

NAMHO Conference 2024

Pool, Cornwall 27 June – 2 July 2024

The NAMHO conference is usually a mixture of field trips to mines and lectures about mining, often following a theme for that year. Conferences are usually organised and run by a club resident in the area but in 2024, the conference was run by NAMHO officers with particular help from Helga, resident in the area, and Les Williams. Both used a team of friends for different tasks such as guiding trips and running the bar.

The conference started earlier than usual because of the distance. There was a visit arranged for Friday 28th June and trips for the following week. I attended from the Thursday night to the following Tuesday.

Saturday 29th June

In morning, I stayed at venue and handled trip changes etc. (as I was webmaster) as well as attending four of the lectures. In the afternoon, I went on a trip to the “Blue Mine” which is a highly decorated copper mine. On the Saturday evening, we were back at the venue for a buffet evening meal and to make use of Les’s bar facilities.

Sunday 30th June

I made a reasonably early start to Tywarnehayle Mine to avoid traffic and make sure of parking space. The trip involved entering a higher level adit and then dropping down to the main adit. The main had been used by the Royal School of Mines (based in London) so there was some rather extreme timber work and some interesting graffiti. After working our way through the main level and some stopes, we climbed up a ladderway alongside the railway incline which took us to the surface higher up the hill than where we entered. After a look around the surface features, we dropped back to the cars. In the afternoon, I drove over to Cligga Head and had another good trip. This started by a quite steep (very steep in places) path down the cliff to some old workings which led us down to the beach. From there, we started working our way back up into the main workings which had some modern features as the mine was worked for tungsten during the Second World War. The trip included seeing some of the massive stopes before returning to the surface via a higher exit.

Monday 1st July

On Monday, I went to King Edward Mine (museum). There I met a large group of delegates and we had a guided tour round. The museum was the treatment works used by Camborne School of Mines to teach students about ore processing. On this day, the visit included a demonstration of the Californian stamps, not the quietest of equipment! After this, most of us went on to Great Condurrow Mine for an underground trip. This mine was also used by Camborne School of Mines for teaching purposes and is now run by a local mining interest group.

Tuesday 2nd July

For the last day, I went to St Austell – part of the way home – and had a guided tour provided by Imerys around their china clay facilities. This included a view of the Littlejohns quarry, one of the largest in the country, the treatment and drying plants and also the pilot plant being used to develop a process for extracting lithium. At Littlejohns, use is still made of water cannons (monitors) – see

the picture below. Imerys provided a coach and packed lunch for the delegates who went on the trip.

There were other trips after this including visits to Geevor and further south west in Cornwall but having been there before, I preferred to get home. It was a good weekend with a lot of friends and it is only a shame that more DCC members don't get involved in NAMHO. However, it was a long way away, hopefully the next conference will be nearer home.



View from the campsite (top) and South Crofty headframe (below)



In the "Blue Mine"



Timbering and graffiti in Tywarnehayle Mine



The railway incline in Tywarnehayle Mine



The cliffs at Cligga Head with mine entrances



Ore chute in Cligga Head Mine



Winding gear in King Edward Mine



Rock drilling in Great Condurrow Mine



Littlejohns China Clay works



Centrifuges in the clay processing plant