

NAMHO 2011 The Final Count Down

As we approach the end of 2010, the rapid count-down to NAMHO 2011 begins. It is planned to have the details for bookings, trips, walks and talks up and ready on the web site for the 1st January. If you have any ideas for trips or walks please let Andy Wood know ASAP !

We will also need 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. We do seem to have a lot of volunteers for guarding the beer tent!

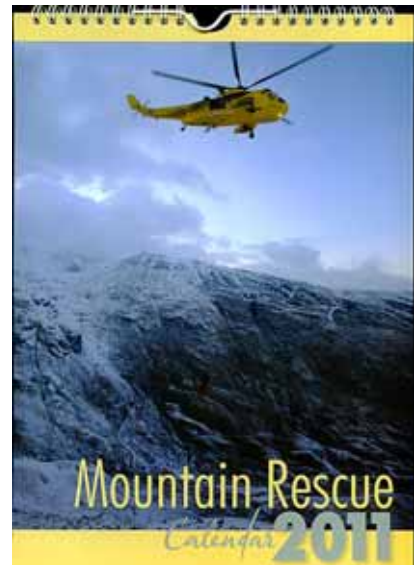
MR Calendar

Thanks again to the generosity of GoodYear, member teams of Mountain Rescue England & Wales have been given copies of the Mountain Rescue Calendar 2011 to sell to raise funds for rescue.

The Club through it's connection with MCRO & BCRC, has received a number of calendars to sell at £5 each, we need to sell them all before Christmas Ho-Ho-Ho!

Anstice Hall

The Anstice Hall Madeley is now no longer enclosed by awful 1960s buildings. Following the demolition of most of the early New Town buildings and the creation of a new 'High Street' it is now much more open - a great improvement! (picture to follow in the next issue - when the snow clears!)



Digs Re-start(ish)

A couple of Club digs were due to re-start over the winter - Pitchcroft and Yew Tree. While two visits have been made to Pitchcroft and even more intriguing brick work

uncovered! The 19th December dig has been postponed to January.

It was intended to start digging at Yew Tree on November 28th, but the icy conditions were too much - there seemed to be some reluctance to wading up the level in outside temperatures of -5°. An investigation of the level has revealed a collapse in the entrance trench. So a bit of digging before we start next time.



News Round-Up 1

Ivor Brown

100th Anniversary

December 4th 2010 is the 100th Anniversary of the Kemberton Pit Disaster (7 men died when the Sunday evening cage crashed down the shaft).

This was the last multi-death disaster (over 3 killed) to occur in the County. A number of events are being held to mark this.

The "Wrekin" Ruby

Officially known as the "Gem of Tanzania" this ruby which was used to prop up the balance sheet of the Wrekin Construction Company, when it was valued at £71 million, has recently been bought at Auction by Tim Watts, Chairman of the Network Group for £8,000.

Daily Telegraph, 29th Sept. 2010

Celtic Miner

In August the writer visited the new workings at the Caphouse Colliery to extend the visitor tour, a Celtic Miner machine is being used - but it is slow going. About 10 yards had been done (and some coal produced). More details next issue.

For information on the machine search for "Celtic Miner" on the internet via Google.

Horsegin Pumps

Queries have been raised recently about horsegin pump chambers in mines. An engraving has been found in the "Colliery Managers Diary" for 1872. The advertisement also lists nearly 40 collieries to which they had been supplied.

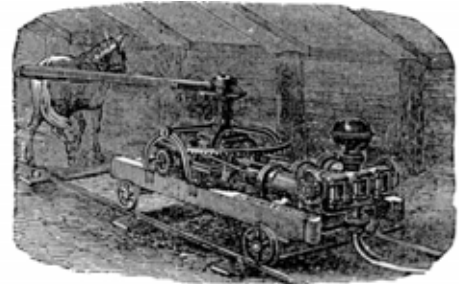
Listing Baths

The proposed "listing" of the Kemberton Pit Head Baths has not been successful. The Conservation Officer from Telford & Wrekin Council has replied to the proposal, and she says that "the building has been significantly altered" and "that there is nothing of any quality" remaining.

It was not like this when the proposal was first put to them four years ago. The back of the building has since been removed to get large trucks inside.

Randall Conference

A conference on John Randall, the Madeley Geologist who advised on the site of Kemberton Pit and Granville Pit, (so it is said) was held in Madeley in September. Nearly 100 attended (see Below 95.5 for further information on Randall). A book is being produced based on the Conference.



WARNER'S IMPROVED PORTABLE COLLIERY PUMPS, FOR HORSE, PONY, OR STEAM POWER. SMALL SIZES MADE SPECIALLY TO PASS THROUGH NARROW WORKINGS.

Above: Advertisement for Warner's horse powered colliery pumps, from Colliery Managers Diary, 1872.

Huntington Lane

UK Coal announced in September 2010 that they were about to start work on the Huntington Lane Opencast Coal Site in Telford, despite protesters occupying land intended to be the haul road linking two parts of the site. It also stated that this site "the last significant remaining coal reserve" in the area would produce 900,000 tonnes of coal in a 32 month period and create around 90 jobs.

Only about half the 90 acre site would be excavated and it would be back "to green" in a 41 month period, old mine workings would be made safe and a £500,000 "Community fund" would be made available to be managed by a site liaison committee.



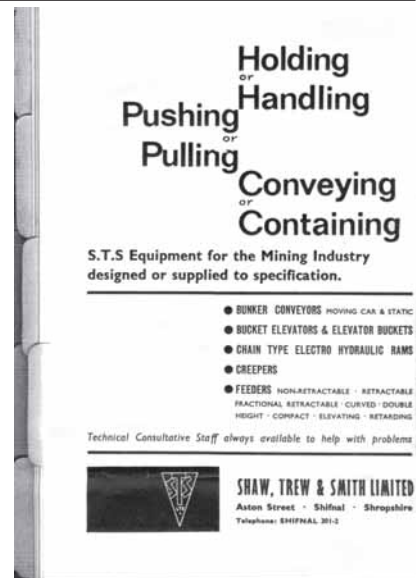
Shropshire made two-deck cage on its side, top with roof manhole in the foreground. (National Mining Museum)

Shropshire Cage

A Shropshire mine cage, from Silverdale Colliery, North Staffs, has been found in the stockyard at the National Mining Museum, Wakefield.

When cleaning it up the plate marked "Shaw, Trew and Smith Ltd. Aston Street, Shifnal, Shropshire" was discovered. It is thought to date from about 1960.

The writer remembers Shaws making 'Spence' and other coal chutes for use with conveyors in a yard next to Madeley Market Station - he is awaiting information from others as to whether this was the beginnings of the same Company. Can anyone help?



Shaw, Trew & Smith Limited Advert. (from the Colliery Guardian, 1964)



Pre- Dinner Walk - Steeraway

2nd October 2010

On Saturday 2nd October as a pre-dinner “warm-up” 4 Club members (Peter Eggleston, Mike Shaw, Steve Dewhirst, and Kelvin Lake) joined trip leader Alun Cureton at the Forest Glen car park (at the foot of the Wrekin) for an interesting walk around the Steeraway area. Contrary to the weather forecast it was a pleasant sunny day as Alun lead us around the geological and mining features of the Ercall Local Nature Reserve.

On the North-west slope of the Ercall an interesting unconformity is exposed in the quarry walls where the beds of conglomerate and Wrekin Quartzite can be seen as inclined layers resting on the eroded pink igneous rock called granophyre. An impressive series of ripple marks can be seen in the Wrekin Quartzite (formed from fine white quartz sand) in the quarry wall.

From the quarry we moved on to the limestone mining area where the remains of 4 lime kilns can be found. Two of the kilns are fairly well



Above: Alun Cureton beside the Wrekin Quartzite ripple formations.

preserved, one has an old mine truck or limestone wagon thrown into it. The tops of all 4 kilns are easily accessible - one being very close to a major footpath!

In the woods behind the kilns several adits survive, at least one of which can be explored.

Following the routes of old tramways we moved on round the hill, visiting a large adit in a cutting - with a dig possibility. As time was ticking away, it was well past 5pm by now, and the Club Dinner was due to start in Shrewsbury at 7.30, we had to increase the pace a little to get back to the car park.

A fascinating area, and it deserves another look - perhaps a good place for another walk in the New Year, but starting about 10am next time!



Above: Alun Cureton outside the entrance to one of the limestone adits.

Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings.



Above: The old truck inside the Steeraway lime kiln.

Below: View into the top of the “No.4” lime kiln.



Above: View into the entrance crawl of the old limestone adit, in the woods near the lime kilns.

Below: Mike Shaw, just inside the large adit - at the end of a deep cutting.



The Lilleshall Company's Pits - the Last Years, 1939-1979

Ivor J.Brown

The general history of mechanisation of the longest surviving Company pits, Granville and Grange, has recently been given in Below. This article looks at the developments that took place between 1939 and 1979, the date of final closure (it is based on a short talk given by the author).

By 1939 the Company had realised that their pits were deteriorating “due largely to mechanical problems and loss of manpower” (according to a Valuation Report by George Price, published 1946). They had received recommendations from Otto Foster Brown, a consultant, that they should open up a new mine to the North-east and then close Woodhouse Pit to provide manpower for it. They were working towards this when the 1939-45 war interrupted it, but technical problems due to age, added to a general loss of manpower due to the war, and brought about the closure of Woodhouse in any case.

During the war another consultant, H.W.Smith, advised a complete re-organisation of the remaining two pits, Granville and Grange, which would involve closing down for a year.

The situation over this period is shown in the following table of production.



Granville Colliery, prior to electrification in the 1940s.

(NCB)

Year	Pits working	Employees	Tons coal produced
1927	4	1491	400,000
1937	3	869	300,000
1947	2	466	120,000
1948	2	466	115,000

erected at Granville Pit. It was described on a plaque mounted on the engine house wall in April 1949 as being the first electric winder to be purchased and put to work by the NCB.

Between 1927 and 1947 productivity in tons per man year had fallen from 268 to 257 and was still falling.

At Nationalisation in 1947 the pits were both still mainly steam powered but the new NCB continued to implement some of the earlier proposals. For example a new electric winder and steel headframe were

The 1950s

In 1950 however the NCB's Chief Engineer wrote that, although round ropes for winding had almost completely replaced flat ropes by 1909, there was still one winder in Shropshire using flat ropes in a shaft 385 ft. deep. Granville No.2 shaft had in fact, flat rope until at least 1952, probably the last such ropes to be used for colliery winding in the UK.

At this time the NCB considered two options:

1. Re-opening Woodhouse Pit (the shafts were still accessible and used for pumping) and completely re-equipping it, or
2. Combining Granville and Grange but re-equipping both shafts as necessary. This was the chosen option.

There was however still a third possibility, that of a new mine nearer Sheriffhales for which some work had already been done. More drilling to determine possible reserves was done until about 1950.



Plaque on the wall of the Granville No.1 winder house.

(Kelvin Lake-I.A.Recordings, 1978)



The Lilleshall Company's Pits - the Last Years, 1939-1979 continued ...

The early NCB development proposals for the Grange/Granville Pit merger included:

1. Connecting the two pits underground with a 1,000 yard tunnel.
2. Transferring all coal-winding operations to Granville.
3. Making Grange the new upcast shafts with exhausting fans.
4. Steam winders to be replaced by electric ones.
5. New headframes to be erected at all shafts.

At Easter 1953 the two pits were merged, Grange ceased to be a separate unit, the number of miners at the combined mine fell by 50 and the production for the year fell by 22,000 tons. In 1954, 550 employees produced just 132,000 tons.

Further decisions had then been taken, the proposals for the new mine had been dropped and Granville was to be substantially upgraded. These new proposals were announced as:

1. No.2 shaft was to be widened to 16ft. diameter and deepened by another 40 yards.
2. New tunnel drivages of over 2,500 yards, capable of taking 2½ ton capacity mine cars and battery locos. All former light weight rails had to be replaced.

3. New pit head baths and facilities for 800 men (with provision for a later extension to take in total 1,000 men).

During the period 1954 to 56 this work was completed, although there was severe disruption to employment numbers and output over this time.

In 1959 Harry Gittens, the Area Manager announced that £1.5 million had been spent and that output should reach 212,000 tons that year, by 1959 he expected 288,000 tons. For this over 700 men would be needed. He also said that at the proposed level of 288,000 tons, the pit had sufficient reserves for 60 years, with an average manpower of 775.

The pit did however have problems with methane ("fire-damp") but had installed some methane drainage equipment in 1957 and the gas was being sold to the local Gas Board. The pits statistics over this period were as follows:

Year	Employees	Tons coal produced
1955	574	151,770
1956	567	132,249
1957	563	98,774
1958	634	134,480
1959	691	206,800

The 1960s

From 1960 there continued a steady improvement in production, and manpower also increased; 1960 210,400 tons (656 employees) to 1963 245,000 tons from 664 employees but this was still below the output expected.

Up to 1960 the pit had used conventional hand-loaded coal faces, but in early 1960 the first power-loaded face was opened using an Anbauhobel Plough. This was to be followed by two others.

On 1st September 1960 there was an ignition of firedamp underground and men had to be withdrawn from the pit. The area involved was sealed off but re-opened several days later. The pit's Rescue Team was in attendance with the Madeley Wood Colliery Team (I.J. Brown as Captain) on stand-by at the surface.

In May 1961 the writer spent 5 days at the Pit with Tom Blower the Manager, in preparation for his final professional examination. He was to study the plough-face, methane drainage operations and the use of battery locos and mine-cars in particular. On arrival early one morning he was asked to help carry a large package into the pit and to the face, where colliers were on a sit-down strike having had a dispute with the overman. When Mr. Blower arrived he had a few words with the colliers, and, having anticipated that the colliers would have eaten their lunch-time snap while waiting, opened the two packages that the author and he had carried in. From these he distributed fresh sandwich packs to all the colliers, the men returned to work - the art of good management was learnt!

About 1964 Mr. T.L. White (Area Manager) told the press that Granville was to be extended to produce "600,000 tons plus" per year. This was at the opening of the new Granville Miners Welfare Club (costing £30,000) which was to replace the old Club in Limes Road,



View from the top of the No.1 headframe during the opening of the new pithead baths. (Coal Magazine, c1950)



The Lilleshall Company's Pits - the Last Years, 1939-1979 continued ...

Oakengates. He mentioned that a further phase costing £14,000 was to be added, Some present feared that this really meant that they were preparing to take on Madeley Miners when that pit closed, but such closure had not yet been announced!

Shortly after a new development scheme was undertaken which included the introduction of shearer loaders to replace the ploughs on the faces as well as the development of new faces involving further drivages of tunnels.

The closure of the Madeley Colliery was then announced and in 1966, 186 men were transferred to Granville in two main groups. A further 174 men were transferred in July 1967 making a total of 350 transferees.

Granville manpower had increased from 553 in 1965/66 to 882 in 1968/69 and it's production was said to be approaching 300,000 tons per year. This figure was however about the same as the Lilleshall Company had produced annually from a similar number of men in 1937, thirty years previously, using only manual labour and pit ponies. The pits were now fully mechanised, but working perhaps thinner seams and further from the shafts.

Granville still had it's troubles, in September 1968 spontaneous combustion occurred underground on a 'Double Coal' Seam coal face and men had to be withdrawn. It was announced that new areas were to be opened up in the Top Coal, New Mine as well as the Double Coal Seams which would involve 1,400 yards of extra tunnel plus installation of a trunk road belt and an underground bunker.

Much of the planned coal was to be sent to a major new District Central Heating Scheme, but unfortunately in 1969 this scheme was cancelled. Norman Latham, Union Secretary, and the 700 strong Union Lodge put in a major objection, but to no avail. It was feared that without the scheme the pit would close.

The 1970s

There was much written in the press at this time and not all was gloomy, for example in 1971, 15 miners were awarded 50-year employment certificates. Long-service records were a feature of the old Lilleshall Company. However in 1972 "700 miners walked out on strike".

It was stated that two faces had faulted out, fresh development was urgently needed and even though existing faces were machine-worked, output and pay was going down. The 600,000 tons per year anticipated by the NCB had not been achieved, but the NCB said that even though production had fallen from 300,000 tons per year to 200,000 "the future for the pit was assured".

In February 1973 the pit achieved a productivity record of 56.8 cwt. per manshift, about 15 cwt. above national average, 664 men had produced 8,008 tons per week. This was equal to about 400,000 tons per year, if it could have been sustained.

However, four months later the pit was put on the NCB's recommended "closure list", but in September 1973 it was "reprieved" so long as "geological conditions remain good".

1974 was a year of unrest amongst miners nationally and Granville

miners went on strike. Newspaper reports stated that the pits 11-strong management team had to work 16 or 17 hour shifts to keep the pit safe. Rumours abounded that the pits future was again in jeopardy.

In February 1975 the NCB stated that they had removed any threat of closure and that 580 miners were producing 5 to 6,000 tons per week. Some months later, however, production again began to fall.

In August 1978 the NCB announced that Granville Pit was to close "due to geological and mining problems", the pit was not economic. According to the NCB Granville should be producing 300,000 tons per year, but in the last year 1977/8 553 workers had produced only 145,000 tons.

By March 1979 staffing had dropped to 512 workers and production was only about 4,000 tons per week, the equivalent of about 200,000 tons per year. Pits elsewhere on the UK were producing up to 500,000 tons per week with a similar number of employees. The Granville Lodge of the NUM were concerned with the problem of loss of jobs, the NCB were offering only 70 jobs elsewhere and then only for men under 55 years of age. Some men would however be kept on for a few more months to salvage the colliery. The last coal was raised from the pit in May 1979.



Laying up the Shropshire branch NUM banner at Blists Hill, Friday 29th June 1979.
(I.J.Brown Collection)



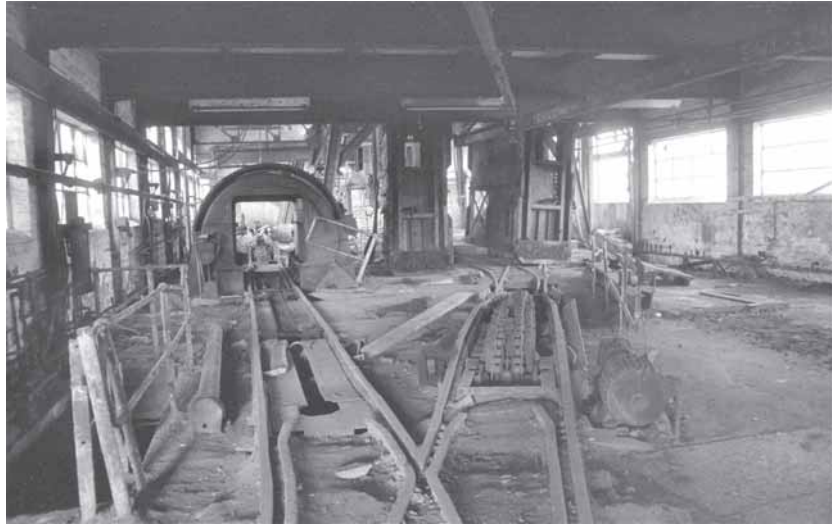
The Lilleshall Company's Pits - the Last Years, 1939-1979 continued ...

On June 29th 1979 the banner of the last Shropshire Miners Lodge was paraded through Madeley to the Blists Hill Open Air Museum site chapel (an old tin chapel moved there from a site near Granville some years before). During a short service two hymns were sung, "Guide me O thou Great Jehovah" and "Land of Hope and Glory".

In all, 90 Shropshire miners had transferred to Staffordshire pits, particularly Littleton Colliery. A special bus was used for this purpose but this service ceased in February 1991. Littleton Colliery itself closed about two years later, on 10th December 1993 and there were few transferees to other collieries from here. It was stated in the press that at this point the last 30 of the former Shropshire miners lost their jobs.

The 1980s

In 1980 Granville Colliery site was offered for sale through agents, Hall Wateridge and Owen, but was eventually purchased mainly by the Local Authority. In 1985 a



Remains of the tippers, creeper and cages at the Granville pithead, 1980.

(Kelvin Lake-I.A.Recordings)

consultation report "Granville Reclamation" was produced by Consultants. This was followed in 2004 by the "Granville and Woodhouse Farm Mining Study produced by the Local Authority. Much of the area of the pit itself has since been re-graded and is now used as a Local Authority waste tip.

References

1. Previous articles in this series in "Below".
2. Items on Grange and Granville Pits in Below 2009.4 and 2010.1
3. Local newspaper reports and NCB Press Statement.

Four Rare Bat Species in Wiltshire Woods

During a radio tracking survey by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the Cotswold Water Park (CWP) Society in Braydon Forest, 13 bat species out of 18 that breed in the UK were discovered, including four species of rare bats.

The four rare species, Bechstein's, barbastelle, lesser and greater horseshoe bats are listed on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List and are the only bats in the UK to have European-level protection.

The Bechstein's bat colony included at least 12 females; some of which were lactating, indicating that they are breeding.

There are an estimated 1,500 Bechstein's bats in the UK.

Cave Divers called to French Rescue

John Volanthen and Rick Stanton of the South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team (S&MWCRT) were flown to France, by the RAF, in early October at the request of the French Cave Rescue service - Spéléo Secours Français (SSF).

Cave diver Eric Establie went missing on a dive in the Dragonnière Gaud cave near Labastide de Virac in the Ardeche region of France on the 3rd October. Despite rescue efforts by the SSF they were unable to locate him, so called upon the experienced UK divers.

The pair found Mr Establie's body around 3,000ft (900m) from the cave entrance on the afternoon of October 11th.

Rick Stanton (a Fire fighter from Coventry) has recently agreed to be on the MCRO call-out list.

Glebe Mines to Close

Glebe Mines, which extracts and processes fluorspar at Cavendish Mill in the Derbyshire Peak District has confirmed it will cease work by the end of 2010, resulting in a loss of 65 jobs.

The firm was fined almost £40,000 in 2007 after the nearby village of Stoney Middleton was flooded (on 22nd January 2007) with waste when a lagoon burst it's bank. The clean-up operation cost about £2m.

Although the company has permissions from the Peak District National Park Authority to work quarries and mines for several years to come, it needs investment to open those quarries and it has failed to attract investment.

Fluorspar is used in chemical and manufacturing processes for a variety of products, including asthma inhalers and mobile phones.

News Reports 29th October



NAMHO 2010 - Trip Report

The 2010 NAMHO conference was held in Coalpit Heath, South Gloucestershire this year. At least 12 Club members made the journey down there for the Friday night and the opening talk by guest speaker Professor Mark Horton from Bristol University.

A few members attended the lectures in the Miners Institute, but most went on the walks and underground trips. As the choice of underground trips in the local area was limited (not helped by a landowner withdrawing permission to visit nearby underground workings at the last moment, causing numerous delegates to change their trips) many of the trips were some distance from the conference i.e. Forest of Dean, Cheltenham, Bath etc..

That said the conference was really well organised and run. The distance to the underground sites didn't really matter and they were very enjoyable.

The local surface walks were repeated on the Monday after the conference, so those of us who had been on underground trips all weekend could get a flavour of the local mining remains.

The conference provided an opportunity to visit a range of stone mines in the Bath-Cheltenham area. What was interesting was the different methods of working which they exhibited.

Congratulations to South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group for an excellent conference - now we have to try and at least equal that!



Left: The Coalpit Heath Village Hall and Miners Institute - base for the 2010 conference.

Below: Former local mines made their presence known with some mining subsidence, just over the road from the hall.



Underground Stone Mines - Swan Mine



Kingsdown Quarry or "Swan Mine" near Batheaston is a Bath freestone underground quarry. Has 3 entrances all conveniently opposite the Swan Inn - an excellent place to start and end with a pint and a meal.

Left: View outbye of the 'worst' entrance crawl.
Below: Base stone for a crane.



Below, left: A stone crane crushed by a slab from the roof.

Below, right: There is a large amount of miners graffiti around the mine, some of it sketches, some cost calculations and signatures.



NAMHO 2010 - Trip Report continued ...



Left: A stone water trough, thought to be for the use of underground ponies.

Right: There are several work benches around the mine, still with collections of tools and artefacts.

This bench had several files, which were used to sharpen saws.



Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings.

Right: Club member Mike Clough (nearest the camera) and another delegate walking along one of the main roadways. Cart tracks and pony hoof prints can still be seen in many parts of the mine.

The roadways around the mine are quite large - but with the typical spragging technique used for roof support in the stone mines of the area.



Below: Mike Clough looking at the intact stone crane in one of the furthest reaches of the mine.



NAMHO 2010 - Trip Report continued ...

Underground Stone Mines - Whittington Quarry

Also known as Dodwell Hill Quarry, this is a Cotswold stone quarry about 4 miles outside Cheltenham.

It was a major producer of building stone for Cheltenham from about 1800, but it became uneconomic by the 1860s when the newly built railways were able to bring in cheaper Bath stone.

Right: View across the valley to the early part of the Quarry, now collapsed and run-in. The accessible underground workings are in the woods off to the left.



This mine has few aretefacts, but lots of 'marks' from when it was worked, such as the scrape marks from wheels on pillars (see **Left**) and evidence in the muddy floor of hoof prints (see **Right**).



The most interesting of the horse trackways is in an area beyond a fall and necessitates a crawl to reach it.

The wheel ruts are clearly visible (see **Left and Right**).

Close examination of the floor and surroundings reveals an interesting "story". Hoof prints can be seen not only in the middle of the tracks, but on a couple of sharp corners actually on the bank at the side where wheels appear to have ridden up the wall.

Hob-nailed boot prints can also be seen 'following' the pony, again on what must have been a slippy, sharp corner they appear part way up the side of the trackway.



Below: Evidence of the cutting out by hand can be seen with these jad slots still visible in a pillar.



Right: The mine is fairly stable, but in parts there are some worrying blocks 'hanging' from the roof!



NAMHO 2010 - Trip Report continued ...

Underground Stone Mines - Lower Balls Green, Nailsworth

A Cotswold stone quarry near Nailsworth, worked for Minchampton freestone from about 1800 to 1900.

During World War II, a lot of stone near the entrance was removed to construct an airfield, while in the 1950s attempts were made to grow mushrooms in the quarry.

It is largely a easy walking site, with a few scrambles over roof collapses - the most notable having a squashed wagon and jubilee rails under it!



Above: Two metal wedges still in situ - these were driven in to separate one block of stone from another.



Above: The entrance to the underground part of the quarry - now at the bottom of a ravine!



Above: Some serious pillar robbing has taken place near the entrance.

Right: Nigel Dibben (NAMHO Secretary) beside a large waste wagon 'trapped' by a collapse near the end of the workings.



Left: This sawn block face showed evidence of wire-cutting. It appears that a hand-held wire saw was probably used to cut off the outer part of the block.



Right: Through-out the mine, short shot holes can be seen. Some, such as the one on the right, show signs of a powder blast. It is thought that these short holes had a small charge of black powder in them to 'pop' the blocks off their beds.



Left & below: Views of a large stone preparation area at the far end of the underground workings. In addition to cutting blocks to shape, it appears banker masons worked here preparing a range of items.

The main tramming level ends at a loading wharf (**below, centre**), with several sets of steps for the workers.



NAMHO 2010 - Trip Report continued ...

Surface walk around Coalpit Heath - Serridge Pit Area

On the Monday after the conference the surface walk was repeated for those delegates who were doing other things over the weekend.

There are two pits in the area with interesting remains; Serridge Engine Pit and Ram Hill Colliery.

Serridge Engine pit is believed to be the site of a Newcomen pumping engine and there is some access to underground features. SGMRG members have been excavating the site over a number of years and a recent development has been the discovery of what appears to be a beehive shaft cap.

Ram Hill Colliery is preserved and the remains include a large part of an enclosed horse gin house - the remains of a similar one at New Pit just down the road from Serridge Pit were also visited on the walk.

From Ram Hill an extensive tramway (the Dramway) connects several pits in the area and eventually ends at a wharf on the River Avon. Several sections of the Dramway survive, along with stone sleeper blocks and rail chairs.

A fascinating walk and thanks to the members of SGMRG who took the time to show us around.

Below: The former beam winding engine house of New Pit, with the remains of an earlier horse gin winding house in the garden (**below, right**).

Right: Stone blocks and chairs on the 'Dramway' at Ram Hill Colliery.



Below: Excavations at Serridge Pit - the edge of a beehive cap is just visible on the left of the picture. Drainage channels are on the right and looking at the state of them some at least have carried hot water.



Right: Former engineering workshops at New Pit, now converted into dwellings..



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

14th August 1858

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT AT COALPORT.

THE COAL TRADE.

A COMPLETE suspension of the coal trade by the Severn has taken place in consequence of the lowness of water in the river, and the high price of coals as compared with those of South Staffordshire. The water in the river has been remarkably low for some time, so low that vessels could not take anything like a sufficient cargo to defray expenses of the voyage, even if the remuneration for freight per ton was as reasonable as formerly. As an instance of the shallowness of the river, I may mention that horses with carts and wagons now cross the fords. But the great complaint on the part of carriers is on account of the high price they have to pay on the wharf for coal, and the competition they meet with at Stourport and Worcester. Since the reduction of colliers' wages and that of the selling price of coal, in South Staffordshire, the Shropshire owners have had additional disadvantages to labour under, inasmuch as no similar reduction of price in coals has followed that of wages. The fact is, the Shropshire iron and coal masters are under no great temptation to sell at a reduction, seeing that the stock yet unworked is by no means in proportion to the amount of iron ore they have in store. The south bank of the river affords a sufficient warning to iron masters in this respect. The coals, excepting some containing a large proportion of sulphur, whereby they are totally unfit for iron making, have long ago been exhausted. Although iron ores still abound, and their extraordinary richness pays for them being now worked and sent in large quantities by river and canal into South Staffordshire for use; the absence of coal threw out of blast the iron furnaces all along that side of the coal-field, as at the Calcuts, Barnets, Leasow, Benthall, the Cuneberry, Broseley, and Willey, depreciating the value of property, causing great migrations of labourers and considerable displacement of capital. Had the Severn Valley line of railway, now on the eve of accomplishment, been constructed a few years back, coal might have been carried, as it now is in other places, to supply the deficiency, and to work up the ore on the spot. Indeed, it is not improbable that when the means of bringing down coals exist, smelting operations may again take place on the spot.

FROM ANOTHER CORRESPONDENT.

THE SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY.

THE owners of mineral property in Shropshire as well as the agriculturists, are viewing with great satisfaction every indication of progressing the operation of the Severn Valley Railway Company. The half yearly meeting of this company was held on Monday. The directors reported that Messrs. Peto, Brassey, and Betts, the contractors, were now in possession of land to the extent of 21 miles at Bridgnorth, Broseley, Bewdley, and Stourport, and they (the directors) were prepared to extend their operations so soon as agreements for the purchase of land would allow them to proceed. By promptly meeting the calls, they hoped that the shareholders would enable the directors to complete the line in two years. From the speech of the chairman it appeared that since the 23rd of July, when the bill for the extension of time received the royal assent, land sufficient for three miles of railway had been purchased. The directors did not think that the estimated capital of £530,000 would be exceeded. The construction of the works would cost £363,000. If the sum estimated was exceeded it would be because of price demanded for land. The line would pass through a very beautiful and fertile district, and also a large mineral district. He hoped the landholders would meet the company as they might, in a liberal spirit. There might be sense exceptions, but, on the whole, he trusted they would be satisfied with a reasonable amount for their land. If the shareholders responded to the calls, the line would be opened for traffic within two years from the present time. That one of the directors might devote himself entirely to the business of the company during its construction with a view to strict economy, which at such a time had been neglected by some companies, was as determined that the yearly allowance to the directors should be increased from £570 to - £1,600. It was afterwards stated that the line was to be a single one in the first instance, but that by agreement to pay £20,000 more, the contractors would make the earthworks a double line, which was considered by Mr. Fowler, the company's engineer, to be desirable, and the charge very moderate. There can be no doubt that the mineral property of Shropshire will be greatly increased in value so soon as this railway is completed.



The Club in 1971 - 40 Years Ago

Ivor J.Brown

The January 1971 issue of the Club Newsletter commenced with the words "The New Year has brought with it a mood of change in the Club" and this is certainly what happened.

Ten newsletters (No. 75 to 84) were produced during the year, 28 sides of type in all. However, "stories" by Blogg filled nearly half of them and they were both amusing and of Club interest. It is surprising however, that 'Blogg' wasn't strangled before the end. Nearly all the visits reported in the other pages were to Welsh mines and caves with the occasional visit to Derbyshire and Yorkshire. Despite the number of reports it was reported at the February meeting that the average attendance was "2 and a half members".

South-west Shropshire mines trips were only reported on, on a couple of occasions, perhaps because on one visit members were met by "Mr. Roberts with a shotgun". There was more success in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield, the salvaging at Milburgh was completed and several parties of visitors were taken around Blists Hill Museum site (the reconstructed Mossey Green Headframe and newly

made "mine adit") and the Tar Tunnel (see opposite for an item on the exhibits at this time).

The shaft keps at Cadmans Pit and the mine weighbridge at Hall Pit were offered to the IGMT during the year, but had been removed by others before the Club got to them.

The monthly meetings were held as usual but were frequently cut short so that talks with photographic slides could be given. Of note were 'cave formations', 'Yorkshire Potholes' and 'Blaster Bates'. There was also a 'kinky film on ferrets' and films of 'power station fires'.

Topics discussed at meetings included:

Finding a base in North Wales,
Recruiting new members, and
The deterioration of the Club house.

A page in the July newsletter entitled "The SMC - Any future?" by P.J.Appleton caused much concern!

In a three page response in September D.R.Adams looked at several proposals, including:

1. Changing the Club name!
2. Dispensing with the Newport Club house and substituting one in North Wales!
3. Moving base to a more populous area e.g. Shrewsbury?

Officers elected (or re-elected) at the AGM were:

President D.B.Corbyn,
Chairman P.J.Appleton,
Vice Chair & Records M.Bleazard,
Secretary T.J.Davies,
Treasurer C.Lane,
Tacklemaster G.K.Lyon,
Publications C.J.Williams,
Steward D.R.Adams,
Newsletter Editor P.J.Appleton.

There were about 15 members and 15 Associate members.

Only one publication was produced during the year - the "1966/67 Yearbook" (4 years late), but the 1971/2 Journal and Accounts No. 9 and 10 were said to be well underway by December.

A special dinner was held after the AGM at the Red Lion Inn, Myddle to mark the Club's 10th birthday. It was very well attended and all things looked brighter for the future.

Madeley Mining Disasters - Talk by Ivor Brown

On the 24th November Ivor Brown gave a talk to the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum about "Madeley Mining Disasters" to a packed Glass-classroom at the Enigunity Museum.

The talk covered several notable mining disasters in the area such as the "Lane Pit" accident (9 men and boys killed while riding the "doubles" - buried together in one grave in Madeley Churchyard) and the last major Shropshire pit disaster at Kemberton in 1910.

The Kemberton accident was covered in some detail, with the possibility of the keps being at fault.

Several members of the audience had worked at Kemberton, Halesfield and Granville Collieries. Also in the

audience were relatives of two of the Kemberton victims (Jones and Rogers). One lady, the niece of one of those killed in the Kemberton had brought along a copy of a Concert sheet listing the performers and songs sung to raise funds for the relatives of those killed.

One the highlights of the evening was when Iris Brown sang four verses of an "In Memoriam" ballad to the Kemberton victims, members of the audience joining in with the singing. Ballads were often composed after mining accidents, then performed in pubs while a hat was passed round - so they were of necessity quite long!

Several Club members also attended the talk and for the "Grand Finalé" six of them were "encouraged" to climb

into a mock cage (built by Alan Taylor) to show how cramped the Kemberton cage involved in the accident would have been (pictures next issue).

Below: Ivor Brown checking out the 'cage', built by Alan Taylor, before the talk started.



Successful MCRO Rescue Weekend

3rd - 5th Spetember 2010

Over the weekend of 3rd to 5th September, Club members hosted an MCRO rescue weekend.

The plan was for a rescue practice to held at Huglith on the Saturday, with a series of short talks and workshops on the Sunday in Snailbeach Village Hall.

Steve Holding had managed to arrange camping at a site normally used by Scouts at Pennerley, so people were able to camp from the Friday night, although there was some difficulty in finding it in the dark!

Organising events like this is a bit nerve racking, in that you don't know exactly how many people are going to turn up. The South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team mid-Wales rescue practice earlier this year was fresh in our minds. At this event there were only 5 camping on the Friday and only 3 of us at the "social" on the Saturday night!!

Luckily, this wasn't the case for us, over 30 people turned up on Saturday morning at Huglith. In addition to MCRO members from the Club and Dudley there were participants from Gloucester Cave Rescue Group and the South East CRO, with quite a lot of the visitors electing to camp.

Gloucester brought along their ambulance and a very useful large gazebo with sides, for the Surface Control - we could definitely do with one of these ourselves!

The rescue scenario involved an injured explorer on the main tramming level of Huglith, with the route out being up the winze in Badger level. Apart from a delay in getting the stretcher and support team down the winze to the tramming level, everything went quite smoothly.

As usual, communications raised a few problems - particularly when the Heyphone case was opened and the power lead found to be missing!



Above: The camp site at Pennerley used by participants in the rescue weekend. (John Smith)



Above: Rescuers kitting up, Graham Smith (MCRO), and Emma Porter (MCRO) on the left, Steve Tomalin (GCRG) on the right, with Gloucester CRG gazebo in use for booking in and surface control in the background. (John Smith)

Below: The Gloucester Cave Rescue Group ambulance and control vehicle, Paul Taylor (GCRG) on the left. (Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings)



Successful MCRO Rescue Weekend continued ...

There were also delays in communicating details back to Control, but then this seems to be a particular problem every CRO seems to have.

Overall, a good day, lessons were learnt and it only took 4 hours 50 minutes from the initial deployment of the first rescue team to the stretcher arriving back at Control.

Saturday evening there was a social gathering in the Stiperstones Inn, with us taking over the bar for meals and a few drinks!

Graham Smith acted as unofficial taxi driver, ferrying people back to the camp site at the end of the night.

On Sunday we were joined by more team members in Snailbeach Village Hall for a series of talks on topics ranging from how to work with helicopters, bad air, sleep deprivation and workshops on kit inspection and the MineCam.

On the practical side Mike Clayton and Bartek Biela rigged up a demo on the George's Shaft headframe of various new rigging and haulage devices.

A very successful weekend - in fact so much so that we have been asked by GCRG to repeat it next year!



Left & Above: Rescue activity on the main tramming level of Huglith and the stretcher being hauled up the Badger level winze.

(John Smith)



Right: Finally out - carrying the stretcher back to control.

(John Smith)



Left: Steve Holding giving his talk about "Bad Air".

Below left: Emma Porter, Neal & Gareth Rushton and a member of GCRG inspecting kit.

Right: John Morgan trying out a new hauling rig.

(John Smith)



The Club and Early Mining Exhibits at Blists Hill

Ivor Brown

Miners Walk

Forty years ago the Miners walk on the Blists Hill Museum site was formed and the Club were involved in this and the removal and reconstruction of the early exhibits.

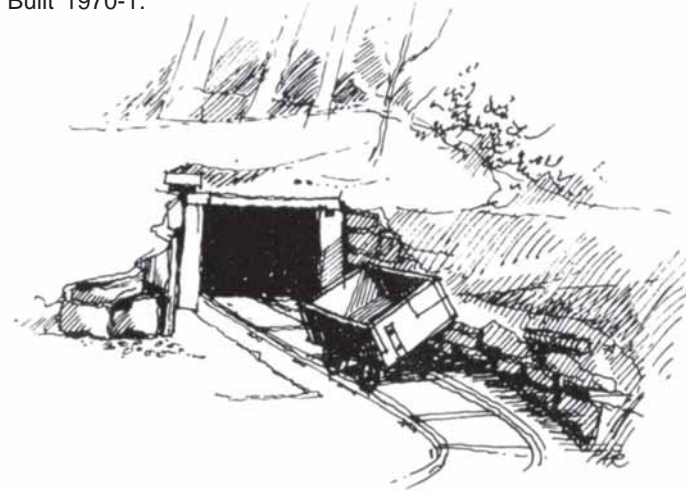
The hand-winch removed from the Rock Mine could not be reconstructed as it was of cast iron and was damaged in transit. The remains have not been repaired yet!

The first three new mining exhibits at Blists Hill Museum:, collected and reconstructed with assistance from SMC members after the completion of the Miners Walk track in 1970 are show here.

Mining exhibit No. 1

A 7 yard long mine adit, with rails and tub.

It was a new adit, no original adits existed at this end of the site.
Built 1970-1.



Mining exhibit No. 2

Wooden headframe from Mossey Green Pit - a ventilation chimney and horsegin was to follow later.

Built 1971-2 (never completed - the horse gin is still to be built).

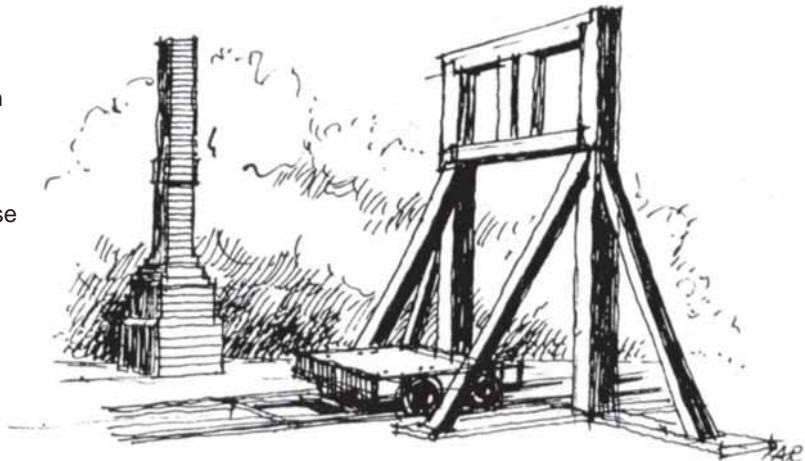


Mining exhibit No. 3

Headframe (steel) from Farm Pit, an engine house and ramps were to follow later.

Built 1971-2. (the electric winder from Rock mine was later installed here, but the ramps have not yet been built).

Illustrations from IGMT Blists Hill Museum Guide, 1975.



Some Memories of the Re-thatching of the Old SMC Clubhouse

Ivor J. Brown

This one-up/one-down limestone miners thatched cottage was rented by the Club at Church Aston, Newport from 1964. But as the year progressed the thatch deteriorated and began to let the rain in. Quotes were obtained for re-thatching between 1971 and 1973, but the expense seemed too great for the Club.

In 1973 the local authority was persuaded that the building should be 'listed' and they said they would be able to put half towards the cost. The money would come from funds which would otherwise be lost in the impending 1974 Local Authority Re-organisation. On being told that the Club would not be able to raise the rest and would have to cover the roof with corrugated sheeting, the Council re-considered, they then said that they might be able to pay more, depending on what funds might be available at the end of March 1974.

The Club added to the £40 raised by members a loan of £100 and the contract was let in January 1973, it was expected to take three weeks. Work commenced immediately that February.

The new thatch, put on over the old thatch as is traditional, was expected to last 40 years. It would only be guaranteed for 20 years if it was covered with netting to keep out the birds. This would cost an additional £40. The Contract price was finally £329 plus £40 for netting and a further £30 for gutter repairs, about £400 in total.



The Club Cottage "Snailbeach" at Church Aston, Newport with its newly thatched roof, in March 1974. (Ivor J. Brown)

As work commenced it was found that a further £100 would have to be spent on stonework as the top of the walls were unstable. So £500 was now needed.

Work continued in faith (Ivor Brown was treasurer). The owner was approached but she could not help, although she did agree to re-imburse the Club at a rate of £20 per year for each year short of the 20 year period (1974 to 1994), should the Club have to leave before 1994. She was an old lady and did not know what the future held.

In March 1973 the work was completed, the bills were received shortly after and the Treasurer went back to the Council.

Fortunately they had sufficient funds left over in one account to make up the shortfall and the Treasurer breathed a sigh of relief!

All bills were then paid and the Club continued to use the property until the 1980s when the owner died.

Notes

1. The Club cottage, as described in 1681 and the 1840s, is covered in an article by Sula Rayska in the SMC Journal for 1976.

2. Did the Club claim back the £20 per year (up to 1994) from the Executors of the old lady's estate when the cottage was sold in the 1980s?

Trapped Caver Rescued from Stump Cross Caverns Clay Level

A caver who had become trapped in a complex of tunnels under a North Yorkshire visitor attraction was rescued after a seven-hour ordeal.

Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue was called to Stump Cross Caverns, near Grassington, after the experienced caver got into trouble in an area known as the Clay Level, below the public areas of the complex.

He had been working on accessing an area no-one had been in before, but became stuck.

Rescuers eventually managed to secure a harness to him and pull him out. He reached the surface and was taken care of by family members. He was a little shaken, but didn't need medical attention, just some food!

News Reports, 4th November 2010

Parys Mountain Water Pump Stolen

The pump used to keep the old settlement ponds on Parys Mountain from drying out, and thus allowing contaminated dust to be blown into the air, has been stolen.

It runs on a none standard power supply and due to the Credit Crunch it is unlikely that the Council will replace it.

Descent 216



Hidden Earth 2010 - Leek, 24th-26th September

The National Caving Conference

Several Club members made the trip to Leek for this years National Caving Conference (Hidden Earth). Unlike NAMHO conferences, there are no field trips associated with Hidden Earth, the emphasis being more on the lectures. The use of 3 lecture theatres means delegates can pick and choose from talks based on trip reports, to those on equipment, technical information and workshops (i.e. cave radio developments, 3D laser scanning of caves). In addition, the trade hall gives you chance to check out the latest equipment and kit on offer from a range of traders - there was a greater variety of traders at this years event compared with previous years.



Left: A delegate negotiating the "cave passage"!



Right: Kevin Baker (NAMHO Chairman) investigating the 'cave' entrance to one of the Club stands.



Above: Decorated helmet, lamp and battery by Ceris Jones - an entry in the Art Competition.

A Topsy-turvy Secretary

Earlier this year Andy Wood had a bit of a 'turn' after a mid-week training session at Snailbeach.

Everyone else had gone off to the pub, leaving Andy getting changed. As he was driving down the track from Perkins Level his Land-Rover slipped off the road and somersaulted down the bank into a field.

Although disorientated, he luckily didn't suffer any major injuries and eventually managed to get a message to the pub, so the others were able to come to his aid.

Rumours that his Christmas dinner will include: Sausage rolls, roll-mop herring, turkey twizzlers, and mashed potato followed by upside-down cake and apple turn-over, are untrue.

Below: Nick Southwick beside the unhappy Landie. (Andy Wood)



There are also photographic and art competitions, numerous Club stands and displays, plus SRT races, a tackle bag stuffing competition. For the more energetic (and slim!) there is the artificial cave - several, very slim, people who tried this got stuck, or came out with some wicked grazes!! For the less energetic there is the bar and the challenge to drink it dry!

If you haven't been to a Hidden Earth before, then why not?



Pitchcroft Bolts

David Poyner

Club members are unlikely to be surprised to learn that after being buried for over 150 years, most of the metal items found at Pitchcroft are heavily corroded; the upper bolt in the picture is a typical example.

Usually the rust and concretions are knocked off by careful hammering so the item can be identified and recorded. Occasionally more extensive treatment is provided. The bottom bolt was polished by a colleague who runs a light engineering firm. It demonstrates that iron is indeed a bright, silver-white metal in its native state!

It also clearly shows the fine-structure of wrought iron. The iron forms long, parallel fibres; these are formed by the repeated hammering and rollings that are used in the process to make a rod of wrought iron. As the iron corrodes, these become apparent.

They also demonstrate how the head of the bolt was forged in a die rather than being welded on. Interestingly the head is slightly lop-sided; this is a common feature of the bolts we have found at Pitchcroft. Presumably the dies used by the blacksmiths who made the bolts were also slightly lop-sided.

I am grateful to Sean Askey for polishing the bolt.

Taff Merthyr Colliery

Before Taff Merthyr Colliery closed, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales identified the mine's principal surface features and recorded their function in detail.

Recording what actually happens at industrial sites and how they operate is known as process recording. They have published the first in a series of short accounts of the processes on their Heritage in Wales blog.

Go to

heritageofwalesnews.blogspot.com for more information.

Peter Cloughton



Pitchcroft bolts; before and after polishing. (David Poyner)

Chinese Miners - Triumph and Tragedy

Triumph

In April, 115 Chinese miners were rescued alive from a flooded mine in Shanxi province after spending more than a week underground.

Tragedy

On the 16th October an explosion at the Yuzhou pit (in China's central Henan province), which is owned by Pingyu Coal & Electric Co Ltd killed 26 miners and trapped 11 others. The explosion occurred as miners were drilling a hole to release pressure from a gas build-up as part of efforts to decrease the risk of blasts in this notoriously gassy mine.

Some 300 rescuers had been working to reach the trapped miners, however the last 5 bodies were recovered on Tuesday 19th, bringing the death toll to 37.

Luckily, 239 other miners who were underground at the time managed to escape immediately after the explosion.

China is heavily reliant on its mining industry, with coal supplying some 70% of its energy needs. Many of those employed in mines are migrant workers with limited training. More than 2,600 miners were killed in Chinese mine accidents in 2009.

Ecuadorean Miners Trapped

Sadly the 4 miners trapped by a roof-fall at the Casa Negra gold, silver and copper mine, near the southern town of Portovelo, Ecuador have been found dead.

The collapse, thought to have been caused by a water leak which eroded structural supports, occurred on Friday 15th October, trapping the men about 150m (490ft) underground.

The bodies of 2 of the miners were recovered on the 17th October, but it took a further four days to reach the bodies of the last 2 miners.

News Reports, 21st October 2010





Christmas Puzzles Page



Conversions

By changing one letter at a time, change CAVE into MINE

Now try changing CAVE into DIRT
(Hint: you might have to use a TV channel)

CAVE
MINE

CAVE
DIRT



Do You Know Your Elements?

You should find the 22 elements listed below in the word square on the right.
(If I've spilt them correctly!)

- | | |
|----|----|
| Fe | Mn |
| Pb | Hg |
| C | Ni |
| Al | Si |
| Ba | S |
| Sb | Ag |
| As | Sn |
| Ca | W |
| Co | U |
| Cu | V |
| Au | Zn |



A	L	U	M	I	N	I	U	M	N	O	R	I	C	C
N	K	E	L	R	O	G	W	G	W	E	O	I	N	A
T	I	N	A	E	T	S	D	O	P	V	N	U	I	L
I	Z	C	F	D	K	H	U	L	Q	E	O	R	Z	C
M	N	O	B	R	A	C	J	D	S	T	C	A	X	I
O	H	B	J	G	S	E	I	R	U	F	I	N	Y	U
N	B	A	R	I	U	M	A	N	L	C	L	I	P	M
Y	W	L	Q	H	E	I	G	N	P	G	I	U	D	T
E	Y	T	U	K	A	S	Z	T	H	E	S	M	P	O
N	V	H	Q	C	T	D	Y	R	U	C	R	E	M	J
S	I	L	V	E	R	U	E	S	R	E	P	P	O	C
M	M	A	N	G	A	N	E	S	E	K	L	I	X	F
J	R	U	B	S	V	A	N	A	D	I	U	M	N	P

Questions

How many of those listed above have been mined in Britain?

How many in Shropshire?

If you are feeling really bored ...

What are the main ores/compounds of the elements above?



Can You Spot Anyone You Know?



This was the underground “scary squad” for the Shropshire Mines Trust Halloween event in October - there are now several traumatised children (and parents) in the villages of Snailbeach and Stiperstones.

Telford Under Water Search Unit

Stuart and fellow divers have been busy again since the last issue of Below with a dive at Rhiwbach.

You can see the results of their dive on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GG_BUzdgXJM

They would like to do more but need extra Sherpas’ (or should that be shirkers?) to help carry bottles, lights etc..

While watching Stuart’s video, several other diving videos were listed beside it - one that caught my eye was “Silica Mines in Wales”.

Having visited these mines some years ago I thought I’d watch it.

However while well lit, it tended to concentrate on the divers, rather than the mine. Judge for yourself:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=QktGgM3Lyyo

- but watch Stuart’s video first!

New Geevor Exhibit

A new exhibition in the ‘Hard Rock’ Gallery at Geevor has been set-up. Based on a selection from the 3000+ plans and sections held in the Geevor archive, which have recently been digitised by BGS.

The exhibition is a joint effort with St. Just Mines Research Group and is called “Underground Overground”.

Photographs and other material try to relate underground workings to surface features and give an insight into mine surveying.

Geevor is open every day except Saturday - there is discounted entry for members of NAMHO affiliated groups.

Bill Lakin - Chair of Trustees

Library Additions

North Wales Caving Club Newsletter, Issue 316,

November 2010. Another issue with a full colour front page (sigh!). Trip reports to OHA, Ogof Llyn Parc & the Croesor to Rhosydd trip complete with deflating dingy and collapsing bridge - possibly won’t be long before it’s a site for a rescue call-out!

New Zealand Tragedy

The successful rescue of the 33 Chilean miners, unfortunately gave the media the impression that trapped miners could always be rescued alive.

This view has been tragically altered with the explosion at the Pike River coal mine, Greymouth, New Zealand. Many didn’t understand why they tried to use ‘robots’ rather than rescue teams going in straight away. However the distance to the working faces (nearly 2km) would have put them on the limits of their breathing apparatus, and there have been at least 3 subsequent explosions.

In the past there have been British accidents where rescuers have rushed in, including in one case the Mines Inspector and senior pit officials, only for another explosion to kill them all.

One question that needs to be answered is, with a driveage so long into a known gassy mine, why wasn’t there any escape shafts?

Searchable Database

A new searchable database (by country, author, medium,date) on the representations of mining in European culture (literature, film, art, music etc.) is now available online at www.imaginaireminier.eu

As it is in French at the moment (a translation in in progress) it may be helpful to access it through:

<https://sites.google.com/site/minesineuropeanculture/>

which gives some 'directions for use.

Over 2,000 entries have been submitted to the database, with some trepidation since it will be apparent at a glance that although I have very strong personal ties with mining, I am no specialist in the usual sense.

I therefore welcome in advance all suggestions that will contribute to its improvement - for which I have no doubt there is ample room.

Yves Bouveret

*Hon. Prof. Université Jean Monnet
Saint-Etienne, France.*



Archaeological Research Seminar / Workshops

Dr Peter Cloughton

As a part of the NAMHO Research Framework project looking at the archaeology of the extractive industries - mining and quarrying - there will be a series of seminar / workshops around England to examine the various specialist themes within the project.

The first on the subject of bulk minerals (stone and aggregates) was held on 26 November at the National Stone Centre near Wirksworth in Derbyshire.

On Saturday 19 February, at the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Caphouse Colliery, near Wakefield there will be a further

seminar looking at the archaeology of coal, clay and ironstone.

The event will give participants the opportunity to discuss their work, to learn what others are doing and exchange ideas. For example, over the last few years a number of mining history interest groups have been investigating early steam engine sites associated with the coal industry. The work they are doing has the potential to expand our knowledge of early developments in pumping techniques.

Sharing the results can help interpret the findings, adding value to the work and drive research forward. If

you are involved in similar work on coal, clay or iron mining, then make sure you attend.

Other seminars on lead, tin, copper and slate working are also planned for the Winter of 2011 at venues in the South-West, Cumbria and Derbyshire. Details will be circulated widely and posted to the Research pages at the National Association of Mining History Organisations' website - www.namho.org

For more details contact:
Peter Cloughton -

p.f.cloughton@exeter.ac.uk
or Phil Newman -
projectofficer@namho.org

More Books

Slate Quarry Album

By Ann & Gordon Hatherill, second edition, SB, 200pp, 149 duotone and 243 colour photographs, 19 scale drawings, 18 diagrams and sketches, 11 maps

The book is absolutely superb with all colour photos which is never going to be cheap it is without doubt a credit to all involved. The authors spent some 20 years researching and photographing the sites. The only sad part for me is the lack of Underground features but clearly the Hatherhills are railway and surface enthusiasts. I particularly like the chapter which includes four walks for anyone unsure of the area this is a superb aid complete with maps, photos and route details. The walks vary in length and are as follows: Gorseddau Quarry & Ynsypandy Mill; Croesor Tramway; Rhiwbach Tramway; Rhoysydd Quarry and Tramway.

“(Publisher review) The book is a result of over twenty years research into the methods of working within Welsh Slate quarries. Originally Gordon and Ann Hatherill went to Aberllefenni Quarry near Corris but, in the 1970s, they concentrated on Llechwedd and Maefferen quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog having been

given permission by J W Greaves & Sons Ltd. During their time in the quarries Ann photographed, mainly in colour and Gordon drew and measured many items - wagons, track equipment etc. They accompanied the men as they worked the gravity and powered inclines, worked the slate and disposed of the rubbish on the tips.

The photographic record of these operations is unique. The text traces the growth of tramways within and from the quarries, types of rails, points, wagons, motive power, construction of inclines and associated equipment. Accompanied by photographs there are detailed descriptions of the methods of working the inclines and tramways. Pages of Gordon's sketchbook are reproduced as well as his final drawings.

The first edition of this work sold out rapidly. In assembling this second edition care has been taken to review the content and expand it to over twice that of the original”

I can't recommend this book enough - now only available in softback.
Price: £24.00 + P&P

Mike Moore

The Metal Mines of West Cork

By Diane Hodnett, Sb, 288pp

Diane is Cornish born in Troon and is descended from generations of miners.

Now living in Ireland she completed this historical study of the metal mines of west Cork, which produced Copper, manganese, silver and lead. The book is neatly illustrated with plans and locations of mines sites complete with surface and underground photographs some in colour. This is an excellent book and fully recommended.

Price: £16.00 + P&P

Dolcoath Mine - A History

By Allen Buckley, Sb or HB, 460pp

Allen has produced several books on the Cornish Mine Industry where he worked underground at South Crofty and Geevor Mines. He has an interesting style of writing and that captivates, the reader whether they be Historian or Explorer this is fantastically well researched book supported by some excellent photography

Costs: Hardback £36.99 + P&P
Softback £25.99 + P&P

Mike Moore



Library, News, and Books

New from Seven Stones Publishing **The Mines of the Peak District, An Underground Field Guide: Vol.4 Bakewell & Lathkill Dale**

Mine Explorer Byron Machin presents the final volume in a new and comprehensive guide to the accessible underground mine workings in England's most beautiful national park. Along with information to aid underground exploration, fascinating insights into the mines histories are also provided.

A5 Paperback, 24 pages,
Card Cover, illustrated with full
colour underground images.
Price: £3.50 including p&p.

The Mines of the Peak District, An Underground Field Guide: Vol.1-4

This specially priced collection
includes all four volumes of Byron
Machin's guide book series:

Vol.1 - Manifold, Dove & Dane Valleys

Vol.2 - Matlock, Middleton, Bonsall & The Via Gellia

Vol.3 - Castleton, Bradwell, Coombs Dale & Stoney Middleton

Vol.4 - Bakewell, Lathkill Dale, Deep Dale & Bradford

All books are paperback with a
colour card cover and a selection of
colour plates within.

Vol.1 (32pp)

Vol.2 (40pp)

Vol.3 (24pp)

Vol.4 (24pp)

Price: £15.00 including p&p.

Available from: Byron Machin,
49 North Street, Leek, Staffordshire,
ST138DW (send a cheque or postal
order)

Available from:

http://shop.ebay.co.uk/lexxion_1984/

or Mike Moore at Club meetings,
or online at www.moorebooks.co.uk

The River Ran Red

**A history of The Golden Valley
Ochre Mining and Oxide Works,
Wick Nr Bristol**

By Carolyn Williams, SB, A5, 91pp

Carolyn has lived in Wick most her
life and spent the last 20 years
studying and researching the site.
This is a fascinating study into a little
known industry, brought alive with
superb photos, maps and sketches.
Price: £8.50+P&P

Penwyllt - The Story of a South Wales Community

By Peter Burgess, Sb, A5, 138pp

Although now home to three caving
clubs, South Wales CC, Swindon SS,
and Wealden CMS, Penwyllt also has
a fascinating past. Around the village
can be found the evidence of early
tramroads, lime-burning, brick-
making, and the Neath and Brecon
Railway as well as the physical
infrastructure of the close-knit former
working community.

The book describes these various
facets of Penwyllt, as well as an
overview of the geology, landscape
and caves. I have spent the better
part of two years investigating the
area on the ground and collating a
great deal of valuable knowledge
from others. Whilst the book is not
specifically targeted at cavers or
mine-explorers, there is clearly much
in the area to interest anyone who
visits the location, and the book
includes three field walks which
guide you around what can still be
seen in this fascinating area.
Price: £7.50+P&P

Lead Mining in Derbyshire History, Development, Drainage Volume 3 Elton to the Via Gellia

By JHRieuwerts, HB, 208pp

This is volume 3 of a set of 4 the
author is well known for his detailed
research in the area. The book
contains colours and black and white
photos of surface and underground,
details plans and diagrams. Every
mine site is described and the various
soughs and adits are located.
Price: £25.00+P&P

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.

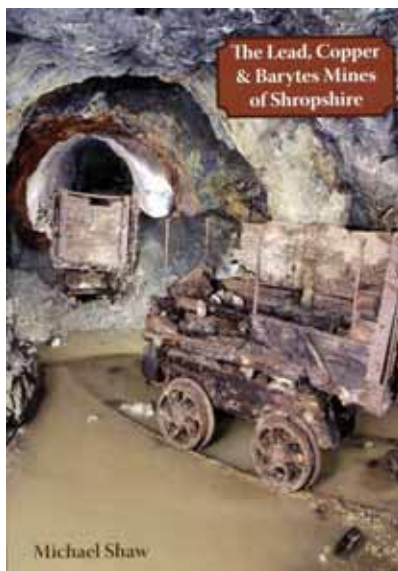
The East Cumberland Coalfield.

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.

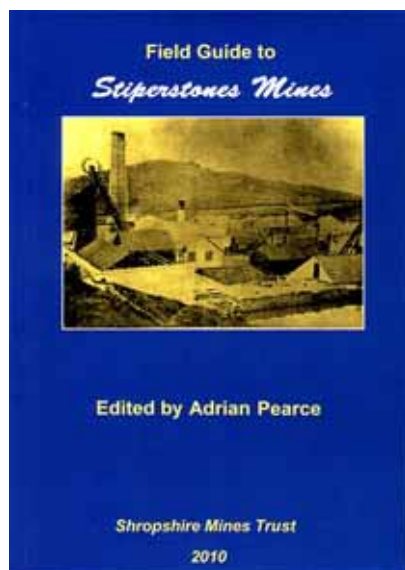


ISBN: 978-906663-09-4

Softback, 320 pages, over 200 b&w
photographs, drawings and plans.
Price £12.95.



Books and Videos



Field Guide to Stiperstones Mines, Shropshire

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

Published on behalf of the Shropshire Mines Trust, This pocket-sized (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 non-technical 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

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 bargain at £15.

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, chalcopryrite 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, pump-out 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 2011

President: David Adams

**Membership, Insurance &
BCA Rep: Mike Davies**

1st January: Columns Open Day,
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu.

Chair: Neal Rushton

Tackle: Andy Harris

19th February: NAMHO
Archaeological Research Framework
Seminar, National Coal Mining
Museum for England, Caphouse
Colliery, Wakefield. Looking at the
archaeology of coal, clay and
ironstone. More details on:
www.namho.org

Vice-Chair: Tony Wilson

First Aid Officer:

5th March: BCRA Cave Science
Symposium, Cardiff University (with
field trip the next day).

**Secretary & Training
Officer: Andrew Wood**

scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

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
ninamorgan@lineone.net

Treasurer: Marian Boston

**Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton**

8th - 15th May: 12th International
Cave Rescue Conference, Bulgaria.

**Conservation & NAMHO
Rep: Steve Holding**

**'Below' Editor, Publications:
Kelvin Lake**

e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk

18th - 22nd July: NSS Convention,
Glenwood Springs, Colorado, USA.

29th July - 1st August: NAHMO
Conference, Preston Montford Field
Study Centre. Plus events in the
following week.

