

Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Autumn Issue No: 2010.3

NAMHO 2011 The Final Count Down

We are on the rapid count-down to NAMHO 2011 - bookings for which will start soon. The list of trips and surface walks that will be on offer need to be finalised before Christmas, if you have any ideas for trips or walks please let Andy Wood know.

At the moment we are short of people to help with trips or walks - you don't have to be the leader, helpers are always required!

Plus we will need people at Preston Montford to help with booking in, admin etc. You don't have to be there all day, any help you can give, even for just a few hours, will be more than welcome.

Right: The Certificate of Award and the silver "Ian Hislop Challenge Cup" presented to the Trust (sadly they have to give the silver cup back!)

SMT Display Wins Onslow Award

At this year's Shrewsbury Steam Rally at Onslow Park the Shropshire Mines Trust were awarded "The Ian Hislop Challenge Cup" for the "Best Working Steam Exhibit".

The Trust have displayed their low-loader with a compressed air winch, rock crusher (from Snailbeach), Eimco Rocker Shovel 12b, BEV electric loco and rock drill at Onslow for a number of years. Although a mixed demonstration of mining and rock

crushing, the display does allow members of the public to see various items of mining equipment in operation. Despite being in the open air, they also get a feel for the sound of a rock drill!

The display this year was powered by Tom Henderson's 1901 Fowler Traction Engine "Pride of Wye" (hence the steam connection).

Congratulations to everyone involved.



Below: Members of the team at the presentation, left to right: Alun Gwalchmai (driver of "Pride of Wye"), Adrian Pearce, Steve Holding, Andy Harris, Stuart Tomlins, Peter Eggleston, Andy Kennelly, Mike Worsfold, Mike Moore. Missing from the picture are team members Eileen Bowen and Edwin Thorpe. (Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings)





"Below" 2010.3

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News Round-Up 1 Ivor Brown

NAMHO Project

The Steering Group for the NAMHO project on Mining Archaeological Research held a meeting at Stiperstones Methodist Church (formerly Perkins Beach Church) on July 10th 2010. (This new church is very convenient for such meetings - catering and toilet facilities, good car park etc.) Afterwards the Group were given a tour of Snailbeach Mine. They were most impressed.

1939 Film

A report has been found which states that in June 1939 Mr.C.P.Bates showed a film to the north Staffs Branch of the Institute of Mining Surveyors on the "high speed removal of overburden at the roadstone quarry of Coalmoor Basalt Ltd. in Shropshire by a No.4 Ruston Bucyrus Excavator with Muirhill dumpers". Does this early film still survive? It is understood that Mr. Bates became a consultant in the area in the 1950s.

Coal Tub Found

A 13cwt capacity coal tub the size of the ones used at Kemberton Pit, Shropshire in the 1950s, has been found at the National Mining Museum (Caphouse).

At the time a collier had to get sufficient coal to fill 20 of these in a $7\frac{1}{4}$ hour shift at 4 shillings per ton (including setting supports) i.e. 13 tons x 4/-=52 shillings per day.

Below: Ivor Brown beside the 13cwt coal tub. (Ivor Brown)



Paddock & Portley

Paddock and Portley Mines - the (formerly) wooded tips which were mentioned in the last issue of Below, were worked for coal and ironstone (latterly the Upper Pennystone) during the 19th Century by the Coalbrookdale Company. Both appear to have been working in 1881 (Geological Survey), but some seam workings were abandoned in 1886 and the pits were closed completely by 1891. A tramway took the minerals towards Little Dawley from Portley Pit (the shafts by the traffic lights in Finger Road), another tramway connected Paddock to Portley, the remains of a bridge could still be seen up to the 1960s.

The bleak, flat waste tips can be seen on a 1910 postcard (see page 4 "East Shropshire Coalfields", Tempus). Trees were planted on the mounds by unemployed men in the 1930s (paid on the food-voucher system) and the Wellington Journal of July 8th 1954 describes a scheme to reclaim them (with photos). In recent years the woods had been badly treated and the perimeter littered with household rubbish (with rats).

New Museum Guide

The new guide to Blists Hill Museum given to every visitor shows the Miners Walk and it's exhibits including the "drift mine" with the index number 55 in a red circle - this is interpreted from the key as an "original feature of the site".

Some Club members will remember helping to construct this walk, the drift mine and the headframe here in the 1960s after the museum took over the site!

The new incline is still unused - the dispute as to whether it comes under mining or factories legislation has now "been taken to Brussels".

Shropshire Geo. Soc.

The Shropshire Geological Society Newsletter, May 2010, describes a recent visit to Shropshire Quarry, Bayston Hill.

Recent excavations in the quarry have exposed productive coal measures, a "few hundred tons of pyritic coal" have been stockpiled and there were "spectacularly ferny fossils" present.

NCB Boxers

In the early 1950s NCB Madeley Wood Colliery sponsored one of the pit's pony drivers in a Boxing Match on the Carnival Field during Madeley Carnival day.

Bob Langford fancied himself as a real fighter and was put up against one of the boxing organisers semiprofessionals.

The match ended in the first round with Bob in a blooded heap in one corner of the ring.

The NCB provided gown has recently been located in the Isle of Man (see photo, right).

(Mrs. M.Brown)





Diving Dorothea, North Wales - Sunday 6th June 2010 Stuart Tyrer

The objective of this trip was for the Telford Underwater Search Unit to dive the North Quarry of Dorothea to find what is known as "the far 25 meter tunnel" - if it exists. If it does, then to prove or disprove that it connections with the South Dorothea quarry pit.

We entered the water from the North side beach and headed towards the ridge between the two quarries where the pumping engine house is situated.

After a long swim we made it to the rock face a quick equipment check and we were good to go.

We started to descend and the first thing that hit me was how poor the visibility was - down to only a couple of meters (this could have been due to heavy rain the night before) just below us we saw an old hut.



the North Quarry from near the pumping engine house. The North side beach, where divers enter is in the distance, center left. (Kelvin Lake -I.A.Recordings)

Left: View across

Right: North, across South Dorothea quarry to ridge with the pumping engine house on it.

(Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings)

Below: Old hut or caban discovered a few meters under water on the South wall of the North Quarry. (Barry Smith)



Below: Near the blocked end inside the "far 25 meter tunnel", 25m under water on the South wall of the North Quarry. (Barry Smith)



We dropped down from here to the 25 meter depth and started to swim to our right (West) after 20 minutes we came across a wall heading North and we gathered we had missed it!.

So we then headed to our left (East) and found the tunnel. It's smaller than I was expecting only about 5' high and it only goes for about 7 to 8 meters.

At the end it looks like it has been blocked up. We ascended to our decompression stop depth carried out all deco stops and surfaced.





Diving Dorothea, North Wales - Sunday 6th June 2010 continued ...

Once out of the water we walked over to a point on the surface above where the tunnel is and paced it out to South Dotty, its about 100 meters. On a previous dive in South Dotty we had not found any sign of any tunnel on the North edge of the quarry, but we did find a short tunnel.



After talking to Mr. Jones we have now established that the tunnel never connected to South Dotty and that the small tunnels we found were in fact drainage tunnels.

Thanks

Thanks to Barry Smith for the underwater photographs.

Left: Entrance to a short tunnel near the pumping engine house.

(Stuart Tyrer)





Above: View along the short tunnel. (Stuart Tyrer)

Left: Collapsed, unstable end of the short tunnel.

(Stuart Tyrer)

EU To Close Mines

The European Commission has announced that loss-making coal mines across the EU will have to close over the next four years. The new regulation targets hard coal - not lignite (brown coal).

State subsidies for such mines will only be allowed if a closure plan is in place. Production subsidies are to be replaced by social and environmental aid for affected areas. Most subsidies go to mines in Germany's Ruhr region, north-west Spain and Romania's Jiu Valley.

In 2008, total aid to the EU's hard coal sector fell to 2.9bn euros (£2.5bn), from 6.4bn euros in 2003. In the same period, the proportion of aid used for production fell by 62%.

The EU coal industry employs around 100,000 people in Europe: 42,000 in the coal sector itself and more than 55,000 in related industries.

Hard coal production in the EU was 147m tonnes in 2008, or 2.5% of world production. More than half of the coal used by coal-fired power stations in the EU is imported.

More Opencast Mines

The British Geological Survey has recently announced that applications for opencast mining on greenfield sites are likely to increase to meet the UK's demand for energy, as the stock of brownfield sites suitable for opencast mining is now running out.

Mining firm UK Coal says that coal is vital to meet the Country's energy demands, however opponents say opencast mining is dirty and creates eyesores which destroy areas of countryside.

Most of opencast mining in the UK currently takes place on brownfield sites.

Environmental groups say opencast mining ruins the natural habitat, but UK Coal says there are safeguards in place to protect the countryside and mining companies are legally obliged to restore the land when the mine finally closes.

Opencast mines in the UK are expected to produce 10m tonnes of coal this year.

Tower - Opencast

Plans have been submitted for an opencast mine at the site of Tower Colliery, Hirwaun. Tower closed in 2008, but around 6 million tonnes of anthracite remain unworked.

Tyrone O'Sullivan, the man who led the successful workers' buyout of the mine when it was closed by British Coal in 1994, is behind the opencast idea.

It is estimated the operation would last for around seven years after which landscaping and remedial work would take place. Waste from the opencast mining will be used to strengthen iron workings below the old coal levels.

It's planned to extract the coal from a depth of 165m, from the 480-acre (195 hectares) old washery site. The opencast will be 200 acres (80 hectares) in size. Coal would be transported by train to Aberthaw power station in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The site is still owned by the 280 directors, former miners of Tower colliery.



Mines of Skye David Poyner

Following the recent articles about caves on Skye, the island also has a few mine (or mine-related) remains.

In the north of the island, diatomite was extracted; a tramway runs from the extraction site by Loch Culthir to the remains of a processing plant on the coast at Lealt. I have not inspected this myself, although the course of the tramway is said to be a pleasant walk.

In the south of the island, marble quarries are still active around Torrin; just before the First World War one of the quarries was linked to the coast at Broadford by a railway.

Again, this has been converted to a footpath; the quarry site itself has numerous remains of the quarries themselves, inclines, bases of machinery and also a polishing factory. It is well worth a visit.

However, the most spectacular mining remains are on the adjacent island of Raasay. Here ironstone was mined during the First World War, largely by German PoWs. There were two mines, both connected to the coast at Suisnish by rope-worked tramways.

At Suishnish the ore was crushed and calcined before being sent along a pier to be taken away by ship. The pier, the bases of the calcining kilns, the crusher and the storage bin all survive, together with some ancillary buildings.

The tramway can be followed to the No 1 mine; it runs in a straight line for around 2 miles. About ³/₄ of the way along was a branch for the No 2 mine; the piers for a girder viaduct survive, which carried this branch across the Inverarish Burn.

At the terminus of the main tramway are buildings from No 1 mine; what seems to be a power house and also the engine house to drive the ropeway. A short distance to the north-east is the gated adit of the mine itself. The fan-house, higher up

the hill also survives and there is also a second entrance to the mine the other side of the hill.

A useful book on the history of the mine is available; "The Raasay Iron Mine" by Laurence and Pamela Draper (ISBN 978-0-9514870-0-6) available from the authors

(Cnocmisan, Culbokie, Dingwall, Ross-shire, IV7 8JH) or on Skye or Raasay; well worth getting if only for the photographs.

If anyone is visiting, I'd also recommend the Isle of Raasay Hotel for post-exploration refreshments!



Above: Power and engine house, Rassay No1 mine. **Below:** Interior of engine house (right), Rassay No1 mine.

(David Poyner)
(David Poyner)



Right: Marble Quarry, Skye.

(David Poyner)





Some Notes on the Mines of the Lilleshall Company, No.5 Pits in the Donnington Field (Colliery), Ivor Brown

So far this series has included notes on 12 pits, but a glance at the map in Below 2010.1 (page 14), shows many tipped areas without a name attached. There must therefore have been many more pits, indeed a notebook in the Lilleshall Co. records lists 74 sinkings between 1818 and 1835 in Donnington and Wrockwardine Wood alone.

In later years "Donnington Colliery" area seems to have included all Company pits North of the old Watling Street (more recently called the A5). These included those shafts taken over from older pits in the Wrockwardine Wood, Wombridge and Hadley Fields. In 1870 the company had 30 "pairs of pits" in the Donnington and Hadley Fields and this was before they became completely responsible for the Wrockwardine Wood and Wombridge Fields. The latter also contained an extensive drainage system, including the navigable levels of the late 1700s and the Day level system of the early 1800s, both of which had many shafts, engines and other features. Many of these remained Company responsibility until Nationalisation in 1947.

There were also a number of central pumping engines, some at the pits

which have already been described, but each assisted with the drainage of other pits. Three of the engines at pits where mineral production had long since ceased are listed below, but there were also pumping engines at sites where the locations are now unknown, including Freemans, Rookery and Donnington Wood. Some of the pumping engines were operated in association with other companies, each contributing a share to their maintenance and running costs.

In 1870, the Company stated that it had 15 pumping engines raising 200,00 tons of water per month from depths ranging from 50 yards to 200 yards and these included Granville, Grange, Waxhill and Muxton Bridge, which have already been mentioned. It also included the three below: Stevens, New Hadley and Wombridge.

13 Steven's Engine (also known as Stephen's) SJ 710 126

This was described as a "new pit" before the 1830s and, according to an old diary, was "stopped for good" on February 6th 1928. It was scrapped shortly afterwards. It pumped from 570ft. and in 1870 had a beam engine with 52 inch diameter cylinder.

14 New Hadley SJ 682 116 (probably)

It could be one of the direct acting vertical engines shown on the Hadley Colliery Section of 1812. Wheeler's Diary says the pit and pump was "stopped for good" on April 11th 1879. Local tradition says that it was similar to Pudley Hill Pumping Engine, certainly both had vertical cylinders, but New Hadley was direct acting while Pudley Hill had a beam. (Pudley Hill will be dealt with under the forthcoming "Priors Lee Colliery" notes.)

Figure 2: New Hadley Pumping Engine (believed to be pit No.17) from a "Parallel Section of Hadley Colliery" by Charles W.Pearce, 1812.

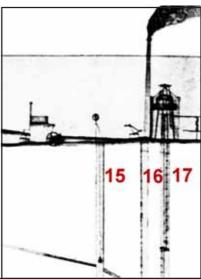


Figure 1

Steven's Engine Pit, Donnington Wood (c1920).

Situated beside the Donnington Wood canal (note the tub boat on the right). The pit ceased working coal about 1880, but continued pumping until 1928.

(IGMT Collection)





Some Notes on the Mines of the Lilleshall Company, No.5 Pits in the Donnington Field (Colliery), continued ...

15 Wombridge Pumping Engine SJ 692 121

Operated in association with others, it was installed in 1858, possibly on a much older shaft, and ceased pumping in 1886.

The house formed a landmark as it was in a very prominent position and it survived until December 1964.

On the 27th December it was blasted down for a developer - but with Club involvement! (82lb of gelignite was used and the fuse lit at 4pm, 2 minutes 2 seconds later the building was a pile of rubble).

The engine had been of Cornish

type, 60 inch diameter cylinder, 10ft. stroke, and could raise 3388 gallons per minute with 3 strokes, but it was capable of doing 11 strokes per minute. It could produce 250 hp and lift water from a shaft nearly 600 ft. deep. There had been a much earlier atmospheric pumping engine at Wombridge dating from c1730 (see Prestwich, "On the Geology of Coalbrookdale", 1842).

Other Pits

As stated previously, there were many more pits in the Donnington Colliery area, certainly exceeding one hundred. The locations and names of those listed in table 1 are known, but little further information has yet been found. (see B.G.S. publications)

Table 1

Ball Siding Pit	Pell Neck Pit
Chimney	Drayton
Lathams	Browns
Sour Leasow	Weir
Langley	Hortons
Humphersons	Pascalls
Tub Engine	Bower
Griffiths	Rookery
Blue Flat	Nobby
Jervis	Sale
White	Woodfield

References

Wheeler's Diary (in private possession) Brown, I.J. "East Shropshire Coalfield", Tempus 1999 page 77: Stevens Engine, p84 Wombridge Engine, p11 Hadley Engine British Geological Survey, "Telford

Memoir" 1995 and maps.

Brown, I.J. "The Hadley Mining

Field", Telford Historical & Archaeological Society Journal No.4, 2000

Below: Front view of the Wombridge Pumping Engine house, showing the bob wall, just before demolition on 27th December 1964.

The 'chunk' missing from the righthand corner was a result of a test explosion carried out by John Mason. (D.R.Adams Collection)



Above: View (c1920s) up the Trench Incline plane with Wombridge Pumping Engine house dominating the skyline (right). (IGMT Collection)



Left: Rear view of the Wombridge Pumping Engine house in December 1964 during demolition preparations. (Ivor Brown Collection)





A (short) Tale of 2 mines, 2 Caves & Lots of Marble in the Apuan Alps Andy Wood

During a recent break in Tuscany, I had determined to do some underground exploring in the Apuan Alps. Some internet research had highlighted a number of old mines as well as several cave systems.

Unfortunately, all did not go to plan!

However, I did succeed in getting underground once, if rather by chance. We had been exploring some of the sights of the Serchio river valley north of Lucca and headed up into the hills to view an old hermitage but further up the hill arrived at the Grotta del Vento, now a show cave.

Grotta del Vento

The name (Wind Cave) derives from the violent air current, which runs through the cave, due to the presence of two openings, which are situated at different levels. This wind can reach 40km/hr so a massive door is closed during tours.

Although first noted in the 17th century, it was not until 1964 that the extent of the system was realised, there being over 4km of passages with extensive flowstone and spectacular formations. We arrived a little late for the stated tour time but as there were no other visitors we were given the 1 hour trip by a very knowledgeable, bilingual lady born in London.



The route is very well constructed to guide the visitor and protect the formations and the experience is mercifully free of the over the top lighting and special effects sometimes used in such places, despite the fanciful titles for some of the chambers.

For full details and good quality photographs see the web site:

www.grottadelvento.com/grotta/ indexen.htm



Above: Interesting stalagmites in the Grotta del Vento, hanging into gour pools. (Andy Wood)



Above: Formations in the Grotta del Vento. (Andy Wood)

Left: A bear skeleton in the Grotta del Vento. (Andy Wood)

Buca della Vena Mine

My main aim was to visit the Buca della Vena Mine, which was exploited for barite and iron oxides as recently as 1987. The mine is situated halfway up a mountain and has many artefacts remaining including a train still inside the mine.

It used an aerial ropeway to bring the ore down to the valley road and I was able to find the base of this without difficulty. But, when I followed the path up the hill it soon petered out so I battled upwards through dense undergrowth looking for the mine site.

It was the wrong time of year to do this as all the greenery obscured any view and I totally failed in my mission, getting only badly scratched arms and legs for my trouble and rendering my oversuit, helmet and light a waste of time. There has to be an easier way up but I ran out of time to find it.

Should you be in the area, give it a try, for details see:

www.mindat.org/ sitegallery.php?loc=2165

The following day we had a group outing right up into the mountains. From Pietrasanta, near the Mediterranean coast, the road towards the hills is lined on both sides with marble and stonework businesses. Huge blocks of stone in a wide range of colours are piled high and huge cranes and saws appear on every site.

As the road winds up the valley, vast scars can be seen on almost all the hillsides where high quality stone has been carved out and spoil allowed to tumble down towards the river. It reminded me of Snowdonia except that the spoil was mainly marble white rather than slate grey.

Levigliani

We stopped in a small, elevated village (582m, nearly 2,000 ft up) called Levigliani for lunch (and very



A (short) Tale of 2 mines, 2 Caves & Lots of Marble in the Apuan Alps continued ...

good it was too) but I knew there was an old (since 1153) cinnabar mine there known for occasional deposits of native mercury. It also turns out that a new mercury-bismuth sulfosalt mineral species, rejoicing in the name of Grumiplucite, was discovered there.

We found the site but, to my
surprise, it had been
turned into a show mine
in 2009 (Mina dell
Argento Vivo) and
was only open on
Sundays at this time of
year.

You can see a video of it at:

www.youtube.com/

watch?v=kNZuC1d7lGs

The village's main claim to fame is the nearby presence of the Monte Corchia cave system, the largest in Italy with 70km of passageways, a 1200m height range and a 2km tourist route opened in 2002. Our timing was again awry, as the ticket office only opened in the morning, so no visit was possible.

However, it is clearly a major attraction for Italy's cavers as one large hotel window was plastered with speleological club stickers from across the country. (see

www.antrodelcorchia.net/ underground/discovery.html

for a slide show of some of the incredible formations and a series of shots of an active marble quarry)

The mountain roads were typically narrow and steep with many tight hairpins; on the uphill approach to the road tunnel through the highest peak, our feeble hire car was hounded by the local bus in the manner of the truck in the film 'Duel'. Once in the tunnel with a clear view ahead, it blasted past us complaining loudly about our slow rate of progress.

Note: The mining 'character' above is used to promote the various underground attractions (caves and mines) around Levigliani.



Above: Blocks of cut marble stacked near the roadside.

(Andy Wood)

Below: Possible base station for the aerial ropeway from Buca della Vena mine. (Andy Wood)



Below: Entrance to Miniere dell'Argento Vivo (Mines of "Argento Vivo" - Quicksilver). (Andy Wood)





News Round-Up 2

New Life for Wrexham Miners' Institute

The Muslim Association of Wrexham has bought the town's former Miners' Institute and plans to turn it into a mosque and a centre for educational and cultural studies.

The institute was set up as a club for Wrexham miners but closed in 2008 after a drop in membership.

The deal to purchase the Institute brings to an end a 20-year search for a permanent base for the Muslim association, which used to hold prayer meetings in portable buildings at the former North East Wales Institute.

News Reports 1st September 2010

Rabid Vampire Bats

Peru's health ministry has sent emergency teams to a remote Amazon region to battle an outbreak of rabies spread by vampire bats.

Four children in the Awajun indigenous tribe died after being bitten by the blood-sucking mammals. Health workers have given rabies vaccine to more than 500 people who have also been attacked.

Some experts have linked mass vampire bat attacks on people in the Amazon to deforestation.

The rabies outbreak is focused on the community of Urakusa in the north-eastern Peruvian Amazon, close to the border with Ecuador. The indigenous community appealed for help after being unable to explain the illness that had killed the children.

Vampire bats usually feed on wildlife or livestock, but are sometimes known to turn to humans for food, particularly in areas where their rainforest habitat has been destroyed.

Some local people have suggested this latest outbreak of attacks may be linked to the unusually low temperatures the Peruvian Amazon in recent years.

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News Reports

Mines Rescue Station Demolished

On Wednesday 18th August, demolition work on the 1913 Wrexham Mines Rescue Station was stopped by Wrexham Council, which said a safety certificate was needed. Heritage body Cadw then listed the building for its "special historic interest" as a mines rescue building, purpose-built to serve the mines of the north Wales coalfields and important for retaining significant original form and layout, in particular the training gallery, after campaigners called for the protection.

However 2 days later on Friday 20th August, Police were called after key parts of the Grade-II listed building were destroyed following the resumption of the demolition work, despite the Listing.

The owner was granted planning

permission three years ago to knock down the building and construct flats. The demolition work has significantly damaged the special interest of this building, particularly the training gallery at the rear of the building.

Wrexham Council are considering legal action as it is a criminal offence to undertake unauthorised works to listed buildings without listed building consent. The maximum fine in such cases is £20,000 and/or six months imprisonment.

Wrexham Mines Rescue Station closed in the 1980s and was handed to the fire service, but it recently passed into the ownership of businessman and former Wrexham FC chairman Mr. Neville Dickens

News Reports August 2010

Mining Museum Gets EU Grant

Purbeck Ball Clay mining museum, dedicated to Dorset's 2,000 year-old ball clay mining industry could open within a year after receiving a £100,000 EU grant.

Volunteers have been dismantling a mine building and re-erecting it beside Norden Swanage Railway station in preparation for the project.

The grant from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development should see the museum open in summer 2011. The Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum Group have been running weekly working parties since 2003 to try and re-create mine workings and a mile-long narrow gauge railway. They have also raised an additional £45,000 towards the project.

The Ball clays mined in Dorset and Devon produce a fine quality ceramic and were used by 18th century potters including Wedgwood and Spode.

BBC New Reports 17th August 2010

Toddler in Mine Shaft

At 9.45am, on Tuesday 31st August, Fire crews were called to Newhall near Swadlincote after a two-year old boy fell into a "mine shaft" in his garden.

An eight-foot (2.4m) deep, six-feet (1.8m) wide, hole had suddenly opened up. The boy's father also got trapped in the hole after he jumped in to rescue his son. Both were unhurt. BBC News Reports 31st August 2010

Venezuelan Collapse

At least seven people were killed in a cave-in at a mine in the east of Venezuela.

A number of miners are also believed to have been trapped by the rockfall at the illegal gold mine in El Callao, in the state of Bolivar.

Safety standards at these unofficial mines deep in the Venezuelan jungle are often minimal, or non-existent.

President Hugo Chavez has tried to crack down on illegal mining. In April, he deployed the army to shut down some of the mining camps in Bolivar state.

BBC News 25th August 2010



What the Papers Said - From the Colliery Guardian submitted by Steve Dewhirst

FROM A CORRESPONDENT AT KETLEY

IRON AND COAL MASTERS' PRIZES.

THE annual examination for the iron and coal masters' prizes took place on Saturday last, when the candidates, with their respective masters and mistresses, attended from the following schools:—Madeley, Madeley Wood, Coalbrookdale, Broseley, Ironbridge, Wellington, Pool Hill, Donnington Wood, Lilleshall, Ketley, and Shifnal. The examination was conducted by her Majesty's Inspector, the Rev. J. P. Norris. The subject chosen as a test of their religious knowledge was the parables of our Lord. The boys were examined in mensuration, arithmetic, mechanics, geography,

history, grammar, &c. The girls were required to make a child's miniature cap; the competitors for the higher prizes had also to cut it out. Two candidates, a boy and a girl, had their papers taken from them and were not allowed to compete, owing to their dishonesty, in making use of written notes during the examination, This is the first instance of the kind which has occurred since the scheme commenced its working. A dinner, to which the children did ample justice, was provided for them in the school room.

20th March 1858

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

Subsidence of the Commercial Difficulties - Fatal Accident at Blast Furnaces - Severn Valley Railway.

A MEETING of a most gratifying character to all persons engaged in the iron making and, coalmining of Shropshire, took place at Shifnal on Tuesday. It was that of the Twenty-second Annual Gathering of the Shropshire Banking Company. Mr. Henry Dickinson, presiding. The Directors' Report was as follows:

Your directors have much pleasure in meeting the proprietors on the present occasion, and in reporting on the progress of the Bank. The net profits for the year amount to £4,091 16s. 1d. To this sum has been added £1,000 13s. 9d., the balance from last year, making a total of £5,092 9s. 10d. ; from which amount has been taken £2,025, being £3 per share upon the 675 shares allotted to the directors in consideration a the relinquishment of their loans, in conformity with the resolution of last year's meeting.

This leaves an available balance of £3,067 0s. 10d., which the directors place at the disposal of the meeting; and recommend the payment of 3s. per share, being 5 per cent on the present capital of the company, and leaves a balance of £817 9s. ltd. From this they propose to take £750 to place to a Reserve Fund, and to carry the balance, £67 9s. ltd., to nest year's Profit and Loss Account.

The present account stands as follows

Net profit for the year ... £4,091 16 1

Balance from last year ... £1,000 13 9

£5,092 9 10

Deduct £2,025, being £3 per share on 675 shares allotted to the directors £2,025 0 0

Balance £3,067 9 10

The accounts of the Bank have been audited by Mr. Banks.

The Chairman, in introducing the report, said he was happy to announce that they had at length reached the turning point of their late difficulties, and although the dividend now recommended was rather smaller than they had hoped to declare, yet he trusted it might be fairly taken as an earnest of their future prosperity. This he could assure them, that the accounts now presented were of a bona fide character, and that the dividend was fairly divisible out of the profits. After some further congratulatory remarks, the Chairman concluded by moving the adoption of the report, which was passed unanimously.

BLAST FURNACE ACCIDENT

On Monday evening, a boy named Pope, while assisting another in tipping some mine at the Light Moat furnaces, Madeley, met with an accident which terminated in his death. It appears that the boy was engaged at the time doing something in front of the carriage, which being tilted unexpectedly, threw the material upon him.

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY

A great impetus to the development of the mineral resources of Shropshire will be given by the Severn Valley Railway. The works are progressing in the neighbourhood of Bridgnorth, and notices arrived on Wednesday to be served on the proprietors of houses in the High Town, under which the tunnel will pass.

24th July 1858



A Union for Shropshire Mine Officials Ivor Brown

The mineworkers union is well known, but it is not so well known that there was also a union for the middle management at mines, the shotfirers, deputies and overmen. This includes their predecessors, the contractors or Chartermasters, the 'fireman' and 'examiners'. All in these categories have always risen from the ranks of workmen and represented some of the most skilled and versatile men.

At small mines a deputy's certificate (which required the passing of a practical and theory test) usually qualified a man to take on the role of colliery manager. This was the case at both the Shortwoods and Rock Mine in Shropshire in the 1960s.

There were several unions for mine officials in the 19th century including the forbidding, highly protective "Shropshire Chartermasters Association" of the 1870s and the "Undermanagers and Firemans Federation" mentioned at several inquests following accidents in the later 19th century (e.g. Waxhill Barracks fatality in October 1894). There was also the National

Federation of Engineman's Protective Association to protect the workers around the shaft top during enquiries into the many winding accidents.

During the first half of the 20th Century a colliery would normally have a manager, undermanager, and 3 overmen (one for each shift). This was the case at Madeley Wood in the 1950s and there would then be a deputy for about every 50 men underground and a similar number of assistants or shotfirers. At Madeley for 500 men below there was about 10 deputies and 10 shotfirers. Often these men were called "colliery officials".

The 1927 Colliery Directory lists the Mining Officials Associations (MOA) alongside the normal trade unions of the industry. There was a North Wales and Shropshire MOA in the list but there does not appear to be any national organisation.

By 1937 the North Wales and Shropshire MOA had become part of the "Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales (including Shropshire) Deputies and Shotfirers Association". A surviving agreement between the association and the Madeley Wood Company uses this title (see figure 1, below).

By 1948 most of the local Miner's Associations had joined together to form the all-embracing National Union of Mineworkers. This included the powerful enginemans associations and the Colliery Office

Figure 1: Page one of the November 1939 agreement.

Agreement, between the Madelley Wood Co., LTD., and the Lancassing, Chestrian and North Wales (Including Suropsulus) Colliner Deruties' and Shorthers, Association.

- The wages of Firemen shall be 18/2 per day (plus the present flat rate allowance of 1/2 per day—plus the national advance of 8d. per day), and the wages of Shotfirers 11/4 per day (plus the present flat rate allowance of 1/2 per day—plus the national advance of 8d. per day), and shall not be subject to percentage variation under the system of Ascertainments, but shall be subject to negotiation between the parties hereto.
- 2. No overtime rates whatever shall be
- 3. Firemen and Shotfirers shall be afforded an opportunity of working six days per week. When not required to carry out their statutory duties, they shall perform such work, (other than getting coal for purposes of sale), as may be required of them by the Management.
- Premen and Sciothrer shad see entitied to six consecutive days holiday with pay each year. A Fireman shall be required to work on Bank Holidays only for carrying out necessary statutory duties, or in case of

Figure 2, below: Officials of the Madeley Wood Co. c1941. The picture includes the Manager, 2 undermanagers, 3 overmen and senior deputy, electrician, engineers and clerk, together with company officials: agent, Managing Director and secretary. (Ivor Brown) [For identification of individuals, see "East Shropshire Coalfield", p53.]





A Union for Shropshire Mine Officials continued ...

Staff Associations (COSA, of which the writer's father was the Madeley Secretary). It was fully expected that the colliery officials associations would join them but at a Conference that year these decided to form their own Association separate from the mineworkers.

The new association was to be called the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers (NACODs). Shropshire appears to have become it's own 'Area'. A report of 1945 stated that the Shropshire pits (excluding Ifton and pits with less than 50 men) employed 83 overmen, deputies and shotfirers.

By the above breakaway the mine officials had abandoned their 'firemans' and miners image and become a full part of 'management' at a colliery - this has been well demonstrated by the actions that they have taken in modern miners strikes.

When the writer became a mine official at Madeley Wood in 1959 he terminated his 7 years period in the NUM and became a member of

NACODs (Shropshire Area). The earlier 1937 agreement between mine owners and officials was by this time being replaced and he was eventually given a copy of the new agreement between the NCB West

Figure 3: Front cover of the "Negotiations and Conciliations Scheme for Deputies, West Midlands Division of the National Coal Board" September 1961

Coal Board", September 1961.

COAL HINING INDUSTRY OF BREAT BRITAIN

Negotiation and Conciliation
Scheme For Deputies

WEST HIPLANDS DIVISION
OF THE NATIONAL GOAL ROARD

Escaldiabled by an Agreement dated
The Wast Middanic Division of the National Coal Board and the National Coal Board and the N.

The National Association of Collins

SEPTEMBER, 1941

Midlands Division and its various mine officials union "areas" (North Staffs, Warwickshire, Cannock Chase, South Staffs and Shropshire (see figure 3).

In 1955 the management of Madeley Wood, with about 500 below ground, consisted of manager, undermanager, 3 overmen, 10 deputies and 10 shotfirers.

Fifteen years later Granville Colliery, with 600 men underground, had an Agentmanager, deputy manager, two assistant managers and two undermanagers and a full complement of overmen and deputies. Granville Pit's coal production in 1970 with full mechanisation was very little more per man-shift worked than Madeley Wood's partially mechanised operation in 1955! Granville seems to have been very much over staffed.

Figure 4, below: The Madeley Wood Colliery official's staff party, c1950. (Ivor Brown)

[Some of the faces at the front can be seen in the picture on p12 - but 10 years younger!]





David Adams (The Founder) – Church Aston Walk, 14th June 2010 Mike Moore

I was free on the evening of the 14th and decided to give 'The Founder' (sorry been watching too much Deep Space Nine!). a hand and acted as tail end Charlie, with Margaret left holding the cash till and demanding payment for service to be rendered by the Founder.

Due to a copy of Malcolm Newton's drawing of the suggested layout of the site complete with engine house, chimney and head gear being copied into the local freebie magazine advertising the walk some 84 people turned up. The Founder had optimistically produced 50 copies of the walk plan and associated notes from his book and was therefore overwhelmed on the evening.

Fortunately the Last Inn had been closed for several months, but it had just reopened with a new owner and renamed 'The Aston'. The car park was just about able to cope with all the vehicles but only due to myself acting as a car park attendant and telling people to move. It just shows how common sense goes out of the window when members of the public pay over their fee and then expect to be told exactly what to do. At least no one turned up with lamps and helmets as usually happens as optimism overtakes reality!

The Founder spoke to the people immediately in front of him and beckoned for them to follow him through the kissing gate into the field

as the rest stood around bemused. Crowd controller Moore again swung into action and persuaded the masses to follow the leader.

Have you ever timed 87 people going through a kissing gate? Well its takes a third of the time as it did to get the same numbers through two kissing gates with the A518 Newport Bypass sandwiched in the middle.

Since the club's first adventures to this site it has been intersected by the Bypass. Trees have been planted where once cattle and sheep grazed, and as a result there is now a dense jungle and all played follow my leader as you could hear his dulcet tones droning just like one of those Vuvuzela's somewhere in the distance.

The Founder then took the crowd into the woods and around the tops of the Limekilns to the top of Twin Dog Shaft and proceeded to explain to those in front of him some of the site complexities meanwhile the other 40 or so were still crossing the road. I pointed out the relevant bits whilst the crowd wandered past me into the woods where they had great fun falling down the now very slippy bank at the side of the shafts. At this point I offered the forgotten few an alternative viewpoint in order to hear the Founders words. As the Founders group moved on I took my group via the alternative route and managed to reach the site of the

Engine House dig in front of the Founder thus saving further sprained ankles and strained backs (apart from my own that is).

The Founder then proceeded to hold court around the Engine House dig, my group who were by now in front and had the advantage of hearing his words whilst the rest continued to arrive for the next 10 minutes. The founder seemed oblivious to the fact that many of his followers were unable to hear his full speech; I concluded that this was a ploy to ensure they turn up next year to hear the missing bits. In spite of my constant reminders the Founder continued to drone on oblivious to the fact half his audience were not present.

We then reversed the stroll through the woods and ended up by the canal basin, again The Founder plunged in to his next lines as the crowd again found difficulty traversing the kissing gate and keeping to the Schedule.

As the final members of the group arrived, the Founder moved on and took the group into the centre of Pitchcroft Lane in order to cross into the field to follow the line of the Old Canal. Margaret and I were left to stand sentry against boy racers whilst the remaining 85 leapfrogged over the stile into the field this again taking forever.

The founder with open fields now found it much easier to stand and talk to the now converted who were hanging onto his every word.

We continued to cross the boundary brook past the quarries and into Barrack Lane with the Founder stopping twice more, only 6 people had dropped out by this time and the remainder had worked out how to get through gates and stiles and still be able to hear and understand the Founders Vuvuzela!

At last we reached Sylvan Close which is on the corner of Barrack

Below: David Adams (The Founder) bidding the crowd a fond farewell at the the end of the walk in Sylvan Close. (Mike Moore)



David Adams (The Founder) – Church Aston Walk, 14th June 2010 continued ...

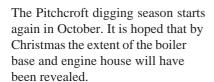
Lane where sadly the final barracks has been lost to new builds. The evening concluded at about 21:45 and the crowd yomped back to the Aston Car Park where the Founder continued with the retail therapy selling signed copies of his club volume on the mines.

Joking apart David has spent a lifetime researching, drawing, writing and talking about these long forgotten mines and does a great deal of PR for the SCMC long may he continue but smaller crowds next time!!

Right, top: The crowd gathers round David in the field, while he talks about mines - he's in there somewhere!

Right: David Adams standing on the excavated engine house with the walkers gathered around the perimeter.

(Mike Moore)



Further investigation of the floor of the engine house might also be undertaken. The tiles that appear to cross under the wall in the one corner are curious (see below), as is the well or drain inside the building.







The Pitchcroft Dig



Left: The drain or hole in the floor of the main engine house chamber. Could it be just a soakaway or a condenser pit or well?

(Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings)

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Left: The tiles that go under the engine house wall.

Below: Some of the small lengths of chain discovered during the June dig, earlier this year.





The Chilean Mine Rescue

The big mining story in the news at the moment is the continuing rescue attempt of the 33 miners in Chile.

The miners were trapped, on 5th August, when part of the San Jose Copper and Gold mine, in Chile's Atacama desert collapsed.

Further rockfalls blocked early rescue attempts, however contact was eventually made with the men on 22nd August when a rescue team's borehole broke through into the area where the men where.

After the roof fall the men had taken shelter in an underground refuge about 600m below the surface (the mine extends about 700m below the surface). Food, medical supplies, clothing etc.. are being sent down the borehole.

Access to the mine is via a long decline, with a number of escape shafts (winzes) between parts of the decline. Unfortunately at least 2 roof falls have occurred (at approximately 350m and 450m below the surface) blocking both the main decline and the escape route.

The current rescue plan involves drilling 3 rescue shafts, two of which are well underway, and one has just started, using different types of machinery.



Plan A - Rescue Shaft 1

Using a 40-ton Strata 950 Raisebore machine which will cut down to the level the miners are on (about 702m deep). The drilling of a 33cm pilot hole for this rescue shaft had reached a depth of 320m by the 17th September. The sides of the shaft are being lined as drilling progresses.

Plan B - Rescue Shaft 2

Started on the 5th September, using a faster raise bore-type drill, a Schramm T-130 to cut down 678m.

This was delayed when the drill bit shattered and pieces had to be fished out by large magnets. However, the 33cm pilot hole reached a workshop close to the miner's refuge on 17th September.

The shaft will now be reamed out to a diameter of approximately 70cm (28 inches) to allow the miners to be pulled out. During the reaming-out operation the trapped miners will have to clear debris from the bottom of the holes - it's estimated 12 to 15 tonnes of rock will need to be cleared each day.

Plan C - Rescue Shaft 3.

Started on the 20th September using machinery usually used in oil drilling, will drill at an angle of 85 degrees to a level 567m below the surface.

Left: The Dahlbusch bomb preserved in the Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, Bochum. (Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings, 2002)

Right: A slightly different design, but with similar dimensions, the Dahlbusch bomb preserved at Grube Samson Museum. (Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings, 2003)

The Rescue Capsule

The rescue capsule that will be used to bring the men out is effectively a "Dahlbusch Bomb". Named after it's first successful use in 1955, when it rescued 3 miners after an underground fire at the Dahlbusch Colliery, Gelsenkirchen-Rotthausen, Germany. It was deployed again on 7th November 1963 when it recovered 11 miners trapped in the Lengede-Broistedt ore mine - this rescue inspired several movies and documentaries.

Examples of the capsule (2.5m long and 38.5cm in diameter) can be found in German Mining Museums (e.g. Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, Bochum, and Grube Samson, Sankt Andreasberg, Oberharz).

Further Reading

There are some excellent graphics, diagrams and descriptions of the rescue on the BBC web site. No doubt it will soon be a film starring Tom Cruise, showing how the Americans saved the day - after all, NASA is advising the Rescuers!





News Round-Up 3

Cononish Gold Mine Plans Rejected

Scotgold Resources is hoping to redevelop the Cononish Mine, which was abandoned in 1997, however Planning permission for the underground gold mine near Tyndrum, Scotland has been refused by the Loch Lomond National Park Authority, over concerns about the long term impact on the landscape.

The National Park claimed that the impact would be significant both during the 10-year proposed life of the mine and in the long term.

Scotgold Resources wants to mine gold and silver at the site, but it was their plans to build a large processing building on the surface that effected the decision. The complex would have covered about 39 hectares (2.5 acres) on the surface.

The company, which bought the mine in 2007, first applied for approval from Loch Lomond National Park Authority more than a year ago. Its parent company is Australian and has ploughed millions of Australian dollars into the venture.

Earlier this year, Scotgold Resources floated on the London stock market and raised more than £700,000 towards the mine's development.

BBC News Reports August 2010

New Dudley Tunnel Put On Hold

Plans to re-open another of the old Dudley Canal tunnels has been put on hold as part of the entrance tunnel has been found to be unstable.

It was intended to re-open the canal tunnel from the existing Castle Mill basin to the large underground canal basin under Wren's Nest. This basin gave access to the thick and thin limestone beds (which at this point

are nearly vertical).

Access to the surface was reputed to be via a 240 step cast-iron spiral staircase (hence the name "Step Pit"), installed by Lord Dudley for a British Association for the Advancement of Science banquet. When Dudley Council re-opened this shaft in 1998, remains of parts of the worn cast-iron staircase were found!

New Cave Charter

A new charter for cave protection has been ratified as a reference document by the European Speleological Federation.

The charter sets out 10 principles for minimising the impact of caving, such as using environmentally friendly lighting, leaving nothing but impressions, not damaging the cave environment, etc. The pdf of the charter can be downloaded from: tinyurl.com/36vfmhe

Descent 214, August 2010

Underground Cannabis

A former World War II Fighter Command bunker near Nottingham has been used as a Cannabis farm.

Following a tip-off form a member of the public, Police cut their way through the steel doors of the Fighter Command 12 Group filter room at Watnall where they discovered 2 large rooms of cannabis plants.

Nottinghamshire Police claimed it was their biggest drugs discovery.

The plants, plus lights and equipment used to grow the drugs were destroyed.



Left: Museum guide Andreas Ravens with club member Edwin Thorpe "modelling" an early rescue kibble in the reconstructed 1787 mine shaft building of August Caroliner Schacht (Oberharzer Bergwerksmuseum in Clausthal-Zellerfeld), 2003.

(Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings)



Library, News, and Books

Library Additions

North Wales Caving Club Newsletter, Issue 315, July 2010. The full colour front and back covers really bring the mud to life!

covers really bring the mud to life! Trip reports to OHA, Pool Park and Dan-yr-Ogof. Details of new access agreements to Rhyd Alyn and warnings of suspect fixtures are given.

Norfolk Mineral & Lapidary Society, Stone Chat Vol.31, No.1, Autumn 2010 - Several interesting items including one on Hertfordshire Puddingstone, a type of conglomerate, similar samples to which have been found at Stonehenge.

Subterranea Britannica, Subterranea, Issue 24: September 2010 - some interesting articles on Thames Tunnels, trips to bunkers in Sweden, Maastricht and West Germany, plus a short item on long canal tunnels and Scottish oil.

Fossil Cave

Fossil hunters in Australia have discovered a cave in the Riversleigh World Heritage fossil field, northwest Queensland, filled with 15-million-year-old remains of prehistoric marsupials.

The find includes 26 skulls from an extinct, sheep-sized marsupial with giant claws. The giant-clawed, wombat-sized marsupial is named Nimbadon lavarackorum; researchers discovered the first of the Nimbadon skulls in 1993.

Discovering such a large collection (including babies still in their mothers' pouches) suggests the animals may have travelled in herds like modern-day kangaroos.

It is thought that the herd might have accidentally plunged into the cave through an opening obscured by vegetation and either died from the fall, or became trapped and later perished.

Journal of Vertebrate Palaeontology, July 2010

Ratgoed- A Study in Slate, The Quarries, the Tramway and the Social Life of a Merionethshire Valley

By Sara Eade, SB, A4, 132pp full colour photos - cost £15.00 + P&P

This is one of the best books I have seen for a while, it is well researched, contains excellent photography and is everything it says on the tin. This is not just a run of the mill photographic volume, it has a clear logical text throughout.

The photos are mainly in colour with some archive black and white archive pictures. A very well produced book, easy to read, and a bargin at £15.

Mike Moore

Oldest Arrows Found?

The stone points are approximately 64,000 years old Researchers in South Africa have revealed the earliest direct evidence of humanmade arrows.

Scientists have unearthed 64,000 year-old "stone points", which they think were probably arrow heads. Close inspection of the ancient weapons revealed remnants of blood and bone that provided clues about how they were used. They also contained traces of glue - plant-based resin that the scientists think was used to fasten them on to a wooden shaft.

The arrow heads were excavated from layers of ancient sediment in Sibudu Cave in South Africa. During the excavation, the team dug through layers deposited up to 100,000 years ago.

The presence of glue implies that people were able to produce composite tools (where different elements produced from different materials are brought together to make a single artefact), which is an indicator of a cognitively demanding behaviour. The discovery pushes back the development of "bow and arrow technology" by at least 20,000 years.

BBC News Reports August 2010

British Mining Publications - from NMRS

British Mining No.88 - Memoirs 2009, A5, sb, 138pp.

A collection of articles from various authors.

Contents:

The Rothwell Haigh Collieries, Leeds. Mr Pope's pots and the rapid smelting of Lake District copper and lead ores 1579-83.

The Inverness Gold.
Tracing the Traces (gold).
Dyliffe & Dyngwm Mines - revision
of lode geometry.

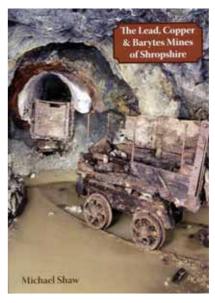
Women's place in lead mining at Grassington, Yorkshire. Onshore oil and gasfields. The 'Iron Man' coal cutter. The East Cumberland Coalfield.

British Mining No.89 - The Metalliferous Mines of Cartmel & South Lonsdale, A5, sb, 104pp, by Max Moseley.

An interesting account of a mining area usually over-looked by mine explorers and historians, who tend to focus on Hodbarrow and the mines of the Furness area.

The Lead, Copper & Barytes Mines of Shropshire

By Michael Shaw, Logaston press.



ISBN: 978-906663-09-4 Softback, 320 pages, over 200 b&w photographs, drawings and plans. Price£12.95.



Books and Videos

Field Guide to Stiperstones Wines Edited by Adrian Pearce Shropshire Mines Trust 2010

Field Guide to Stiperstones Mines, Shropshire

Edited by Adrian Pearce, A5, 60pp Price: £6.00 inc P&P

Published on behalf of the Shropshire Mines Trust, This pocketsized (A5) book provides an introductory field guide to the mines of the Stiperstones area.

Snailbeach is world famous however other mines in the area are also worthy of a visit. This guide describes 12 of the 'main' mines in the area, giving the NGR of each, along with advice on any access restrictions the visitor may face.

There is also a potted history of each site, with photographs and notes about the surviving remains. There are a number of mistakes which should have been corrected before going to print, such as technical descriptions ending in mid-sentence.

The book is designed for a nontechnical visitor to the area to be able to spend a day driving around to see each site and in that respect it will achieve it's aim.

Price: £6.00 inc P&P

Available from the Miners Dry Visitor Centre, Snailbeach or Mike Moore at Club meetings, or online at www.moorebooks.co.uk

The Mines of the Peak District - An underground Field Guide Volume 1

By Byron Machin, A5, sb, 36 pp, colour, illustrated with photographs.

Byron has set out to provide a detailed underground guide to the mines of the peak district. Each mine and level has an exact grid reference and details of pitch lengths and adit

length In this volume he includes -Mines of the Manifold Valley - Ecton Hill - The Bincliffe Mine Mines - The Dove valley - The Churnet Valley -The Mines of Axe Edge.

Price: £4.00 + P&P

Mike Moore

Glengowla

A TOUR OF IRELAND'S FIRST SHOW MINE

Glengowla lead mine near Oughterard, County Galway in Ireland started in 1851 and mining was suspended in 1865. During that short 14 year period, 545 square metres was stoped to produce 390 tonnes of lead containing 28 kilograms of silver.

Today the mine is rich in what was left behind by the miners.

Underground, many artefacts can be seen, including ladders, pump rods and pipes, pulleys, windlasses, guide chutes and timbers.

There is also a scintillating variety of minerals: Marble, dolomite, quartz, calcite, barite, sphalerite, chalcopyrite and very rare blue/green octahedral fluorite. Vugs large and small are lined with gleaming crystals.

On the surface, the powder magazine, blacksmith's workshop and the agent's cottage have been restored and the stables is a museum featuring mining history, minerals from this mine and all over the world and items rescued from the mine.

A hand windlass and a horse-gin have been constructed over the shafts where they had originally been used.

The mine is owned by the Geoghegan family who have done an astonishing amount of work to stabilise the surface, pumpout the mine, build steps to give access to the upper workings, and repair the buildings.

This DVD shows highlights of the underground tour, then goes even deeper to show what might be seen in the future!

Extra chapters feature Dr. Matthew Parkes telling us what is special about Glengowla Mine, Dr. Martin Feely describing the fascinating geology of the area, and a tour of the mine museum with Paddy Geoghegan.

£12.95 DVD (**£10 to Club Members at meetings**)



for details of availability visit: www.iarecordings.org



Club Officers

Diary Dates

President: David Adams

Membership, Insurance &

BCA Rep: Mike Davies

History'. Jubilee Conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Northern Mine

1st - 3rd Oct.: '50 Years of Mining

Research Society at Reeth Memorial Hall, Swaledale. More details on:

nmrs.org.uk

Chair: Neal Rushton

Tackle: Andy Harris

9th - 10th Oct.: Welsh Mines

Vice-Chair: Tony Wilson

First Aid Officer:

Society Occasional Conference "Towards a better Understanding -

New Research on Welsh Mines". At Plas Dolguog Hotel, Machynlleth.

Secretary: Andrew Wood

Librarian: Alan Robinson

www.welshmines.org

23rd - 25th Oct.: 26th SUICRO Symposium, Ramada Hotel, Drumshanbo Co. Leitrim.

scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

16th - 20th Nov.: 'Speleology &

Spelestology', International conference, Naberezhnye Chelny (550 miles east of Moscow), followed by 2 days of excursions and trips. Details on tinyurl.com/ybn82m3

Treasurer: Marian Boston

Rescue Officer:

Neal Rushton

Alan Moseley

2011

Training Officer: Ian Davies

Conservation & NAMHO **Rep: Steve Holding**

'Below' Editor, Publications: Kelvin Lake

4th - 5th April: Conference on Geological Collectors & Collecting, organised by the History of Geology Group, affiliated with the Geological Society. At the Flett Theatre, Natural History Museum, London. For more information contact: Nina Morgan

e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk

ninamorgan@lineone.net

