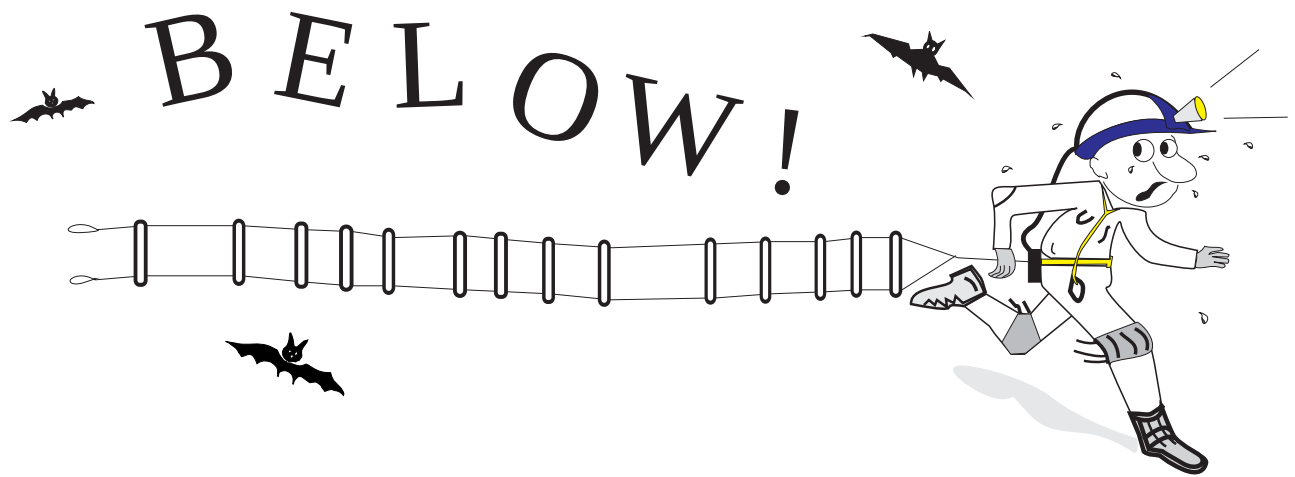




Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Winter Issue No: 98.4

Additions to the Library

A number of publications have been added to the club library since the last issue of 'Below' these include:

North Wales C.C. Newsletter:

No. 251, September 1998; No. 252, October 1998

Mining Heritage Society of Ireland:

Newsletter No.8, September 1998

Norfolk Mineral & Lapidary Society:

Stone Chat Volume 19, No. 1 Autumn 1998

Annual Dinner

A successful Club Dinner was held at the Tern Hill Hall Hotel, with guest speaker Tony Waltham giving a fascinating talk about the China Cave Project. His talk showed some interesting side effects of industrial pollution on the huge cave systems in China - acid fog being just one!

Unfortunately for the caves they are 'down stream' of various furnaces and coal mines so suffer the 'outfall' from the processes. His photographs of the coal mines were particularly interesting showing very primitive working methods - including the use of sleds and wicker baskets for underground haulage. These pictures were very reminiscent of old sketches made by the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children in this country nearly 150 years ago!

Special thanks go to Mole for supplying working pit lamp 'table decorations' from his extensive lamp collection.

Web Site Additions

A new feature recently added to the Club Web site is:



You will find the link to the Labyrinth on the main activities page at:

www.serve.com/scmc

The Labyrinth is intended to be a fun(?) way of finding out about the Club's activities, with background notes, diagrams and photographs about various sites - although there is an *armchair caver* option, for those who don't fancy exploring the site.

If you have any interesting pictures or notes about a site - particularly the smaller sites which would not normally appear in a Club Account, and would like them to reach a wider audience then this could be the place.

Kelvin

Finally
Happy Christmas
and a

Merry New Year

to all
Club Members

Kelvin



News Round-Up 1

by Ivor Brown

Whixall Bodies

Shropshire Arch. & Hist. Society Transactions Vol. LXXI 1996 contain an article on the 3 bodies known to have been found by peatmen at Whixall Moss. According to contemporary reports in 1889 some hundreds of people make their livelihood from cutting and selling peat.

Salop Saltworks

Some information on Shropshire saltworks, mines and wells is given in Shropshire Soc. Transactions LXIV 1985. They include saltworks at Donnington, Pitchford, Jackfield, Kingsley Wyche and Church Preen. Remains of the Kingsley Wyche shaft could still be seen in the 1970's.

Lloyds Engine Report

Richard Hayman has just published the archaeological report on the Lloyds Engine 'dig' in Transactions of Shropshire Arch. & Hist. Society, 1997. He believes the engine house dates only to 1745! It is a very interesting report.

Hospital

Ironbridge Quarterly No.3, 1998 contains an article on the Lilleshall Co. Cottage Hospital, Albion Street, St. Georges 1903-28. This gives details of injuries in many pit accidents, 638 accidents are recorded, Woodhouse Pit being the major source, and pony drivers were the most frequently listed occupations.

Record Search

Shropshire records and Research (the old SRO) are offering a 'search' service for HSE Abandoned non-coal and oil shale mine plans. Their present charges are £35 per hour or part thereafter, plus copies supplied from £1 each. The search includes annotated base sheet summary.

They can also provide A3 or A4 size copies from their collection of plans/maps that are not in copyright for an identified site. They hold a full set of 1st, 2nd edition and 1920's and 1930's

revisions of County Series (1:2500) maps on microfilm for Shropshire, plus many later sheets; 6":1 mile Ordnance Survey sheets, Tithe maps (circa 1840) and field name maps (based on the Tithe); as well as a number of earlier county maps.

Underground Shrewsbury

Current Archaeology, No.159 (Sept. 1998) contains an article by N.Baker on 'Underground Shrewsbury' it deals with the very old but fascinating cellars beneath Shrewsbury. Try a meal in Macdonalds 'well preserved medieval undercroft' next time you are in town.

Selby Coal

Plans for the decommissioning of the Selby Coalfield are now being prepared. Whitmoor Mine, after only about 10 years production has already been closed. The 5 mine sites cover about 165 ha of North Yorkshire County and about 35ha of the City of York's local authority area.

from Mineral Planning, Sept 1998

New 'Mining' Method

The idea of extracting methane gas from the coal seam, either in a virgin state or partly worked already, known as 'coalbed methane extraction' is still expanding.

The U.S. State of Alabama produced 9.82 billion cubic feet of gas in October 1997 (its record month), which was about one quarter of all gas produced in the state (including off-shore). 9.82 b.c.f is equivalent to 1.64 million barrels of oil. Several areas of Britain including, it is believed parts of Shropshire are licenced for feasibility work on coalbed extraction.

based on 'Coal Age' May 1998

Note:

An American billion is equivalent to 1,000,000,000 unlike a British billion, which is 1,000,000,000,000.

Kelvin

Old Mine Stores

In the USA research work is now being done on the feasibility of pumping methane into old coal mines for storage purposes. So far they have found that some European mines also offer re-adsorption potential by which unworked coal adsorbs the gas increasing storage potential by a factor of 10.

E & MJ Magazine, Sept 1998

Sounds like a good way of putting a time-bomb under Telford!

Recent Acquisitions by IJB

1. Sections from the **Royal Commission on Mining Royalties 1891-3** (gives details of Earl of Tankerville agreements with parties working Tankerville, Pennerley and Potters Pits).
2. **Valuation details for Shropshire Coal District 1946** - details of collieries in readiness for Nationalisation.
3. **Bibliography and Index of Geology and Allied Sciences (including mining) for Wales and the Welsh Borders 1536-1958**, over 600 pages (2 volumes) includes publication title, source, name of author, date (over 20 items per page). Published by the University of Wales, 1961-3.

New Publications

Land Reclamation, Ed. H.R.Fox et al, published by Balkema, Rotterdam, 1998. £25. Contains a section 'Industrial Archaeological Aspects' dealing mainly with Shropshire (pp305-315, S. Shropshire & Coalbrookdale mine sites by I.J.Brown)

Ironstone Working in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield by IJB in Mining History Vol. 13, No.5 Summer 1998 (9 pages).

A Mining Family called Brown, by IJB in 'Shropshire Unfolded' Sept. 1998.



Club News Round-Up

Rita Fellows

The Club extends its sympathies to Roy Fellows for the recent sad loss of his wife Rita. Our thoughts are with you at this time.

AGM Changes

A few changes to the Co-opted Club Officers have occurred as a result of the AGM.

1. Eileen Bowen has become the new Assistant Secretary.
2. Andy Harris has taken on the job of Tackle Officer. He has reinforced and improved his shed to take the gear and would like any borrowed gear to be returned to him promptly. Special colour coded flashing neon hooks will be used to ensure that ropes are replaced in the correct spots.

However, you should note that some Club gear will still be kept with Steve Holding (mainly the 'frequent use' items).

Oxygen Meter

During digging operations at Ritton Castle the Oxygen meter started registering strange results. It detected a drop in Oxygen levels and sounded the alarm, but did not flash the led. Oxygen levels appear to be low in the upper part of the heading where the dig is taking place, rather than near floor level. It does not appear to be a gas problem, but more an oxygen deficiency one due to the small nature of the dig area.

The meter has consequently been sent off for repair.

Dog Attack

The owner of the Alsatian dog which attacked a group of Club Members as they left Perkins Level (resulting in injuries to a members guest), has been ordered to keep his dog under control and pay £30 Police costs. The dog bit Kevin Horne on the left calf and both thighs, causing puncture wounds that required hospital treatment.

Counting Bats

No, not a new breed of intelligent Bat!, but news that Mike Worsfold will be starting the winter season bat count soon - watch the monthly meets list for more up-to-date details about sites to visited

New Subs

Following discussions at the AGM the subscription rates for the next year are:

Full Member:	£ 15
Family Membership:	£ 22
Associate Member:	£ 12.50
Junior Member:	£ 8

It was also proposed that Associate Members should be integrated into the Full Membership category, giving them the opportunity to go underground should they wish to do so. This proposal won't be voted on until the next AGM.

Fresh Copies

Accounts 17 (Snailbeach Lead Mine, Nr. Minsterley, Shropshire by Ivor Brown - a short history of some of the surface remains) and 22 (Gazetteer of Metal Mines of Shropshire) have been reprinted, so there are plenty of copies available if you missed them the first time round.

Conservation

Nick Southwick has been leading a variety of work groups at Snailbeach recently. One task has been to lay new track (complete with truck) in Day Level, and another has been the excavation and clearance of existing railway track around the dressing floor area.

Snailbeach Classifier

Dave Adams has completed a set of drawings of the Spiral Classifier at Snailbeach. They were brought along to the November Club meeting and were greeted with admiration from members present.

Consideration is being given to making limited copies available for members, hopefully more details will be available in the next issue of Below.

Alveley Miners

Reunion

For the past two years the Alveley Historical Society have set aside a Sunday afternoon for a reunion for ex-Alveley miners, at the Severn Valley Country Park, Alveley. This year about 50 turned up, with a variety of memorabilia. (I don't know exactly what this included as the event was on Sunday 13th Sept, clashing with the Heritage Open Days, but I have been promised details.) Next year is the 30th anniversary of the closure of the mine, and there is talk of a larger commemoration being organised in Highley.

Alveley Colliery Bridge

Constructed in 1936 to link Alveley Colliery with the screens on the Severn Valley Railway, this was the first concrete bridge to be built on the cantilever principle.

Unfortunately it seems to be coming to the end of its life and the County Council are discussing ideas for a replacement (I will organise a club outing over the winter to have a look round what is left at Alveley).

Pictures of Alveley on the Internet

The Hulton Getty Archive has two pictures taken underground at Alveley Colliery in the early 1950s which can be accessed via its web site. The URL is

<http://www.hulton.getty-images.com>

Then follow the links to the Hulton Getty Archive and the search facility.

The Alveley pictures can be accessed by searching under "Highley"; using "Shropshire" will also pull up pictures of a brickworks in the Coalbrookdale area.

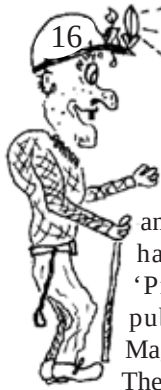
David Poyner

Note:

You may find that to see the pictures you have to look at them from a web site that is classed as an academic site ie: have an address ending in .ac.uk



Three Highley Miners in the first half of the 20th Century, by Ivor Brown



As mentioned in the last issue of 'Below' the National Coal Museum has recently acquired, and had on display, about half the collection of 'Profiles' that were published in 'Coal Magazine' in the late 1940's. These were commissioned

from H.A. Freeth by the new National Coal Board. Four of the 56 profiles published were of Shropshire miners, one from Madeley (see Samuel Cookson in 'Below' 98.3) and three from Highley. The Collection at the Museum contains only the original of Frederick Morgan (see the recently circulated leaflet for his picture in colour). The present location of the other originals is unknown but the Freeth family are trying to locate them.

The artist H. Arthur Freeth was born in 1912 and trained at Birmingham College of Art (was this the reason for his interest in Shropshire miners?). After training he worked in Italy 1936-9 and then became a major in the Intelligence Corp. during War Service. Later Freeth was seconded to the RAF as an Official War Artist. After the War he worked in London Art Schools, but in 1947 the NCB gave him a commission which took him all over Britain, both underground and surface at the NCB pits. In addition to the Profiles he was also commissioned to produce, with Sid Chaplin, a similar series on the NCB's collieries and coalfields but nothing in this series seems to relate to Shropshire.

Freeth later continued as a general portrait painter until his death in 1986.

Profiles No. 8, 31 and 47 are of Highley miners, but by 1947 Highley Pit was a non-producer, the coal was being extracted at Alveley Pit - a new and very modern colliery across the River Severn (see note on page 3 about Alveley bridge remains). All three miners however describe their work at the older pit, two had moved to the new one by the time of publication and one,

Morgan, had moved to Kingsbury Colliery, Warwickshire.

1. Job Hammonds

He was a horse-keeper and had had charge of 52 ponies, but by the late 1940's had only three: - Boxer, Jim and Major. Job lived in Chelmarsh all his life. He was born there in 1881, and by age 13 he was pony driving underground. He then worked on the coalface from 1904 to 1935 when he returned to his beloved work with ponies. He had had much experience of "colt breaking" and was especially good with Welsh ponies brought in rough from the Welsh Mountains.

Much of 'his' story is more about the Highley ponies than himself, one named Bonus did about 28 years underground and stories are given about others, some good, some bad. At the time Job's portrait was published (March 1951) he had just almost finished his mining career (about 55 years underground). He had recently fallen through the cover of a "creeper-inspection hole". (A 'creeper' was a hydraulic ram pushing tubs along by pressing on the axles). He was badly bruised and was off sick. One

of his brothers was still working as a shaftsman at another Shropshire pit (Ifton), while another was a retired miner. Job's son did not enter the pits.

2. Lawson Roper

His account was published in November 1949. He was a driver of the winding engine at Alveley, keeping the engine going 24 hours a day on shift work with his two mates Arthur Morgan and James Deakin.

Lawson was not born in Shropshire, but at Colley Gate near Cradley Heath some time about 1890. His first job, when only 12, was to drive a one-horse gig for the managing director of Samuel Evers and Sons, Colliery Owners. He married in 1914 and in 1917 got a haulage job at Old Homer Hill Colliery, Cradley Heath. His eyes however were on the winding enginemans job, for he had many times as a boy carried his fathers dinner to him at the engine house - his father being the Winding Engineman. (Lawson's two elder brothers were also winding enginemen at other collieries). However Lawson had to wait, first he drove a 'main and tail' rope engine underground, then became a stoker and

Job Hammonds, Coal March 1951



Three Highley Miners in the first half of the 20th Century, continued...

boiler maintenance man. He installed a little winding plant himself at Maypole Pit, Cradley Heath, and unofficially worked the winding engine there. On the day he achieved his goal, control of the engines at Old Homer Hill, the manager showed one main concern, his weight. But Lawson convinced him that this was no problem in such a sedentary job, and he was after all only "18 stone four".

At some time in the 1920s/30s Lawson transferred to Highley Colliery steam winder, where he was remembered for, on occasions, landing the cage so fast at the top that the safety gates would shoot up into the headframe - and stay there!

IJB was taken to Alveley where Britain's youngest manager, Ray Hasbury, was doing amazing things with a new pit ("See where you could be in 10 years time" said the bosses to 16 year old IJB and his fellow pit-boy colleagues - it never happened). Alveley was drawing 6,000 tons of coal a week from a seam 3ft 9in. thick, eight coalfaces and 832 men. The pit was 1,000 ft. deep and Lawson, with his mates Morgan and Deakin "had to draw over 300 tubs per hour, with 4 tubs to each run, which meant 75 trips in 60 minutes" (was this really correct? IJB).

Lawson must have retired soon afterwards, he had no sons to follow the family tradition.

3. Frederick Morgan

Account published December 1947). He was born in the 1890's at Highley and began work at the pit there when aged 13. He was the eldest boy in a family of six, his father and grandfather were miners and the three sons were all put into mining. After 4½ years as an ostler (pony-boy) he graduated to loader at the coalface and at 22 became the youngest stallman in the colliery. He took his deputy's examination in 1916 but, though called upon in emergencies to do special jobs, he could never bring himself to 'leave the men'. His place he felt was among his pals, doing the same work, sharing the same discomforts. (Thirty years later he was still a faceman, but at a different pit, and only working part-time as he was then heavily involved in political life and public service).

While still at Highley in the 1914-18 War he became a part-time mine rescueman and he gained medals and cups in local rescue competitions. He was also solo tenor horn in Highley Colliery Brass Band.



Frederick Morgan,
Coal Dec. 1947

In 1918 he married and moved to Kingsbury Colliery, Warwickshire. He became chairman of the men's Lodge Committee and of the Checkweighmen's Committee, later still a Borough Councillor. In 1945 the King conferred on him the British Empire Medal for services to the Coal Industry.

He was chargehand ("puffler" in Shropshire) on a conveyor-face and chairman of Tamworth Labour Party and in 1946 he was made Mayor of Tamworth. When interviewed by the artist Freeth, he said he was still a regular faceman, in the previous 11 months he had been at work 137 shifts out of a possible 242 and produced 1781 tons of coal (13 tons of coal each shift worked was normal for this time, IJB).

By now in addition to all his council duties he was also a County Magistrate. Apparently this was possible because his wife was making the family's accounts balance by running a fish and chip shop. He had one son who does not seem to have followed the family's mining tradition.

Finally

As stated earlier an attempt is being made to find the original drawings but in the meantime the National Coal Museum uses a copy of a copy of Lawson Roper in its Education Pack and of an original coloured print of Frederick Morgan in its publicity leaflet on the artist H.A. Freeth.



Lawson Roper,
Coal Nov. 1949



News Round-Up 2

Gravel Hills Mine and Dumps, Perranporth Beach, Cornwall

Due to over zealous activity of certain mineral collectors, the Commandant, Major Barry Andrews, has announced that he is gating the mine. Further, anyone taking material from the bank backed by the newt pond could face action. The mine and dumps come under MOD jurisdiction. In the last year the amount of material taken from the bank in front of the pond is more than has been pulled out in the last ten years. One of the parties concerned is from London or has a London accent.

Stone Chat

Greystones Quarry, Launceston, Cornwall

The Manager, Scott Ford, wishes to remind parties that he is very happy for mineral collectors to visit his quarry, with permission, but that whoever visits must NOT climb faces, work under them, or not wear hard hats. They will be asked to leave the quarry and collecting could be stopped for everyone.

Stone Chat

Allum Pot Rescue

A member of Jackpot Caving Club was trapped in Allum Pot over the weekend of November 21st/22nd due to rising water levels.

A party of 5 members from the Chesterfield based club entered the system near the River Ribble (Whernside, North Yorkshire). Four members of the party managed to exit the cave after heavy rain caused it to flood. Unfortunately member Graham Steed failed to get out in time and was trapped for seven hours before levels dropped enough for him to get out.

Virtual Atlas

New web site for the 'Virtual atlas of opaque and ore minerals in their associations' by R.A.Ixer and P.Duller

www.smenet.org/opaque-ore

Laporte Wagons - Update

A picture of one of these wagons appears in **Private Owner Wagons Volume One** by Bill Hudson, OPC. This book is now out of print. The author refers to the wagons being used to convey barytes from Malehurst mine and also Silverband mine near Appleby, Cumberland. The wagon is an 8-plank 1923 RCH design for a load of 12 tons.

Now this type of wagon usually carried coal and as barytes density is approximately twice that of coal the wagon load could not have filled much of the wagon and I do not see why 4/5 plank wagons were not used instead.

One problem is the sheer dearth of photographs of trains on the Minsterley branch!

From the official GWR railway traffic statistics it is possible to know how much much material left by rail.

Rail Statistics

The figures for Pontesbury Station (PS) and Minsterley Station (MS) are as follows:

Year	PS	MS
1903	11,196 tons	904
1913	10,394	4344
1923	1974	907
1929	4346	267
1930	2242	352
1931	2025	572
1932	2791	1647
1933	4620	1177
1934	4120	613
1935	1622	3349
1936	1836	393
1937	1428	238
1938	1507	457

This obviously mirrors the fortunes of the mines as can be seen from 1913 to 1923. I do not understand what happened in 1932,33 and 35 with respect to the 2 stations.

I hope this is of interest.

Alan Rhodes

Chinese Explosion

Three people were killed and 32 were reported missing after a gas explosion at the Liushichan coal mine in the Shaanxi province (northwest China) on November 23rd.

Thirty-seven miners were evacuated from the shaft, including 11 who were injured.

China has a high fatality rate in coal mine accidents.

China 1998

In China recently IJB visited the Geology and Mining Museum in Beijing (Peking), not an impressive building or site but it contains some interesting exhibits on the whole range of minerals worked (China has the greatest reserves for 20 of the known most useful minerals). It also has displays on some surprising "resources" like geothermal energy and most surprising of all "geo-tourism". This consists of two large display areas on the potential of its geology, old mineral workings and even natural hazards like landslips to attract foreign visitors. IJB visited the Karst Pillars of the Li River Valley and the Great Wall on its mountain ridge and agrees that they have potential!

He also visited two show caves, Fubo Hill and Reed Flute Caves in Guilin, but saw no show mines.

A highlight of the trip was when on the way back, he had the temerity to ask the cabin staff of the Boeing 747 whereabouts the plane was. He was invited to visit the Captain. On arrival upstairs he was shown to the Captain's empty seat (he had gone for a rest in the little bunk-room). Dazzled by the experience he nearly forgot his question, but was shown the vast expanses of Mongolia and Siberia from 30,000 ft. up in perfectly clear weather. No mineral workings were seen only tundra and forest but there must be an amazing amount of mineral down there awaiting location. What would the old miners of Shropshire have thought if they knew one of their number had considered such a thing from such a lofty position?

Ivor Brown



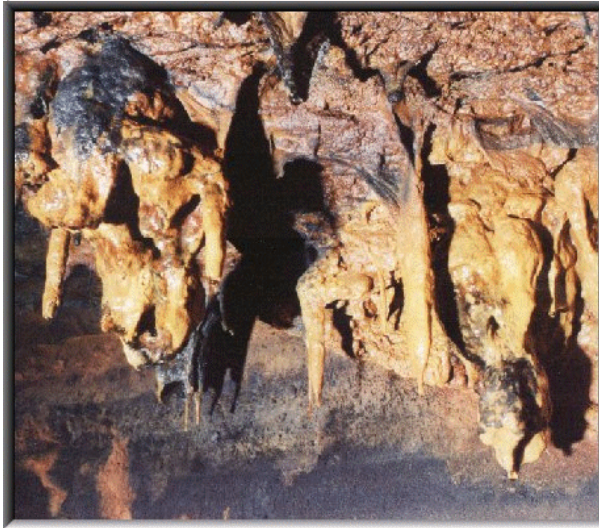
Ritton Castle The Dig

Following the report in the last issue and as digging continues at Ritton Castle, with the 'never-ending' excavation in full swing, Mike Worsfold has lent 'Below' a couple of pictures to illustrate the story so far.

Right: Wet section (drained by diggers), looking in-by.

Far right: Detail of rusticles and coloured formations found in this section (or are they fossiled bats?)

Below: Steve Holding attempting to 'push the dig'



Letters to the Editor

Broseley Mine Remains

You may know more about this than I do, but I see in a recent Bridgnorth Journal the Broseley Local history society (ex-Wilkinson Society) had been given an old tub, a length of chain and a winding drum. The latter seemed to puzzle them. Worth following up for Below?

David Poyner

I have tried to contact the Society but cannot find an up-to-date contact name or number, can any members living in Broseley shed any light on this.

Kelvin

Old Glory

Not sure if this is of interest, but I came across the following in "Old Glory", a national magazine dealing with traction engine and other old machinery restoration. It is in a report on the Onslow Rally:

"The Shropshire Mines Trust also put on an excellent display of equipment, including a large compressed air winding engine which had been restored since the previous year, and a longer more ambitious recreated drift mine with an inclined railway out of it".

Cleobury Mortimer

Furnace & John Weston

I am interested in John Weston, who in 1576 leased a blast furnace at Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire from Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The furnace used locally mined iron ore. I have been told that Weston was associated with the Mines Royal. Can anyone confirm this, or have they come across his name in any other context? I suspect he may have been related to Westons involved in the Weald iron industry.

David Poyner



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6 Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, Coalport by Ivor Brown

Blists Hill Mine

The Blists Hill Mine was sunk by William Reynolds between 1786 and 1799 at the same time as the construction of the adjoining canal and the Tar Tunnel which connects with it. The name Blists Hill seems to have been derived from Bliss Hill as used on the draft OS Map of 1827 and the first OS Map of the 1830s. This in turn was probably a corruption of Blest's Hill, named after a family named Blest who lived locally in the 18th Century. The alternative view is that Blist's is a corruption of Blesst, another corruption of Blessers derived from the frequency that the workers at the Furnaces and Works said their prayers. However not only was the name in use before the Furnaces were built but also, according to a boy named Canning, in evidence to the Child Employment Commissioners about 1840, the workers here did not pray at work "as they do in other areas".

The early years are notable for the number of recorded accidents particularly as it was never a large mine, indicated by the fact that there was no community built here, just a number of scattered cottages and a couple of rows of houses. The accidents included an explosion in 1804 when 3 miners died and 8 were injured (according to Mrs Fletcher over 1,000 people attended the

funeral, but the then curate said 2,000). There was a fall at 150 yd. depth in a coal seam (probably the Big Flint) in 1812 which killed Edward Barker and also the death from burns of a boy aged 15 in 1832.

Geology & Production

A shaft section of the Blists Hill Pit found in an old Memorandum Book of the Madeley Wood Company, dated 1796, shows the shafts to be about 607 ft deep (see Fig.1). A modern interpretation shows that some Upper Coal Measures are present including a sulphur coal and the brick and tile clays or marls, one of which "a red clunchy parting" was being "worked for tile clay". The Middle Coal Measures including the Top, Double, Threequarter, Double and Yard seams are absent due to the 'Symon' unconformity although the lowest seams, the Big Flint Coal and Pennystone Ironstone are present. The coals, ironstone and fireclay seams of the Lower Coal Measures are nearly all present including with their depths:

- New Mine Coal 482 ft deep
- Ganey (528 ft)
- Best, Randle and Clod Coals (552 ft)
- Crawstone Ironstone 578 ft (2 ft thick)
- Lancashire Ladies Coal 607 ft (2 ft thick).

The mine plans show that there are three connecting levels, at the Tar Tunnel, to the Lloyds Pumping Shafts and a tunnel to the Yard Coal incrop to the north. The shaft section states, at 98 ft depth, "to the Tar Level" but by calculation from the Tar Level entrance at Coalport it should connect with the shaft at about 175 ft depth. Perhaps at the early stages during construction there was a temporary access at this higher point but all the evidence since is that there was a more direct connection at the deeper level. (The surface level of the shaft is about 325 ft, surface level of the Tar Tunnel is about 138 ft which gives 187 ft difference or about 175 ft. if drainage gradient is allowed for).

It is believed that the shafts were sunk by William Reynolds as part of an upper canal-shaft-tunnel system, as existed elsewhere in the Coalfield. Some reports say that the tunnel was intended to have formed a lower canal but there is little evidence that it has ever been used as such. The side passage which leads from the Tar Tunnel in the direction of New Hill Mine is, however, about 2 ft higher than the main tunnel level which would have allowed direct tipping underground from a wagon into a boat.

Blists Hill mine was known to be rich in minerals, coal, ironstone, fireclay and

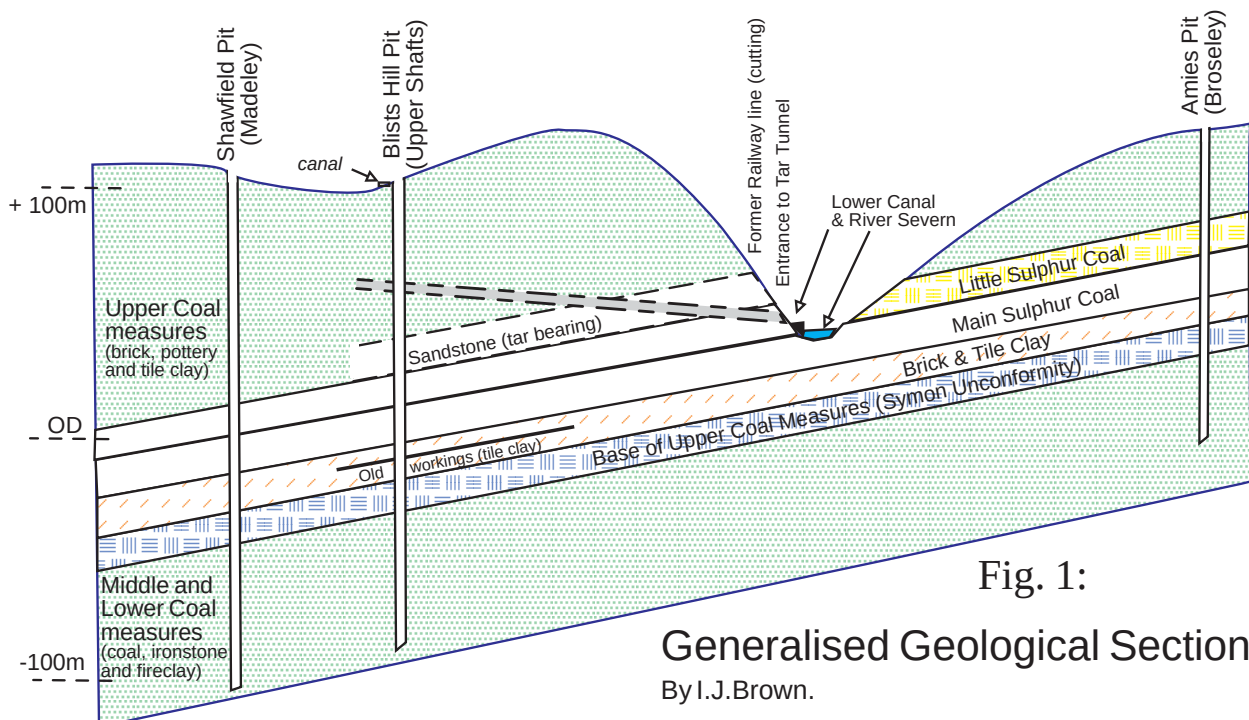


Fig. 1:

Generalised Geological Section

By I.J. Brown.



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6 Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

brick and tile clays, before the time that the three furnaces were constructed there in the 1830/40s. Coal and ironstone were certainly most important in the early years, the 1847 Tithe Map describes the site as "Three Blast Furnaces, two shafts, engine house, part of inclined plane, pit mounds, road etc".

It was quite usual to set up a brick kiln at a new mining site to provide brick and tiles for shaft walling, mine buildings and houses. This seems to have happened here as shown by the fact that the shaft section shows a clunch being worked for tiles in the 1790s. There is however little evidence of large-scale brick working until 1847. An extensive brickworks is recorded at Blists Hill in 1851 and the second large brickworks seems to date from some

years later, perhaps the 1880s. (Randall only refers to one brickworks - a "red brickworks" here in 1880 and only a probable small kiln is shown on the 1882 OS Map).

From this time coal and ironstone were eclipsed by the brick and tile clays. In the 1870s only one coal seam was being worked, the Yard Coal, accessed by a tunnel from the Blists Hill shafts at 430ft depth to a point where it incrops at unconformity in the northerly direction. The old records state that the seam was a poor one, only seven inches thick.

Mine Development

By 1891 all the workings below 396 ft were abandoned and a scaffold had been constructed in the shaft at this level. From this position a level was

driven to connect with the Lloyds Pumping Shaft and some of the mine water was removed by this route. Water was also collected by this means from some of the Company's other mines at Madeley; the Meadow Pit, Styches, Hills Lane and Shawfield. From this time only brick and tile clays were produced using the pillar and stall method. In the early 1880s W. Ward was manager and a Mr Franks was 'chartermaster' but by 1891 the management had changed to C. Raspass as manager with T. Owen undermanager.

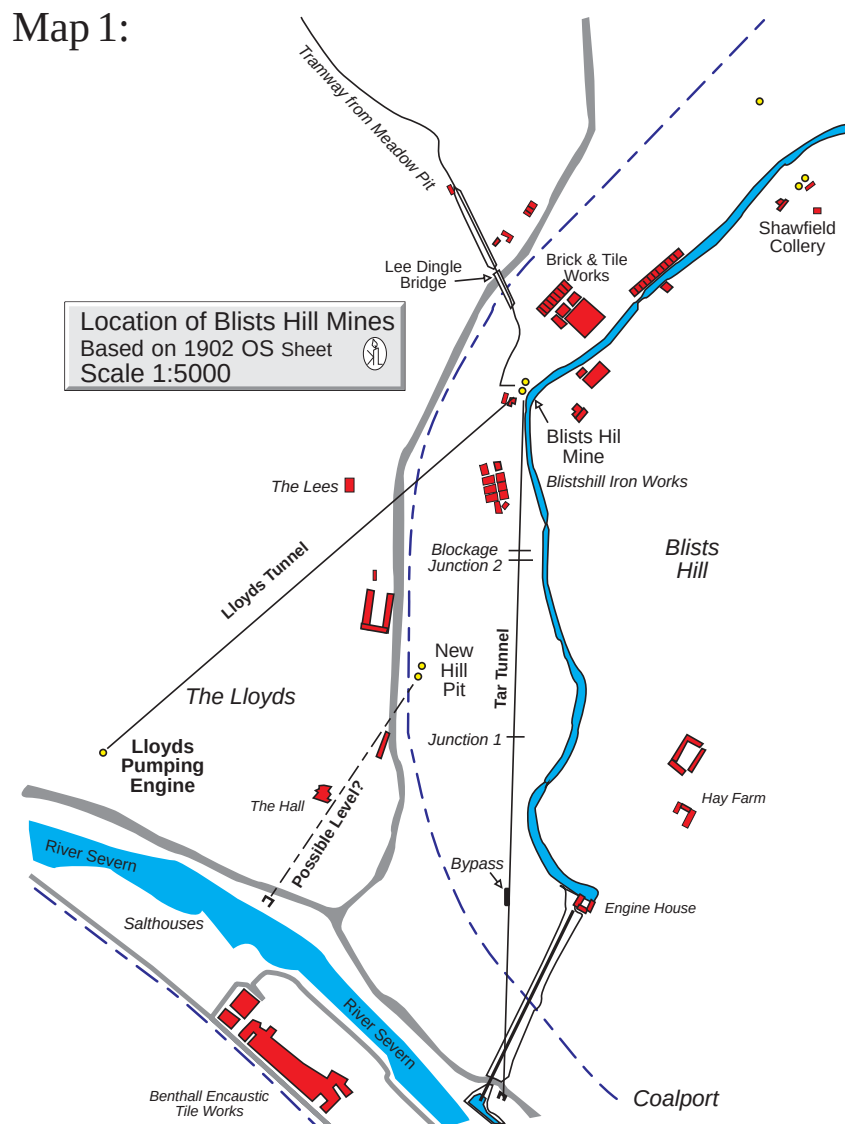
The old 'chartermaster' system had been abandoned but the men still worked under contract as was shown in an accident in 1898 when Franks was described as a 'contractor'.

About 1900 the mine was being worked alternately with Shawfield Colliery, a short distance away. The same team of up to 12 miners, 4 surface workers, 2 underground ponies and 2 carthorses would produce red clays for some months from Blists Mill then white clay (from above the Clod Coal Seam) at Shawfield Mine during the next few months. The two ponies Ben (dark brown in colour) and Turpin (a blue-roan) were raised and lowered through the 7 to 8 ft diameter shafts as required.

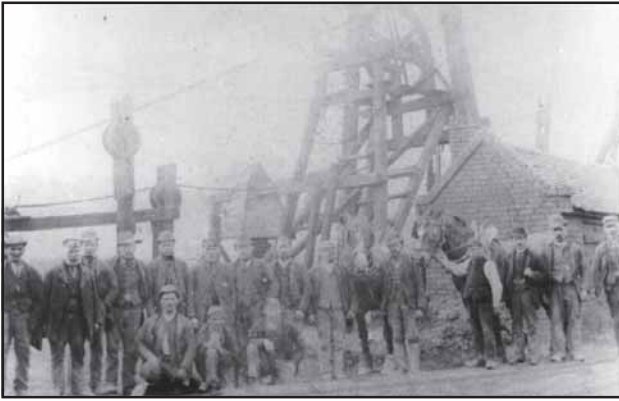
A photo taken about 1890 shows the ponies and some long serving miners including S. Northall, F. Richards, J. Small, R. Oakes, H. Littlehales, G. Durnall, P. Cursley and W. Howells. H. Fiddler worked at the mine for more than 40 years and was for a long time the 'fireman' or deputy.

The Madeley Wood Company had leased some land from a John Titley who owned the neighbouring estate when they extended the brickworks in 1851. George Legge (1821-95) married Titley's daughter and eventually inherited the estate. In 1916 the Madeley Wood Co. conveyed the remainder of their works to George's son William (1852-1937). By this time Legges had also acquired the Woodlands brickworks and the two works at Madeley Wood between Ironbridge and Madeley. The transfer from

Map 1:



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6 Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...



Blists Hill Mine,
about 1890.
Showing pit
ponies.

Madeley Wood Co. to Legge cost £3,200 which included 3 cottages.

During this century the mine was worked very intermittently, indeed abandonment plans were presented in both 1925 and 1941 and, at the later date, deep mine working finally stopped. The most recent workings were to the south of the east brickworks (over the canal from the shafts) and to the south of the shafts below the Tar Tunnel in the Upper Red Clay seam. With this seam at 381 ft depth and the Tar Tunnel at about 180 ft this working probably caused the damage, by subsidence, seen at the furthest point reached in the Tunnel. In the late 1920s the miners were getting about 30 tons of clay per day total, five and a half days a week for a wage averaging £2 .6s 2d a week.

The clay seam itself was so hard that it had to be blasted and once on surface it was laid out in stacking areas for weathering. To assist this process it was turned every few months, water being added as necessary. By this means it was broken down sufficiently for making into 'Broseley Tiles'.

According to the 1930s advertisements it was this that enabled it to stand such burning "**that produces tiles that will never laminate, shale, disintegrate or change their beautiful colours**". It was "**the tile without a rival**" and always carried the trademark "Iron-Broseley" made at "Broseley Tile Works, Madeley, established 1780".

In their advertisement in 1935 (Fig. 2) the mine owners, Geo. Legge & Sons, claimed that they were established in 1780 and still made "genuine Broseley

Roofing Tiles", their products travelling as far as Australia and the Argentine. The "clay is the deepest of all the Broseley clays, being mined at a depth of 400 ft below the surface". This could only be a reference to the workings at Blists Hill. 'The advert added that they had extensive clay resources and had every hope of attaining another century.

The Company failed soon afterwards following lawsuits leading from the collapse of the Washbrook culvert under their waste heaps which caused extensive flooding in the upstream area. An attempt was made at getting to the collapse by sinking a shaft but this was not completely successful. A new company Geo. Legge & Son (1939) then advertised as manufacturing Broseley Roofing Tiles at Madeley Tile Works was listed in Kelly's Directory but production ceased during the War.

After William Legge (who died 1937) the works at Blists Hill were then taken over by his nephew W.G.Dyas (died 1940) and then E.J.James. He bought the works but left before 1951. The writer well remembers sheltering in a

hot kiln at this time with Mr James, who was a neighbour to his family.

John Raleigh then took over but went bankrupt in 1956 and everything was sold (see advert in Wellington Journal 4th August 1956). Raleigh gave, as the principal reasons for his failure, bad coal and the uncertainty of the repaying of debts.

Accidents

During the life of the mine the local newspaper reported many incidents, accidents such as the 1804 explosion, the fall of roof on Edward Barker in 1812 and a 15 year old boy fatally burnt in 1832 already mentioned. In 1856 there was a serious winding incident and in 1860 W.Richards was run over by a wagon and killed underground. (The Richards family were closely involved in the mine's working over many years and still lived in the closest cottage to the mine in the 1970s. They also operated the boats on this part of the canal up to the First World War).

In the 1870s the local newspaper reported that a live frog had jumped out of the coal seam during working, although there were reputedly several 'witnesses', doubts exist as to what actually was seen.

On the first of February 1898 an explosion took place which surprised everyone including the mines' inspectorate, since no coal was being worked and the nearest seam was 90 ft below the clay working in which it occurred. There was, however, a small seam of coal visible in the shaft 24 ft

Fig. 2

ESTABLISHED IN 1780

"IRON BROSELEY" GENUINE BROSELEY ROOFING TILES
HAVE BEHIND THEM A CENTURY-AND-A-HALF
OF TILE-MAKING EXPERIENCE

Permanent Roofs of Distinction and Charm in Colour and Texture
are assured by the use of "IRON BROSELEY" ROOFING TILES
in either **HAND-MADE ANTIQUE** or **MACHINE-PRESSED GRADES**

Solely Manufactured by :

GEORGE LEGGE & SON LTD.
MADELEY,
SHROPSHIRE

Telegrams : Legge, Madeley, Salop
Telephone : No. 28 IRONBRIDGE



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

above. The deputy found firedamp in the clay working on his inspection and reported it to the contractor (formerly a chartermaster) J. Franks. Franks went into the place with a candle and he was burnt, but not fatally, in an explosion. Franks told the inspector that he understood the deputy to have said 'blackdamp' was present not 'firedamp' and that blackdamp was much more likely as they hadn't had an explosion of firedamp for 16 years.

The mine became noted for the number of small explosions and incidents involving lighted candles and explosives. In 1895, for example, a clay miner was injured by the premature explosion of "half a bobbin" of compressed powder even though it was being placed by a copper rammer. The hole is said to have been hand-drilled and almost triangular in shape.

In the early years of this century a Mr Howells and a Mr Dudley "got blown" in separate accidents and in 1930 there was a careless incident in which a miner received serious injuries when explosives rolled into a lighted candle.

Another simple accident, that of banging his head underground, led to the death of the undermanager Mr Jos. Bowen, aged 70 in 1923. Mr Bowen had also held this position for some years under the previous owners, the Madeley Wood Company. Before the First World War he had been undermanager for Meadow Pit, Shawfield and Blists Hill simultaneously. In May 1927 another miner, named Boden was killed and about the same time George Barker of Court Street, Madeley was also killed.

Mine Engines

The original winding and pumping engines are said to have been of the 'quadrant beam' type.

The winding engine was called 'old Adam' and is believed to have been one of the engines designed by Adam Heslop and used by the Reynolds-Anstice partnership, predecessors of the Madeley Wood Company. A similar pumping engine was called 'Eve'. The engines were described in an article in

Fig. 4

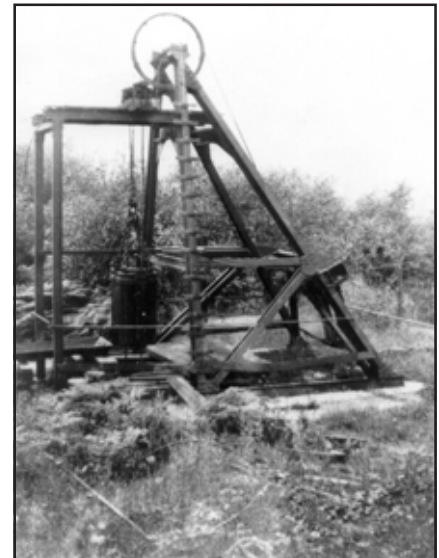
Pumping arrangement at Blists Hill Mine in 1930's.

Note:

Rope passes round a bottom pulley on right.

On left is trough leading to canal for the discharge from the kibble or 'bowk'.

Picture: late Frank Turner



'Power' magazine July 23 1912 where they were said to have been installed in 1779 and put out of use in 1889. While there are doubts about the earliest dates given, the engines were certainly old, having 'open top' hot and cold cylinders of the Newcomen type and a wooden beam.

It is believed that both engines were scrapped soon after the 1912 article was written. The engines were supplied with steam at 8-10 lb/sq in by a 10x12 ft. haystack boiler which itself was scrapped during the First World War.

About 1912 a horizontal steam winding engine was transferred to Blists Hill from Kemberton Pit where it had been used for hauling mine wagons on the surface. (It is believed that previously this engine had been erected new at Styches Pit on Madeley Bank about 1890 and then removed to Kemberton Pit in 1905). This engine and the winding

gear remained at the mine, disused from the last working in 1941, until 1956 when it was scrapped. Steam was supplied by two Lancashire boilers.

Pumping at the mine had been carried out by 'Eve', initially all the way to the surface, but after the connection was made with the Lloyds only up to this level. After about 1906 drainage was maintained by using a barrel fitted to the winding rope (see Fig. 4). At the surface the barrel was emptied, by releasing a plug in its bottom, into a water channel from which it ran into the canal.

Water from high in the shaft (top water) was removed by the Tar Tunnel. For ventilation a furnace, situated in the pit, was used until 1908 when natural air coursing was practised using one shaft as downcast, the other as upcast and with some assistance from the Tar Tunnel.

Fig 3

Area between Blists Hill Mine (in background) and top of Blists Hill Furnaces. The chimney and haystack boilers for the engine can be seen. (The men are coke making)
Pic: B. Waterson



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

Frank Turner

The late Frank Turner worked at this mine for many years and from 1935 to 1940, succeeded his father, as winding engineman. His recollections are given in **'Working at the Blists Hill Mine' in SCMC Journal 1978**. A Mr T.Aston was the stoker and generally looked after all the machinery.

After the Second World War Frank Turner and others considered reopening the mine but could not see an economic solution to the problems of water. Instead it was decided to open a drift mine into the hillside on the opposite side of the canal. Work started on this in 1947. This 'trial pit' accessed red clays beneath the Great Hay area and a conventional 2 ft gauge rail system was used with both wood and steel-tipper trucks.

About 1949 a miner was killed in a roof fall but working continued in a small way until the early 1950s. The adit was blocked for safety reasons in about 1970 though its position could still be seen where rails protruded from the bank.

Development as part of the Museum

The old Blists Hill shafts were backfilled about 1960, first by dumping a large number of pig carcasses and then completing with ash and domestic waste. After the commencement of



Fig 6

1985-6 Archaeological Dig around the early engine & boiler site

development of the Blists Hill Museum in 1968, proposals were put forward to reconstruct the mine. The steam winding engine from Milburgh Mine on the opposite side of the river, the last such engine in the Gorge, was acquired, restored and reconstructed in the rebuilt Blists Hill Mine horizontal engine house in 1969/70.

in operation to this depth to the present day - for demonstration purposes only.

In 1985-6 a major archaeological dig took place around the downcast shaft and in the position of the early engines and boilers. (see Figs.6, 7, & 8). A full report of the findings is available at the Museum.

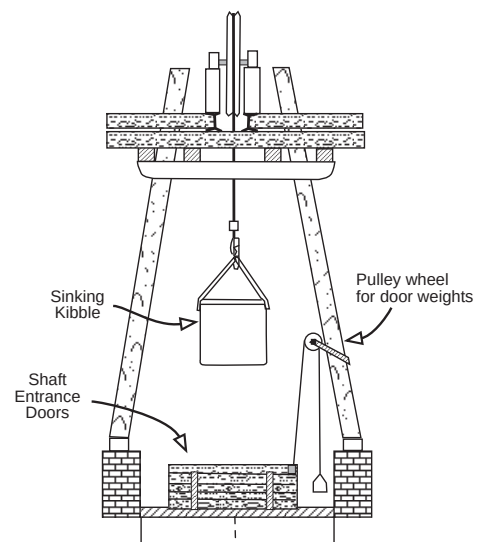
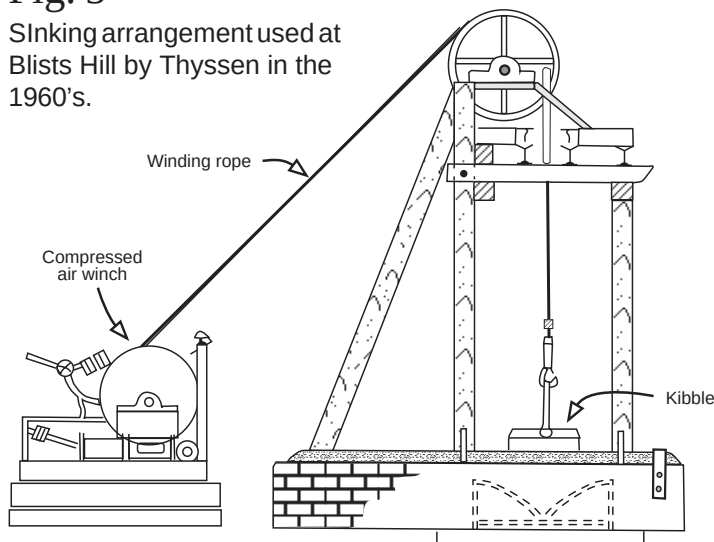
An attempt to re-open the upcast shaft to the level of the Tar Tunnel was then made in 1974. The contractors; Thyssens used a 'cactus-grab' device to clear out the shaft but repairs to the shaft-walling proved more expensive than anticipated (Fig.5). In the end the shaft was opened only to about 50 ft. depth. The steam engine and winding gear has continued

During 1993 the second shaft was opened to a depth of 15 ft and capped.

In its present state the mine represents a traditional, small mine of the area and uses many original features including parts of the cage, the engine house foundations and tramway. The steam winding operations with new wooden

Fig. 5

Sinking arrangement used at Blists Hill by Thyssen in the 1960's.



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

headframe is a rare combination in Europe today and the shaft must, at almost 200 years of age, be one of the oldest, if not the oldest shaft in the Coal Measures still open and in use.

A list of some employees at the Blists Hill Mine is given in the appendix.

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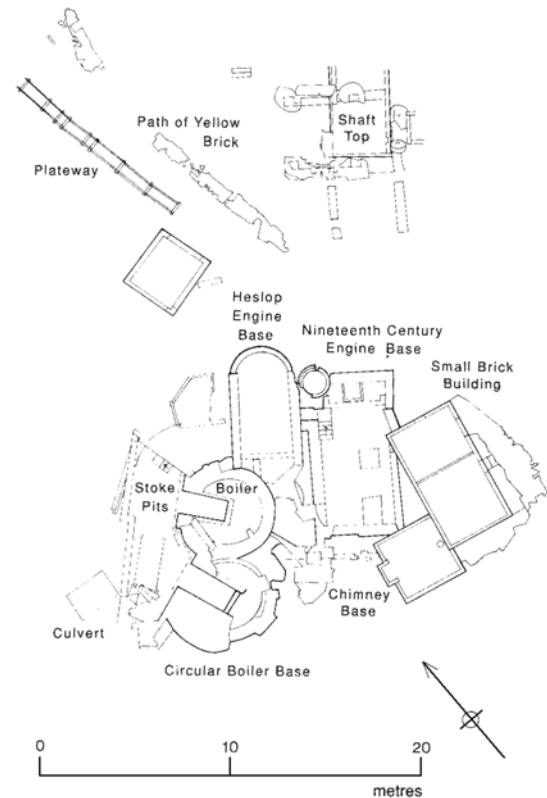
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Fig. 7

Plan of the excavated Heslop engine base. The site of the second engine appears to have been obliterated by a later engine bed.

Drawing: David Higgins/Michael Trueman/IGMT



Below: Boiler settings viewed from shaft side



Fig 8

Top: Detail of one of the two Haystack boiler bases exposed by 198-6 excavation. *Note:* Stoke hole/ fire grate area at top of picture.

Right: Curved brick area thought to have once held a Heslop engine, haystack boiler base to left.

Frank Turner always insisted there were 2 Adams engines here, could the second engine have been to the right of this one, and its site used for a later 19th C. engine base?



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

The Tar Tunnel

This tunnel is situated by the side of the River Severn and begins in the cellar of the village store. (Map 1.) It underlies the incline which connects the lower canal, which runs parallel to the river, to the upper canal. The tunnel was constructed by William Reynolds in 1786 and may have been part of a grand plan to form an upper canal - shaft - lower canal system similar to that used elsewhere. In the event the upper canal, although proposed by 1788, was not completed until 1792 and by this time an inclined plane system had been adopted instead. There is no real evidence that the tunnel was ever used as a canal.

After the tunnel had been driven about 900 ft. natural bitumen, (called 'tar' locally), had been struck in sufficient quantity to justify exploitation and this continued until the 1850s. Young's 'Plan of a Navigable Canal' dated 1788 shows, in addition to the proposed line for the canal, 'a New Level', with a Tar Cistern at its outer end, obviously the Tar Tunnel.

From 1786 to 1830 the tunnel attracted many visitors who recorded their impressions. These make very interesting reading (see **'The Tar Tunnel'**, a guidebook published by Ironbridge Gorge Museum, latest printing 1996). One of the most instructive is the record in Joshua Gilpin's journal and Notebooks, 1765 - 1840, held in the Public Records Office, Pennsylvania, USA. The entry reads as follows:

November 7th 1796 "the Coal Tar Springbroke out some years ago by running a level into the hill for Coal, went up the level about 1100 yards, in many places the rock forms the arch, in others 'tis bricked, - first intended for a canal but since the improvements of railroads and waggons made into a dry tunnel... at the end of the main tunnel...both the pits are sunk down....has cost a large sum of money, about 9 ft high and 7 ft wide, arched both above and below - a gutter on the side for the tar to run down".

Alongside a sketch is the following:

"ABCB the Arch of the Tunnel

E the Platform or way filled up and made even on which the railroad is made.

F the gutter left for the tar to run down and for the water also to drain off'.

Erasmus Darwin had visited the tunnel in or before 1791 and described seeing a horse pulling a waggon within it and it is known that by 1796 a plateway with L section rails had been laid. (Several plate rails were found by the Shropshire Mining Club during early explorations).

Recent explorations in the Tar Tunnel.

The Tar Tunnel has been described in the Shropshire Magazine (May 1967), SCMC Journal 1977 and 'Below' Quart. Journal SCMC No. 92.2 Summer 1992.

After having been disused for about 30 years (except for being classified as a potential air-raid shelter 1939 - 1945) the tunnel was 're-discovered' by members of the Shropshire Mining Club in 1964 and, after some difficulties with regard to access, entrance was gained for survey purposes. It was then surveyed 'in haste' and this has never been re-checked as far as the writer is aware. Some details of this survey follow - see also Map 1.

The tunnel is almost due north, it commences in a cellar and then, as it passes under the roadway, reduces rapidly in width and is double bricklined. For the next 880 ft it is fairly constant in size, about 6 ft high and 6 ft wide (compare this with Gilpin's dimensions) and so has obviously been part backfilled. Indeed during the 1974 miners' disputes, NCB specialists tried out an underground tractor haulage system in the tunnel, and, at the same time, removed a large amount of rubble. During this time they also put in the rail-track which remains there today.

After the strike, the work of clearance in the tunnel continued using Borstal Boys who also did much damage to the stalactitic remains. When they finished, the Mining Club cleared out several

side passages. These cavities were measured to be at: 283 ft, 580 ft, 740 ft, 810 ft and 885 ft from the entrance. Each of the cavities except the one at 885 ft was obviously cut into the sides of the tunnel after completion of the walling. This was probably done in order to collect the 'native tar' once it became apparent that there was sufficient for economic working. There is also a widening of the passage, or 'by-pass' at 815 ft from the entrance for the passing of boats or wagons. At least two traditional miners' banquets have been held in this bypass, in 1976 and 1977.

For the next 515 ft the tunnel is mainly unsupported as it passes through the Thick Rock Sandstone of the Coalport Formation and later the so-called Madeley Fault.

At 915 ft from the entrance there is a fall of rock but this can be climbed over. From 1,390 ft the tunnel is again continually bricklined and the water on the floor gets generally deeper (to knee-depth).

At 1,445 ft the tunnel size is reduced slightly to a brick-line culvert shape but at 1,483 ft this opens into a vaulted junction with a passage about two feet higher than the general floor level leaning to the left. This could connect with the lower shafts at Blists Hill. Along this side tunnel, about 40 ft in, there is a roof fall, which was initially dug through but has since closed again.

After a further 30 ft a massive fall prevented further progress. (If anyone finds a 1950-style Oris watch-glass here it was lost by the writer during a quick exit in 1964).

The main tunnel continues from the junction as a 3.5 ft dia. culvert for another 757 ft where a further fall prevents progress. Just before this point is reached there is a second junction, a small passage to the left goes in a few feet but is blocked by a major fall. The air is very poor at this point and the water in the culvert, which at best is only a crawl, can be over 6 in deep, slimy and ochrous. It is a most unpleasant



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

place and visits are not recommended at any time.

A study of the Abandonment Plans showed that the brick and tile clays beneath this length of tunnel were totally extracted during the last years of working (*'picking out the eyes of the mine'* in local parlance). No further progress seems possible. The total length explored in 1964/5 was about 2,240ft, excluding the side passage length.

Post-exploration Developments

Proposals have been prepared by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum to construct either a new shaft entrance, or dog-leg inclined tunnel from the lower area of the Blists Hill site to the Tar Tunnel at a point near the by-pass. This would permit a through trip for tunnel visitors.

Reconnection with the original Blists Hill shafts now seems impossible due to the conditions described above.

After pumping stopped in 1967 at Halesfield Pit, nearly two miles away, there were fears that rising water underground would cause the mine gases, and then the rising water itself, to find their way out through the tunnel. The NCB was engaged to put in a temporary 'stopping' or barrier, with a glass window, at a position before that where the brick culvert commenced and an automatic gas-testing system was installed. No gas or water has appeared and the stopping area is now passable again.

On one occasion only to the writer's knowledge, when a small party was in the tunnel the roar of water could be heard further in. Two 'brave' members went to investigate and it was found that a large quantity of water was entering through the main side tunnel and cascading down the 2 ft drop into the main tunnel. There was evidence of other such flows but none have caused problems with the normal tunnel drainage.

When the Tunnel was opened to the

public on a regular basis in about 1970 a small forcing fan was installed in the entrance area, the forced air then travels in through drainage pipes and returns from the limit of public access in the general body of the air. This limit is about 300 ft in. Glass 'tell-tales' have also been fixed across cracks in the brickwork and these are examined frequently to see whether further movement has occurred.

Tunnels such as the Tar Tunnel were usually constructed in 'sections', having a shaft to surface at intervals for ventilation, access and debris removal purposes. This seems to have been the case here, one shaft to surface was found by the Club when digging at a fall just beyond the present 'gate', 100 ft in.

A local resident soon complained that a hole had appeared in her garden. There is also a shaft, filled and fenced (No. 6903/10) still visible on the site and another marked 'Airshaft' on TDC plans (No. 6903/15) - although this may be just a chimney base, both are close to the line of the Tar Tunnel. The fenced shaft is at about the final point reached underground in the 1960s.

Reports were prepared on the Tunnel by consultants in 1986 and 1992 using information mainly from the Club records. Both reports dealt with restoration, safety and future potential of the Tunnel. As a result of these reports some work has been done to ensure safety in the length accessible to the public funded by the the Commission for the New Towns. This includes a rather over-engineered lighting system. The entrance to the Tunnel is part of a listed building but the Tunnel itself is neither listed nor scheduled. In some years visitor numbers to the Tunnel have exceeded 50,000.

The Tar Tunnel is open to visitors most days in the Tourist Season although a small charge is made. There is a small exhibition area at the entrance and normally visitors are permitted as far as the 'Tar-wells' some 300 ft in. Helmets are provided. To confirm opening times telephone: Telford (01952) 433522.

Other Mineshafts at Blists Hill

The main **Blists Hill Shafts** (No.15 on location map in last issue of 'Below'), **Clay Adit** and **Tar Tunnel** have been discussed. **New Hill Shafts** were described in Part 5 of this series, but there are other shafts on the Blists Hill Site. In the early 1970's this site, and the rest of Telford, were investigated and all recorded shafts, adits, and wells given a unique number:

6903/4 and **6903/5** are the main Blists Hill shafts (the adit was not numbered separately).

6903/11 was a 'well' shown on the OS 43.15 County Sheet (1902 Ed.)

6903/15 was shown on early local authority (LA) arial surveys and site investigations as an 'Air Shaft'. Although possibly a chimney base it does lie close to the line of the Tar Tunnel.

6903/10 is shown on OS 43.15 (1883 Ed.) and was located on site. It is 7ft dia, with a brick ring still showing although now filled in and fenced.

6903/6 and **6903/7** are shown on the local authority arial survey and were found on site during an Army exercise to form a reservoir. These were found to be covered by iron plates and almost certainly they were connected to the Wash Brook (or Hay Brook) culvert which passes under most of this site.

New Hill Mine (No. 14) was however in this area but may have been the following:-

6903/13 and **6903/14** shown on the OS 43.15 (1883 Ed.) map and also the 1830's OS map, but not the Tithe Map which indicates a pit mound in this position. The Tithe Map shows a mine with "pit mounts, shaft and buildings" east of this position (see *Part 4, Fig. 1*). John Randall (19th C. historian) wrote of new shafts being put down at Blists Hill in the 1840's. Was he referring to these later operations?

A further problem exists because an earlier New Hill pit is shown on Young's 1788 Map, between the brook and the Lloyds, but outside the Blists Hill site. **6902/11** and **6902/12** Local tradition



The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 6

Blists Hill and the Tar Tunnel, continued...

and surface features have indicated another pair of shafts here “west of the cinder hills”. Was this the new prospect of the 1840’s? Did the tunnel from *Junction 1* in the Tar Tunnel connect with these shafts, their alignment is close? This area is almost 200ft. aod and some 60ft. above Tar Tunnel level.

There are still many doubts about the mining history of this site, besides the mineworkings there are also air tunnels, for the furnaces, a Tunnel for the railway and culverts for the water courses, which were covered when the site was developed in the mid-19thC. and afterwards by tipping.

Almost 30 years ago the writer supervised a party of Borstal Boys in the construction of a ‘mock adit’ by cut and cover methods. Now some local residents insist that their late fathers worked this mine in their youth!

(A bit like people being convinced the Blists Hill mine ventilation chimney is real and on its original site, with a shaft under it. Kelvin)

A shaft and tunnel system using large concrete pipes was also built near the ‘Chapel’ on Miners Walk and this has also become part of local mining lore.

Nearly all the mining features on display (except for the actual shaft walls referred to above) have come from other sites.

For example the steam engine, the electric winder and the headframe, have come from other Shropshire sites. Some items in store have come from further afield.

Dogkennel House Shaft, Sutton Hill

The southeasternmost mining feature in this area is the large bricklined shaft at Dogkennel House (NGR: SJ 704624) near Hay Farm. In the late 1960’s it still had a substantial wooden headframe with pump buildings. It is close to the location where the D’Arcy oil boring trial was made in the 1930’s. This shaft, about the standard 8ft. diameter, was usually full of water and had a windpump fitted, later an oil engine also.

This shaft may have been an early 19th C. trial for mineral. There is a reference to a “hay pit” in a report of 1832, when a brick fell from a shaft wall and killed a boy named Samuel Onions, aged 16.

‘Old’ New Hill Pit

The most likely position for New Hill Pits has already been referred to (No.14 in Part 5) but another ‘New Hill’ Pit is shown on Youngs “Proposed Canal” Map of 1788. This is shown to be at the bottom of Coalport Road, near the River Severn and towards The Lloyds. This may be an earlier New Hill Pit or more likely an incorrect position as there is no evidence of mining around their location. It could however be an adit entrance to the New Hill Shafts (a parallel situation to the Blists Hill-Tar Tunnel arrangement) but again there is no evidence of an adit in this location.

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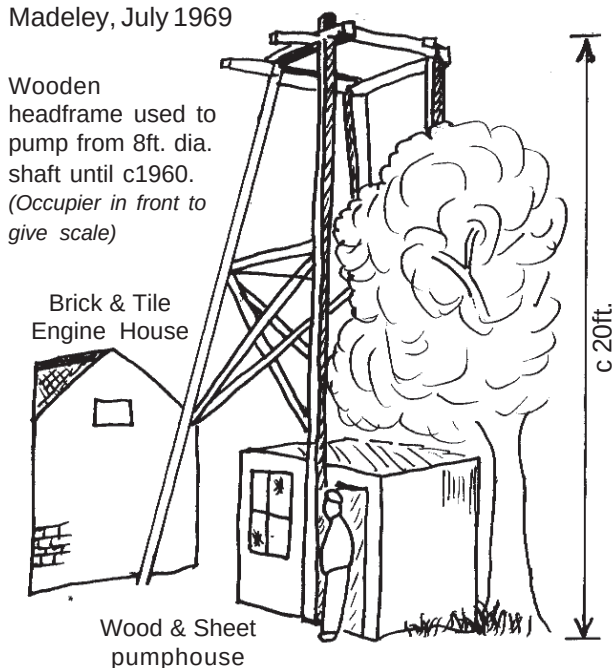
Appendix 1

Amplified for a list in “The Blists Hill Mine Shaft Project” by G.Inman, published by Messers Thyssens 1974.

List of Some Employees at Blists Hill Mine (1922 to 1940)

Mr. J.Bowen	Undermanger
Mr. G.Barker	Miner
Mr. F.Turner	Winding Engineman
Mr. H. Fiddler (Snr)	Mines Fireman Deputy
Mr. H. Fiddler (Son)	Mineral Loader
Mr. F. Fiddler (Grandson)	Pony Driver
Mr. E. Dorricott (Snr)	Mineral Getter
Mr. E. Dorricott (Son)	Pony Driver
Mr. W. Higginson	Mineral Getter
Mr. W. York (Snr)	Mineral Getter
Mr. W. York (Son)	Mineral Loader
Mr. T. York	Mineral Getter
Mr. J. Darlington	Mineral Getter
Mr. E. Lewis	Mineral Loader
Mr. W. Burton	Mineral Getter
Mr. W. Wattson	Mineral Getter
Mr. G. Goodhall	Winding Engineman

Fig. 9 Sketch from photograph by IJB
 Hay Shaft (?) Dog Kennel House, Hay Farm,
 Madeley, July 1969



Research and Help Wanted

ArchSearch Catalogue

A new online, searchable catalogue at the Archaeological Data Service has recently been launched. The information available is currently fairly limited - a search on the term 'mining' located 94 records dominated by records of sites in Fife lodged with RCHM(Scotland)-and reflects the small number of archives available in digital form. You can access the catalogue at:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>

it allows fast searching of records such as the National Excavation Index for England (contributed by RCHME); the Fife, Shetland, and Strathclyde sections of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (contributed by RCAHMS); and the Microfilm Index for England (contributed by RCHME). The catalogue is also a gateway that provides access to "special collections" such as the Society of Antiquaries of London library catalogue and to digital gateways serving communities interested in history, performing arts, text studies, and visual arts via the Arts and Humanities Data Service catalogue.

More data will be added in the upcoming weeks, and will include digital archives being preserved and made accessible by the Archaeology Data Service. Collections scheduled include an index of British and Irish archaeological sites with radiocarbon dates and a database of implement petrology deposited by the Council for British Archaeology, and digital excavation archives and texts from projects in the UK and beyond.

We would value learning about your experiences with the catalogue and the data you access through it. Please email any comments, suggestions, or thoughts to info@ads.ahds.ac.uk

There is a full help system in the catalogue itself, but staff at the ADS are also on hand to help you if any difficulties or if questions arise.

submitted by Peter Cloughton

Chalk Pits?

In an area in France that I am studying there is something that puzzles me. Maybe you can help.

The facts are that high up on the "Gaize", a sort of chalk/sand stone, there are a couple of dozen pits nicely aligned along an old disused road.

One of these pits was excavated by the archaeological service some 3 years ago and it turned out to be a bottle-shape shaft of 23 m deep. The shaft does not reach any other layers, just the gaize, so no flint mine or the sort. At the bottom of the shaft some roman-age pottery sherds were found. On these sherds there is a thick (5 mm) layer of glass.

The area is known to be intensively used in the Roman era and there has been glass-making industry (Roman aged) in that region. The stone "Gaize" is very fire-resistant.

The French archaeologists concluded that these shaft relate to this glass making industry. Probably extracting the chalky sandstone and using it for glass-making. This would mean that the glass-ovens could not have been far from the shafts. I was asked to carry out a survey at the shafts to detect ovens with a magnetometer. I did two shafts covering an area of 20x25 meters and 30x50 metres, keeping the shafts in the middle. In these surveyed area's I found an absolutely silent magnetic area, meaning no ovens of other burning activities at all. The measurements are so clean, there is not even a smallest hint of metal.

Even when I started the survey I told the French archaeologists I did not believe these shaft were used for glass-making. These sort of shaft I know from other regions in France and from Britain (dene-holes), Germany, The Netherlands and Italy, and they are always chalk-pits. Mostly used to extract chalk to chalk the fields, but sometimes used as quarries for building stone. Maybe these shafts were used to extract stones to build glass-ovens,

but that would be the maximum relation.

The fact that they use pits where they can extract the gaize relatively easy in open-cast mining to me means nothing as I know many other site where very labour-intensive shafts were lowered and maybe 500 m away the stuff just simply surfaces, so obviously other parametres are in place as well, that we do not know of (yet).

My question is:

Does anyone have any knowledge of these chalk-pits relating to glass-industry?

I am convinced they relate to chalk mining or quarrying, but please convince me of the opposite.

Best wishes,

Joep Orbons

E-Mail: jorbons@xs4all.nl

www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/souterrains.html

Ifton Help Wanted

Hi there - my name is Rob Stokes and my ancestors came from St Martins, many of them working in Ifton Colliery. I know that someone from your Club visited the area earlier this year or last to interview former miners and wonder how you got on?

Has anyone written up an account of the oral history you gathered yet?

If so, I would love to read it - as I have never lived there and have been in Scotland for nearly 30 years.

Is it likely to be posted on the website at any time?

Thanks

Rob Stokes

RStokes@Compuserve.com

Can any Club Members help with this request? More to the point has anyone visited the Ifton area to interview miners, if so how about a report for Below?

Kelvin



News Round-Up 3

Virtual Atlas - Details

The new web site for the 'Virtual atlas of opaque and ore minerals in their associations' by R.A.Ixer and P.Duller at:

www.smenet.org/opaque-ore

Is certainly well worth a visit if you are at all interested in mineralogy.

With a high resolution monitor you will be able to appreciate the detail of specimens from around the world - for those minerals associated with UK and Irish sites go to Britain in the index.

National Coal Mining Museum

Steve Kee, Librarian at the National Coal Mining Museum for England, has kindly provided an update on the state of finances at the museum.

He points out that: *'our temporary problems last year with regard to our underground has impacted neither upon our immediate nor long term revenue situation.'*

The Coal Authority has generously recompensed us with the ENTIRE amount of lost revenue resulting from the suspension of our underground tours; whilst our newly-acquired annual funding from central government is intended largely to fund surface developments - ie new buildings, exhibition areas, conservation of collections etc. - and the employment of additional administrative and curatorial staff.'

This is excellent news for the long term future of coal mining history interpretation in England and I am pleasantly surprised at the generosity of the Coal Authority in compensating the museum.

The museum has had a web site for some time:

www.clanvis.com/coalmine/

and they are now contactable by e-mail at: ncmme@ncmme.demon.co.uk

Peter Claughton

Great Orme

The Great Orme Exploration Society based in North Wales have a new site (under construction) - opinions and advice would be helpful.

www.briff.dircon.co.uk/goes

Rescue Comms Field Meeting (UK)

The BCRA's Cave Radio & Electronics Group will be concentrating on rescue communications at its next field meet in March 1999. The Derbyshire CRO will be the hosts for this event and representatives of other rescue teams are encouraged to participate.

CREG are expecting that some of the notable figures in cave communications will be on hand to discuss their latest developments. Demonstrations of a number of new techniques which have been pioneered over the last year or two are also planned. In addition to the field activities, there will be a programme of talks on the Saturday evening and plenty of opportunity for rescue team members to talk informally with cave radio developers.

The meet will take place in the Peak District over the weekend of 20th/21st March 1999 - the exact venue is yet to be arranged. For more details and a booking form, please contact:

Mike Bedford, 4 Holme House,
Oakworth, KEIGHLEY,
West Yorkshire, BD22 0QY.

or email:- BedfordMD@aol.com

BCRA CREG

Visit their web site at:

www.caves.org.uk

then follow the CREG link.

The Group publishes a regular quarterly journal of 36 pages Issue 34 will be published on 1st Dec 1998. All enquiries to Membership Sec.:

Bill Purvis, 35 Chapel Road, Penketh,
WARRINGTON, WA5 2NG.
email: creg@zetnet.co.uk

Wealden Iron Research Group

This is to announce that the Wealden Iron Research Group (WIRG) is publishing its own modest web site. The URL is:

<http://ds.dial.pipex.com/town/parade/np03/wirg-hp.htm>

We hope to improve it as time goes on, but hope publishers of other, allied, sites might care to post a link to ours.

Jeremy Hodgkinson

IV International Mining History Congress

During the 4th International Mining History Congress in Mexico, November 1998, Dr. Ivor Brown, Chairman of NAMHO lobbied for votes for the next congress to be combined with NAMHO's International Mining History Conference in Cornwall in July 2000. There were other contenders, the Americans wanted it in Greece in September 2000. The American Society of Mining Historians past-president Stan Dempsey now runs a Company called Royal Gold Inc. which has mineral bearing land in Milos, Greece. To gain permission to work it the Greek Authorities apparently require him to build a Conference Centre and show that it works, Royal Gold's Executive Vice-President was sent to get the 5th Congress or lose his job.

The front runners were Milos and Cornwall, but supporters of Milos were offering sponsorships and other financial inducements which Ivor Brown had no mandate to match.

Ivor Brown believes that NAMHO may still be asked to do the 5th Congress, the Royal Gold representatives admitted that everything depended on 'things going right' for them in Milos. The need to find an alternative location for the Congress is not new - it even happened this year - the Congress should have been in Chile not Mexico!

Ivor Brown



Mining Conferences

Mining History Conference

At the IVth International Mining History Congress in Guanajuato two weeks ago, a vote was taken on the venue and date for the next (Vth) Congress.

There were four contenders -

Seville in the year 2002.
Cornwall in 2000.
South Africa in 2002.
Milos, Greece, in 2000.

After heated debate, particularly over the break from an approx. four year interval to two years to coincide with the 'millenium', a vote was taken on the proposals. Seville was eliminated at the first round - only one vote in its favour - with Cornwall and South Africa tied in second place. An elimination round left a straight fight between Greece and South Africa, resulting in a decision in favour of a congress on the island of Milos, Greece, in September 2000.

Some brief details of the Greek proposal pending publication of the full Vth Congress agenda -

Congress to be held on the island of Milos, in the Aegean Sea, during the week September 4, 2000.

Organising committee to be convened by George Xydous, of the Greek Mining History Association, and Stanley Dempsey, of the United States Mining History Association, with the companies for which they work, Silver and Bartyes Ores Mining Co. and Royal Gold Inc., as major sponsors.

Dr James E. Fell (USA) will chair the international programme committee.

Special events to be hosted in the Milos Mining Museum, the Archaeological Museum, with field trips to the silver mines at Laurion and other localities under consideration.

The support of all levels of local government is assured.

Financial assistance will be available to

bring 'noted' international mining historian and other relevant speakers to the conference, and students will be admitted **free of charge**.

Lodgings will be available in five hotels on the island at convention rates - capacity around 200 delegates - with the hope of discount airfares.

We were assured that the climate on Milos in September would be pleasant - sunny, warm and dry.

The NAMHO Cornish International Conference (more details later) in July 2000 is to go ahead anyway, but not under the flag of the Vth International Congress. So we now have two conferences to choose from in 2000 - might I encourage you all to go to both.

Peter Cloughton

International NAMHO 2000

The first International NAMHO Conference hosted by the Corn Brea Mining Society and Camborne School of Mines on Friday 14th to Tuesday 18th July 2000 at Truro, Cornwall.

This, NAMHO's first International Conference has been set-up to celebrate 21 years of NAMHO and to coincide with the 'Millenium'. Nick-named InterNAMHO2000 it is planned as a unique event, with the themes:

A Acquire
R Record
D Display

For more details contact:
Lawrence Holmes, Rivergarth, Malpas, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 1SS
e-mail: NAMHO@csm.ex.ac.uk

VIII Flint Symposium, Bochum, Germany, 6-10 September 1999

The first circular and call for participation at this conference have just been issued:

The aims of the VIII Flint Symposium will be the presentation and discussion of recent research on the following topics:

prehistoric flint mining, distribution and processing of mined flint; interregional contacts; settlements associated with flint mines; geology of mined silicious rocks; flint sourcing and identification; and geophysics of flint mine sites.

All papers and posters at the Symposium should be presented in English and no papers will be read in absentia. The symposium will include a

2-day excursion to flint mines in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Registration is requested by 31 January 1999. Please send the details asked for below to the conference organizer:

Prof. Dr. Gerd Weisgerber

Deutsches Bergbau-Museum
Institut für Montanarchäologie
Am Bergbaumuseum 28
D-44791 Bochum, Germany

(email: Weisgerber@dmf-lb.cubis.de)

Your note should contain:

I wish to attend the VIII Flint Symposium

Name & title...

Forename(s)...

Address...

Daytime telephone...

Fax...

Email...

Title of proposed paper or poster....

In addition, there is the possibility of reprinting the book "5000 Jahre Feuersteinbergbau" (Bochum 1980) if enough preliminary orders are received, so please indicate on your application whether you are interested in purchasing a copy of this publication as a reprint.

Peter Cloughton



Minerals of Survival

A dust storm made visibility difficult, forcing Captain Clarke to slow right down to almost walking pace.

'I must get those Betonian minerals in time', he said, banging his hands on the controls as he apprehensively thought about the fate of the colony.

'This is the expedition's last hope. If I can't do it, then were doomed!', Clarke thought silently.

Stopping the moon beetle briefly at the height of the storm, Clarke breathed deeply, thinking about the task ahead of him.

'Two attempts and two failures. Will I be the third he thought'. That question kept on going through his mind.

A rumbling noise came momentarily which rattled the moon beetle's controls.

'What the hell's happening now', thought Clarke as he examined the electronics beneath the control panel.

Shudder, shudder..., shudder, shudder, and rumble! The ground began to move and the beetle slid into a crevasse that had opened up along the fault line and jammed itself against its sides.

Waking up a few minutes later, still dazzled from the effects of concussion, Clarke almost sealed his own fate by walking in the beetle and rocking it, before he had time to realise the precarious position he was in. Grabbing hold of the side railing so not to rock the vehicle, Clarke peered out of the window and looked down into the abyss.

'Oh my God', he exclaimed.

Looking around Clarke saw the delicate position he was in. The moon beetle was jammed against the sides of the crevasse at its front and back ends, almost able to be spun about on a pivot.

'That's pure luck', Clarke thought, for he realised that had the moon beetle fallen into the crevasse longways and not sideways, it would have gone into the abyss and that would have been it.

Any sudden movement and the beetle would go into the abyss. Keeping very still, breathing rhythmically as he learned in his yoga exercises to combat mild hypersensitivity, Clarke thought coolly and looked around him.

By the side of the door of the beetle lay a rope with a grappling hook that had fallen from the emergency kit. Clarke slowly crawled along the side of the beetle and tied the rope around the waist, buttoned up his space suit and opened up the door.

Looking upwards, Clarke could see the top of the crevasse, with a jagged edge that could be used to get a firm hold by throwing up the anchor. Realising that this was his means of escape, Clarke, heart pounding and breathing becoming more erratic and heavier, quickly threw the rope and the grappling hook, but it didn't reach and fell back into the space beetle, causing it to jerk and creek quite loudly.

'Don't get excited', Clarke thought as he thumped his leg, realising that moment of impatience almost caused the beetle to go into freefall.

Carefully, re-winding the rope and grappling hook, Clarke meditated for a moment, gave the hook some rope slack swung it gaining momentum and threw the hook up over the top of the crevasse. Pulling hard, the hook took hold.

Crawling through the door, Clarke pushed against the beetle as he jumped out.

Cra., Cra., Crash, the moon beetle jerked before finally falling into the abyss.

Clarke's heart beat thumped frantically for a while before regaining its composure.

'Just a push off with my feet. That's all I did', Clarke thought to himself.

'What if I had tripped up in the beetle before I jumped out. For god's sake, it doesn't bear thinking about', he sighed.

Grabbing the rope with both hands and

manoeuvring himself so that he could vertically walk up the cliff, Clarke climbed up the crevasse and onto the surface.

Fortunately his compass was not broken and by taking a bearing of N152E, Clarke after a two-hour walk managed to reach the cave where the Betonian minerals lay.

To his almost astonishment, the minerals just lay there and Clarke quickly chiselled them out and filled up his containers, thinking weirdly:

'What! No booby-traps, giant monsters or space pirates? Everything else has happened, so why's this part so easy?

Oh well, I suppose the cave's due for a ...' Crack, rumble; before Clarke could think the next word the roof to the cave's entrance gave way and buried Clarke and the Betonian crystals.

Silence. Then after a while Clarke slowly regained consciousness; slowly that is and still buried. Having worked as a miner on the asteroid mining division for 15 years prior to joining the expeditionary colony, had taught Clarke a fair bit about rock falls and the hazards of earth movements.

Hugging himself together like a mole, he twisted himself from the immediate material surrounding him and slowly but surely, bore himself out of the soft rock/moon dust out into the open.

'The face workers of Alpha Centauri would be proud of me', thought Clarke as he looked at the man bored tunnel before it collapsed on itself.

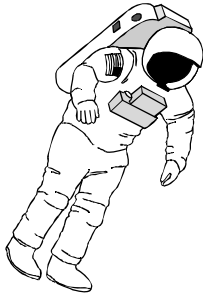
'God that's sun's hot. ' 'Still, another half-hour and I'll be in that Omega shower. '

The thought of that shower with its one thousand fragments from all over the Milky Way was almost inspiration enough to get back to base and save the colony.

Suddenly, with moon base in sight in the long distance, Clarke suddenly stopped.



Minerals of Survival continued...



‘Where is it’, he exclaimed.

Flapping his right hand against his waist, he realised that his reserve oxygen cylinder was missing. He had double checked that all his life support systems were present and operative when he had left moon base and just after he had climbed out of the crevasse, and it was there then. But that extra oxygen cylinder had gone.

Thinking quickly, Clarke suddenly realised that it must have become dislodged from his space suit when he had become buried by the collapse in the cave entrance.

But now it was too late for bitter thoughts and self-rapprochement. How was he going to get back now?

His oxygen supply would run out well before he got back to the cave mouth and what’s more to the point, before he got back to moon base. Clarke was too exhausted by the heat from the sun’s rays to panic. For a man who had constantly fought through life to control his emotions, this was indeed calm thinking. Or was it?

Clarke sat patiently trying to conserve oxygen, while he thought. Battling between defeatism that for all too often in his life had told him to give up and a new sense of responsibility to himself and the colony that was stimulating him to fight on, he knew that this was the most critical moment in his life, possibly one of the last few moments!

‘I must get help’, he thought.

‘But how?’

‘Base isn’t that far away.’

‘Signal, that’s it, I’ll signal them.’

‘They know that I’m coming back.’

‘They must be waiting and watching out for me.’

‘If I could make them realise I’m so close, they could come out and rescue me.’

‘That is, if anybody is still alive’, he thought, as a chill went down Clarke’s spine as he remembered the whole purpose of his mission.

Looking at the base, he suddenly became blinded by the reflection of the sun, which caused Clarke to turn his head away.

‘The sun’s never that bright.’

Looking back at the spot where he had just been standing, Clarke saw that the sun’s rays were reflecting off some crystalline rocks, creating a brilliant blinding flash of light.

‘That’s the answer’, Clarke thumping his feet down on the surface.

Positioning himself at a carefully selected angle, Clarke sat down and pulled out the largest betonian crystal and caught the sun’s rays reflecting it towards moon base.

By careful angling the crystals rhythmically, he was able to flash a light beam towards the moon base every few seconds.

After a little experience, Clarke found that he was able to flash a signal in morse towards the moon base.

‘They must see it’, he thought.

‘It’s my only chance.’

After twenty minutes signalling, Clarke’s arms started to get heavy under the weight of the crystal and breathing started to get harder. Clarke knew that he was exhausted and that his oxygen supply had virtually ran out.

‘Why didn’t they come’, Clarke exclaimed.

‘They knew I was coming back!’

‘They must be watching out for me’, he thought.

Then that horrible thought entered his head:

‘What happens if there’s nobody to come out.’

Clarke knew the desperate state the colony was in when he had started out on the mission. In fact he only volunteered for the mission thinking that his chances of survival were marginally better out here than amongst the plague-infected colony.

Dropping the crystal, lying back, Clarke just lay there in silence before becoming subconscious. ‘How are you feeling now Major’, a voice spoke down as Clarke looked up into bright lights.

‘Where am I’, he asked.

‘You’re in Ward D Sir.’

‘You mean’, Clarke muttered.

‘Yes Sir’, said 2nd Lieutenant Keynes.

‘Fortunately we got your signal before you passed out’, the subaltern replied.

‘But another minute and you would have suffocated’, the nineteen year old grinned.

‘And those crystals. They worked a treat’, Keynes said.

‘The COs only worry now is if we can get a sample of the plague for our laboratory records Major’, came a chuckle from a nearby nurse.

‘Major...who’s Major’, asked Clarke perplexed.

‘Well let the General answer that Sir when he comes to pin the Solar Cross First Class on you’, smiled the nurse.



Christmas Puzzle



Can you spot the 10
differences between
these two pictures?



Caption:

Eeah, ther's a big spider in my boot!



*Happy Christmas and
a Merry New Year*



Books, Videos, Places & Events

‘Archive’

If you have not come across this publication it is well worth picking up one or two back issues.

It is a very well produced publication, often with some excellent mining articles and photographs and covers industrial and transport history.

In recent issues it has covered mining sites such as :

Wheal Friendship, Starring Clay Mine, Littleborough, Presteigne Coal Trials, Brodsworth Colliery, Llanberis Copper Mine, Hartley Main Collieries (3 part article), Hatfield Main sinking, Ramsey Copper Mine, Dartmoor, Taff Merthyr Colliery, Aspatria Colliery (3 part article), Deep Navigation Colliery, Treharris and Point of Ayr Colliery.

If you want more details they can be found on the web site at:

www.argonet.co.uk/users/postcards/archive/index.htm

Ian Pope

Ian Pope, (a Forest of Dean Historian and publisher of ‘Archive’) has also produced a number of Railway books featuring various Forest of Dean colliery histories. All of the colliery and iron mine histories have a fully researched company history. In the cases of Cannop, Eastern United and Northern United these are from official company records.

The books include:

The Severn & Wye Railway Vol 1, Pope, How & Karau, Wild Swan Publications, 1983. The collieries covered are: Norchard, Kidnalls, Princess Royal and Flour Mill, Park Hill, Parkend, plus Park Hill iron mine.

The Severn & Wye Railway Vol 2, Pope & Karau, Wild Swan Publications, 1988. The collieries covered are Arthur & Edward (Waterloo), Pluds Pit, Lydbrook, Venus & Jupiter, Dark Hill, along with Easter, Dun Pit, Sling & Ham, and Clearwell iron mines.

The Severn & Wye Railway Vol 3, Pope, How & Karau, Wild Swan Publications, 1985. The collieries covered are Bicslade, Speech House Hill, Wimberry, Cannop, Trafalgar.

The Forest of Dean Branch Vol 1, Pope & Karau, Wild Swan Publications, 1992. Collieries covered are Quidchurch, Eastern United and the iron Mines include Perseverance, Shakemantle, Ruspidge, St Annals

The Forest of Dean Branch Vol 2, Pope & Karau, Wild Swan Publications, 1997. The collieries covered are Northern United, Nelson, Meadowcliff, Roberts Folly, Regulator, Haywood, Duck. While the Iron Mines include Westbury Brook, Wigpool.

Copies of these books (and ‘Archive’) are available from:

‘The Archive Bookshop’
Lydney, Gloucestershire
Telephone: 01594 - 844 776

If you have any problems **Mike Moore** should also be able to obtain copies for you as well (possibly even with a Club Members discount !)

Manx Mines & Minerals

A 64 minute video by Duke Video on the Story of Mining in the Isle of Man. £14.99, Cat. Code: DM8041 available from Duke Video, PO Box 46, Douglas Isle of Man, IM99 1DD



Mining Videos (available from the Club)



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

A Tour of Clive Copper Mine £14.95

A comprehensive guided tour of Clive, with Edwin Thorpe acting the ‘experienced’ expert and Kelvin Lake the ‘novice’. The tour covers both the upper and lower levels, plus the Northern stope (the access to which is now a bit dodgy).

Clive Rescue Practice, £9.95

An action packed ‘head banging’ record of a Club rescue practice, featuring the ‘infamous’ maypole winze traverse!

Snailbeach, £14.95

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

Collections from the Archives

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

- C.15: Dudley Tunnel ‘88 to ‘89, £14.10
- C.18: Donisthorpe Colliery, £11.75
- C.20a: Snailbeach - Final Frontier, £9.87
- C.23: Bagworth Colliery, £11.75
- C.28: Morse’s Level, £9.87
- C.29: SCMC in Cornwall, £16.45
- C.32: SCMC in Ireland, £14.10

Latest releases:

- C.35: Old Glengowla Lead Mine, Ireland
An underground trip down to water level in this recently drained mine, full of amazing minerals and curious artefacts. £9.87
- C.37: Dudley Tunnel - Wrens Nest East Mine. Local historians have often talked about ‘Step Pit’ an access shaft to the East Mine underground canal basin and caverns that was reputed to have a spiral staircase, recent stabilisation work has uncovered fragments of the staircase, plus allowed an interesting insight to the canal and mines in this area. £9.87

For more details about videos contact:

I.A. Recordings, PO Box 476, Telford, TF8 7RH

e-mail: info@iarecord.demon.co.uk or visit their web site at:
<http://www.iarecord.demon.co.uk/>



Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

Training Officer:
Steve Holding

Chairman: Neal Rushton

First Aid Officer:
Alan Moseley

Conservation Officer:
Nick Southwick

Vice Chair: Tom West

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

Secretary: John Priest
scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Assistant Secretary:
Eileen Bowen

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

Rescue Officer:
Role undertaken by the Rescue Wardens: Neal Rushton, Steve Holding, Alan Robinson, Andy Yapp

Tackle Officer: Andy Harris

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

Diary Dates '98

For organised Club trips please refer to the Monthly Meets lists.

5th Dec. Christmas Bash at the Stiperstones Inn.

6th Dec. Gloucester Rescue Practice, contact Alan Moseley.

Note: A surface walk or similar activity may be arranged for the Christmas Break - hopefully more details with the December meets list.

1999

13th Feb. AGM of Mining Heritage Society of Ireland, Dublin.

28th Feb. SWCRO AGM, 10am, Copper Beech, Abercrave.

20th March, NCA AGM, 10.30am (venue to be announced).

27th March, CNCC AGM, 10am, Hellifield Village Institute.

4th April, Columns Open Day, Ogof Ffynon Ddu.

Whitsun, Mega trip to Spain.

May Snailbeach Stretcher winch

Sept. 1999: NAMHO Conference, will be held in the Forest of Dean

