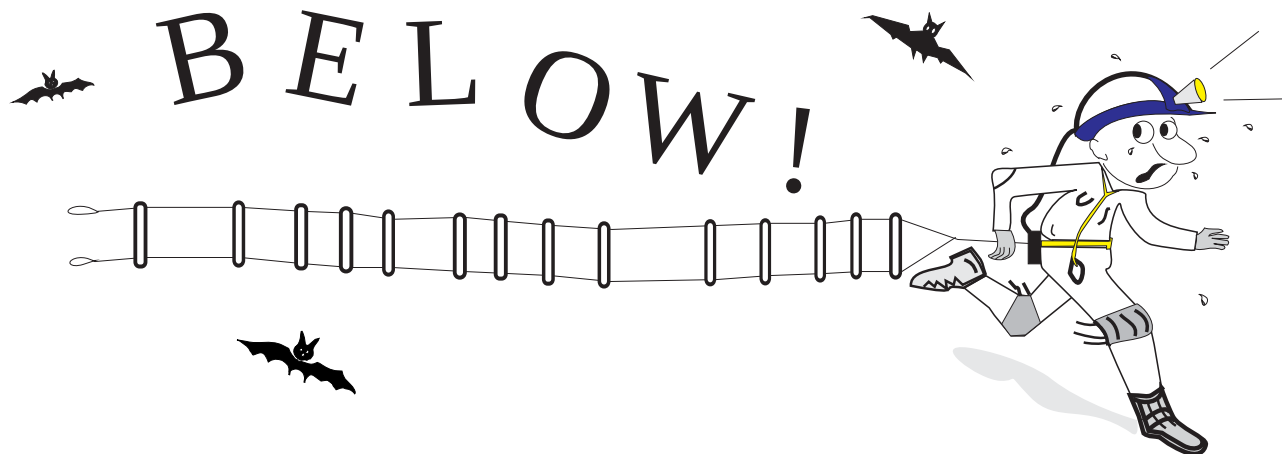




Library Additions

Craven Pothole Club, China 2003 Expedition: Editors Patrick Warren & Emma Porter, Spetember 2004. An interesting account of the CPC 2003 trip to Guangxi province, China, where they surveyed some 22km of cave passage and visited some 50 cave sites -in addition to the well drawn surveys there are a number of excellently reproduced colour photographs through-out the text. If you are only vaguely interested in China Caves it is well worth purchasing a copy of this expedition report.

Subterranea: Newsletter of Subterranea Britannica & the Cold War Research Study Group, Issue 5, September 2004 - includes an interesting account of a Sub. Brit trip to Gibraltar.

Journal of the Great Orme Exploration Society: Issue No.1, 2002, Issue No.2 Autumn/Winter 2003 - includes a report on their trip to Snailbeach, plus some of Ian Cooper's photographs.
BCA Newsletter, No.1, July 2004 - the first produced by the newly formed national organisation.



Quicker by Tube

As was mentioned in the last issue of 'Below' members of the Welsh Mines Society told Club Members at the Onslow Park weekend that a new tube had been fitted through the collapse in Level Fawr (Cwmyswyth), so on Saturday 9th October a return visit was made to the level to check out what had been done and to get a few photographs.

The new tube is similar to the one by the portal, but has had a section cut-out of it so it could be "rolled" up and pushed through the entrance. They have made an excellent job of building a pack-wall under and around the new tube - although it is a little 'tighter' than the entrance tube!



Left: View of the 'outbye' side of the new tube with Ian Cooper testing it for size.

Below: View of the 'inbye' side of the tube with part of the end tipping truck (featured in Journal 9) in the foreground.



Hidden Earth 2004

About 4 Club members made it to this years Hidden Earth, held at the Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal (pictured lower right). There was the usual mixture of interesting talks and workshops, with the added challenge from the organisers "to drink a brewery dry" - needless to say everyone rose to the occasion and by 10pm Saturday had finished off 35 gallons of real ale (hic!). Club members did well at the event Steve Holding scooped 3 raffle prizes, Ian Cooper came second in the 'Colour Print' section - with his 40 yd. level truck picture and second in the Premier Category. Bradford Pothole Club also donated a very useful haulage bucket for use in the Club dig at Sugnal.



News Round-Up 1

by Ivor Brown

Westcott Farm

There was an item on Westcott Farm Level, Shropshire in 'Below' 2004.3 (last issue). The present writer is surprised this has not been entered earlier. His notebook entry states "Visited 4th Sept. 1960, Westcott, adit 10 yd. from road, by farm, good access, follows copper-bearing vein 25 yd, worth further investigation, many bats". It is noted that at 21m, 5 bats and a heap of guano had been seen 44 years later. Things haven't changed much! It was also noted in 1960 that the main area of mine workings was "in front of the bungalow" alongside the track, with "many adits and shafts" and some "open stoping" with timber supports (see 'Below' 2004.2, p19-20, for a recent trip report).

Shropshire Geo. Soc.

The Shropshire Geological Society have obtained £12,000 from the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund to help manage and put trails down into 3 areas of mining interest, Wenlock Edge, Titterstone Clee and North Stiperstones (from Snailbeach to Pontesford Hill), and carry out further work on the Wrekin Hills Trail. Their latest newsletter also has articles on Sharpstone Quarry (Bayston Hill) and Hawkestone Park of mining interest.

Mineral Barges

Barges of minerals are to travel along the Severn again, but not yet through Shropshire. A grant of £1 million has been made to RMC to set-up a system to carry nearly 3 million tons of aggregates in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire in 180 tonne barges.

(from Quarry Management, Oct. 2004)

NCB Films

Members have asked where they can see copies of the following official films and videos, the National Museum of Coal Mining, Wakefield, has many, but not these:

- i) 1960s film in the NCB Mining Review Series showing a group of 'hunting' deputies from Madeley Wood Colliery. They went out in the woods before their 6.30am shift start!
- ii) A 1980s NCB video of the excavation of the furnace buildings etc.. in the Newdale Opencast Site, near Wellington, Shropshire.

Can anyone help?

E.Parry Preacher?

Following on Andy Cuckson's query on whether E.Parry, Mine Agent and owner of the Central Stores (SCMC Journal 9) was a Local Preacher. The 1895 Primitive Methodist Ministerley Circuit Plan has been checked and E.Parry is listed. It is interesting to see how some small communities had many accredited Local Preachers. For example, of the 58 listed, the bigger communities had ; Ministerley 6, Pontesbury 7, but the smaller had; Pennerley 9, Snailbeach 4, Perkins Beach 5, Hope 7. The Local Preachers must have been a fair proportion of men in these places!(Three Local Preachers were killed in the Snailbeach accident that year, but are included in the above statistics).

The above does not take account of Local Preachers in other denominations e.g. Wesleyan Methodists, these were stronger in coal mining areas like Pontesford and Plealey.

Tileworks Make-over

Newly re-modelled and further sections of the 19th century Dunhill's Tileworks have been opened by the IGMT at Coalport. It includes a tiled portion of a London Underground Station and many other period pieces. Well worth a visit.

[What happened to the mining exhibit "The Rock Sandwich" that contained many items rescued by the Club over the years and used to be at the tileworks before it closed for refurbishment? KL]

Dog Monument

A member has asked for a photograph of the 19th Century Monument to a Receiver (Dog) who fell to his death down a coalmine shaft near Broseley, Shropshire. Professor Pevsner's book "The Buildings of England - Shropshire Volume", p320 says that it is in Shirlett High Park, 1 mile south of the Old Hall, Willey. **Can anyone help?**

Whimberry Crumble

There has been an excellent crop of the old miner's favourite, the Stiperstones Whimberry this year. They have been fat and juicy, but the wet weather during picking has meant that they had to be 'washed' by hand not winnowed in the traditional manner (blown clean by the wind after combing). Costs of preparation have therefore been greater - said to be about £3.50 per pound weight.

Coal Production

The Coal Authority reported that in the last full year underground coal mines produced 14.7 million tonnes coal and opencast mines produced 11.6 million tonnes. With the closure of Selby it is possible that more coal will be produced from opencast sites than deep mines in the present year.

End Cliffe Quarry - Court Case

The Peak Park Planning Authority (Derbyshire) has won a court case against the owners with regards to End Cliffe and Lee Moor Quarries near Matlock. PPPA wanted to deem the quarries legally "dormant", the owners claimed they were still "active".

However the only activity found on site was "a group of people living in tunnels and treehouses with the stated aim of preventing it being re-opened"!

(MQR Journal August 2004)



Nenthead, October 2004

by Ian Cooper

Members from S.C.M.C. regularly travel up to the North Pennines to visit the Nenthead mines and explore the surrounding area. Although excursions are occasionally organised at other times of year, the main periods of activity are weeks at Easter and at the end of October. Trips during the week long holidays are usually decided on a spur-of-the-moment basis, with any additional prearranged activities forming corner-stones to work around.

Flinty Fell Quarry

On arrival in October 2004 we learnt that Mole (*also sometimes known as John Hine, from the Forest Of Dean*) had met one of the owners of Flinty Fell Quarry and was arranging a visit and tour of their stone works for the following Sunday morning. The sandstone rock from the quarry, located on the moor above Nenthead, is well known to mine explorers of the region. The distinctive rich yellow stone was transported underground in vast quantities to form impressive stone arched passages that now snake through the stacked deads of the area's mines.

The processing works for the quarry is located a few miles away, just outside Alston, and even features a bricked up adit to abandoned workings located in the hill behind! Being led into their saw shed we were introduced to an impressive CNC

controlled stone saw. Not only is this able to slice through rock as a traditional circular saw, it's also capable of machining the stone using the side of it's blade. By moving the stone beneath the cutting edge it's possible for the machine to

generate curves, chamfers and bevels automatically. At the moment this feature remains unused as most of the decorative features are added by hand, it's quicker and cheaper than spending time programming the machine for the type of one-off jobs that the workshop tends to handle.

After browsing some of the finished products, ranging from paving slabs and lintels to impressive stone pillars, we moved across the yard to the splitting shed. Any visions of a craftsman sitting on a stool with flat cap and couple of chisels need to be put to one side, a conveyer line



Stone Splitting machine, Flinty Fell Stone Works

stone in the required direction.

Returning to our vehicles we travelled the short distance to Nenthead, before driving up the track to the quarry itself. Considering the vast quantities of stone that have been removed from the area in the past, and the present quarrying operations that still continue to this



Stack of finished Stones at Flinty Fell Stone Works



CNC Stone cutting machine at Flinty Fell Stone Works

feeds large slabs of stone to a series of hydraulic splitting machines. After the stone has been lined up the cutting chisels are lowered down to meet the stone, in the process adjusting to match the rock's rough shape. When all the chisels are in contact, pressure is applied to cleanly snap the

day, the size of quarry is surprisingly small. The bed of stone being worked is relatively narrow and the total depth of workings can't be more than 20/30ft deep. Rather than use explosives, which would damage the stone, the beds of rock are gently prised out of the ground using a combination of mechanical excavators and fork-lift trucks. The rubble produced during extraction is subsequently crushed and sold as aggregate, while thin sheets of stone are collected by hand to be used as roofing slates. Despite rather damp weather conditions everyone found the experience most interesting and



Nenthead, October 2004

by Ian Cooper

after thanking the Hodgson Brothers, who run the quarry, we went our separate ways.

For the rest of the week activity was varied with groups busy in many of the local mines.

Brewery Shaft Lights

After a discussion with one of the North Pennine Heritage Trust's director's a group of four, including three members from S.C.M.C., spent the day lifting the string of display lights out of the 328ft Brewery Shaft. Since their installation the Trust has experienced problems, ultimately leading to the situation where only the top three out of a string of 10 bulbs would work. Electronic engineers Paul Thorne and Ian Cooper, assisted by Steve Holding and Matthew Clarke preferred to raise the string of lights as an 'SRT' haulage exercise rather than use the small hand winch provided. Suitably equipped with lifelines Matthew Clarke was positioned in Rampgill level, his task being to lean out and attach haulage ropes to the lights as they came level with him. Meanwhile up at the top the other three wrestled with a cats-cradle of ropes and wire cables to neatly lay the system out on the surface.

With no access to circuit diagrams, and no replacement components anyway, a full fault diagnosis and repair was always going to be difficult. Despite the problems, by late afternoon four of the faulty lighting modules had been modified so the lights would illuminate the shaft in pairs, rather than singularly as designed. The subtle tweak increased the number of working lights from the three functioning at the start of the day, to nine. The team also managed to revitalise the electronic "splash" that echo's up the shaft as the last lamp is lit!

With time ticking by the task of lowering the string of lamps back into the depths began, about half way through the process a family of visitors came to see the shaft.

Having explained what was happening, and led them through the working area, it was possible to point to the spot of light down the shaft and explain that it's source was the assistant positioned level with the car park. As the family made their way out and said goodbye they were particularly amused as a disembodied call from the depths of the shaft also bid them farewell!

Unfortunately the day's activities didn't all go as smoothly as they might. Once the string of lights were securely chained back in position the only task remaining was to pull up our last haulage rope, it was unfortunate that this became tangled in the lights and eventually led to Paul abseiling 40ft down to sort the mess out. Once the equipment was tidied away it was possible to admire the day's work, and once again see the depths of Brewery Shaft illuminated into the distance.

During the week S.C.M.C. member Andrew Wood experienced Nenthead for the first time. A relatively gentle introduction to the area took in the standard tour of Smallcleugh to see the Ballroom Flat, before venturing off beyond 'Gypsum Corner' to the furthest reaches of the mine. A detour to see the run-in at Bog Shaft preceded the long walk to the furthest end of the main horse level, before retracing our steps to view the sub-level that leads down to Capelcleugh.



Paul Thorne working on the Brewery shaft lights



East Gate drilling rig working on the borehole for the new geothermal energy project

Borehole

As an alternative to the daily underground trips, local historian and director of the North Pennines Heritage Trust Peter Wilkinson led a walk to explore the mining remains around Rookhope.

Before setting off on foot we called at the site of a new geothermal bore hole that's being drilled 1,000m down into the farmland alongside the disused East Gate Cement Works. Work at the borehole continues 16 hours a day and was already just over half way down at the time of our visit.

An interesting couple of hours were spent on site talking to the site manager and photographing the equipment in use, before heading off to see the remnants of the area's mining industry.



Nenthead, October 2004

by Ian Cooper

By the end of the week a varied itinerary of trips and visits had been completed and all those present were looking forward to the next opportunity to head north.

Right: Detail of the borehole drilling rig.

Below left: Drill bits used by the rig.

Pictures: Ian Cooper



Heritage Day - 12th September

On Sunday 12th September Club members helped the Mines Trust out with the annual Snailbeach Heritage day.

The day got off to a slow start, although most of the early visitors had come specifically to go underground on the Perkins Level trip - many had been in previous years but had missed this trip, so they arrived early to ensure they could get underground.

However after they had been to Perkins Level they then seemed to stay around the site visiting the buildings and going into Day Level.

One elderly gentleman - Eddy Powell (Joshua Edwin Powell) from Minsterley came along in the morning and while chatting to people mentioned that his father (Joshua Thomas Powell) had worked at Huglith and he appeared in the

photograph on page 95 of Ivor Brown's "West Shropshire Mining Field" in addition he said that he had his father's carbide lamp, from Huglith and a mug presented to his great-great-grandfather (?) by the Snailbeach mine.

Later in the day he came back to the Miners dry and produced the mug and lamp from a plastic bag - he'd been home to Minsterley to fetch them (although his wife had given him strict instructions not to break the mug) !!

The lamp was interesting, it was obviously an early style small carbide cap-lamp, but had no makers name or marks on it to identify it.

The mug however was fascinating. It was white china, with a gold rim and gold circles in the grooves around the lower part of the mug, and probably held about a pint of liquid.



Above: Mr. Powell's carbide lamp.

Below: Various views of the mug.

Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings

It had a nice floral pattern either side of the handle and was inscribed in gold script: "Joshua Hughes, Snail Bitch Mine 1853".

Yes - Beach was spelt Bitch ! There was nothing on the base of the mug to indicate where the mug was made, but it is a very nice artefact.



Hopton Court Culvert and Spring

by David Poyner

Two items of potential interest have come to light during a survey of the upper course of Hopton Brook, on the east flank of the Clee Hill, in Hopton Wafers Parish. From 1803, Hopton Court was the home of Thomas Botfield. He was part of a family of East Shropshire coal and iron masters who owned Old Park iron works; his father had taken over most of the mines on the eastern part of the Clee Hill in 1780 and Thomas continued to work them for all of his life. On his death in 1843 the estate passed to his nephew Beriah, who became the MP for Ludlow¹. The current owner of the Hopton Estate is a descendant of the Botfields.

Hopton Court Bridge Culvert (SO 639 767)

A road leaves Hopton Wafers and currently heads north east, now passing to the north of Hopton Court. Prior to 1859, the road went directly to Hopton Court but was altered at the expense of Beriah². The old road can still be traced; in particular, the bridge by which it crossed Hopton Brook is still standing. This is a handsome stone structure with a brick-lined arch. High on the east bank, its parapet is penetrated by a culvert. This is 7' high by 4'2" wide. The top 2' is a brick lined arch; the walls are of stone. It follows the design of the bridge itself and was probably built at the same time. It is currently 28' long; on its south side it continued for about another 3' but the roof of this has now collapsed. It is built on a curve, so that it would not be possible to see through it from either end. From the south end, a path leads from the collapsed portal through a cutting to emerge on the same level as the brook, on an open space. There is no trace of any path on the north side; the bank drops steeply to the brook. However, a similar passage at the same level cuts through the parapet of Beriah's new bridge of 1859-60. This is straight but of similar dimensions.

There is no obvious function for either culvert. One clue as to why the

culverts might have been constructed is that the first series OS map of 1882 shows a path going through the two culverts and extending about ½ a mile up the brook valley. Hopton Court grounds were landscaped, apparently by Humphrey Repton in c1812³. As part of this, it is possible that a brookside walk was created. The old bridge culvert could have been designed to enhance the experience of the walk; its construction as a short tunnel would have added to the adventure.

In fact, emerging from its north portal, the walkers would have been greeted by the site of a paper mill on the opposite bank, invisible from the hall or the start of the walk. This may have been a feature that Botfield wanted his visitors to see, from the safety of the bank; it would have made a surprising contrast. On this interpretation, the walk would still have been in existence in 1859/60, when the new bridge needed to have a similar, if simpler culvert included to maintain the route. However, it must have eventually been abandoned.

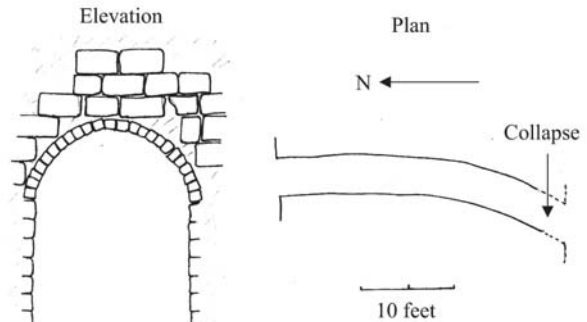


Figure 1: Plan and elevation of north portal of the culvert. Much of the stonework around the portal is obscured by undergrowth or earth; only visible stones have been drawn.

Given the steepness of the bank north of the old bridge, without regular maintenance it is possible that it quickly collapsed.

The Chalybreate Well (SO 6367 778)

About a mile north of Hopton Court, the brook approaches Catherton Common. On its east bank the ground rises steeply to Knowlebank. On the western side there is a more gentle rise to Catherton. For several hundred yards at this point, the ground is extremely wet and marshy; the brook runs orange with ochre. This is where the coal measures of Catherton Common drain, the water heavy with iron salts. Many centuries of working of the coal will have created extensive underground,

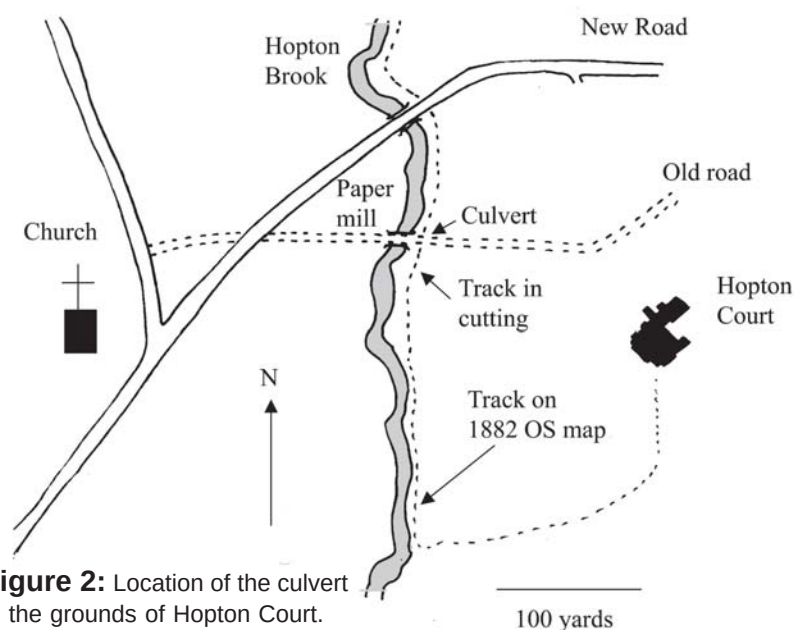


Figure 2: Location of the culvert in the grounds of Hopton Court.



Dans and other Mining Relics

by Ivor Brown

water-filled voids that have to discharge somewhere. It is likely that the ochrous outflow is largely the consequence of mining.

These springs have been exploited. The 1882/3 OS map marks them as a "chalybreate well". There are the remains of a small stone building at the northern edge of the marshy area. Berrow's Worcester Journal of August 20th 1840 noted "there is a strong chalybreate spring lately discovered at the foot of the [Clee] hill and enclosed in a small building and which is left open for the public to have the benefit of the water free of any expense". This is almost certainly the Hopton spring. The same report promotes another mineral spring on the hill as having medicinal value. This was probably at a site in Cleeton later called Newfound Well (SO 602 782). Both of these would have been in the ownership of Thomas Botfield and it is likely that he was behind the promotion, although his motives may have been purely philanthropic. There was considerable interest in natural springs at this time; in 1839 a mineral spring had been discovered at Tenbury and the town was in the process of styling itself "Tenbury Wells" to mark this⁴.

It only remains to record that this attempt to promote mine drainage water as a health supplement appears not to have met with success; my guess is that the scheme was quickly forgotten.

I am grateful to Chris Woodward for allowing me access to the Hopton Court Estate.

References

- 1) Gentlemans Magazine, 1860, part 2, p473.
- 2) Notes of the late Edwin Caldwell written c1930, kept at Hopton Court, p96.
- 3) N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England; Shropshire, 1958, pg 154.
- 4) K. Beddoes and W.H. Smith, The Tenbury and Bewdley Railway, 1995, p1

At the end of the item on the Madeley County Court in the last issue (Below 2004.3, page 21) the question was asked - was there a connection between the family of Dann, Carters of Madeley pits and the trucks of that description. It does now seem that the name of the truck came before the name of the family, since the Oxford Dictionary and local newspaper refers to "dans" in the

1850s and earlier. It has been suggested however that the family may have adopted their name from the "truck" - perhaps if they had a reason to lose a less favourable name, a not unusual practice even today.

An example of the early use of the name 'dan' for a truck is given in the following newspaper description:

Wellington Journal, 16th May 1863 "Broseley News"

CURIOUS RELICS - On the afternoon of Tuesday, as some of the colliers in the employ of Messrs. G. and J. Langford were engaged in getting coal near to the Ferry-field, they came upon some old workings near a fault. Here they discovered several primitive articles, used at some remote period in those ancient workings.

These included a basket, a skeleton *dan*, an axe, and a gaun. The basket, which is about thirty inches long by two feet wide, is quite unique. The flooring, consisting of oak boards about an inch and a half thick, is fastened to the sides, (which from the colour the wood must have been shod with iron, but which has perished) by six strong oaken pegs. These enter the sides about five inches, and rise above the floor of the basket about six inches. In addition to the iron bow, which spans the basket from end to end, rising about two feet from the floor, there are also two pegs. Around these pegs including ends and sides, there was a wall of wickerwork which is much decayed. When found the basket was full of small coals. The *dan* is about twenty inches wide by thirty long. The two side pieces are connected by four cross pieces. The shape is cuniform - wider at the one end than the other. The axe is encased with a firm encrustation of rust, except the edge, where a fracture recently made shows a good quality of steel. The handle, which is broken into three parts, is about thirty inches long. The iron hoops which bound the gaun have long since perished. The staves, the handle, and the circular bottom, about nine inches in diameter, are intact. These articles were found between two faults, which exist in this locality. In the opinion of the workmen who found these relics judging from the appearance of the place where they were found, water may have suddenly broken in upon the workmen, by whom, in their haste to escape, these primitive remains were abandoned.

Does anyone know what a "gaun" is ? A small wooden bucket or barrel ??



The Colliery Managers 'Ticket'

by Ivor Brown

Since 1872 a colliery manager has, like a sea captain, required to be 'Certificated' by the Government. These Certificates, involved among other things, the passing of an examination controlled by the Mines Inspectorate, the Certificates being usually called a "ticket".

A Mr. C. Jefcoat, one time manager of Ashmore Park Colliery near Wednesfield, Staffordshire, held Certificate No.2 and it is believed that George Round of the Madeley Court Company held No.3. Noel T.Beech of the Lilleshall Company held No.11 and so on.

By the 1950s the Certificate numbers had reached the 1000s, and in 1955 the main 4 collieries in Shropshire were managed by C.L.Todd (3971), Granville; T.Blower (3812), Kemberton; R.J.Hasbury (4484), Highley; and H.Foster (2715) at Ifton.

By 1961, when the writer became No. 8435, as well as passing written examinations the requirements included producing Certificates of (a) First Aid proficiency, (b) Gas Testing, (c) Hearing, (d) of general education and of (e) practical underground work (5 years with 2 years actually on the coalface). In

addition it required a birth certificate proving age over 25 and two testimonials of good character (usually present colliery manager and local vicar).

Colliery Manager's Certificates are still essential and the process of awarding them continues, but the writer has not found the number of the latest (must be over 10,000 !) or any complete list of holders. It would be interesting to find out who was No.1 but the National Coal Mining Museum lists only go back to 1896.

Annual Dinner - Callow Inn

This years Club Dinner was held at the Callow Inn, Bromlow, with about 25 members and guests attending on a very wet and windy night in this pub with some superb views over the surrounding country side.. Following a good meal a tense auction took place of the two pictures that used to be at the Last Inn, painted by Malcom Newton. Mike Moore and David Adams were the eventual winners of the auction with proceeds from the auction going to Club funds.

Ivor Brown was the after dinner speaker, stepping in at the last minute to regale us with stories of early Club activities, illustrated with some fascinating pictures of early Club trips (and Club members!), plus some pictures and stories of his time at Telford. One incredible set of pictures showed a road near the Town Centre where the curb stones were 'grinding together', immediately followed by a massive slump of a nearby pile of overburden.



A bashful Mike Worsfold accepts his "E-mole" and "Golden Nut" awards.
Picture: Ian Cooper

Mike Worsfold was awarded this years "Golden Nut", plus a the "Explorer Mole" or "E-Mole" award for his efforts in pushing Club explorations and survey work (allegedly - a survey of Scott Level perchance?).

After a successful evening almost half the members stopped the night either in the pub or in the car park (Mole managed to get half his tent on the only available patch of grass, while the rest of us slept in our vehicles)



Left: Ivor and Iris Brown, taking a relaxing break in the bar before the dinner.



Right: Long standing Club Members Jenny & Terry Davies

Left: Roy Fellows, on loan from the Mafia for the evening, 'chills' in the bar.

Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings



A Christmas Special - Cashing in on Tragedy, contributed by Ivor Brown

In the mid 19th century it was traditional for Shropshire pit girls to travel to London usually to work in the surrounding market gardens - but they were often tempted to other types of money raising. Many would go just for the Autumn after nodule picking had been completed on the heaps and a fresh crop had been weathered out by the frosts in the Winter following (for further information see 'East Shropshire Coalfields' by the writer, page 111) . One (or perhaps two) "girls" seem to have been quite enterprising:

SALOPIAN JOURNAL (2ND OCTOBER 1839)

HATTON GARDEN OFFICE - MONDAY

Mary Jones, *alias* Rigby, an elderly woman, with a girl 13 years of age, were brought before Mr. Combe, in the custody of Horsford and Pring, Mendicity officers, on whose statement it appeared that on Monday morning they saw the prisoners in the neighbourhood of Islington, and knowing the eldest prisoner to be a notorious imposter, they determined on watching their manoeuvres. At length they observed them go to several gentlemen's houses, where the woman presented the following printed documents for the purpose of procuring alms :-

"THE UNFORTUNATE COALMINERS' HUMBLE ADDRESS AND STATEMENT.

"I do hereby certify that the bearers here of in my employment in the coal mines in the parish of Hadley Old-Fields, in Shropshire, when a most melancholy accident of fire-damp took place in the pits in which the unfortunate sufferers were at work; 25 men, 14 boys and 16 horses were burnt to death, and 9 more dreadfully injured, leaving their friends, 10 widows, and 36 children to bewail their loss. The accident has caused the works to be stopped, and reduced the bearers to a state of misery, and almost starvation. Not less than 450 were thrown out of employment by the above melancholy event. We hope, therefore, that our sufferings will plead for us, and that these facts will move your hearts to enable you to assist us in our present time of need. Gentlemen, their characters are unimpeachable for sobriety, industry, and honesty. They have worked for me many years, and gave me every satisfaction. They will honestly account to their fellow sufferers for every trifle they may be intrusted with by a generous public, who know that fire is obtained at

the hazard of the lives of their fellow-creatures.

"REV. C. CLAYTON,
"MR. H. LAWLEY,
"MR. B. ROWLEY,
"J. ONION, MASTER OF THE WORKS.

"The smallest trifle will be thankfully received by us with the sincere gratitude -
July 24, 1839.

"Houlston, Printer, Wellington."

Horsford stated that there were no less than 14 connected with the prisoners' gang, and their depredations had been numerous and successfully practised for a considerable time. Since the year 1837, the prisoner and her husband had been frequently committed to the House of Correction for similar practices, and her husband was at present in prison, having been committed for three months. He apprehended the eldest prisoner and two other women some time ago under similar circumstances at Homerton. He found in her possession numerous documents exactly similar to the above, which he now produced.

Mr. Combe asked her what she had to say?

Prisoner.- The papers were given to me by a gentleman, who told me to take them to Islington and leave them there. She did not know who he was. She worked for a gardener at Brentford, but she was going to Wales.

Mr. Combe closely questioned her, when she made very evasive answers, and contradicted herself, on which he committed her for one month to the House of Correction and hard labour, and he directed that the girl should be taken to the workhouse.



Mining Remains in the south of the Black Country

by David Poyner

A few months ago, Ian Grant, photographer, industrial archaeologist and member of the Mining History Discussion List, took me on a day tour of mining sites in the southern half of the Black Country, from Halesowen as far as Old Hill and Netherton. What follows is a brief account of the most significant mining sites we visited, with a few notes on their history. This is not intended as work of great scholarship (but there are some good sources available; see below); rather it is simply to inform (or remind) people what can be seen in the Black Country. Of course, as Halesowen was part of Shropshire until the 19th Century, the mines there may be of particular interest to the club!

Beech Tree (SO938839) & Oldnall (SO932838) Collieries

Our trip began on the southern fringe of the South Staffordshire Coalfield. At Wassel Grove, now a golf course, there were several attempts to find workable coal by a shaft and borehole. These demonstrated that there was no coal worth mining. By contrast, about ¾ of a mile to the north, there was an important mine at Beech Tree. However, to understand this mine it is best to consider matters chronologically and start

another mile further north, on the edge of the Stour Valley at **Hayes Colliery** (SO933843). This was working in the early 19th Century, owned by George Attwood, a prominent ironmaster. In 1860 the first railway arrived in the area; the Stourbridge Railway, running from a junction with the newly opened main line at Stourbridge to Cradley. A branch was constructed to Hayes with a siding and tramway to serve the mine. From Attwood, the mine passed to the Fisher family and so to James Brook Fisher, who also owned an adjacent firebrick works.

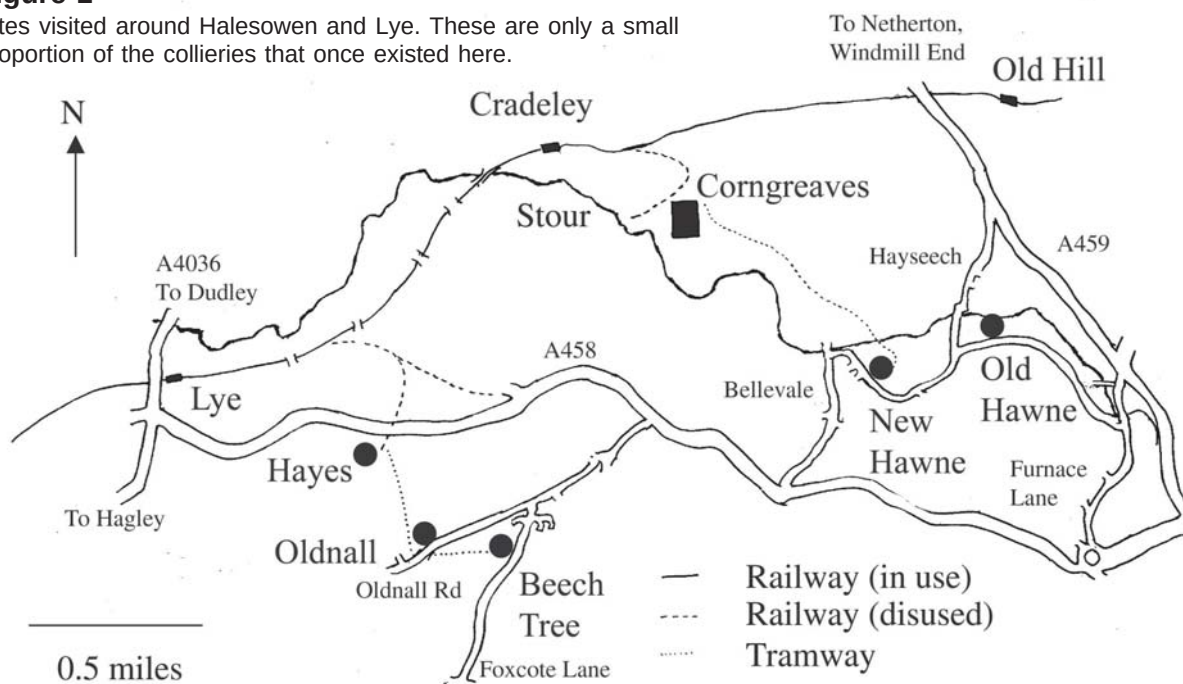
In 1872, Fisher leased the mineral rights to the neighbouring Oldnall estate from Oldswinford Hospital and soon afterwards opened a colliery there. He connected it to Hayes via a self-acting narrow-gauge tramway. From Hayes the coal was transhipped onto the standard gauge line and so could be sold to a wider market. By the early 1880s the Oldnall was drawing about 3000 tons of best coal and rough slack a month as well as around 1500 tons of fine slack. However, following a royalty dispute with Oldswinford Hospital, Fisher gave up the mine in 1887. In 1890 he also gave up Hayes Colliery to Mobberley and Perry, firebrick makers of Merry Hill. As early as

1887, they had expressed an interest in leasing Oldnall but could not agree terms with the Oldswinford Hospital. However, in 1899 they did take over Oldnall, reopening it. They took over Fisher's plant that had remained at the mine but soon replaced it with their own. Oldnall had a pair of shafts, 191 yards deep and worked coal and fireclay. The mine quickly expanded to employ about 100 men below ground.

Beech Tree Colliery was sunk in 1873/4 by James Holcroft, iron and coalmaster who owned mines close by at Cradley. Although he built an engine house, he seems to have mined little or no coal. He negotiated a route for a tramway to reach the railway at Hayes, but for some reason did not proceed with the mine. The surface buildings were abandoned until 1919, when the site was leased by Mobberley and Perry, as a logical extension of their works at Hayles and Oldnall. The shafts were deepened to 220 yards and by the early 1920s the mine was employing well over 100 men underground with a total coal and fireclay output of around 5000 tons per week. A rope-worked tramway was constructed to link the mine with Oldnall and the coal was then sent down the incline to the screens and sidings at Hayes.

Figure 1

Sites visited around Halesowen and Lye. These are only a small proportion of the collieries that once existed here.



Mining Remains in the south of the Black Country

by David Poyner

Hayes itself was closed in 1928 but the site was retained for transshipment. It seems that as the most recent pit, workings were concentrated on Beech Tree, with Oldnall closing in 1944. At nationalisation Beech Tree was drawing about 80,000 tons of coal as well as 20,000 tons of clay. The mine was modernised by the NCB in 1955 with new underground haulage and now employed around 200 men. However, the end came unexpectedly in 1958 when the workings flooded from water-bearing strata. Some men were transferred to Highley.

There is apparently nothing left of Hayes Colliery; it is very difficult to even spot where the branch left the Stourbridge line just beyond Lye Station. However, at Oldnall, there are extensive spoil tips and the upper part of the incline is intact. A brick overbridge survives, carrying a footpath over the incline although the cutting has almost been completely filled with old cars. From Oldnall, the route of the tramway to Beech Tree is intact. At Beech Tree there are extensive spoil tips. Just the other side of the road from these, the pithead baths of 1950 survive as a scout hut. The substation that supplied electricity to the mine is also still present, just down the road from the baths.

Old Hawne (SO 963849)

Old Hawne is said to have been another of the Attwood collieries, like Hayes. It was linked to the Dudley Canal by a tramway. After being operated by various charter masters it closed around 1870. It was revived shortly afterwards by the Hawne Collieries Co., but closed again a few years later. In 1894 it was brought back into use as a pumping station by the Hawne Mines Drainage Association. This was an attempt at collective action by the local mine owners to keep their mines free from water by pumping from a number of deep shafts in the district. The pump engine worked until the 1920s, when it became uneconomic to continue.

There is apparently very little left at Old Hawne. However, what does survive is the tramway bridge over the Stour, just off Furnace Lane. The tramway can be traced a short distance westwards of this. The bridge was present in 1844 and is probably quite a bit older. Although not visited, Hawne Basin, where the tramway terminated on the Dudley Canal, also survives; this is now the terminus of the No 2 line of the canal which originally made a junction in Selly Oak with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal.

New Hawne (SO 957846)

New Hawne was sunk in 1865 by the New British Iron Company, to feed their furnaces at Corngreaves. It was linked to the works by a narrow gauge railway, worked by locomotive (later replaced by the more normal rope haulage). The two shafts were 270 yards deep. The engine house included both a winding engine and a pumping engine. The mine employed about 150 men, drawing around 400 tons per day. Unusually for this date, a mechanical vibrating screen was used to sort the coal. In about 1880 a Guibal fan was built to help with the ventilation. In 1893 the New British Iron Company went into liquidation but New Hawne was obviously a viable concern as it was purchased by Shelagh Garrett and Sons. It employed around 200 men until after the First World War. However, in the 1921 coal strike, many mines stopped pumping and water levels rose throughout the district. New Hawne was flooded and subsequently closed.

New Hawne is the most complete colliery in the Black Country. The winding house, fan house, workshops and offices are all intact and in good condition. Until quite recently they were used as council depot and so were maintained. The majority of the remains are from 1865 but a datestone on part of the workshops of 1895 show how they were extended by Garrett and Sons. At the time of the visit, all windows and doors had been securely

shuttered for protection. The buildings can be viewed from the adjacent Hawne road through the numerous gaps in the hedge. It is a little sobering to realise that such an excellently preserved complex merely merits grade II listing. It is to be hoped that a use can soon be found for the buildings, to ensure their long-term survival.

Cobbs Engine House and the Bumble Hole (SO 951288)

The Bumble Hole was formerly at the centre of a complex of canals, furnaces and mines. In 1798, the No 2 line of the Dudley Canal was driven through here, with the aim of providing an alternative outlet for the mines of the Dudley area. Doubtless this provided a boost to the local mines. In about 1831, Sir Horace St Paul erected a pumping engine to drain his Windmill End Colliery that was located on the hillside by the canal. The engine house was known as Cobb's Engine House, allegedly after a local farmer; the mine was eventually designated the No 3 pit of the colliery. However, the mine was already old when the pumping engine was erected and used a Newcomen-type atmospheric engine for winding.

At the Bumble Hole the canal originally curved around the hillside in a tight arc. A short branch of 1803 went towards Baptist End to serve Bumble Hole, Netherton and Baptist End Collieries. Several other wharfs connected to other works; a long tramway headed north towards Dudley, extending 1½ miles to Springfield colliery via inclines and a tunnel. Just south of Windmill End Colliery was Warrens Hall Colliery, with its own basin. Windmill End furnaces were in the loop of the canal. In 1858, a new canal was opened north-east from the Bumble Hole, passing through Netherton Tunnel and providing a short cut to the main line of the Birmingham Canal Navigations between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. A cut-off was also constructed across the loop of the original Dudley canal to shorten the journey and relieve congestion.



Mining Remains in the south of the Black Country

by David Poyner

Finally, the Dudley and Halesowen railway was built from Dudley to Old Hill and beyond in 1878, crossing the canal close to the pumping engine.

The pumping engine was important in keeping Windmill End and surrounding collieries free from water. Water control was such a problem in the south of the Black Country that after the failure of a number of voluntary schemes the South Staffordshire Mines Drainage Commission was set up by Act of Parliament in 1873. However, a year earlier the Old Hill Mines Drainage Company was established by agreement and this acquired the Windmill End Colliery pumping engine. Eventually this was absorbed into the South Staffordshire scheme.

In the meantime, coal drawing continued at the other shafts of Windmill End. By the early 20th Century, Warrens Hall Colliery was owned by H.S. Pitt and Co., one of the main colliery owners in the south of the Black Country. They also eventually worked coal at Windmill End No 3; in 1918 both mines each employed just under 100 men underground and around 35 on the surface. Pumping ceased at Windmill End in 1930; I assume coal drawing stopped around this time as well at the adjacent collieries. The pumping engine was scrapped but the winding engine went to the Henry Ford museum at Dearborne. The pumping engine house and stack were preserved, although all other buildings were demolished.

The most impressive feature today is Cobb's Engine House and associated stack; they form a scheduled Ancient Monument. Numerous spoil tips are still present and form part of Warrens Hall Country Park. Warrens Hall Colliery basin is still in water; No 1 pit was adjacent to this. From here a tramway can be traced to the No 2 Pit of the colliery where traces of foundations are present. Elsewhere on the site, there is the canal. The middle of the loop is now filled in but the two arms are still in water. The



Above: The John Cobbs Engine house and canal junctions in the early 1970s. Note the mine waste tips of Warren's Hall colliery to the right, Bumble arm towpath bridge to the left with the towpath bridge over the Netherton tunnel branch behind it. Picture: Peter Eggleston - I.A.Recordings

Netherton Tunnel is open for traffic and it is possible to walk through it. There is a small visitor centre on the cut-off with interesting displays on the history of the area.

Further reading and sources

www.lostlabours.co.uk : Ian's website. This has illustrations of many of the sites in this article; go to "In search of Agenoria". Under "research" there is much useful background to the industrial history of the Black Country.

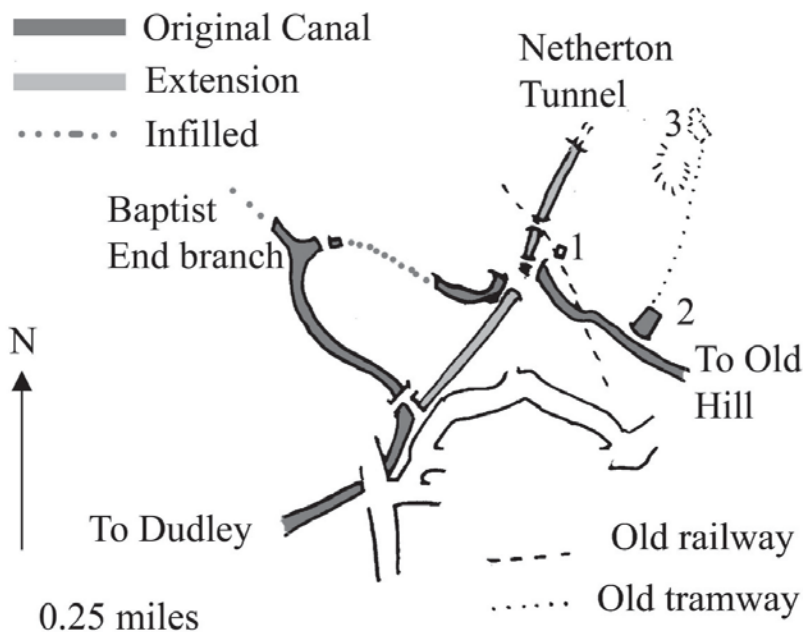
A history of coal mining around

Halesowen by Nigel Chapman, Heartland Press, 1999. The definitive account of coal mines between Halesowen and Lye. I have taken almost all of my information for these mines from this book.

Boats, smoke, steam and folk; exploring the canals of the West Midlands by Robert Davies. Tempus, 2001. Contains an account of the Dudley Canal at the Bumble Hole and Cobb's Engine House.

Figure 2

The Bumble Hole. This shows the area today. 1) Cobbs Engine House and Windmill End No 3 Pit, 2) Warrens Hall Colliery Basin and No 1 Pit, 3) Warrens Hall No 2 Pit



What the Papers Were Saying Submitted by Steve Dewhirst

WELLINGTON JOURNAL AND SHREWSBURY NEWS 1899

FATAL FALL DOWN A MINE AT MINSTERLEY.

An accident which had a fatal termination, and which has caused considerable sorrow in the neighbourhood of Roman Gravels, has recently occurred. On Tuesday evening a man named John Grove, aged about 44 years, who was well accustomed to work in the pits, went on duty at the Tankerville mine at six o'clock. The mode of transit from one level to another was by means of ladders, and while descending one of these it suddenly collapsed, and Groves was precipitated a distance of about 20 yards. A fellow-workman named Thomas Edwards went to his assistance, and found him in an unconscious condition, but still alive. Groves was at once conveyed to the surface, and afterwards to an adjacent cottage, but died within three-quarters of an hour. Examination disclosed the fact that he was terribly injured. One of his arms was broken and his ribs were fractured badly. Deceased unfortunately leaves a widow and 10 children. He was a very steady, industrious man, and as will be seen from a report of the Gravels Friendly Society Anniversary, held yesterday and given elsewhere, appreciative and sympathetic references were made to him by those who knew him best. Alterations are being carried on at the mine, and it is stated that a chain must have caught the ladder the deceased descended, and pulled it from its foundations, so that it easily gave way to the weight of the deceased, he being a man of considerable size.

An inquest on the body was held yesterday at the Sun Inn, Roman Gravels, by Mr. R. E. Clarke (coroner). Prior to the opening of the inquiry the Coroner and Mr. Atkinson (H.M. Inspector of Mines) visited the scene of the accident, and made a thorough inspection of the plant used and of the mine in which the fatality occurred.

Evidence was given by Sarah Groves, widow of the deceased, who deposed that her husband's wages recently had been £1 per week. William Titley, who worked with the deceased, said someone shouted from the 28th fathom that the chain-an iron one, weighing about 4 cwt.-had broken.

They at once went to the level mentioned, and made preparations to repair the chain. Deceased coming to the top to the blacksmith's shop for a new link, which he subsequently brought down. They started to descend lower, deceased going first. They got down one ladder and deceased went on as if to use the second, when witness heard a crash. Deceased's light (a candle carried in his hat) went out and witness then shouted, but received no reply. Witness then looked about to see what had happened, and discovered that the ladder on which the deceased was descending the mine had disappeared. Deceased was afterwards found lying on a stage about 15 yards from the bottom of the mine with the chain near him. He was taken to the surface at once, but expired before he actually landed.- By Mr. Atkinson: The chain had been in use about 20 years ; but he had never known it brought up to be repaired.- By the Coroner: He had not heard any direct complaints about the chain, but the men on the bank had said that, it was not so good as it had been.

Thomas Edwards, agent of the mine, said he was down the workings on Tuesday, and found everything right. He had received no complaints as to the state of the ladder. The chain had been repaired twice during the six months he had been at the mine, but it had never been brought to the surface for the purpose of repair, because the men did not travel when it was working.

At the conclusion of the evidence the jury consulted together in private for some time, and then passed the following verdict:- "We find that the deceased came to his death accidentally, but we are of opinion that the Mine ought to be carried on under more modern principles and with more regard to the safety of the men, and that the shaft should be put in proper repair before again being used as a roadway for the men."

3rd June 1899



The Madeley Court Colliery, Madeley, Shropshire, Part 2

Working the Mines, by Ivor Brown

The 'pits' seem to have been numbered consecutively as sunk between the 1840s and the 1870s; by 1849 they are shown on the Tithe Map schedule as:

Plot 333 'Pit mounds' (Shafts 1,2, & 3)

Plot 323 'Pit mount, engine house, buildings & shafts' (Shafts 5 & 6)

Plot 145 'Engine house, shafts, pitmounts & buildings' (Shafts 7 & 8)

Plot 324 'Pit mound, engine house, buildings & shafts' (Shafts 9 & 10)

The sites of the remaining shafts have not been positively identified at this date but there are several plots showing 'quarry', 'Rough and Pit' and 'sandpits' owned by J.Foster (from other evidence it can be assumed that the compiler of the schedule used 'Rough and Pit' to describe surface clay works.

Local tradition indicates that pits 11 and 12 were sunk about 1872 and by 1882 all the known pits up to 16 & 17 had been completed.

Very little is known about pits 13, 14 and 15 although local tradition gives them the positions shown on figure 2. The recent Geological Map and Memoir (completed 1970-72, but published in 1995) however shows that the modern geologists have placed 11 and 12 in the positions of 14 and 15 leaving the latter (which have marks of run-in shafts) with no numbers. They also put 11 and 12 in the complex of shafts near 9 & 10 and do not number 16 and 17 at all, but just mark them as "Fosters Pits". The present writer prefers local tradition for the shafts as previously numbered.

A full geological section for Pits 7 & 8 is given on a Vertical Section Sheet numbered 23 published in 1846 by the Geological Survey. The Section was compiled by D.H.Williams and shows all the principal coal seams but only two of the ironstone seams are named, the Pennystone and the

Crawstone. The position, thickness and approximate depth is given in table 1.

Table 1

Pits 7 & 8: Thickness of seams and depths from Geological Survey Section.		
Seam	Thickness	Calculated depth
Top Coal	4ft. 9in.	576 ft.
Threequarter Coal	3ft. 6in.	580 ft.
Double Coal	4ft. 0in.	600 ft.
Yard Coal	3ft. 0in.	-
Big Flint Coal	3ft. 0in.	632 ft.
Pennystone Ironstone in shale		668 ft.
Viger Coal	2ft. 0in.	680 ft.
Two Feet Coal	2ft. 0in.	704 ft.
Best Coal	2ft. 3in.	728 ft.
Clod Coal	2ft. 3in.	744 ft.
Little Flint Coal	2ft. 4in.	766 ft.
Crawstone Ironstone		772 ft.

A geological section also exists for No. 9 pit from which the modern Survey geologists have calculated the depths of the seams relative to Ordnance Datum.

Table 2

Comparison of calculated depths of specific seams relative to Ordnance Datum.				
	Pit 9	Pit 7 & 8	Halesfield Pit	Kemberton Pit
Top Coal	c-36m	-65m	-85m	-122m
Clod Coal	c-96m	-116m	-138m	-184m
Separation	60m	50m	53m	62m

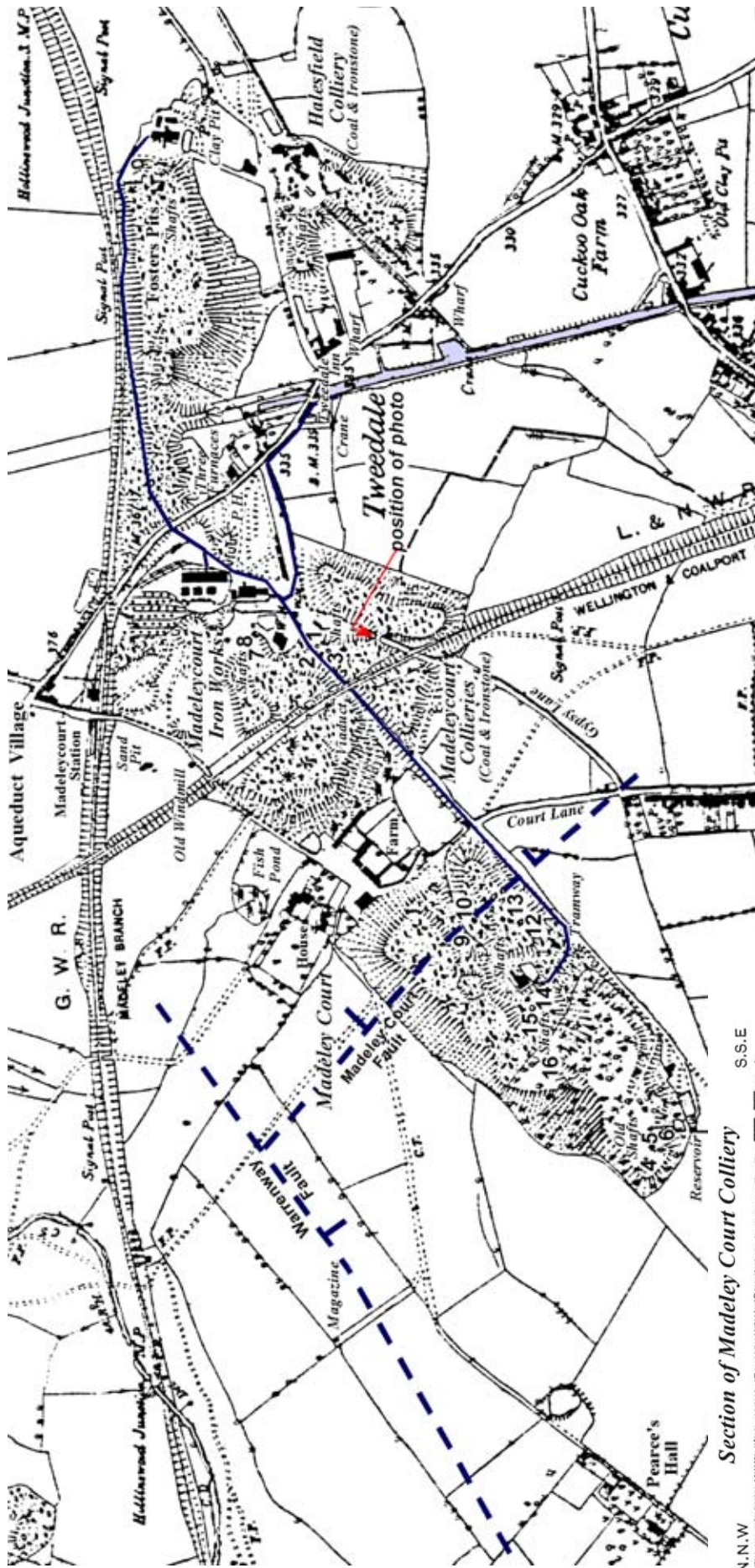
This section shows not only a regular thickness of beds separating these two seams between Pit 9 and Kemberton Pit, but also the general dip to the north east. The depth increase of the seams in the short distance between Pit 9 and Pits 7 and 8 (see figure 1) also indicates a considerable downthrow fault. This is in fact the line of the Madeley Court fault which cuts the Court mining area in two and which is almost parallel to similar faults north of Halesfield Pit (27m) and north of Kemberton Pit (the Holmer Fault 37m).

William James Clarke was manager of the Colliery for about 20 years from about 1880 to 1900 and in 1901 he had a technical paper published in the Transactions of the Geological Society of London in which he produced a very diagrammatic section through the Court Colliery (see figure 3). Although he did not show any faults he showed that the Upper Coal Measures rested unconformably on the Middle Coal Measures with the important coal seams having a steady dip but steep rises (up to 35°) at the edge of the coalfield. All the pits in his colliery area are shown as a single 'shaft' and the fault that splits the area is left out.

Both John Randall the local historian and Thomas Wynne, the local mines inspector have written of how the new owner in the 1820s, James Foster,



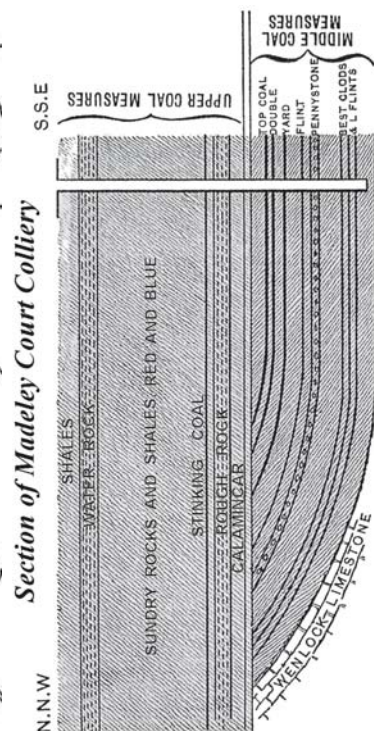
The Madeley Court Colliery, Madeley, Shropshire, Part 2 Working the Mines, by Ivor Brown



Approx. Locations of Pits & Faults around Madeley Court Colliery
as shown on modern geological maps (based on 1:10560 OS Map 1888)
other features added by I.J.Brown, 2004

Figure 1

Figure 3 (left)



[Scales: vertical, 400 feet = 1 inch; horizontal, 10 chains=1 inch.]



The Madeley Court Colliery, Madeley, Shropshire, Part 2

Working the Mines, by Ivor Brown



The ironstone cartway bridge & the Coalport Branch Railway Bridge over Gypsy Lane, Aug. 1968 (I.J.Brown)

intended to protect the old Court House at the centre of his mineral take but it seems that this idea was dropped by his successor. Mr. Wynne informed the Coal Commission in 1871 that coal was left unworked for about 100 yards all around the building, but that Mr. W.O.Foster "is now sacrificing the old house and getting the coal from beneath it, having given a large price. The coal being of more value than the damage he will do to the building." Mr. Wynne added "It is the best way, as far as my experience has gone, to take the whole of the coals from underneath at once." By this he meant that a rapid total extraction causes less damage than protracted partial extraction - a principle still being applied in the area nearly 100 years later.

The two ironstone seams worked at the Court Pits were, it appears, the principal reason for the Company operating at the Court, particularly the Pennystone Seam as the Crawstone Seam was much less productive in this part of the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. Smith, in 1846 gives the Pennystone Clay Ironstone Seam here a special mention and describes it as "easily scratched by a steel point but harder than the Donnington Pennystone, colour dark grey, fracture conchoidal, structure compact with some crystals of iron pyrites". He found by analysis that the stone was 34.75% iron.

A former mine deputy, Mr. Albert

Brunt, described the working of ironstone at the 'Court' about 1900 to the present writer in the 1950s. He said that the mines were worked as "stone pits" not "coal pits" and in fact the abandonment plans were sent into the Record Office as 'Ironstone Mine plans' rather than Coal Mining Plans. (This is why the Court Company does not appear in the 19th Century Directories as "Colliery owners".) The working methods were however similar but the workings were mainly 'gas-free' so there was no need for safety lamps except in a few places. The Inspectors obviously disagreed - see the incident report on the next page. The writer actually purchased a 'half-size' flame safety lamp said to have been used at the Court pit, through an antique dealer, from an old miner in 1974.

Mr. Brunt described the operations at the surface as normal, low waste heaps covering large areas to facilitate the spreading of the 'stone' for collection by women of the nodules of ironstone in winter after weathering. These were sometimes calcined (or burned to remove impurities on site) by 'burners'. By

coincidence the writer has just received a letter from a lady whose great-great-grandfather, was described in the 1851 Census as a "Mine burner" at Madeley Court. Presumably his task was to calcine the ore, as 'mine' and 'ironstone' are often used interchangeably in the West Midlands.

Over the years, 1840s to 1900s, the Court Pits suffered its share of serious incidents and fatalities (see table 3). According to the Mining Journal newspaper in 1846 there was an explosion which killed two men (Volume XVI page 530). In 1864 the beam of one of the engines broke, fell down the shaft completely blocking it. Fortunately the men were able to escape by the second shaft at the pit. In 1888 a miner was seriously injured while carrying some explosive powder, a boy threw a piece of lighted fuse at him which caused the powder to ignite.

The writer is indebted to Neil Clarke of Little Wenlock for assistance with this article, in particular with some of the details that follow regarding ownership and management of Madeley Court Works.

Table 3

Accidents at Madeley Court Colliery Among the fatalities have been the following

1860	T.Bower		fall of ground (C)
1861	E.Slacks	age 16	kicked by a horse (I).
	G.Parker		gas explosion (I)
1862	J.Guy		balance weight fell on him in shaft (I)
1863	H.Bagshaw		gas explosion (I)
1865	J.Worton	age 20	miner (I)
	B.Tipper		(I)
	B.Boden	age 20	(I)
	W.Harrison		collier, fell down shaft (C)
1868	J.Beech	a boy	held onto hook drawn part way up shaft, then fell (I)
1872	E.Hill	age 57	engineman, rope broke (C)
1880	H.Owen		fall of coal (C)
1882	J.Kirkham		sinker, crushed by cage (C)
1889	T.Idstone		fall of coal (C)
1890	S.Ball		fall of roof at No.7 pit (C)
	T.Deakin		fall of stone at 'Halesfield Stone Pit (Madeley Court)' (I)
1904	J.Bennett		fell off building during demolition.
1911	B.Bennett	age 61	engineman, fell down pumping shaft.



The Madeley Court Colliery, Madeley, Shropshire, Part 2

Working the Mines, by Ivor Brown

It is known that James Foster of Wombridge Furnaces purchased the estate in 1828 and commenced operations about 1840. The works had passed to his son William Orme Foster by 1860 and remained with him to the end.

A Thomas Pearce was manager of New Hadley Ironwork in the early 19th Century and probably joined Foster at Wombridge sometime after 1818. A Charles Worth Pearce drew a section of New Hadley Colliery in 1812 but his relationship to Thomas is not yet known.

A Francis Pearce (who may be the son of either Thomas or Charles above) transferred to Madeley Court in the 1840s. By 1850 Francis is described in Directories as the "Agent" and lived at Park Cottage, Madeley.

Charles Worth Pearce, possibly the son of Francis is described in the 1868 Directory as the works 'Agent' and by 1895 he was living in Madeley Court House where he stayed until about 1909. The terms 'Agent' and 'Manager' seem to be interchangeable at least in the 19th Century days of chartermaster working. C.W.Pearce was for example, Agent in 1868, Manager in the 1870s and Agent again in the 1880s. Others have also been 'Agent', such as George Jones in 1856 (but he was a 'Surveyor of Mines' living in Madeley Court House in 1851) and George Round, 'Agent' in the directories of 1863, 1874 and 1877.

'Managers' seem to have been appointed in later years including W.J.Clarke in the 1880s (in 1901 he wrote that he had nearly twenty years experience in management of collieries at Madeley) and W.Snowden 'manager' from about 1900. Both Clarke and Snowden gave their address as Springhill House, Madeley - did the latter take over both the former's job and house?

Part 3 of this series will describe the individual pits and indicates the extent of surviving remains.

Figure 2

Locations of shafts based on the 1849 Madeley Tithe Map

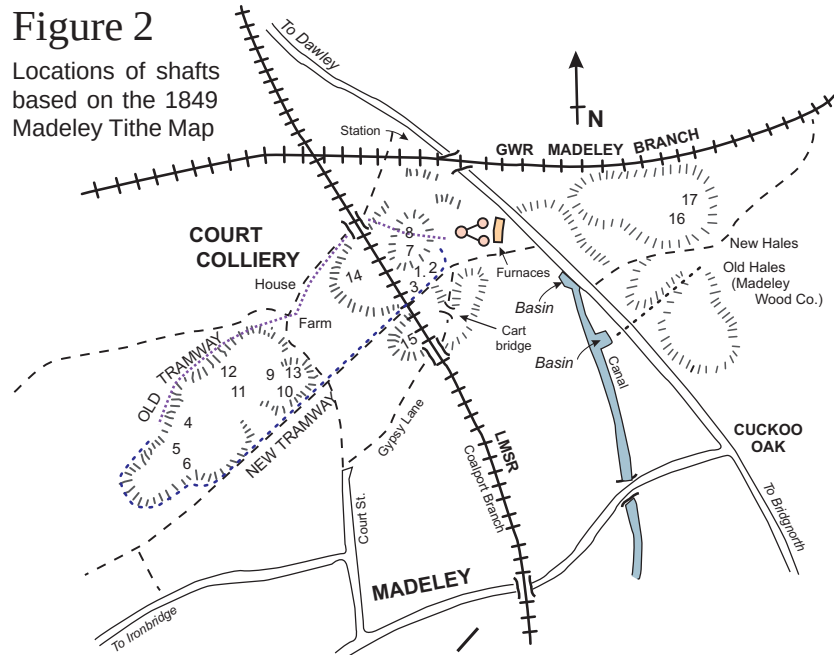
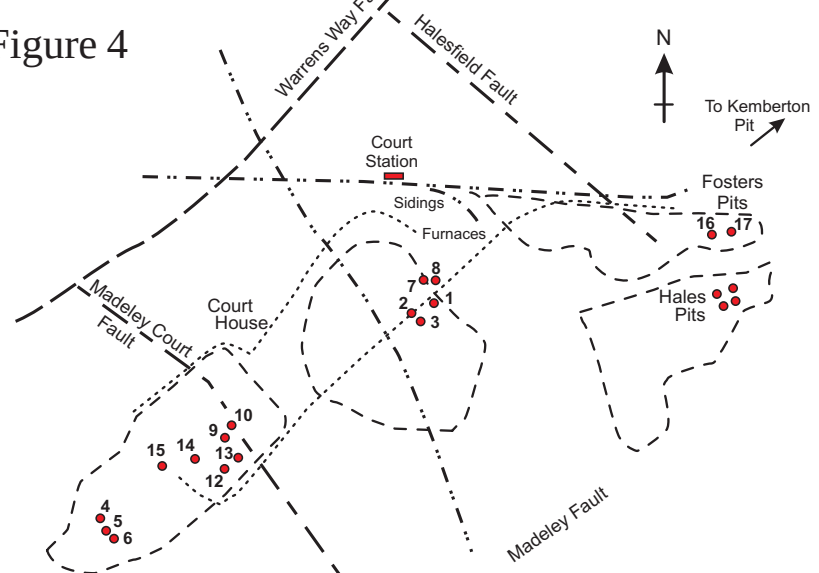


Figure 4



Sketch of approximate locations of Pits and Faults on modern Geological Map
by Ivor Brown, 2004



From Mines Inspectors Report 1903

Madeley Court Colliery No.3 pit (Salop) on 10th Sept, at 5.40pm, Barometer 28.95 falling rapidly - one injured. Workings in the Top Coal were being reopened near the shafts and an exploring head was being driven alongside an old goaf. This was ventilated by two ranges of 12" air pipes 70 yards in length. A small accumulation of gas in a hole in the roof was ignited by one of the candles in use and one man was slightly burned, three others working near not being injured. Some gas had been detected in the place the previous day and it should therefore have been worked with safety lamps. Lamps were introduced after the accident.



Dust Suppression at Madeley Wood Colliery in the 1950s

by Ivor Brown

While nearby Granville Colliery was noted for its explosive gas problems Madeley Wood was noted for its dust problems and during the 1950s some interesting experimental work was carried out to determine how the problem might be reduced. The work was carried out by A.R.Sargent, the NCB Area Scientist and J.V. Spence, an Inspector of Mines, and their relevant technical papers are listed below.

In the first paper the colliery's well-liked manager, Tom Blower, with Roy Sargent, made the following comments; "there was no serious attempt at dust suppression during cutting until 1952". "Dust conditions were therefore unsatisfactory", "The effect of which (free moisture in the seam) on dust suppression became negligible". "Dust conditions in the Best and Randles Seam (were) 'not approved'." "(Even) the intake air to a face often contains quite high concentrations of dust".

These comments are highly relevant and it is hoped that every former Madeley faceworker had them taken into account during the recent "dust claim" compensation period which ended March 31st 2004. The comments are a clear admission of the conditions accepted as normal by the NCB at the time. Dust masks were not provided at that date, although the Paper states that "masks were usually worn by the cutter men". These, to the writer's knowledge were, like pit helmets and safety boots, only used if purchased by the workers concerned. (The writer only ever bought helmets and safety boots).

Many innovations were tried out on the coal cutting machines during the Blower and Sargent project including the spraying of water and foam from various positions and various angles along the cutting jib (photograph 1) and are all detailed in the Paper. Sampling of the air/dust conditions during this work was, of course, important and took several months. It had to cover whole shifts and all

conditions and was done by means of a "thermal precipitator" supported on camera-style legs (figure 1). In principle the device contained a tank of water of known volume, and as this passed at a controlled rate it drew a known quantity of dusty air between two electrically heated elements which "flung" the dust against adhesive plates. These could be removed so the amount of dust could be measured.

For much of the time the thankless task of sitting in the dusty air behind the cutter fell into the responsibility of the writer who as a young teenager was allowed to work 'underage' on the face as an "operator of scientific equipment". It was all part of "job experience and training"!

The foam and detergents tried were particularly unsuccessful and had the

The Thermal Precipitator

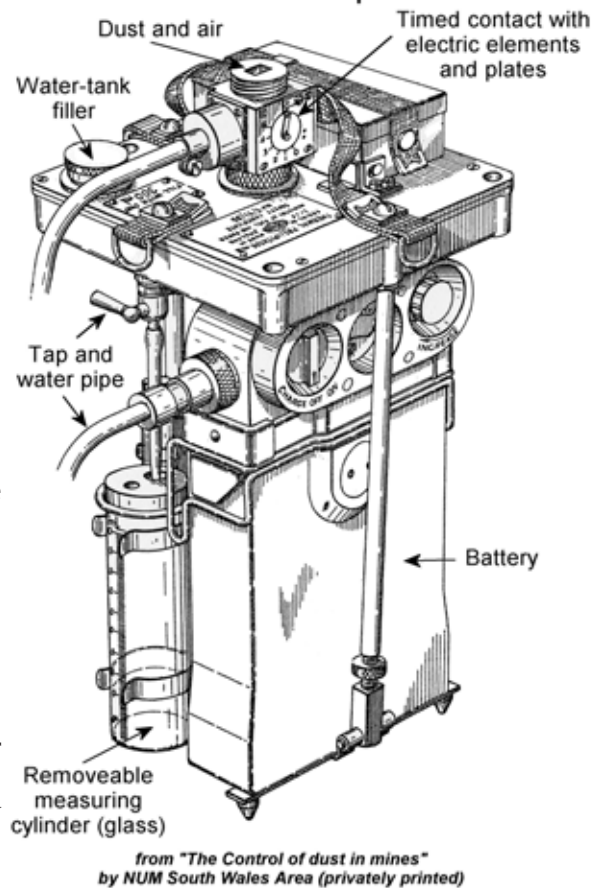


Figure 1

uncomfortable effect of causing the dust to stick and set solidly on everything it touched leaving a layer inches thick on shovels, clothing and flesh - as well as the "scientific equipment".

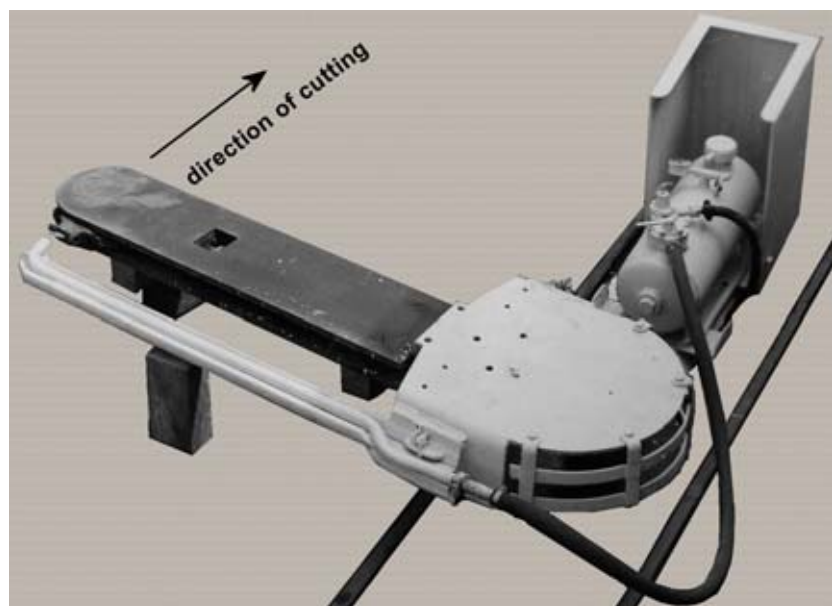


Photo. 1: The foam dust suppression equipment fitted to cutting jib c1955.



Dust Suppression at Madeley Wood Colliery in the 1950s by Ivor Brown, continued ..

Inspector Spence's special interest was the reduction of dust and the degradation of coal on haulage conveyors and down "transfer chutes" from one conveyor to another. He tried to reduce dust by improving conveyor design (particularly jointing), by altering belt speeds and by designing "enclosed-spiral type" chutes to replace the "free-fall" situation which was normal (photograph 2).

Prototype designs were put together in the colliery fitting shop (see photo 2) and then taken underground for full scale trials. Dust sampling then had to be repeated to determine progress or otherwise following adjustments using precipitators and other methods. This was another job for the writer on the return-air/dusty side. Some chutes were quite successful and went into production as "Spence Chutes" being made at a small manufacturing yard in Station Road, Madeley, Shropshire.

The amount of dust absorbed by the writer in these and other more



Photograph 2: Spence Chute experiment with 90° curve at Madeley Wood Colliery c1956.
Photographs: Ivor Brown

conventional underground jobs over a 10 year period must have been enormous.

For more information see:

- (1) Some Attempts at Dust Suppression at a Shropshire Colliery by T.Blower and S.R.Sargent, Iron & Coal Trades Review, Vol. 172, pages 295 - 302, April 6th 1956.
- (2) The Study of Coal Fall and Conveyor Belt Scavenging by J.V. Spence. Transacts. Inst. Min. Eng. Vol. 110, pages 313 - 325, 1950 - 51.

Onslow Park Weekend, August 28th to 30th

The Shropshire Mines Trust had their mining display in action again over the August Bank Holiday weekend, this year larger lumps of rock were delivered in addition to the material that was going to be put through the crusher so that rock drilling could be demonstrated. This exhibit proved quite interesting - if somewhat noisy! Some initial teething problems were encountered with the rock drills, but luckily Andy Harris was on the scene with his Landrover (complete with anvil and vice). After stripping down the drills he got everything working and numerous holes were drilled during the Sunday and Monday demos.

One other problem threatened to ruin the weekend - the oil engine refused to start! However Tom Henderson



Above: The Fowler traction engine "Pride of the Wye" driving the main crusher.

Below left: Mike Worsfold operating the rock drill.
Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings



came to the rescue with his Fowler traction engine "Pride of the Wye" and after cutting off a couple of bits of the display trailer, it was possible to connect his engine to the pulley on the end of the crusher drive shaft. This kept Mr. Henderson happy as his engine was actually 'working' all weekend, however the downside for the volunteers was that the crusher worked really well without any hold-ups!!

This meant that the display had 2 steam engines working on it with Steve Miln's Aveling & Porter "Lady Hesketh" driving the secondary crusher once again.



Hunting for Baryte & Witherite in 1831, for Pottery Use

Reproduced below is a copy of a letter written in 1831 (at Minsterley) by Leonard Abington, a 46 year old potter working for Joseph Mayer of Hanley. The letter was kindly sent to the Club by Julie Cundy of Derbyshire.

May 17th 1831

Dear Sir,

I am under the necessity of writing before I have anything very decisive to report respecting my business for this reason - the post woman calls at this outlandish place only three times a week if I do not therefore write in time for her visit tomorrow morning there will be no other chance until Friday by which time if I meet with good success, I hope to be on my way home. This place affords the only sleeping place near Snailbeach which is two miles off. I have found out one of the workmen and have got him here with a jug of ale and am by this means possessed of all the information I could desire previous to my going to the mine (he is to call for me at half past five tomorrow morning to accompany me to the mine). He knows none of the spars by name but describes the very thing I want though he says it is not so plentiful now as it was several years ago. The lease was turned over for it about 14 years ago to supply somebody in London. Whitney of Shrewsbury, he says buys a good deal of Barytes (Sulphate no doubt) from them. It is packed in casks of about five hundred weight each and sent by the Mine Company teams to Shrewsbury. From all this my way appears pretty clear, but I can tell nothing for a certainty until tomorrow. I called upon Brocas, he was out. I left the Bill and shall call again on my return. For want of a better knowledge of the country and through bad advice at Shrewsbury I have had the misfortune to come above 3 miles out of my proper road over one of the most hilly roads I ever trod. The heat has also been excessive, but I have happily got housed before the cold night air comes on which considering my catarrh is most fortunate. I am fatigued beyond description, but I hope to be able to turn out in time for my subterranean friend in the morning. Will you please have the kindness to inform my wife that my cold is by no means worse, but I hope somewhat better. If sweating will remove it I have plenty for the purpose. This afternoon I drank tea by the bowlful for it is the only thing I dare take and I think warm drink, warm air and warm exercise has made me better by many degrees than I was on starting. If I meet no delay at the mine I hope to arrive at Newcastle by one o'clock on Friday. If otherwise I write by the post on Friday and you will receive it I suppose on Saturday or Sunday morning.

I am dear Sir, yours most faithfully.

Wed. morning, half-past seven o'clock

I open my letter again with much regret to inform you that I have just returned from Snailbeach where I had an interview with Mr. Owens the manager of the mine without success. Whitney of Shrewsbury takes all which they can get. He gives them four pounds per ton for the Carbonate at the mine, about one ton there now, which Whitney's man has been dressing over ready to go to Shrewsbury - they say he would take a hundred tons immediately of they had it. It is for the use of manufacturing Chemists. The beautiful sample of sulphate of Barytes is from this mine. Whitney takes that also. I tried all ways to get a little from the present stock but in vain. The man offered to secure me a small lot in a short time if I would leave my name and address. This I did not choose to do.

I said I would trouble him with a line by post if I should find it worth any further inquiry. In about 18 months they expect to work into a part where it is supposed from the report of some of the old workmen to be in large quantities. And it is supposed that larger masses of it be under the mounds of rubbish, but he refuses to attempt getting that, from the objection that it would not pay for the labour.

There is another mine to which I can go when I have recovered from the fatigue of this mornings walk. It is about four miles from here but none of the miners give me the least encouragement of finding any Carbonate there. I shall return to Shrewsbury tomorrow and shall call of Mr. Whitney to try if I can strike a bargain with him for a small lot. If I should succeed in doing this I shall of course disguise the real consignment of it.

It will give you no little trouble to make out this broken tale but time will not allow of my writing another as I would do so.

My cold is better this morning. The day is cloudless, the hills quivering with vapour and the ground splitting with drought. If nothing unexpected happens I shall certainly be at Newcastle at one o'clock of Friday.

Written at the Miners Arms
Minsterley - on the
Montgomery Road
near Shrewsbury.



Shropshire's Biggest Mining Companies in 1894

by Ivor Brown

(a) Mines of Coal etc..

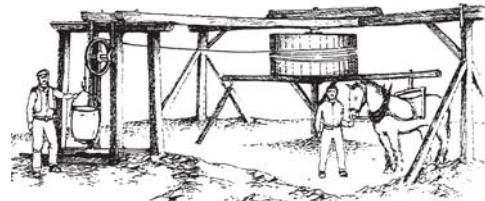
The year 1894 seems to have been the first when the Inspector of Mines actually published statistics of numbers employed at the individual pits working coal, ironstone and clay. It was in a period when the industry had begun to stabilise after the great slump of the 1880s. The term mineworkers includes both those employed on the surface and underground.

Company	District	Mine workers	Active pits
Lilleshall,	Donnington/ Priorslee	1472	12
Madeley Wood,	Madeley	668	8
Madeley Court,	Madeley	252	4
Highley Co.,	Highley/Kinlet	199	2
Athertons	Hanwood	172	2
Stirchley Coal	Stirchley	158	6
Hopley Bros.,	Wombridge	122	3
Coalbrookdale,	Dawley	109	6
Cornbrook & Knowbury,		86	3
Smallshaw,	Arscott	75	2
	Totals	3313	48

The changes in employment and number of pits from the mid 19th Century is seen from the following information as given by the companies to the Royal Commission on the State of the Population in Mining Districts in 1848 and from other sources.

These figures are not directly comparable because the number of pits seems to indicate individual shafts, a common practice at this time, but numbers of pairs of shafts in later years.

By 1854 the Mines Inspectors Report states that in Shropshire there were 5,722 mineworkers in Coal and Ironstone pits but does not mention workers in clay mining.



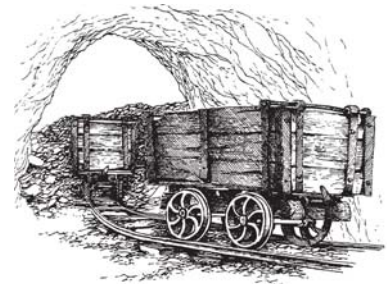
The total number of mineworkers in 1894 is given as 3,779 (924 on surface and 2,855 underground) which means that 466 workers were employed at the remaining 48 mines (Total of 96 mines), an average of about 10 each. Total Shropshire production for that year was 683,025 tons coal, 11,673 tons fireclay, 46,640 tons ironstone, 54,731 tons red clay and 398 tons pyrites.

It should be noted that most of these companies employed not only miners but also workers in the clay industries, blast furnaces and forges etc.; for example Lilleshall Company employed about 3,000 total, Madeley Wood about 850 and Madeley Court 550.

In 1848:

Company	Employees	Pits
Donnington Co. (Lilleshall Co.)	3500-4000,	200
Coalbrookdale	about 3000,	30
Madeley Wood Co.	about 1000,	about 20
Madeley Court Co.	about 800,	about 8
Stirchley (and Old Park) Co.	na	35

Drawings by Malcom Newton



(b) Mines under the Metalliferous Mines Regulations Act

Although this principally applied to the lead mining industry it did include statistics for minerals such as barytes and in Shropshire, 'calcspar/limestone'. The total number of employees in 1894 is given as 302 (101 on surface and 201 underground).

The biggest employers of mineworkers were;

Snailbeach Co., Snailbeach, 158 workers - 1 mine
Wotherton Barytes Co. Wotherton, 31 workers - 1 mine

This means that 123 workers were employed at the remaining 10 mines at work at this time (two of which were limestone mines in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield, Steeraway 10 workers and Lincoln Hill 3 workers). Total production 1894 was 4,777 tons barytes, 2,057 tons lead, 3,171 tons calcspar/limestone, and 302 tons zinc.

In 1854 the Inspectors Report states that there were 335 workers in 'lead mining' operations, and the numbers employed under the Act increased to a peak of nearly 1,000 in the 1870s, by 1894 however, it was 302 with numbers still falling.



Miners Remember

Sheffield Survivors Remember Colleagues

Survivors of an accident at Brookhouse Colliery, Beighton, Sheffield, in 1958 held a memorial service in October to remember the bravery of their colleagues who rescued them. All 44 in the cage survived an 'Overwind' incident on

a new electric winder which caused the cage to hit the shaft bottom (4th March 1958). 36 out of the 44 men in the cage were injured and carried nearly a mile underground to safety.

During the ceremony on Saturday

23rd October, a commemorative steel bench and plaque was unveiled (designed by artist David Mayne and funded by the Arts Council).

from various news reports
for the Mines Inspectors report see:
www.pitwork.net/brookhouse.htm

Gresford Tragedy - 70 Years On

A church service was held on 22nd September at Gresford Parish Church to mark the 70th anniversary of the Gresford disaster. The north Wales village has been synonymous with the tragedy that happened 70 years ago to the day.

In the early hours of Saturday 22 September, an explosion rocked the

Dennis section of the mine killing 254 men and boys. Despite an inquiry in October 1934 into the disaster, it is still not known what really caused the explosion. However, prior to the explosion, evidence of heat and gas was discovered in the colliery.

Five hundred men were underground on the night shift when the incident

happened. Historians say this was an unusually high number because some men had worked double shifts.

Only 11 bodies were recovered from the colliery, the other 254 were sealed inside the mine. Gresford colliery reopened six months after the disaster but the Dennis section was never used again.

Albert Rowlands' Account

"We lived on Holt Road and I started off down the road with my dad on bikes - two more miners joined us and the four of us cycled together."

His father was worried that his son would be late for work so he told him to ride ahead alone and he would see him later. He never did.

"I got into work and in the lamp room there were two windows where the miners could get their lamps from, my father was at the other window and not the one I served,"

"So when I left him on the bike, that was the last I saw of him.

"The telephone went and the foreman said to me 'Go and get the ambulance man. I got to his house and knocked on the door and I told him he had to come back to the pit, but I didn't know what had happened."

The teenage Albert cycled back to Gresford, still unaware of the tragedy unfolding.

"There wasn't anything happening and they were coming out like mad from the Martin section. I remember the Llay mine rescue team arriving and then some miners arrived who would've normally gone to work.

"Miners that went down and came up were just shaking their heads. I remember them bringing up a few dead bodies on stretchers and there were some dead horses.

"Six escaped because they knew of an air vent and fortunately they found it.

"I just wandered around backwards and forwards and up to the pit - we were just living in hope all the time.

His father's body was never recovered.

The disaster, which affected so many Wrexham families, shocked the whole country.

Albert Rowlands from Wrexham was just 14 when his father was killed in the 1934 Gresford Colliery explosion. (both worked at the pit). Mr Rowlands was a 14-year-old lamp boy working at the Gresford Colliery at the time of the disaster. Still living in Wrexham, the 84-year-old remembers the day he last saw his 35-year-old father John (see box left).

People from across Britain and overseas responded generously to the plight of the bereaved. Donations poured in to the two big funds, one based in London and the other in Wrexham. In all more than £566,500 was raised, a truly massive sum of money 70 years ago.

Donations also came in kind, two lorry loads of apples from Kent fruit growers, 200 boxes of kippers from an Aberdeen fish merchant, 10 massive cases of Campbell soup, girls' frocks and boys' shirts from English clothing companies.

Ordinary individuals sent clothes, especially children's and mourning clothes.

*Compiled from News reports
and Eye-witness statements*



Alderley Edge 26th September 2004

An early Sunday morning saw 7 Club members meeting up in the car park by the 'Wizard' pub (now a restaurant style pub) at 10.30am. One Club member got a little lost and didn't get there until we had gone underground, although we were only underground about 2½ hours and the time on his note meant he only missed us coming out by 15 minutes!

Our trip, organised by Ian Davies with guides from the Derbyshire Caving Club, took us into Engine Vein Mine, which has had a concrete cap fitted over the open stopping and a secure door installed over one side to give access to the workings.

The DCC have done a lot of work in this mine clearing out back-filled levels and installing 'fixed aids' - these include a fire escape from an old pub now used to give access to one of the larger chambers. They have also made their own rails and mine trucks!

The mine seems to have Victorian levels cutting through hand cut levels - very similar to those at Clive. After exploring the higher workings, we made our way down several ladderways to the Hough Level. This has been a major dig for the DCC over a number of years, the spoil from it has almost filled a quarry near the adit entrance! There is still work to do in clearing it through to Wood Mine, that connection still sumps - they believe due to a blocked drainage adit. The current 'inbye' end of the level contains the remains of a boat, which members of the public were once taken in along the level, although our guide was not sure exactly how long ago this was.

After popping out the Hough Level to 'day' to see the quarry, we made our back up through the mine to the Club's museum in a small building behind the 'Wizard' - this is equipped with a glass covered illuminated well or shaft allowing visitors to see down - perhaps we could do something similar at Snailbeach?



1 & 2: DCC 'home made' rails and mine truck

3: Club members in one of the large chambers.

4: John Priest climbing a fixed ladder to higher workings.



5: Remains of the sunken boat in the Hough Level.

6: Club members descending Engine vein stope

7: Steve Holding just 'fits' in a superb hand cut level that branches off Hough Level. Slightly narrower than those at Clive Copper Mine, but very similar.

8: Entrance to the Hough Level

Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings





Christmas Puzzles

Page



Spot the Difference

Below are two cartoons, in the lower version there are 6 differences in each panel compared to the upper one. See if you can spot them all !

3000 years ago	Present Day
Boy , the "Red Lion" team did well - winning the trophy by hitting that last mammoth!	Wow! It's a shrine - with the mother earth effigy being used to ward off evil spirits in the form of a lion, while the hunter-gatherer's enjoy a successful hunt!

3000 years ago	Present Day
Boy , the "Red Lion" team did well - winning the trophy by hitting that last mammoth!	Wow! It's a shrine - with the mother earth effigy being used to ward off evil spirits in the form of a lion, while the hunter-gatherer's enjoy a successful hunt!



Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year





Christmas Puzzles

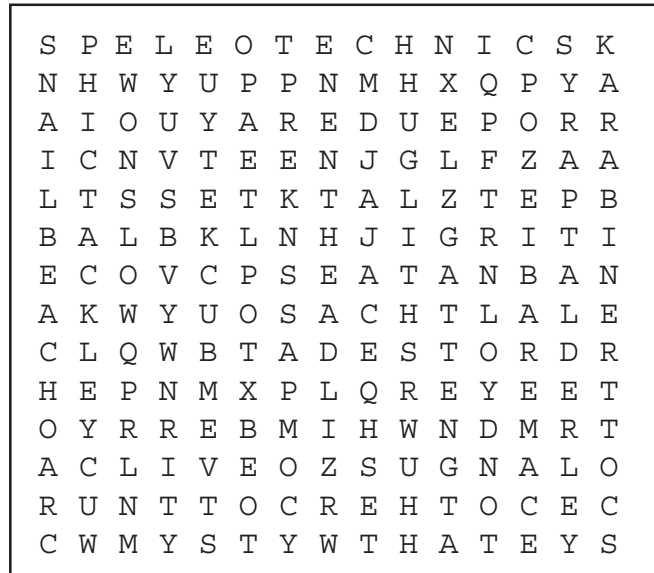
Page - 2



Wordsearch

Ok, here is the now compulsory Christmas wordsearch puzzle.
Hidden in the square are a number of words (listed below, left).

Alderley	Karabiner
Parys	Shovel
Grit	Bucket
Cothercott	Speleotechnics
Huglith	Petzl
Onslow	Whimberry
Snailbeach	Descent
Scott	Camera
Gatten	Helmet
Clive	Rope
Cwmystywth	Tape
Sugnal	Compass
Nenthead	Tackle



Word Change Ladder

Can you turn Hemp into Rope in 6 steps by changing just one letter at a time to make another word?

Clues for Word Change:

- * feeling of expectation and desire for something to happen.
- * keep or detain.
- * a hollow space in a solid object or surface.
- * past participle of grasp, carry, or support.
- * make it easier for someone.

If you are feeling a bit fuddled there are some clues on the left, although they are not necessarily in the correct order !

Have fun.

Kelvin

Hemp
Rope



How Many Wheels ?.

I can think of three underground waterwheels that still survive in Britain today. Probably the most famous one is that at Ystrad-Einion mine, Wales (pictured left).

Question: Do you know where the other 2 are?

There must have been more than these 3 in the past, does anyone know of any other mines in Britain and Ireland that had underground waterwheels?

Underground waterwheels were very popular in Germany and in the Hartz quite a few survive or have been reconstructed in show mines. Many of the mines often had waterwheels at different levels within the mine making use of the same water!



Conferences, Books & Foreign News

NAMHO 2005

In 2005, July 8-10, NAMHO will be holding its annual conference in the south-east of England, at Dorking in Surrey. The venue, close to cross channel links and major regional airports, provides an ideal opportunity to bring together mining historians from across Europe.

As part of the conference it is intended to hold a seminar on 'The Common Aspects of European Mining History'. The seminar would include perhaps six papers on aspects of mining history which are not confined by national borders and reflect a common interest in mining be it for metals, coal or stone. There will be the opportunity to network and establish working relationships with other mining historians from across the continent. If you are interested in attending contact: Peter Cloughton

P.F.Cloughton@exeter.ac.uk

Russian Explosion

Thirteen miners have been killed in an explosion in a coal mine in the town of Belov, in the Kemerovo region of Siberia, about 3,000km (1,850 miles) east of Moscow.

The alarm was raised about 09:45 (01:45 GMT) on 28th October, following the blast which was apparently caused by a build-up of methane. Ninety miners working in the Listvyazhnaya mine in the Kuzbass coalfield were rescued, including 23 injured. The 13 who died were among a group who had been carrying out repair work at the time.

Although it is claimed that this is the first major accident at this mine in half a century, accidents are common in Russia's mines, which have a dismal safety record, they are badly funded and maintained and safety procedures in the sector are notoriously poor.

In April an explosion in the Kuzbass, Russia's largest coalfield - killed 45 miners.

from news reports

Waller's Description of the Mines in Cardiganshire

by David Bick, Card cover 64pp, landscape quarto size, colour photos and prints throughout.

Three Centuries ago, the silver lead mines of Mid Wales were highly prized and after a rich discovery, the Company of Mine Adventurers was launched in a fanfare of publicity to work them. In 1704 to aid the promotion, William Waller, the manager compiled his Description of the Mines in Cardiganshire, with a series of maps and plans of the mines and smelting works. They were the first of their kind to be published and have long been regarded by Historians and Industrial Archaeologists as prime source material. To mark the tercentenary this volume contains a complete facsimile reprint of the original which is now very scarce.

Also included are a number of supplementary colour photos, and modern explanations. The book reflects David's enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. This is an excellent publication and one of the best I have seen for some time. I only received them today and had to read it immediately. This is genuinely great mining history publication and should sit with pride of place on your bookshelf. Cost **£9.99 + £1.00 p&p**

Mike Moore

Chinese explosion

A gas explosion at a coal mine in central China has killed at least 122 people and left 26 others missing. It is one of the worst mine accidents in recent years. Rescue operations have been hindered by a high concentration of gas and debris from the collapsed shaft.

More than 400 people were working in the Daping Mine in the city of Xinmi, Henan province, when the explosion happened late on Wednesday 20th October. Over 200 people escaped but 66 miners were confirmed dead.

Great Rock - Devon's Last 'Metal' Mine

This is the story of Devon's last metal mine. The ore mined at Great Rock near Hennock village, was micaceous haematite, a form of iron oxide which occurred in shiny platelets. It proved invaluable as a component of rust resisting paints that were widely used for steel structures such as railway bridges.

The mine was worked solely by adits. Working probably started sporadically in the mid-nineteenth century, however the mine worked continually from 1902 to 1969.

I have to declare a personal interest - I had the unforgettable experience of briefly working underground there as a student in 1963. It is the only mine that I have come across where they made their own locomotives, wagons, mill equipment and, if you wanted timber, you went out and cut down a tree.

179 pages, 27 figures and 63 plates.
Paperback **£11.99** ISBN: 1 900147 32 7
Cloth **£15.99** ISBN: 1 900147 32 5

Available from Willow Books
www.willowbooks.co.uk

Note - they have the price of the hardback wrong!

Tony Brooks

Nine managers of another mine, where a flood trapped 29 people, have been detained for concealing the scale of the incident.

China's economic boom needs more and more power and coal production has been rising by more than 15% a year. China's coal mines are considered the world's deadliest, despite a Government crack-down on illegal and 'worst-run' mines, 4,153 people died in mining accidents in China in the first three quarters of this year - a figure 13% lower than last year's !!

from various news reports



Books and Videos

Collieries in The North Staffordshire Coalfield

Paul Deakin, 158pp, HB, approximately 200 photos of which over 1/3rd are in colour. There 30 pits featured in this book and that also includes a couple of opencast sites. Paul is a well known photographer in Caving and Mining circles he is very modest about his work but I believe he is second to none. He is a Chartered Surveyor a Chartered Mining Engineer and a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. In this book he draws on a vast collection of historic black and white photographs supplemented by his own colour and black and white photos taken over the last 40 years. To see color underground photos in a coal mines is very rare and they add a very specific drama to the aspect of the book. Perhaps the most startling fact with the exception of Apedale and remaining buildings at Chatterley Whitfield all of these mines have closed and now are just green sites covered with industrial buildings, shops and Stoke City FC ground.

Price **£19.95**

Collieries and their Railways in the Manchester Coalfields

Geoffrey Hayes, 228pp HB

Price **£19.95**

South Wales Collieries Volume 5 ; Mardy Collieries

David Owen, 128pp, SB Price **£12.99**

Mining In Cornwall, Volume 7, South Crofty Mine, East pool and Agar

126pp SB Price **£12.99**

The Great Laxey Mine

Andrew Scarffe, 236 pp hardback size approx A3. The definitive history of the Great Laxey Mine and the Laxey Wheel. Illustrated throughout with many colour photographs, drawings and maps.

Price **£19.95 +£5.00 p&p**

The Greening of the County - 40 years of Reclamation

By Durham County Council, the booklet includes before and after pictures at the various reclamation sites. In the 40 years the pit heaps have been reclaimed and land restored to agriculture, woodland, public open space, footpaths, cycle ways and modern industrial use.

A total of 22 square kilometres have been reclaimed. This is an area equal in size to Lake Windermere or twice that of Kielder Reservoir. The cost of

the reclamation work, in today's values, would be up to £200 million.

The book costs **£2.95**, from Durham County Council libraries and local bookshops. Copies are also available with an additional **£1** postage and packing from Andrew Sprigg, Tel: 0191 383 4116 or Anne Fisher on 0191 383 3454 both in the Environment Department at Durham County Council.

Alan Vickers

Latest Mining Video from I.A.Recordings

A Tour of Carrs Mine

Exploring the nenthead visitor mine

£12.95 - VHS (**£10 to Club Members**)
DVD-R, £14.95 (**£12 to Club Members**)
NGR:NY783431

Carrs mine is part of the phenomenal Nenthead lead-zinc mining complex high on Alston Moor in the Cumbrian North Pennines. Carrs was first recorded in 1679 and by 1750 it was one of the largest mines in the area. From about 1800 it was taken over by the London Lead Company who already ran most of the Nenthead mines. They brought in modern techniques such as horse haulage on tram rails. In the early 20th Century it was mined for zinc by the Belgian Vieille Montagne company who introduced compressed-air rock drills.

This is a record of a tour of the show mine guided by Peter Wilkinson, showing the superb dry-stone arching of the horse levels, the vein mineralisation, some of the mining methods, tunnels and workings large and small, timbered rises, iron rails and the shapes and beautiful colours of mineral deposits - 'the mysterious underworld of the leadminer'.

There is also an introduction to the other things to see and do at Nenthead, including the unique collection of Georgian and Victorian buildings and 'The Power of Water' - an exciting hands-on exhibit demonstrating the importance of water power for lead mining.



After the tour we go beyond the show mine with SCMC members, to explore areas of Carrs that people don't normally get to see, including a gleaming calcite-lined 'grotto' and unprotected sumps with water pouring down to even deeper mines.

We also have a quick look into some of the other mines of Nenthead, particularly Smallcleugh with its stone arching, ore chutes and air doors.

Written by Peter Wilkinson, Janet Cresswell and Peter Eggleston
Running time: 31 mins.

For more details about videos and DVDs contact:
I.A.Recordings,
PO Box 476, Telford, TF8 7RH
www.iarecordings.org



Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

Tackle: Ian Cooper

Chair: Eileen Bowen

First Aid Officer:
Alan Moseley

Secretary: Mike Davies

scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Librarian: Alan Robinson

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton

Training Officer: Ian Davies

'Below' Editor, Publications:
Kelvin Lake

**Conservation & NAMHO
Rep:** Steve Holding

e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk

Diary Dates 2005

25th February: Cave Biology, 29th
Nunwick Lecture, University of Hull.

5th March: BCRA Cave Science
Symposium, University of
Birmingham

5th-9th June: Centenary of flotation
symposium, Brisbane, Australia. Visit
the web site: www.ausimm.com.au

16th-19th June: 16th Mining History
Association Annual Meeting,
Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA

17th-19th June: FoD Caving
Symposium IV, English Bicknor

1st-3rd July: British Cave Rescue
Council Conference, Eastwater Farm,.
Priddy.

4th-8th July: NSS Convention,
Huntsville, Alabama, USA

8th-10th July: NAMHO 2005,
Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking,
Surrey.

2006

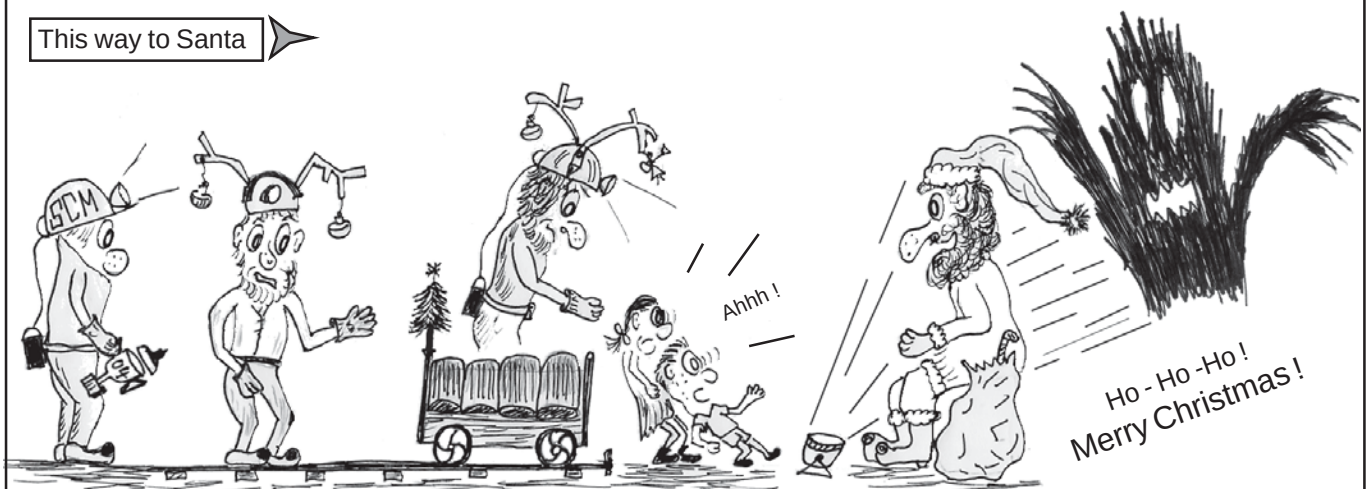
9th-17th October: International
Mining History Congress (IMHC),
Beringen in the Limberg mining
region of north-east Belgium. Visits
to sites in the area will take place
during this period.

Smidgin:

Visit Santa's "Lead Mine"



This way to Santa ➡



I don't get it, we've got reindeer, tinsel, and decorations, yet
all the kids seem scared of Santa !



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

