B

Draft regional / specialist allocations

North of England (1) – Cumbria and Lancashire
 North of England (2) – Northumberland and County Durham
 Shropshire and the Borders (including Cheshire)
 Yorkshire / Derbyshire
 Bristol, Somerset and Gloucestershire

South-East England
South-West England (Devon and Cornwall)

Prehistoric mining
Early historic mining (Roman through to the 16th century)
Coalfields
Quarrying (including underground quarries)
Ironstone mining / quarrying (particularly the mines of the Jurassic Scarp)
Salt mining

Academic research
Council for British Archaeology and/or the Institute of Field
Archaeologists (representing wider archaeological interests)

Appendix C

Draft topic list
(by no means definitive)

Underground archaeology – fire-setting and other early rock
breaking techniques, developments in drainage, etc.
Transport – tramways / ropeways, canals, pack-horse routes and
river/coastal shipping points
Settlements – surviving and abandoned
Ore processing – including early crushing techniques, stamps,
crazing mills, etc.
Boundaries – allocating and marking mining boundaries, customary
and outside of custom, particularly in the mining other than
for lead.
Power systems – human / animal, water, steam (particularly the early
application of steam), electricity and the internal combustion
engine
Early (pre-industrial) coal working
Copper mining - post Bronze Age to the Medieval Period.

Tin working - Medieval and earlier (alluvial working)
- Early lode back working (particularly in Cornwall)

Industrial minerals – alum, potash, gypsum, etc.

Minor metals – wolfram, manganese, etc.

Sand and gravels

Ironstone mining – particularly mid 20th century mining in the
Midland counties

Women in mining – is there gender based archaeology in mining?

Mining related migration

Scientific methods for mining archaeology

- Paleoenvironmental
- Geochemical (sediment analysis)
- Provenance of metals/ores – lead isotope analysis etc.
- Dating methods

Contact details

Those interested in working on the research framework are encouraged to contact any of the Conservation team at the earliest opportunity by e-mail - P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk - robert_waterhouse@hotmail.co.uk - janis.heward@virgin.net -or by post, using the address at the foot of the page.

The next Council meeting

NAMHO Council Meeting Saturday Nov. 15th 2008 has been arranged at the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Caphouse Colliery, Wakefield commencing at 10:30 am prompt. Tea and coffee will be available from 10:00 am (when the Museum opens).

The meeting should finish at 1:00 pm and lunches will be available in the canteen.

A number of guided tours are available from 2:00 pm.

1. Surface only, covering the exhibition areas at Caphouse Pit, a narrow gauge rail trip to Hope Pit, and tours of Hope Pit exhibition areas including the water treatment sites.
2. Underground tours, both the normal public tour and a more arduous one including the new development areas underground (as available at the time) and the Drift out of the mine (concrete steps at about 1 in 4 for 300 yards).

Pre-booking is advisable for the latter trip as places are limited, contact Dr I.J. Brown tel. no. 01924 257137 (Representatives of member organisations will be given priority).

All the usual facilities will be available for visitors accompanying representatives including free tours underground during the day (10:00 am to 5:00 pm).

Further information can be obtained from the museum (tel. no. 01924 848806).