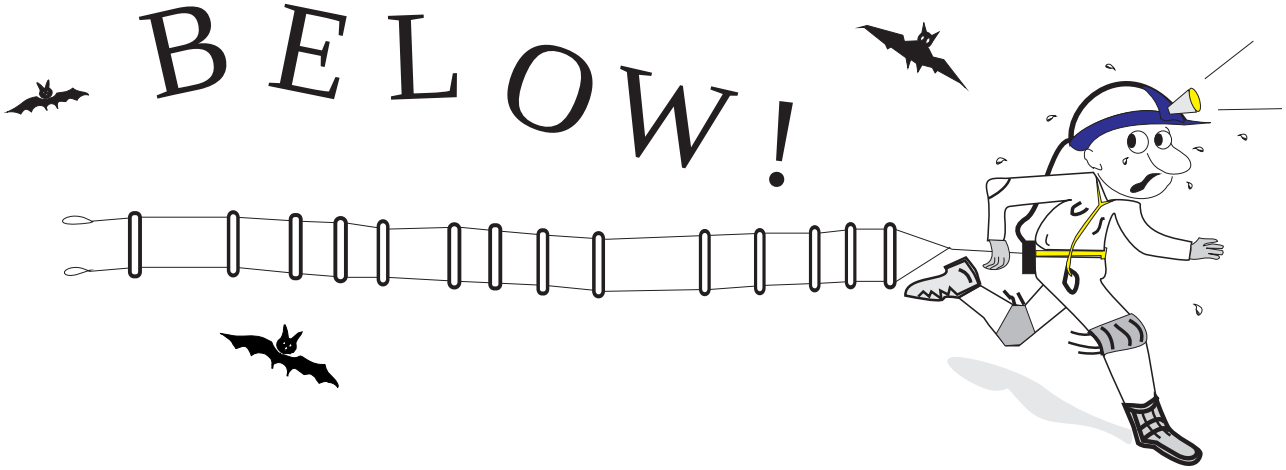
BELOW!



Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club Winter Issue No: 95.5

They Said it would never happen!

After 30 years (?) of waiting the Club has finally got a working winch. ***Yes!*** Alan Taylor's masterpiece was finally tested in anger, on Saturday the 25th November - just in time for Mike Moores 40th Birthday 'bash'. Alan kept his word and was the first person to be lowered, down Chapel Shaft - the chosen site for this auspicious occassion.

After a couple of hours rigging, the inaugural ride went without a hitch, although the use of a cage may cause problems in the future, mainly when trying to get on or off. A very successful day, and a very impressive piece of work. Well done Alan.

Finally; Merry Christmas everyone.

Kelvin

Welcome

As the year draws to a close we would like to welcome the following new members who have joined during 1995:

Full Members: Ian Bretherton, Sue Brueton, Les Davies, Paul Thorne, Jon Williams, Lyn Williams

Probationary: Dawn Coundley (since transferred to Full), Eric Cox, Dot Cox, Simon Matthews, , Keith Oak, Andy Cuckson, Adrian Foster

Junior: Gemma Cashion, Charlie Cox, Vicci Cox

Associate: Eric Cotterill, Maurice Febry, Ian Forest, Barry Job, Michael Munro, Neil Mason, Martin Stoakes

Tankerville Update

Thanks to all those who wrote to South Shrosphire District Council about the threat to Tankerville Mine engine house. There has been a complete change over the last few months, from doom and despondency to optimisim. Funds have been found from the Council and Engish Heritage to build up the shaft, cap it and underpin the engine house - this work is currently taking place.

There are also plans to to excavate and plug the top of Old Shaft. The site is being acquired by the Council and is soon to be transferred to the Shropshire Mines and Building Heritage Trust. The latter is being set-up with trustees from Shropsire County Council, South Shropshire District Council and Shropshire Caving & Mining Club.

The Trust will be applying to English Heritage for a grant to repair the engine house itself in the Spring and will be responsible for on-going maintenance of the site. Further sites may be acquired as appropriate. An application has been made for a £3,000 EEC grant to pay for setting up minining trails and interpretation boards in Shrosphire.

The Trust hopes to act as a catalyst in preserving/acquiring other sites.

Adrian Pearce

(See page 4, for brief details of current work at Tankerville)

English Heritage have also agreed a grant of £150,000 over 3 years to repair the engine houses at Ladywell and the Grits.

Rogue Cavers

The Club is very concerned at the activities of unknown persons who are exploring mines in Wales and Shrsophire. They removed a fence from around the shaft at Rorrington Mine and left it unprotected. It took delicate negotiations to persuade the landowners that it wasn't us and to allow future access.

In another incident in a Welsh cave, they made a number of models in clay underground and left the initials "SCMC" in the mud (no SCMC member was involved). In the latest incident, they cut fixed ropes and removed hangers from Bwlch-y-Plym Mine. The equipment had been installed by a local outdoor centre who use the mine for trips, they approached the Club to enquire if it was us! We are not just concerned at the irresponsible behaviour of these people, but the fact that they seem to be setting up the Club to take the blame. If anyone knows the identity of these persons please inform Adrian Pearce.

News Round-Up 1
by Ivor Brown

Limestone Group

The seventh and final report of the D. of E's Limestone Study Group has been published. It contains much information on how the £3 million plus has been spent on "making safe" the County's limestone mines.

New Walsall Mine

Walsall Museum are constructing a mock-limestone working and are using some relics and descriptions of the Shropshire Mines.

Harrison's Notebooks

The four notebooks, commenced 1849, by Captain Harrison of Snailbeach Mine put on display at the recent 'Disaster' exhibition have now been studied. they include details of Cefn Gunthley and Pontesford Mines as well as Snailbeach.

The Smelter is detailed, from the construction of the necessary brick-kilns to make the bricks, the first load for the flue (Oct. 22 1860) to drawings at the Smelter.

It is about time this marvellous survival was fully recorded.

Archive Photos

The 2 volume publication of Archival photos of Telford has now been published. It has been compiled by J.Powell and M.A.Vanns of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum (Chalford Publishing Co. Ltd, Stroud, price £8.99 each). There are a few mining shots, including 2 blunders: a collapsed single headframe is shown as "the Kemberton Pit", it should be Halesfield Pit - the Kemberton had a tandem headframe. Also the flat rope winder on p110 was at Grange Pit not Granville. In addition Woodhouse on p109 is probably Granville.

Like in most picture books (including the Club's "Mining in Shropshire") the captions often direct the reader to, for example, the building "on the right" or left - but this is not shown because the publisher has cut it off!
How annoying.

Access Negotiations

Before the Club Dinner on the 7th October, IJB, Mike Moore and Nick Southwick visited various locations in Ironbridge.

Negotiations were completed for the access into the 200m long Brierley Hill Tunnel to be opened up. [*A follow-up visit was also made on 12th November by a small group of members, when a strong draught was detected coming out from the brick work of the entrance. A date in the New Year will be set for opening the portal. Ed.*]

The lowest of the 3 adits into Lincoln Hill Mine was also located and it should be possible to re-open this. The 1800 Tunnel has been blocked off where it enters and leaves the underground garage - no progress here.

Later IJB started a survey of the brakehouse at the Crawstone Mine - the 2 holes for the chains to enter and pass around the brake pulley were located. Surveying also continued at the surviving Kemberton Pithead Baths and Offices. A search was made for the remains of Highley mining School (IJB was a student there in 1954/5) on the Sunday but nothing was found. (The school was in the village next to the Pen-nib factory).

Coalfield Guide

The latest issue of the Guide to the Coalfields shows no working coal mines in Shropshire, but there are 2 working opencasts: the Candles Site in Telford (Clay Colliery Co. Ltd.) and Lodge Coppice (Coal Contractors Ltd).

Earthquake Effects

The 1994 6.8 magnitude Californian earthquake had little effect on tunnels. Researchers found no spalling (except for dust and other deposits), no fallen fixtures, some cracks up to 0.1 inch may have widened and water inflow and gas levels increased for a short time only.

World Tunnelling, Sept. 1995

Walker Tech.

According to the Colliery Guardian in 1941 there seems to have been some doubts as to whether the Mining Dept. at Walker Technical College, Oakengates could continue due to the run-down in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. However Mr. Howells, the Principal tried to dispel this fear by pointing to the fact that the College was between two developing coalfields, the Forest of Wyre (new Alveley Colliery), and the North Shropshire Coalfield (new Ifton Colliery).

Museum Flooded

The great downpour of 10 July 1995 flooded the Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale causing considerable damage. The warren of culverts beneath the Museum and Glynwed Works are still an unknown entity. On two previous occasions the Club has carried out exploratory trips and a third has now been requested.

Whinberry Harvest

The Stiperstones whinberry crop has been poor this year, the berries were thin and wrinkled rather than fat and juicy, and the pickers were even fewer than last years. In mining times the miners sold the whinberries (billberries) to merchant (higglers) for 1½d per quart (1½pounds) for making pies and kept the poorer cranberries (cowberries) for their own pies.

The red cranberries alone were rather 'tart' but ideal when mixed with whinberries for special occasions. Cranberries could be preserved for winter use by storing in cold water.

Information from Mrs. Davies, Pennerley and the landlord of the Stiperstones Inn

Oil Lamp found

A Wells Single Torch Lamp (oil burning open flame of the shooky-type) has been found near the Cornish Engine House at Snailbeach. This type of lamp was made over a wide period - 19/20th Century. They would be used in draughty places, such as the surface, where candles could not be used.

Huglith
September 1995

Members Present: Ben Shaw, Ian Bretherton

The aim was to descend a winze (A) from the main tramming level into the flooded stope below, and to explore this stope. In the past the winze has been rigged from the in-situ rails alone, this is probably because the rock is so hard that hand bolting is very difficult. We managed to get a decent bolt in place after a couple of hours!

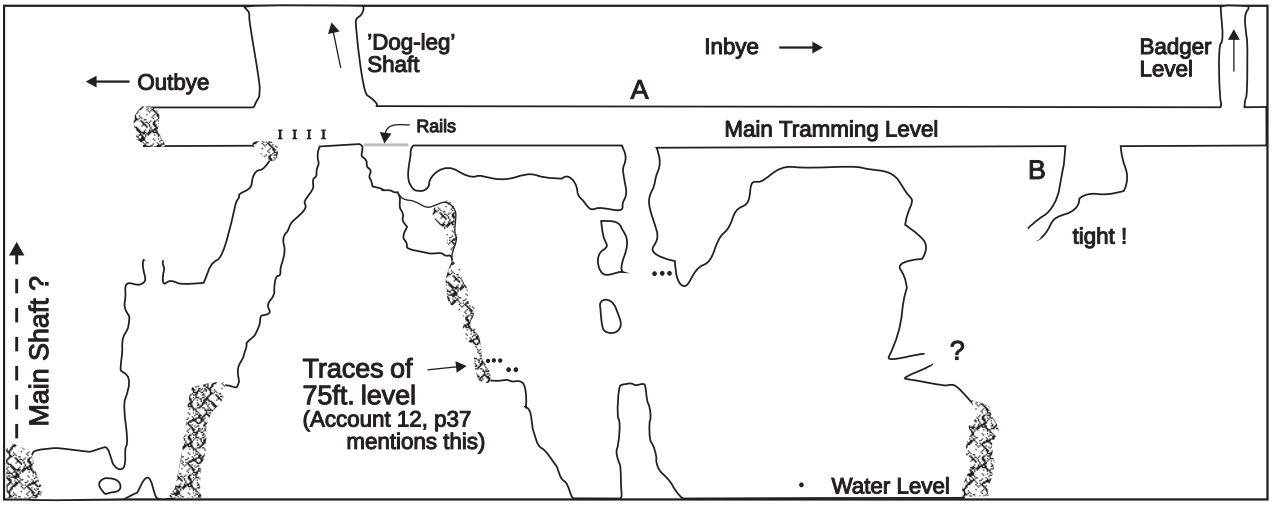
The winze was descended for about 26m through a large but narrow stope to a landing on a pillar about 6m above the water. Looking outbye we could see a previously used route down to water (via the hole that the rails bridge near the bottom of the 'Dog-leg' shaft).

Next trip we took a boat, purchased from a well known toy shop for £9.99. The instructions said it was suitable for a child weighing no more than 120lbs. In the event it was surprisingly stable and easy to manouver, but hard to get in or out of.

The stope was explored for about 70m (inbye) to a blockage of rubble and iron junk. An opening can be seen about 6m up the wall, on approximately the same level as the old '75ft.' level (referred to as 'Middle Level' in Account 12, p37).

A descent of the hole (B) on the left of the diagram is planned. The other option is aid climbing up to the opening mentioned in the prvious paragraph. This would require a better boat, as you would have to stand up in it to drill. (Unless you start bolting underwater!)

Ben Shaw



Section of Lower Part of Huglith Mine (Based on a sketch from memory, by Ben Shaw. Not to Scale)

Key

I - Girders ● - Stemples - Loose Rock

Porth-Yr-Ogof Flood

Pete Owen (Shrewsbury U.E.G.) reports a mysterious incident in Porth-Yr-Ogof cave on Sunday October 8th. The day was dry when a party of four entered via the Tradesman's Entrance. The water level was below knee height and flowing fairly fast. The group turned right into the low 'Toothpaste Tube' and although there was some water flowing along the passage there was plenty of head room. Suddenly the water level rose in seconds. The two in front did not get submerged but the rear two did as the water reached the roof.

The party managed to escape through the hole in the left-hand wall just beyond the sharp right-hand bend, after about half a minute the water level subsided.

The fifth member of the party in the main entrance chamber did not see any rise in water levels. Pete presumed that the freak flood was caused by the release of a blockage further upstream in the course of the underground river. He has not experienced anything like that before, and believes that had the party been larger then the ending would have been different.

Welsh Water are currently working above the cave, but their operations are unlikely to have caused such a flood pulse. In 1963 water from a WW pipe did pour into the cave when the valve in the manhole above the cave broke. Welsh Water are also under instruction to notify the Cambrian Caving Council when they intend to open the sluices on the Dringarth Reservoir, since such action would create a flood pulse on the River Mellte and the water passage in the cave. As the water level in the main chamber did not change this is also ruled out.

Anyone got any suggestions as to the cause of the flooding?

Cambrian Caving Council
Newsletter No.8, Nov. 1995

News Round-Up 2

Dan yr Ogof

After a temporary hiccup in the access arrangements for Dan Yr Ogof earlier in the year following a series of unfortunate incidents a new system is now in place.
At the request of the owner a committee has been formed, called the Dan Yr Ogof Cave Advisory Committee (D.Y.O.C.A.C). It comprises 4 local cavers, representatives of the Brecon Beacons National Park, the Countryside Council for Wales, Cambrian Caving Council (CCC) and South Wales Caving Club (SWCC). The later have been responsible for access to the cave for the past 30 years.

Members on the Committee will be reviewed/re-elected every two years. The main target of the Committee is to assure as much continued liberal access as is compatible with conservation and research procedures.

At present access is to continue as before, under the auspices of SWCC, but from 1st January 1996 the responsibilities will be passed gradually to the D.Y.O.C.A.C.

It is envisaged that current leaders will want to retain their leader status. To do this they will need to obtain a D.Y.O.C.A.C. "identity card". Past leaders who have not been frequent visitors will need to reassure the Committee that they retain a suitable level of knowledge of the cave's conservation requirements and safety measures. Updates may be required at perhaps 3-yearly intervals for all leaders.

If you would like to become a "new" leader, you will have to attend a seminar session and satisfy the Committee of your competence.

It is envisaged that all exploratory projects will be cleared by the Committee, who will be in a position to offer up-to-the-minute informed advice on conservation implications, methods of procedure and precautions. The clearance is to be arranged rapidly without waiting for the bi-ennial meeting time. The Committee hopes that the new system will facilitate digging and exploratory projects rather than inhibit them.

The precise methods of achieving all this are currently under development. Any comments on, enquiries about or helpful suggestions on the proposals can be sent via:

Elsie Little
Secretary to the Committee,
Hennoyadd Villa, Abercraf, SA9 1UR

Barmote Court

In October IJB attended, by invitation, a meeting of members of the Barmote Court in Derbyshire. These meetings have been held for many centuries. it raises the question, did Shropshire ever have its own mining laws like North Wales, Forest of Dean, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Yorkshire etc.?

IJB Talk

IJB will be giving a talk to the Shropshire Geological Society (Tel: Susan Beale, 01694-723679 for more details) in Shrewsbury, March 13th 1996 titled "Snailbeach Mine and the 1895 Disaster".

Tankerville

Work has now commenced on stabilising the Tankerville Engine House and vegetation has been removed from the shaft top and the area surrounding it. The well preserved range of 6 ore bins are now visible for the first time in living memory, they must be unique in Britain.

The shaft seems to be blocked at about 50m depth. In October it was also temporarily blocked for safety at about 7m down. The balance beam tunnel is massive now that it is clear, but like the other stonework around it is in need of urgent repair.

Puzzle

An article by Sula Rayska on Ketley Hall, Red Lake, Telford contains this sentence:

"a particularly interesting feature is the tunnel-vaulted corridor on the first floor, perhaps a type of folly indicating the house's connection with the Reynolds family who were often said to be tunnel mad".

Does it still survive? What does/did it look like?

The Reynolds also lived at nearby Ketley Bank Hall any above ground tunnels there?

Ivor Brown

Shropshire Project Log

Boat Level

8/4/95 John Davies, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick, Stuart Tomlins, Andy Yapp. Dug in centre of apparent shaft mound, believed to lead to Boat Level but no void uncovered.

3/9/95 Colin Armfield, John Davies, Les Davies, Steve Holding, Mike Moore, Malcolm Newton, Adrian Pearce, Mike Worsfold. Surveyed all passages except two stopes. Sewage found in side passage leading to Tankerville.

23/9/95 Nicola Danbury, Steve Holding, Adrian & Julie Pearce, Alan & Vicky Robinson. Trip to end & back plus checked out stopes.

Bulthy Mine

15/8/95 Nicola Danbury, Steve Holding, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Stuart Tomlins. Drainage level dammed as water supply. Several short adits open half way up hill. Open adit other side of hill with flooded shaft in floor.

Burgam Mine

3/9/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, Dawn Coundley, Mike Moore, Malcolm Newton, Adrian Pearce, Nick Southwick. Measured several shafts at landowner's request for safety treatment.

Cothercott Mine

8/1/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick, Steve Southwick, Stuart Tomlins, Mike Worsfold Andy Yapp. Did most of surface survey and checked accessible underground remains.

9/4/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, Adrian Pearce. Completed surface survey.

Far Gatten Mine

7/5/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick, Steve Southwick, Adrian Pearce, Mike Worsfold. Surveyed surface, two open adits - don't go far.

Gatten Mine

7/5/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick, Steve Southwick, Adrian Pearce, Mike Worsfold. Surveyed surface.

Hollies Trials

13/5/95 Adrian Pearce found level partly open.

20/5/95 Andy Yapp explored level for about 60ft. to infill from above. Collapsed shaft found on surface corresponding to blockage. level was stone arched for 10ft. then in shale. About 6ft. high 4ft. wide. Another level found to South with much smaller tip. Entrance completely collapsed.

Hugh's Bridge

8/10/95 Eileen Bowen, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick, Adrian Pearce, Mike Worsfold. Tunnel entrance still open and holding water. Landowner says tunnel open to blockage at shaft. Shaft has been filled and covered over, impossible to detect, but landowner says it is next to poplar tree.

Ketley Hill Flues

1/8/95 Steve Holding, Adrian & Julie Pearce, Alan Robinson. Surveyed system of flues and condensers.

Ladywell Mine

19/1/95 Adrian Pearce checked engine house with officers from Shropshire County Council and South Shropshire District Council with view to preservation.

Old Wind Tunnel/Shafts

26/8/95 Mike Moore, Adrian & Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick. Inspected site of filled tunnel shafts and later incline. Found bricked-up entrance to tunnel behind house down hill.

7/10/95 Ivor Brown, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick. Talked to owner of house by canal tunnel and obtained agreement for future exploration.

8/10/95 Cara Alison, Eileen Bowen, Sue Brueton, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Nick Southwick, Steve Southwick, Mike Worsfold. Dug blockage from top of apparent well revealing large void with about 5ft. of water.

Rorrington Mine

17/1/95 Adrian Pearce checked shafts and adits with Forestry Commission with view to fencing.

Tankerville Mine

19/1/95 Adrian Pearce checked engine house with officers from Shropshire County Council and South Shropshire District Council with view to preservation.

31/3/95 Stuart Tomlins and Andy Yapp met with English Heritage and SSDC officers to discuss ways of stabilising Watsons Shaft.

23/9/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, Adrian & Julie Pearce, Alan & Vicky Robinson, Stuart Tomlins. Checked cleared shaft top and had ride over shaft in cage suspended from crane.

West Grit Mine

19/1/95 Adrian Pearce checked engine house with officers from Shropshire County Council and South Shropshire District Council with view to preservation.

White Grit Mine

19/1/95 Adrian Pearce checked engine house with officers from Shropshire County Council and South Shropshire District Council with view to preservation.

Wilderley Mine

8/1/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick, Steve Southwick, Stuart Tomlins, Mike Worsfold, Andy Yapp. Did surface survey.

9/4/95 Surveyed lower track and drainage adit. Found extension with a loop through cutting and embankment + old truck by line.

Wrentnall Mine

5/2/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, John Davies, Les Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick, Rob Southwick, Stuart Tomlins. Did surface survey and checked out open adit.

2/4/95 John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Nick Southwick, Rob Southwick, Andy Yapp. Surveyed level from open works and took landowner in. Checked fenced shaft at SJ421035 (3.8m diameter and 5.8m deep to water).

Guinness Tour of Ireland
14-21 October 1995

The trip, typical of club events, was under-subscribed until the last minute, however after several visits to the travel agent (and a chocolate bribe) all arrangements fell into place. All 16 people arrived at Holyhead to go on the Catamaran service to Dun Laoghaire. The minibus was driven by Edwin and Eileen during the week for which we were all most grateful, as even the shortest looking journey on a map of Ireland can take twice the time you think, especially on the return when all but the unfortunate driver have sampled the Guinness at every stop, except Silvermines where the town closes for the day even in the rain.

We stayed at an Equestrian Centre near Ashford (30 miles South of Dublin) which had some suitably equipped cottages. Our Dutch host was quite enthusiastic until he saw Mike Worsfold covered in ochre climb out of the minibus and manage to cover the outside of the bus with muddy hand prints! Our host was assured by Edwin that everything would be cleaned off and that his walls would be left as white as we found them. Anyway the horsy types were wearing helmets and wellies of a sort, although their mud was not bright orange.

During the week a lot of Guinness was consumed, a lot of miles were travelled and a curry, chilli and a casserole were prepared. Oh, we saw some mines too.

The Programme

The tour programme was as follows:

Avoca

Little was known about the site other than it had a very large Cornish engine house. We were met, on site, by Nick Coyne, who spent several hours showing us around, explaining some of the history and showed a 15 foot plan of the underground workings, many of which are sealed off. There is another engine house on the site, and on the opposite side of the valley there are at least 3 more. It was however, a very hot day and only Steve Holding, Mike Worsfold and Roger Gosling went underground, the rest went to the 'Meeting of the Waters' pub where a local celebration was taking place. Adrian Pearce was provided with his first Guinness and was immediately converted to Ireland and future visits!

Silvermines

This was a 3½ hour drive in the rain from Ashford where we were staying. Pete Eggleston attempted to navigate with 3 others in the back reading better maps giving alternative directions. We met Martin Critchley in the village who showed us buildings and capped shafts of the modern workings, and the older Cornish Engine house and dressing floors.

The accessible workings are about a mile outside the village. These are a pillar and stall type and are set behind the modern mine buildings which are full of literally thousands of drill core samples. It was a particularly weird occasion with 3 video recorders constantly being used and the mine being floodlit by these as the cameramen wandered along different passages.

Glendalough

This time Nick directed and we found the shortest route so, he said. Roger's return route was longer but more scenic. We used the main tourist car park and walked along the lake path, following the sign-posted 'Miners Walk' to the sign-posted 'Cornish Village' and that was the sum total of the information about the mines. At the village there are the almost complete remains of a roller crusher from the Mills Foundry, Llandidloes, Wales. The mountain goats in the party climbed up the very steep scree behind the village to investigate the various levels. Although after a few hundred feet these were found to be collapsed, with a bit of effort these could be pushed. A much easier footpath was found down to the track especially as the rest of the party had returned for a Guinness to get out of the rain, Edwin discovered the waitress came from Market Drayton. The late afternoon was spent investigating the various buildings, levels and shafts in Glandasan, where an abandoned cornish stamp head was found halfway up the mountain.

Geological Museum, Beggars Bush, Dublin

The museum was visited by all and is well worth the effort as mineral specimens from all over the world are very well displayed, as are numerous photographs and information about Irish Mines. We also met John Morris for a discussion about the Irish Mining Society. After a Guinness and a sandwich, a party of 8 went to Tara working Mine, where they were treated to a fabulous visit. The rest of the group went for a party in Dublin - more Guinness.

Glenmalur

Following reports from others this site which is over the Mountain from Glendalough was visited, however the wet level entrance was found to be collapsed and only a very tree filled stope at the top of the hill could be found. Further along the road some distant tips were noted these were just above the Youth Hostel unfortunately little access was gained. Another tip in the forestry opposite was spotted but only a flooded adit was located.

Guiness Cont..

Bonmahon

We met Des Cowman who showed us around this site (some 3½ hour drive from Ashford), again little was previously known by our group. Des treated us to a real tour of the headlands with stories and information of shafts in a rock out in the bay, and headlands riddled with levels.

A local dog took great pleasure in seeing our group and proceeded to run up and down the cliffs which in places seemed almost vertical, it then jumped into the sea at the bottom, barking. At one stage we were concerned but he re-appeared as we left.

An interesting debate took place between the party and Des about the main Engine House left standing. In passing he mentioned another which we had to rush over to before the light faded.

The party returned home extremely tired, but full of enthusiasm for the next visit and hope for the Irish Mining Society plus of course another Guinness.

More details and fuller descriptions of the trips will be given in the Club Journal or a separate publication later next year.

Mike'mines a Guinness'
Moore

Snailbeach Project Log

7/1/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick, Stuart Tomlins, Mike Worsfold, Andy Yapp. Continued clearing trees from reservoir next to George's Shaft winding house.

4/2/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Julie Pearce, Nick Southwick, Stuart Tomlins. Finished clearing reservoir, sorted out artefacts in Blacksmiths & Loco Shed, brought container from Ladywell Mine.

4/3/95 Led parties of public around Day level over weekend as part of centenary of Snailbeach Disaster.

8/4/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Steve Holding, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Ben Shaw, Nick Southwick, Mike Worsfold. Cleared railway line from magazine, valve house, track to upper processing area and the area itself. A few large trees left to another time. Found open trial level at SJ38820219 (c. 1950's?). Open for 100ft. to right angled turn to right, then further 50ft. to blind heading. Waist deep water.

16/4/95 Adrian Pearce. Found filled shaft at SJ38050274 with most of tip removed.

6/5/95 Eileen Bowen, John Davies, Mike Moore, Adrian Pearce, Nick Southwick, Mike Worsfold. Repaired part of Black Tom engine shed that had been vandalised.

2/9/95 Colin & Liz Armfield, Eileen Bowen, Sue Brueton, Dawn Coundley, John Davies, Mike Moore, Keith Oak, Adrian Pearce, John Priest, Nick Southwick, Rob Southwick, Steve Southwick, Stuart Tomlins, Mike Worsfold. Removed trees from valve house and upper processing shed.

7/10/95 Cara Alison, Eileen Bowen, Ian Bretherton, John Davies, Steve Holding, Adrian Pearce, Ben Shaw, Stuart Tomlins, Mike Worsfold. Cleared trees from around George's Shaft.

Adrian Pearce

Museum Fire

As a follow-up to the Stop Press report in the last issue of 'Below', here are a few more details of the fire at the Peak District Mining Museum. It appears that a fire broke out in the Pump Room, about 1am on Sunday 20th August. Luckily the automatic fire system activated and the fire brigade were quickly on the scene.

The night club on the floor above the museum in full 'throb' and several hundred people had to be evacuated.

The Museum itself was not affected by the fire, but there was considerable damage in the Pump Room - mainly smoke and water damage to a large number of books and showcases. There was also structural damage to the Pump Room. Repairs are likely to take several months to complete.

PDMHS Newsletter 76

Insurance

The Club pays for all its Full, Honorary, Probationary and Junior Members to be covered by the BCRA insurance scheme. This gives public and member to member liability insurance up to £2 million for activities associated with mining history, eg: underground/ surface exploration, surveying, preservation, training, even social events. it applies all the time and not just on Club trips.

The cover is for anywhere in the world **EXCEPT** North America. It is **NOT** personal insurance or for commercial activities. It is meant for you if you are sued by a member of the public (eg if you leave a shaft cap open) or by another member (eg: if you cause the death or injury of another member on a trip).

For £5, we can get a landowner covered under the same insurance and this is a good way of getting access. We have done this to gain access to Huglith and Rorrington Mines.

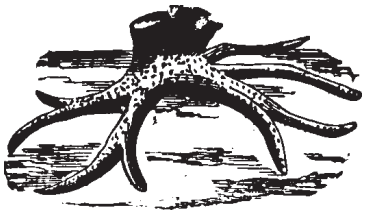
Adrian Pearce

Mining Characters No.4

John Randall and the (mainly) Coalbrookdale Coalfield

John Randall 1810 - 1910 saw many changes during his long and active life. He was born at Broseley, trained in his Uncle's potteries and elsewhere, was employed as a painter (mainly of birds) at Coalport China Works, lived at Coalport for many years and by 1871 was living in Madeley.

Here he described himself as postmaster, printer, stationer and bookseller - but he was also doing many other things e.g. author of books, publisher and editor of journals, corespondent to many technical publications and consultant geologist. He even, in 1856, describes himself professionally in Kelly's commercial directory as a "Collector of Minerals and Fossils of the (Shropshire) District".



His interest in geology had begun before 1851 (when his collection won him a bronze medal at the Great Exhibition), but his interest in writing only began in the 1850's when he published items on local interest in the county newspapers (mostly anonymously). One of theses items in a particular is a masterpiece, it describes a visit to one of the Madeley Wood Company pits in 1859.

"You may go down in the doubles or in the skip - in the former you are seated upon a small round chain, in the latter you stand upright in a basket. The men prefer the former and go down swinging and singing in a bunch, ten or twenty men and boys at a time"... and so it goes on, absolutely fascinating. Some of these articles were later collected and published in book form as the "Severn Valley" in 1862, but some of the best got left out.

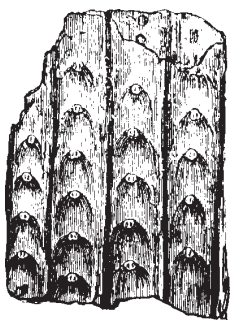
In the 1860's and 70's he produced guides to local railways, village histories and short biographies. The longest books were the 'History of Broseley' published in 1879 and that of Madeley in 1880. The book on Madeley has about 20 pages on the geology and mining of the area as well as numerous related references elsewhere.

In the 1860's he became something of a local mining expert and appears to have been the one who suggested to the Anstices that if they sank shafts east of the known coalfield, near Kemberton they would find coal, and they did. From this time onward he was much sought after for comment and was never afraid to give it. In his long series in the Mining Journal he describes most of the great happenings of the day, for example, the sinking of Granville Pit (in Part 2, 1869), Arley and Shatterford Colliery (in Part 3) and many more. (*IJB has only got as far as Part 19 - the Journal is cumbersome, small print and the writing style atrocious with apparently unconnected references to finds in italy and elsewhere - which proves only that he was widely-read, an important qualification for an expert of that time*).

In Part 1 of his reports to the Mining Journal on visits to the Stiperstones Mining Area "at the request of some London gentlemen" he tells us little except about the terrain and the weather, but promises more in Part 11. He wrote to the Colliery Guardian in 1858 about the "futile nature" of Mr. Moseley's attempts to sink for coal in Silurian rock near Buildwas and the fact that it had to be done by German miners because the local miners thought the idea quite daft. He reported several months later with glee the case of "Ben the sinker who summoned a German Dr. Reider (or Donster Swivel Redivivus) who was engaged by Mr. Moseley to sink for coal for non-payment of wages".

Without any formal training he became a Senior Member of the South Midland Institute of Mining, Civil and Mechanical Engineers and led trips and contributed to papers in the 1870's. Now over 60 years of age he was only just beginning his career. he gave up his work as a painter at Coalport in 1881 (after 46 years and age 71) to concentrate on his other activities, he swapped his work on producing a monthly journal for a new weekly - The Wrekin Echo. Later it became part of the Shropshire Guardian.

He wrote at least two more books (on Madeley Court and Worfield), some pamphlets, took part in many local organisations and councils, wrote articles for journals and produced the annual "Tom Moody's Almanac". His geological and mining associations still kept him busy too. He was now considered an important source of information and advice. In this field his greatest successes had probably been the assistance he gave during the planning of the Severn Valley Railway, the sinking of Madeley



John Randall and the (mainly) Coalbrookdale Coalfield

continued from page 8 ...

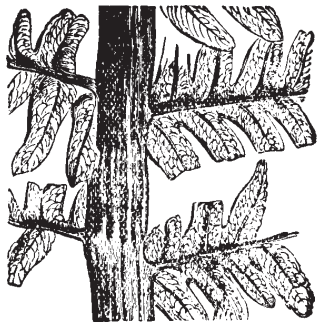
Wood (Kemberton) and Granville Pits, the identification of the "red-beds" of the upper Coal Measures and in persuading the mine owners that they had to go through this barren ground to get to the seams of coal beneath.

He carried with him the memories of the happenings in the 18th Century as related to him in his youth, right through the 19th Century to the early 20th. His final great act for us was to put some of this down in the Victorian County History of 1908 (Vol.1) on the industries of Shropshire.

For those interested in Shropshire Mining his works are a mine of information in themselves. One and a bit pages of notes to cover such an active life of 100 years is insufficient to do it justice.

The references must include his 16 books, his monthly Journal 1875 - 1880, his weekly newspaper, is annual Almanac (1874 to at least 1886). His life seems to have been too much for any biographer but excellent short essays are given in the History of Madeley reprint (1975), Madeley Rest Room Review (December 19930 and in Shropshire Magazine (August 1962 and October 1971). Unfortunately these do not cover in detail Randall's mining and geological work, that awaits another author.

The Memorial with epitaph to John Randall 1810-1910 can be seen in Madeley Church. His Madeley home, still occupied by his daughter in the 1940's is now buried beneath the Madeley Shopping Centre.



Note

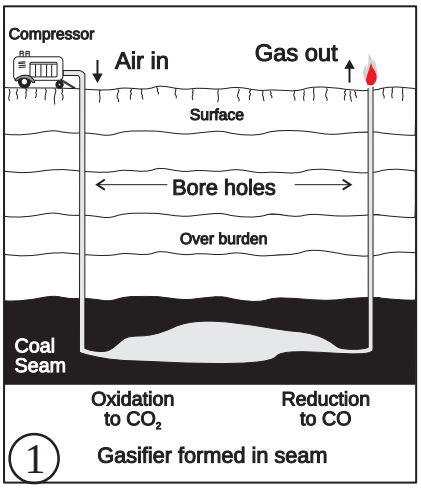
It was while wading through Randall's weekly mining reports in the Wellington Journal that the idea for the mining notes in 'Below' was born - the present issue contains the 34th production.

Ivor Brown

'Novel Mining' Methods on trial in the Forest of Wyre Coalfield

Just after the last war the area near Bayton Mine on the Shropshire-Worcestershire border became the site of one of 2 projects in the UK to develop underground gasification of coal. Both projects involved the use of boreholes but while the Newman Spinney Project was connected with an opencast, the Bayton Project (which was in fact nearer Rock Village than Bayton) involved shafts and underground drivages. The following notes have been summarised from a "National Coal Board Appraisal 1976, The Underground Gasification of Coal".

The Bayton Project began in 1951 with the sinking of boreholes to try out the 'pneumatic linkage' technique as used by the Russians in their Brown Coal deposits. In this high pressure air supplied down one borehole percolates through the coal seam to another borehole and eventually an enlarged air passage is formed (1). The process was found to be slow unless more oxygen was added to the air, this then produced only a small channel which could only be enlarged by using higher pressures. This was a simple system



The basic concept of underground gasification of coal

and is still the currently favoured technique.

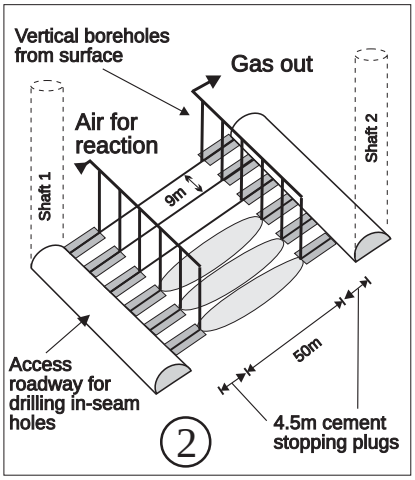
Another technique tried used 'electro-linkage' as developed in the USA. An electrode was fitted at the base of each of 2 boreholes and a high voltage passed between them (about 2,000 volts). The current first dried out then carbonised the seam leaving a permeable path of coke between the holes. It was found however that some linkages could not be completed, the current tracked in the wrong direction and the path could not be corrected.

The third technique attempted involved long boreholes in the seam and for this to work at Bayton, shafts had to be sunk to the seam and roadways constructed in parallel so that the long boreholes could be driven between them (2)*. The horizontal in-seam boreholes were intersected by vertical boreholes drilled from the surface and the reaction was started by igniting the seam at the bottoms of one row of vertical holes. There were problems, the reaction could roar away down the borehole necessitating an air-reversal to bring it back, thus loosing efficiency, and if used too frequently, control would be lost when the adjacent cavities burned into one another.

A later development used only a single gallery or roadway and a blind borehole (3) to overcome those problems. In this 8" diameter holes were drilled for 250ft. into the seam ending blind (i.e. not connected with any other cavity). A 3" diameter pipe was then inserted almost full distance, this then carried

continued on p.10

‘Novel Mining’ Methods on trial in the Forest of Wyre Coalfield cont..



Trial 45 at Bayton, England
(c.1955)

compressed air which pre-heated the pipe thus producing a reaction zone that liberated gas from the coal. It was an immediate success producing high quality gas from a stabilised reaction zone. However the steel pipes then failed at high temperatures and the use of high-temperature steels proved too expensive.

At this stage work was transferred to Newman Spinney where a small power station was to be constructed. Problems arose in the application of the blind hole system and the trials were eventually abandoned.

When work started in 1951 at Bayton, non-mining contractors were used under the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and as work progressed the writer remembers discussions at Highley Mining School regarding the lack of any precautions being taken against firedamp explosions when working in shafts and tunnels in the Coal Measures. (Similar fears again arose for the same reasons when civil engineers were sinking shafts and driving sewer tunnels under Dawley in the 1970’s).

In 1956 the work at Bayton was transferred to the National Coal Board who implemented proper procedures but within months the project had been shut down. The site was then reclaimed by the NCB, but concern has been expressed at the low standards used.

David Poynton has recently investigated more closely the present situation on-site. The NCB handed back the last area to the farmer in 1959, although at that time the blower house seems to have been still in place. The rest of the equipment had been sold off to the Mole Mining Company and others (an inventory survives).

The site of the buildings has been converted to a farmyard and pig rearing unit and the rest is used for growing grass for hay/silage.

As a parting shot a Miners Lamp was presented to the village of Rock by the NCB and this is now kept in the Parish Church - as reminder of things that might have been!

Acknowledgements

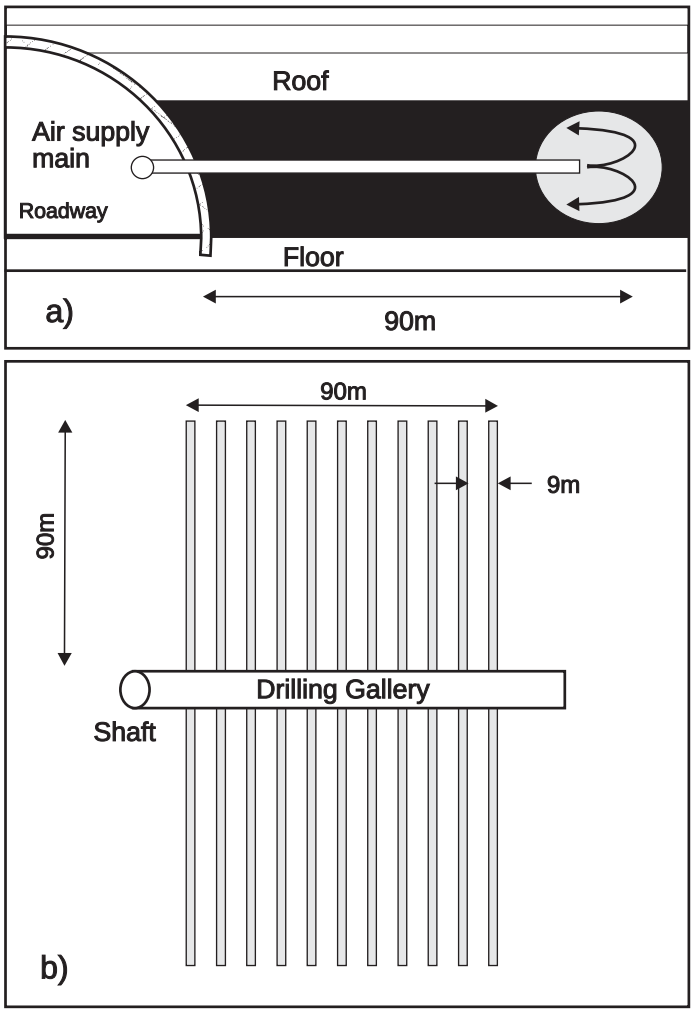
To the NCBs appraisal already mentioned, which itself is partly a digest of the publication “British Trials in Underground Gasification 1949-1955”, HMSO 1956. Also to David Poynton for his information on the past-working situation.

* Note

The 1956 HMSO publication contains some interesting photos and plans of the operations at Bayton. It also states that in the first test involving shafts; two 70ft. deep 6ft. 6in. diameter shafts were sunk, two galleries each of 100ft. were driven 200ft. apart and 4 parallel horizontal boreholes 30ft. apart were used. All this was in the Broseley Seam (?). See (2) for the general layout.

Ivor Brown

3



The blind borehole method
a) Vertical section
b) Plan View (Not to scale)

Frongoch Engine Shaft
A detailed description.

The Frongoch Engine Shaft has four, in-situ pump rods today. Pump rod '**A**' appears to continue up the shaft as far as a caplamp will reach. About 14m up the shaft it has been reinforced or repaired with heavy planks of wood and iron bands. It has a timber secured to it with iron bands, with an eye piece on the top. This would be for attachment of a balance bob rod. At about knee height there is another timber attached with a more pronounced offset, this is probably the upper part of a plunger pump.

Rod '**B**' ends about 5m up the shaft, and has a timber secured to it which carries a rigid iron rod that ends in an eye. This is also probably for the attachment of a balance bob rod. The timber of rod '**B**' also has some chain round the top, not of sufficient weight to be part of the lifting arrangement, it was probably used to secure the pump rod to the side of the shaft, out of harms way, when this rod was taken out of use.

Pump rod '**C**' has every appearance of a piston pump, but this it cannot be. Its timber upper section can be seen to continue all the way up the shaft, and is in much better condition than '**A**' and '**B**'.

Rod '**D**' is of heavy 3½ inch diameter steel or iron rod, with a fulcrum piece at about eye level. This also can be seen to continue all the way up the shaft. I have seen a pump rod of this type elsewhere (Bog Mine engine shaft SN 738814. This is about 60° on the underlie, to water at 20m). I feel that this latter rod was probably put in as a standby, rod '**C**' being the last one in use.

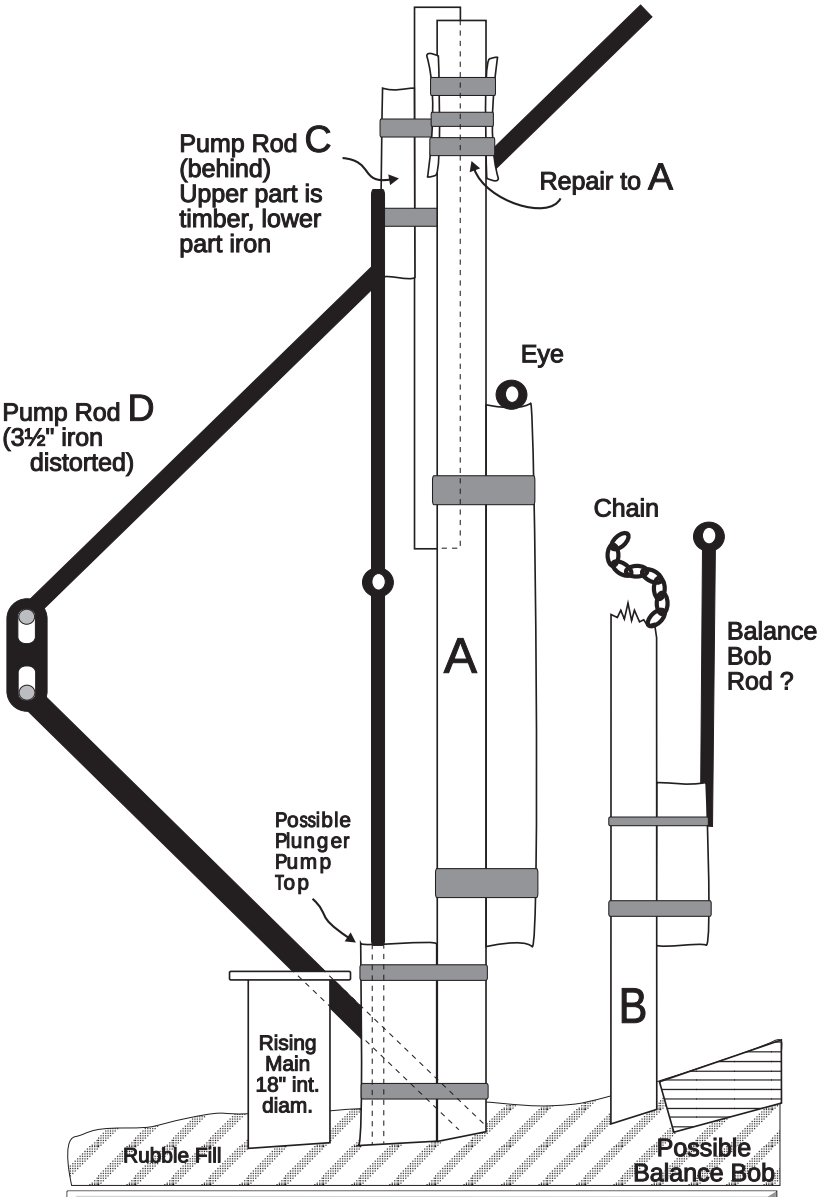
One should remember that this point (24 fathom) wasn't always adit level, as the Wemyss Mine was at one time a separate concern, and the workings didn't connect before Frongoch acquired the Wemyss property. In those days pumping would have been to surface, or more probably to the old shallow adit (now lost). There would probably have been cisterns and plunger pumps at this level and above.

It is interesting to note that the shot-holes in the adit change direction at a point about 60m outbye of the cross cut to Boundary Shaft, indicating two way driving. Also there is no noticeable misalignment, so the dialing must have been spot on. Another point of interest is the way that the adit has been driven to circumvent all the shafts and the Wemyss workings. This suggests a connection below adit, and a mistrust of wooden launders.

In the vicinity of the engine shaft there are various other artefacts, a stout wooden box, corners reinforced with iron, contains heavy bolts. There is a rather curious wooden plug about 18inches long, tapering from 12 inches down to 7 inches, purpose unknown. In a level beyond the shaft is a wooden collar launder which would have been bolted to the top of the rising main to launder the water away clear of the shaft. Also near the shaft, and buried under debris, is what may have been a balance bob.

I think that it is clear that they had a lot of trouble with premature failure of the timber pump rods, and did a bit of experimenting with alternative arrangements.

Roy Fellows



Frongoch Engine Shaft Pump Rods at Adit
(Based on a sketch by Roy Fellows. Not to Scale)

Documents from Shropshire Research Centre
Relating to the Pontesford Coal Field

Below are copies of two letters in the Longueville collection which give an insight to the closing of the Pontesford Coalfield around 1860. The Longuevilles were solicitors in Oswestry and from the volume and detail of records remaining can be seen to have been very important in this area. From these and other documents it is obvious that the seams of Coal were nearly worked out and that the royalty was very high. Also other conditions of the lease seem to have been very onerous to the Snailbeach Company.

The cost of Coal transport to the Mine Engines and Smelters would have been a major factor in balancing the cost of the royalty. By the 1860's the "New" railway had been established and this gave cheap access to Coal from Wrexham and other areas.

The documents are presented as direct transcriptions with no comment. Punctuation has been maintained from the original. The document titled Pontesford Colliery Dec. 1861 is written on blue paper and signed by Walter Eddy who is presumed to be the Mine Captain. The document titled "Statements" is written onto several large (approx A3) sheets of paper double spaced written in one hand and appears to have been prepared for legal submission.

Colin Armfield

Pontesford Colliery Dec. 1861

There are three seams of Coal in the land the thickness and depth from the surface of each at the Engine Pit field No 18 are as follows:

Name	Thickness	Depth from surface
Top or 1/2 yard Coal	1ft 6in	72 yards
Middle or Yard Coal	2ft 3in	105 yards
Bottom of Thin Coal	1ft 3 in	123 yards

No maps have been left of the workings. The quantity of Coal uncut however can be pretty accurately ascertained from "Water level" of each seam in the different old pits and from the evidence of the Agent and Workmen. I believe the map shows tolerably correct the coal un-worked in each seam and that this cannot be disputed.

The bottom seam of Coal has not been found in the Engine Pit though it has been sunk deep enough to meet it, if there. This seam may be destroyed in and around the Pit, by local disturbance and it is likely to be found entire in other portions of the ground where it is shown to be un-worked. In the absence of proof to the contrary I have no doubt Miss Highway's value will change ALL

The bottom seam of Coal is entire except a portion around the Pit. I have therefore estimated half of the bottom Coal as existing in field 18 and the same quantity for the middle Coal.

The middle Coal has been proved in this field to be very inferior and the seam contains not more than half the usual quantity of Coal. In all the other fields shown as un-worked I have estimated these two seams of Coal as being entire.

Name	Acres unworked	Produce/acre	Total
Top or ½ Yard Coal	9	1694	15246
Middle or Yard Coal	12½	2500	31250
Bottom or Thin Coal	17½	1310	22925
Total quantity or Coal uncut of 20 to the Ton			69,421

Which being reduced to "Stacks" of 24 cwt. each gives 57,850 Stacks on which a royalty of 1s 4d a Stack is charged.

For the last three years I find the average Get of Coal did not exceed 2400 Stacks a year yielding a royalty of about £160 a year. If the three seams of Coal were worked at the same time and with ordinary spirit I consider that 5000 Stacks of Coal can be got yearly, this will take 11½ years to work out the remaining Coal.

I deduct 1000 Stacks yearly for consumption of the engine, cabin fire lamps on the Pit +c. Leaving 4000 Stacks yearly on which royalty is to be paid and which at 1s 4d a Stack gives £266 13s 4d a year for 11½ years.

This would be an enormous price as royalty. Coal remaining if it were estimated by the same standard as other Coal districts. But here the royalty is double the average other districts and the lessees are bound to work or pay for all Coals in the land.

I have put a big yield to acre for each seam and have endeavoured to value as if I were employed as umpire by the lessee and lessor so that I cannot fancy Mr Highway's mine. Advisers will put a higher value on the Coal remaining than I have done at least I cannot see how they can stretch it much higher

Signed *Walter Eddy*

SRO Longueville Collection, Box 28a

Statements from Pontesbury Miners relating to workings at Pontesford Coalfield up to 1860

Thomas Mansell of Pontesbury, Collier aged 35.

Knows Miss Highway's property in lease to the Snailbeach mining Co.

Have worked for that for 16 years, working partly at Malehurst and partly at Pontesbury. There are three seams of Coal in the lower part of the workings -

I first worked at the Bye Pit in the field No. 4 on the map on the two lower seams the top seam having been previously worked out. I also worked at another shaft on the No. 4 I never worked at the top Coal in the No. 4 which is 18 inches in thickness I have worked at the middle seam in No 4 which is very irregular 2ft 5ins in thickness at the thickest point. I have worked at the lower seam in No. 4 which is 14 inches in thickness. At the Engine Pit the upper seam is 70 yards from the surface the middle 98 yards.

I worked from the Teg Pit in No 4 field all the bottom Coal on the cross the rise of that Pit. I also worked in the shaft in the field No. 11 on the lower seam only the 2nd seam is also there but the 1st had cropped out. The Coal in the lower seam in No.11 was worked clean out up to the road with the exception of a bit on the north part which was left as a barrier and is full of faults.

I also worked in the Pit in No 10 at the lower seam but left before it was worked out to work at Malehurst.

I also worked in the Pit in field No 16 at the middle seam.

Taking the whole Colliery throughout the lower seam is the best in quality the other seams are poor in quality.

The colliers are paid for getting the Coal various prices. In the Teg Pit I received 6s/8d per ton for getting the lower seam bed but do not remember what was paid me in the No 11 but it was a less sum. For getting the middle seam in the Bye Pit I received 5/- + 5/2 per ton. The same prices would be paid now since the opening of the Minsterly Railway we get Foreign Coal in from Ruabon, Chirk + other places but I don't know at what prices.

I also worked the field No 16 at the Gibbet Pit for about 6 months at the middle Coal The Coal was very irregular being wavy often nipped out entirely.

I know the roads in the works in fields No 17 + 18 + had the superintendance of making the three boreholes + one sump upon that road.

In making the No 1 borehole at a depth of 10 yds 2 feet we met with the conglmerate we thought there was no Coal there as we had proved it in the shaft we bored.

The 2nd borehole was 14yds 2 ft when we got to the conglomerate

The 3rd borehole was 15yds 2ft deep when we got to the conglomerate at a depth of 13 1/2 yards in the sump we came to the conglomerate on the top of which the bottom Coal should be but only found a little smut.

At each of these boreholes we found at about 11yds a thin Coal of about 6 inches which was nowhere workable has never been worked, and at the bottom of each a thin Coal of about 4 Inches.

William James Pontesbury Hill aged 65

Have worked for the Snailbeach Co. about 50 years I first worked in the Stable Pit in field No 2 there are 3 seams of Coal there I next worked in the Corner Pit in the same field I next worked in Jacks Pit in No 12 I also worked at the Gibbet Pit in No 16 at the Bye Pit in No 4.

I worked in the lower Coal in the Stable Pit when I ceased working all the Coal was worked out.

I worked the lower Coal on the Corner Pit which was all worked out the same as Jacks Pit.

I worked the lower seam in the Bye Pit up to the fault got the Coal clean out. The top middle Coal having been previously got.

I worked the middle Coal in the Gibbet Pit but cannot say to what extent. A small portion of the Coal was left in the southern corner of No 16 the ground being very irregular and faulty.

I was paid by the ton sometimes 6s 6d at others 7/- + once for a few yards as high as 8/-

There is no Coal left in the use of the Stable Pit, The Corner Pit or Jacks Pit

SRO Longueville Collection, Box 28a

concluded on page 14..

Documents from Shropshire Research Centre

Relating to the Pontesford Coal Field

continued from page 13..

Thomas Turner of Pontesbury aged 62

Worked for the Snailbeach Co. for 45 years I first worked in a Pit near the Smelthouse since filled up next at a Pit near Jacks house next at the Poplar Pit in No 11 next at the Cross Meadow Pit in No 11 next at the Engine Pit and Bye Pit next at the Gibbet Pit in No 10 next at the Pit in No 6.

I worked the lower Coal in the Pit near the Smelthouse the top Coal had been previously got but the middle Coal was here I was not present at the finishing of the Coal there.

I worked in the lower seam in all the Pits I have named but was only present at the clearing out of the Pit in N0 6 + all the Coal was got out of there.

I worked the top Coal in the Gibbet Pit at first but it was not fit for the Smelthouse + afterwards the middle Coal + stripped the middle Coal from the Pit up to the Nags Head Fault,

I also worked the Bottom Coal from the Bye Pit up to the eastern boundary.

I was assisting in making the boreholes and sinking the sump we had down in 4 places to the conglomerate + only found a little smut where the bottom Coal should be.

I have been in the Main heading from the Engine Pit and also in the Cross headings + found no Lower Coal + the Middle Coal was poor + in and out.

SRO Longueville Collection, Box 28a

Mining History Society of Ireland

An inaugural general meeting of this new society will be held in at 1pm in Dublin on 10th February 1996 to formally elect officers and to agree the constitution.

The Society aims to cover all aspects of mining history through-out the whole of Ireland (Eire and Ulster). It has been formed with an initial steering committee who are acting as officers while the constitution is developed.

Various Club Members have been involved in helping with the formation of this Society and group of Members are planning to fly over to Ireland on the Friday before to take part in the meeting.

If you are interested in joining them contact Mike Moore or Adrian Pearce.

Glyn Pits

The Welsh Mines Preservation Trust have been involved in talks with the landowner at Glyn Pits and Cadw with the aim of restoring the Glyn Pits engine houses and machinery. They are looking for a sum in the region of half a million pounds and hope to raise part of the money from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Gwent Land Reclamation Committee have also been approached to see if funds that they had 'pencilled in' for the previous stalled restoration effort might still be available.

Lets hope that their efforts are successful, because Glyn Pits is a mine restoration scheme that is long over due.

WMPT October Newsletter

NAMHO Newsletter

It has been suggested that the NAMHO newsletter should be made available to all members of NAMHO organisations. At present, it is issued to organisations in the hope that they will distribute the information to hteir membership but, with the best will in the world, this does not always happen.

One possibility is to publish the newsletter in folded A3 format which would give A4 sides. It could be issued to organisations in bulk and they could include it with their own newsletter.

The NAMHO Editor would appreciate feedback from individuals as to whether they would welcome this scheme and how it could be organised - please give comments to our NAMHO rep. Colin Armfield.

Thefts

Thefts from cars in the Yorkshire Dales are on the increase again. In an attempt to combat this growing problem the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC) would like to hear from anyone who has had their car broken into while in the Yorkshire Dales.

They intend to collate the information to ascertain the most vulnerable areas and areas where there are regular occurrences.

If you have had a break in or attempted break in, please send details of the Time, Date and Place to:
The CNCC Secretary, Les Sykes
(Tel: 01695-728673)

Earthquake

An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter Scale was recently reported in South West Wyoming. It caused the death of 1 person, injured 11 other and severely damaged the Solway Minerals Mine.

However, subsequent investigations discovered that it was not a natural earthquake, but one caused by the collapse of approximately 2km square of old mine workings!

Mining Journal

Speleo Congress

The 12th International Congress of Speleology will take place in 1997 in La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Swiss Jura (heartland of the watchmaking industry and situated in the karst of the Jura mountains). The first call for participation has recently been sent out, so if you want to submit a paper or interested in attending you need to pre-register.

The congress backbone will consist of a rich programme covering all aspects of speleology and karst study. There will be workshops, public round tables and field trips (including a pass to the underground water mills in Le Locle).

Registration fees will be about 120 SFR. The second call for registration will be sent out in March 1996. Deadline for abstracts of the announced presentations June 30, 1996. The Congress address is: SubLime, P.O.Box 4093, CH-2304 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.

Pre-registration is possible through the internet to:

http://www.unine.ch/UIS97/

E-mail:

congress.uis97@chyn.unine.ch

Snailbeach Minefest

The Club carried out a public relations exercise over the weekend of 4-5th November, following numerous requests from local villagers for a trip into Perkins Level.

During both days, over 250 visitors were taken into the mine. Andy and Kim Yapp agreed to take bookings and the original plan was to take parties of 15 at hourly intervals during the day. In the event, numbers far exceeded expectations and many members were unexpectedly introduced to the pleasures of mine guiding! We ended up taking parties in as soon as sufficient numbers were gathered and, at one point, there were three separate parties in the mine at the same time.

Visitors booked in at the Loco Shed where we had Club publications on display (we made about £75 over the weekend). They were all asked to donate £1 to the Air Ambulance and we made £237 (some slipped by without paying!) which has been forwarded.

Visitors then climbed aboard the *Tomlinsmobile*, which was kitted out with bales of hay, for a free ride up to the entrance. At busy times, this was supplemented by Steve's landrover.

At the entrance they were kitted out with helmets and lamps and treated to tours of Perkins Level. During Saturday, other members helped to build an enormous bonfire for the evening. Wood for the latter mostly came from work the Club has been doing on site to remove trees and vegetation from the immediate surrounds of mine buildings.

A guy was supplied courtesy of John & Lyn (there were some comments that it was dressed better than John!). The fire was lit at 7.30pm and an enjoyable evening followed with fireworks and a barbeque. Most members stayed overnight at the Stiperstones Inn which supplied the usual hospitality (liquid and otherwise).

Thanks to the following members who made it all possible: Colin & Liz Armfield, Eileen Bowen, Ian Bretherton, Nicola Danbury, John Davies, Steve Holding, Mike Moore (+ Sarah his step-niece), Adrian & Julie Pearce, Neal Rushton, Nick Southwick, Rob Southwick, Edwin Thorpe, Stuart Tomlins, John & Lyn Williams, Mike Worsfold, Andy Yapp.

Adrian Pearce

Geology of the Clive Mine Area

The following sources of material on the geology of the Clive Mine area, etc. have been discovered:

Thompson, DB **"A Guide to the History & Geology of Quarrying at Localities along the Natural History Trail in Corbet Wood, Grinshill"**. 1995, Clive & Grinshill Conservation Committee.

Benton, MJ & Spencer, PS **"Fossil Reptiles of Great Britain"** 1995, Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Benton, MJ et al **"A Review of the British Middle Triassic Tetrapod Assemblages"** 1994, part of "In the Shadow of the Dinousaurs" by Fraser, NC & Sues, HD

Braithwaite, RSW **"Mineralogy of the Alderley Edge - Mottram St. Andrew Area, Cheshire"**. 1994, Journal of the Russell Society, 5(2).

Braithwaite says that Mottramite [$PbCuVO_4(OH)$] from Pim Hill (SJ486201) was processed at a plant at Alderley Edge.

Geoff Warrington

Moelydd Mines

In the book **"Through Thick & Thin"**, about the firm of Johnson, Poole & Bloomer, it mentions that Henry Johnson surveyed the Moelydd Lead Mines near Oswestry in 1847.

Are these mines over the border in Wales or are they an alternative name for the Crickheath Hill of Llanymynech Mines? Or are they a completely different set of mines in Shropshire?

Adrian Pearce would be interested if anyone has any information on them.

Prize Puzzle

This years prize puzzle is based on stories in this issue of 'Below'. So, if you have read it, you should be able to answer the questions!!
Sending your winning entries to the Editor (address on the back page). The first correct entry drawn out of the Editorial hard hat on 1st February 1996 will win a roll of Kodak Ektachrome Elite 200, 36 exposure colour slide film.

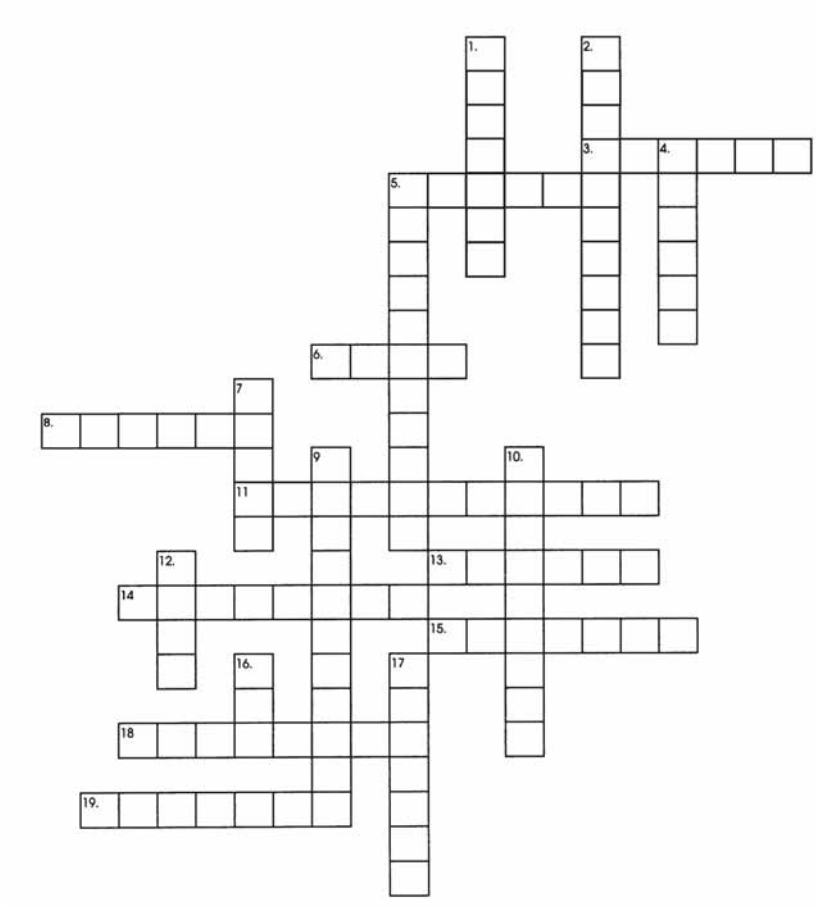
Kelvin

Across:

3) An inaugural meeting will be held here (6).
5) Name of the pit where William James first worked (6).
6) A Swiss Karst area (4).
8) First name of the Mine Captain at Pontesford (6).
11) Site of Alan Taylor's debut performance (6,5).
13) Type of headframe at Kemberton (6).
14) Mike Moores favourite drink (8).
15) Six have recently been unearthed (3,4).
18) A tunnel mad family (8).
19) The Lead Court in Derbyshire (7).

Down:

1) Mining Character of note (7).
2) An entrance at Porth-Yr-Ogof (10).
4) Site of coal gasification tests in Shropshire (6).
5) Pete Eggleston attempted to navigate to this site (11).
7) An old one was found by the line at Wilderley (5).
9) Watson's still here (11).
10) Famous Stiperstones berry (9).
12) Rods at Frongoch (4).
16) A recent Hulgith Explorers first name (3).
17) Collected by the Gentleman in 1 Down (7).



Minsterley Methodists by Brian Tildesley

Following on the discussions of the Methodist Chapels in the Snailbeach area, the following poem from "The Methodist Church - Minsterley Circuit, July to September Plan 1879" by W.J.Howlett, which names all the Methodist Churches on the circuit might be of interest:-

On all this circuit, Lord look down;
Thy people bless.
The labours of these preachers crown
With large success.
O let each place Thy glory see,
And bind each Leader's heart to Thee
My every member quickened be
With heavenly fire.

On Minsterley let showers of grace
Again descend;
Here show the brightness of Thy face
Unto the end.
Give Asterley a glorious rise;
Bid Pontesbury mount toward the skies;
Help Pontesford to win the prize
That shines on high.

Give Perkins Beach a touch divine
With Thine own hand
And Meadow Town a goodly sign:
Their love expand.
Let Worthen catch the purging flame
And Aston join in Thy great name;
Thy full salvation loud proclaim
To all around.

At Wattlesborough let them see
Thy grace still given;
And may they true and steadfast be
Till called to heaven.
At Pennerley let peace abound
And love and joy spread all around
And Hopes Gate pressing on be found
To Canaan's land.

At Knowles display Thy saving power
And seal it Thine.
On Snailbeach send a teeming shower
Of grace divine.
On Vron Gate let Thy glory fall
And Paddock hearken to they call
At Tankerville may Christ be all;
Yea, all in all.

We oft have met in Jesus' name,
But now we part.
Yet still we feel the Spirit's flame
Within the heart.
Jehovah will our strength renew
And with the promised land in view
We still our heavenly way pursue
And meet above.

BOOKS

Mining in Shropshire

Written by Members of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, Edited by Adrian Pearce, published by Shropshire Books, 1995. Price £7.95. (A5, 98 pages.)

Aimed at a general audience, the book sets out to describe the story of mining in Shropshire from prehistoric times to the closing of the last mine. The book is very readable, and allows you to dip into it by 'browsing' the photographs or learn more from the text.

The book deals briefly with each of the main mining areas in Shropshire, these range from the highly productive Coalbrookdale coalfield and South Shropshire metal mines to the small mining areas around Oswestry and Lilleshall. Each section contains a brief field guide to remains in that area, complete with map references.

Overall there is a nice balance between the amount of 'dry' text, photographs and the superb illustrations. I particularly liked the choice of photographs used in the book, providing a good mix of old period pictures, with present-day views, of both underground exploration and surface scenes.

A very enjoyable book, and one that I have found myself constantly referring back to.

Edwin Thorpe

New Publications

Guide to the Coalfields 1995 (formerly a Colliery Guardian now a Coal International publication). Lists all 86 operational coal mines in the UK, large and small also unions, professional bodies and mining educational establishments etc.. This year the guide also includes Coal Mining Museums world-wide (chapter prepared by IJB).

Early attempts at land reclamation in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield by IJB (in Environmental Managers Journal, Aug. 1995).

New Shropshire Mineral Working Book

A Guide to the History and geology of Quarrying at Localities along the Natural History Trail in Corbet Wood, Grinshill by D.B.Thompson, published 1995.

Available from the author at 3 Ladygates, Betley, Nr. Crewe, Cheshire CW3 9AN. price £2.50 + postage 50p.

A4 size, 55 small print pages, 33 photos, maps and drawings. It describes a trail through some 30 quarries, pointing out features of interest as well as describing aspects of the 1,00 year history of working.

It gives details of the fossils found, the method of working and the destinations of the stone produced.

In all a most interesting and useful book.

Ivor Brown

One to Visit

Sygun Copper Mine

Open all year round. The fascination of history and the wonders of modern-day technology combine to create an unforgettable experience at this Prince of Wales award-winning family attraction, set in the heart of the stunning Snowdonia National Park.

Bookings/inquiries to:
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Beddgelert,
Caernarfon,
Gwynedd, LL55 4NE
Telephone: 076686 585
24 Hour infoline: 076686 564

Kelvin

Valley Heritage Centre & Museum

Valley Road, Hednesford, Cannock. Based on the site of the local Mines Rescue Station (closed 1991), the Museum (which opened in 1989) collects and exhibits artefacts dealing with the history of Cannock Chase. Worth a visit if you are passing, but only open Mon-Fri. 11.00-16.00 in the Winter

Mining Videos (available from the Club)

If you are interested in doing a bit of armchair mine exploration the following videos, produced by I.A.Recordings with help from Club members, may be of interest to you.

A Tour of Clive Copper Mine £14.95
A comprehensive guided tour of Clive, with Edwin Thorpe acting the 'experienced' expert and Kelvin Lake the 'novice'. The tour covers both the upper and lower levels, plus the Northern stope (the access to which is now a bit dodgey).

Clive Rescue Practice, £9.95
An action packed 'head banging' record of a Club rescue practice, featuring the 'infamous' maypole winze traverse!

Snailbeach, £14.95
The rise and fall of Snailbeach, once renowned as the "richest per acre of ground in Europe", is traced in this production through the use of historic photographs, animated plans and sections, and unique underground video footage.

Collections from the Archives
The following tapes contain almost all the footage recorded at the given mine, and are intended as a resource base, not a finished production:

C.15:Dudley Tunnel '88 to '89, £14.10
C.18:Donisthorpe Colliery, £11.75
C.20a:Snailbeach - Final Frontier, £9.87
C.23: Bagworth Colliery, £11.75
C.28: Morse's Level, £9.87
C.29: SCMC in Cornwall, £16.45

For more details contact: I.A.Recordings,PO Box 476, Telford, TF8 7RH
e-mail: info@iarecordings.org

Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

Chairman: Neal Rushton

Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton

Secretary: Adrian Pearce
scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

Membership Services: Mike Moore

Tackle & Rescue Officer: Steve Holding

Training Officer: Alan Robinson

Conservation Officer: Nick Southwick

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

NAMHO Rep: Colin Armfield

CCC/CNCC Rep: Ben Shaw

'Below' Editor: Kelvin Lake
e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk

Diary Dates '95

For organised Club trips please refer to Adrian's Monthly Meets lists.

10 December: Peak Cavern, Derbyshire. Contact Steve Holding.

1996

6 January: Snailbeach Project - 10.30am at the Village Hall. Contact Adrian Pearce.

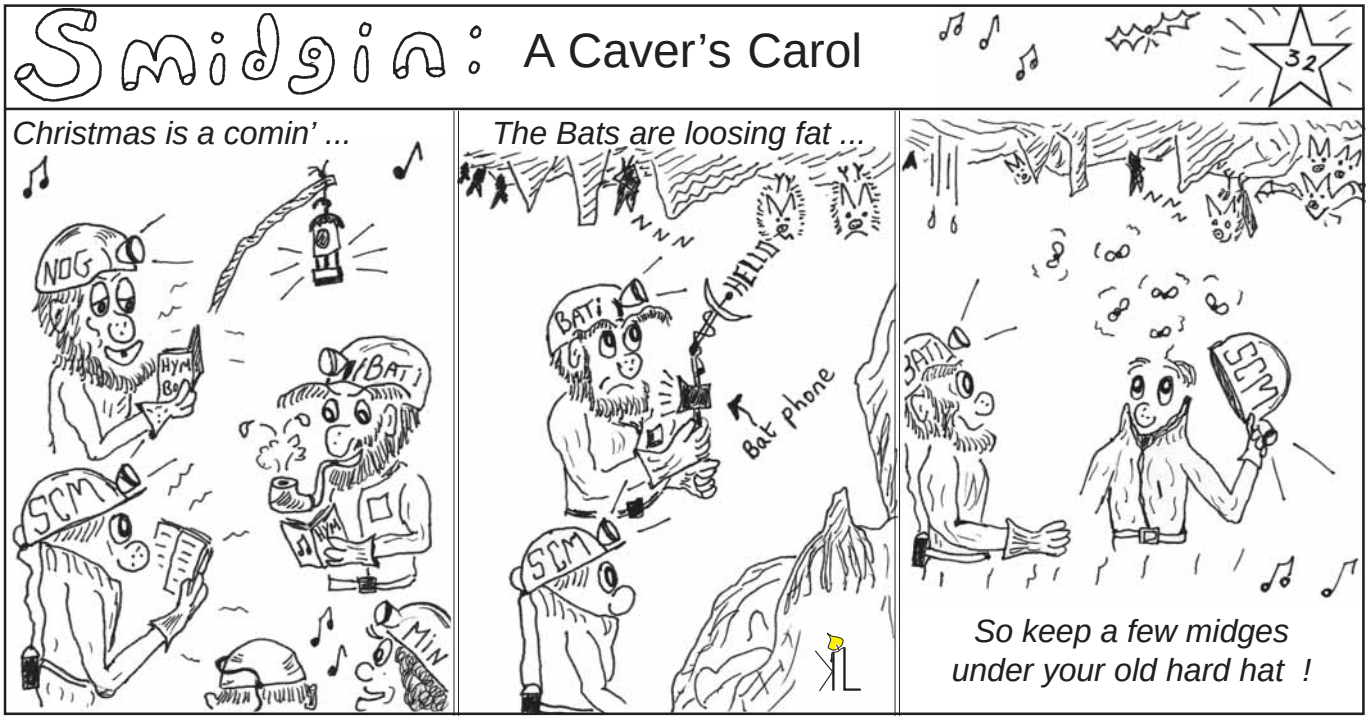
7 January: Shrsophire Project - 10.30am. Place to be announced. Contact Nick Southwick.

January TBA: Haig Pit/Florence Mine and Lakes. Contact Adrian Pearce.

January TBA: Yorkshire caves. Contact Alan Robinson.

10-11 February: Mining History Society of Ireland, inaugural AGM, Dublin. Contact Mike Moore.

13 March: I.J.Brown talk on "Snailbeach and its Disaster 1895", Shirehall, Shrewsbury to the Shrops. Geological Soc. and Shrops. Archaeological Soc. joint meeting.



Catch us on the World Wide Web. Club activities & the labyrinth: http://www.shropshirecmc.org.uk/