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The Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club

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Doesn't time fly when you are enjoying yourself, it only seems like yesterday that I was sitting down typing the Christmas issue!

Since then the Club has had an active start to the New Year. New Years Monday being spent at Edwin's house SRT-ing up tall trees. The great thing about this is long distance work can be tried by releasing the rope as the victim, erm climber reaches the top of the tree. Good tho' Madeley Climbing Wall is, it does not help develop stamina for long SRT pitches.

Mike Moore found tree climbing very un-nerving and suggests that next time it be done at night so he can't see the ground - perhaps he could be blindfolded instead!

The next issue of "Below" will appear in June, so could you let me have any copy /material , letters by the middle of May.

*Kelvin*

## Faulty Vents

A fault has been discovered in some Oldham type T3 cells made since 1986. The fault is only of concern when charging the lamps and is due to a defective vent plug whose O-rings can be displaced, thus blocking the vent and causing the cell to explode.

The cells can be identified by their smoky-grey transparent body and may have "Oldham Type T3" embossed on the case.

The faulty valves are a one piece construction with a black top standing proud of the cell body. Members are advised that they replace this type of valve on any cells that they have- replacements (recognised by an opaque white top with a black rubber blow-off cap) are available from most caving shops.

If it is found that several members have cells of this type and date, it may be worth obtaining a 'bulk' supply rather than every one trying to get the odd couple of valves.

## Hat Warning

Still on the issue of safety, the latest NAMHO Newsheet draws attention to the use of cheap 'construction worker' helmets underground (like most Club Members wear!).

It appears that a novice caver got into difficulties on a ladder and banged her head on the wall, causing the ordinary 2 point attachment to break and the helmet to fall to the bottom of the pitch.

It is recommended that when climbing underground or in areas where a fall may occur a climbing type helmet should be used with the more robust straps and greater number of attachment points.

Presumably the novice in question was using a Petzl cap lamp rather than an Oldham style lamp, otherwise why didn't her lamp cable retain the helmet?

# Snailbeach Visit 29th December 1988

Members Present:

Neal Rushton, Mike Moore and members of the Rushton family. We decided to visit the Snailbeach area to assess the credibility of the recent Wardell-Armstrong report.

No new shafts as such were located, and there are serious doubts whether anyone has descended Black Tom shaft where the headframe is still in position across the top. It perhaps should be questioned whether it is actually advisable to attempt descents of Black Tom, considering the large numbers of pig carcasses that were thrown down it at the time of the Swine Fever outbreak.

Mike and Neal entered Roberts or Perkins Level, nothing new to

report, accept that the stope is seriously full above the bridge, where the timbers are now exposed and subject to rot etc. (the bridge has been like this for 2 years now Ed.). It is recommended that a rope is strung across as a traverse line, and crossers must be life-lined.

Mike Moore

Since the beginning of the year, the road to Chapel Shaft has been closed, due to concerns about movement in the large hole beside the road at the top of the hill - the source of all the fridges and rubbish in Roberts Level stope. Until the situation becomes clearer it is probably a good idea to keep out of Roberts Level.

## Stableford Irrigation Tunnel

### 1st January 1989

Members present:

Mike Moore, Dave Adams.

A visit was made to the site of an irrigation tunnel at Stableford, near Shifnal, Shropshire.

The tunnel is approximately 4 feet high, about 3 foot 6 inches wide and over 400 feet long.

It was understood to have been driven in 1732 to provide irrigation in fields, from the River Wharfe which has an interesting oxbow around the hillside at this point.

Both ends of the tunnel were

inspected, at the lower end the tunnel was entered for about 40 yards, but owing to the lack of light and suitable clothing, and a sharp bend to the left, we retreated. At the upper end the tunnel enters from just above the river where there are remains of a sandstone staging and what could be a sluice system. About 6 inches of water lies in the tunnel for about 40 feet.

A revisit with lights and suitable footwear is to be recommended.

Mike Moore

# Parys Mountain Re-opens

This famous old mining site, on Anglesey is re-opening and will possibly become the largest non-ferrous metal mining operation ever undertaken in Britain.

The site once an extensive underground Copper mine and later an opencast site - due to the old miners robbing underground pillars causing it to collapse has been abandoned for a number of years.

However test drilling in the late 1960s early 80s, established the presence of a about 7 million tonnes of useable ore about 500 metres down on the north side of Parys Mountain.

The early miners worked the site because of the readily accessible, rich copper ore that could be easily worked and processed. They were aware of the presence of a more complex ore - a mixture of Zinc, Copper and Lead Sulphides and called it "Blue Stone" however they did not have the technology to work it.

It is this ore (with a total combined metal grade of 12%) which is to be worked. Apart from Zinc, Copper and Lead small amounts of Silver and Gold have also been found in the ore.

Phase 1 of the new development will be the sinking of a 450m shaft (costing £4.5 million). Phase 2 will involve the construction of surface plant - although it is intended to crush the ore underground.

Annual production is estimated at 400,000 tonnes of ore,

comprising:- 25,660 tons Zinc, 12,200 tons lead, 5,800 tons copper, 810,000 oz. silver and 5,250 oz. gold.

David Bick has been commissioned by the mining company concerned, Anglesey Mining PLC to carry out an I.A. survey of Parys Mountain. He has listed 49 features worthy of recording/ preservation. Most of them are not threatened by the new development and the mining company are promoting way-marked trails for the public to see the features.

The unique pumping windmill on the mountain is also to be preserved, but David Bick does not want it to be 'out of context'.

## Sygun Copper

If enough water can be obtained to work the old stamps at Sygun Mine, it is hoped to present the Prince of Wales with an ingot of copper from the Mine.

## Waterwheel Pump

A waterwheel has been preserved at Cwm Ciprwth Mine, with any luck the flat rods, angle bob and pumps will also be preserved too.



*Happy  
Easter*

\*\* The recent list of miscellaneous mines in Great Britain, published by the Mines Inspectorate, includes "Lincoln Hill Mine" - R.M. Douglas Contractors! Presumably because the mine filling operations involved men working underground.

Also included in the list is Cambrian Mine - 'Rec Carbo', Eclipse Signs of Mold - what are they doing?

\*\* R.Hazard has deposited a translation of the 1860s French description of Pontes-ford Smelters, with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. I.J.B. has found another translation in a Mining and Smelting Journal dated 1862.

\*\* An article about computers in mining, by J.A. Corbyn (a former Club Member) appears in the Transactions of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy Vol. 97, July 1988. He is now based in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

\*\* Johnson Pipes, Doseley, have applied to tip in the Doseley Quarry, formerly a site of Special Scientific Interest (because of the presence of columnar basalt and amethysts).

\*\* A meeting has been held in Snailbeach Village Hall to discuss the Consultants "Snailbeach Mine Stage 2" study on reclamation and tourism. Phase 3 of this study is now being considered.

## Snailbeach Shaft Study Sunday 12th February 1989

Members Present: Neal Rushton, Dave Adams, Alan Robinson, Steve Rodenhurst, Edwin Thorpe, Peter Eggleston, Mike Moore, Kelvin Lake

As members were interested to see what was going on at Snailbeach this visit was arranged. Basically apart from the odd new fenced off area of undisturbed ground near George's and Black Tom shafts - where it is thought climbing shafts may be located, not much has changed.

The Blacksmiths shop by George's shaft has been well and truly wrecked, walls broken down and attempts made to remove line shafting. The nice wooden crane by the hearth has also been dismantled and the double action bellows slashed with a knife or some such implement.

While at the site, day adit was entered to see the state of Engine shaft. The black and white video camera was also lowered to see if access was possible to the 112 yard level. After an un-eventful descent, passing an odd stemple and nice square notch in the shaft wall a blockage was encountered 100 metres down. No obvious routes off were visible, although there was an interesting overhang in one 'corner' which looked tantalising!

George's shaft was also checked with the camera and found to be blocked at the 60 metres mark, with a chamber and level off on the north/ north-east side between the 37 and 40 metre marks. The direct route off the chamber seemed blocked, but there looked like a curving tunnel going off the east side of the chamber.

# Clive Geological Trip

## Sunday 19th February 1989

Members Present:

Neal Rushton, Edwin Thorpe, Peter Eggleston, Chris Lucas, Mike Moore, Steve Holding, Sean Bostock, Kelvin Lake.

Plus: David Thompson and 2 colleagues.

David Thompson had expressed an interest in carrying out a detailed geological survey of the Clive workings to help him with his forth coming book.

At the same time Neal was keen to replace the traverse line, across the top of the Maypole shaft, with a newer rope - the current rope must have been there 3 years now !

Steve, Mike and Neal worked on the replacement, while the other members helped David Thompson and the geologists with their equipment.

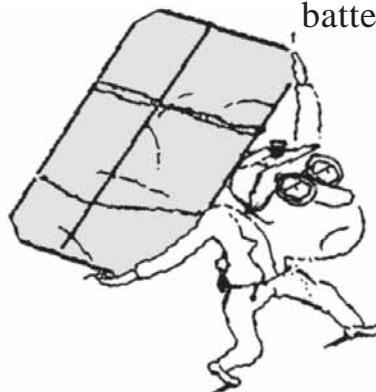
Sean and Kelvin also had a go at extending the dig in the backfilled level, in the far stope. A little progress was made and while the level appears to be still "going", there is no sign of the end, just loads of sand and big rocks!

Dick (the geologist) had brought along a scintillation counter to check out the rumours that "hot" spots had been discovered in the area (a hot spot is not a good spot, or so they say).

Although the count was found to be slightly above background no evidence was found for radioactive areas. In fact the level was fairly uniform throughout the mine.



Hurry up with that battery box!



As the trip ended early, Pete tried out his latest video camera down the Well shaft.

This one (the mark 2A?), a very small colour camera, complete with small light (actually as powerful as the old version) and 100m of thin multi-core cable, can easily be carried by one person in a bag - including the 100m of rope for lowering it!

The only heavy item now is the battery (guess who gets to carry that?).

Although the colour camera is not quite as sensitive as the black and white one, the added dimension of colour helps with the interpretation of the image.

Now that it has been seen to be effective, Pete is going to build the camera into a more suitable "box".

Further developments are also planned mark 3A ..... 9Z ?

## Bad Vibes

While the Club was at Snailbeach considerable antagonism was shown towards Members by a few local inhabitants. Their anger was not aimed at the Club per se but really at the Council. It appears they have decided that the area is very dangerous and have ordered people living in and around the mine site not to eat any home grown food, or graze animals in the area.

They have also banned local kids from riding motorbikes over the waste heaps (something that has gone on for years!), and several local lads have been stopped by the Police.

The attitude of the local people seemed to be more of "I don't see why you should be enjoying yourselves here when we can't".

It is important that Club Members are aware of the strength of feeling concerning recent developments at Snailbeach and avoid doing anything to upset people further.

## OFD Markers

When visiting OFD, the reflective markers that you will see in the Streamway are intended to show the way up to safe areas in times of flood.

Some of the areas that the markers lead you to, are also possible ways out, but they can also become flooded in very wet weather.

So if it rains a lot the next time you are down there you may just have to sit it out until the water subsides.

## OFD Markers . . . .

When you are in the Streamway part of OFD (or any other cave prone to flooding if it comes to that!), make SURE that you know what to do if a flash flood occurs.

## Lilleshall Shaft

A new shaft is being sunk at Lilleshall Quarry to give access to the old underground workings. When complete the contractors intend to survey the workings to determine their extent.

Hopefully it will be possible for the Club to arrange a trip down at some point during this stage of the work.

## Gaping Gill Fatality

On the same day we were performing our rescue practice, a real incident occurred at Gaping Gill Pot, Ingleborough, Yorks.

A Mr. Kevin Mann from Bickershaw, Wigan became tangled in his rope, 100 feet down the pot (presumably he was using SRT gear ?).

Despite the efforts of the rescue team they were unable to save Mr. Mann.

This is not the first time in recent weeks that incidents like this have occurred, although they were without such tragic consequences.

Perhaps the Club should practice a few rope rescues, in case something like this happens in Shropshire. Edwins trees would probably be the best place to try out such rescue techniques, rather than the wall at Madeley.

# Clive Rescue Practice

## Sunday 26th February 1989

**Members Present:** Neal Rushton, Steve Holding, Steve Rodenhurst, Chris Lucas, Sean Bostock, Mike Moore, Peter Eggleston, Edwin Thorpe, Kelvin Lake

Plus 7 members of Stafford Speleo Club.

Before the actual practice got under way, the Stafford Group were given a "lightning" tour of the upper workings. Their main comment was how warm and dry the mine was, being used to more wet and draughty things like caves!

Steve Rodenhurst volunteered to be the victim and accordingly made his way into the old barytes level above the upper workings in the far stope. Once in the level he "broke" his leg by free climbing the small winze!

Luckily help was to hand - the rescue team actually started from near the Rubbish shaft, thus some time was saved in getting people into the workings.

Peter and Kelvin followed the progress of the rescue with a video camera, producing a reasonable record of the main obstacles overcome by the rescuers.

The size of the rescue party certainly helped speed up the rescue. The sand slope and crawl being passed very quickly.

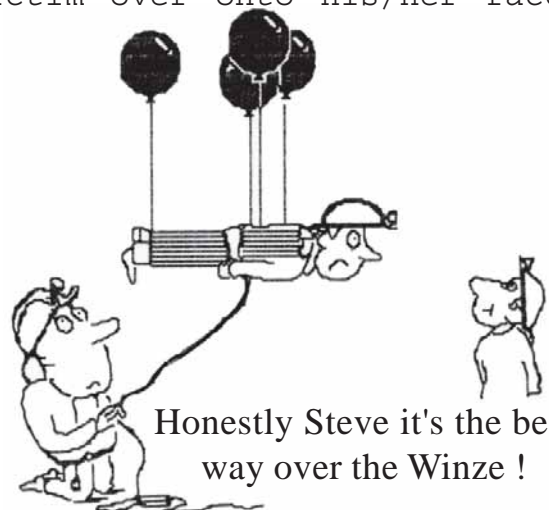
The techniques learnt on the last rescue were employed/modified this time, which also contributed to the increased speed of rescue.

This is not to say that fresh problems did not present themselves, the winze crossing was certainly different!

To get the victim across the top of the Maypole shaft, the crossing was attempted without using the higher level as a belay point, since this is a luxury that is not always there.

However things did not go quite to plan, the stretcher became tangled with the haulage and traverse rope, so that it did not actually hang on the traverse rope, but was suspended on the haulage ropes (the higher level was still used, but only as a life-lining point for the stretcher). The result was that Steve was hauled across the winze in a horizontal position with a superb view straight down the hole!

The most important thing that this rescue highlighted is that we need to practice getting people into the stretcher and bandaging damaged limbs to other limbs or splints. We should also try different methods of suspending the stretcher - particularly with a view to preventing it "flipping" the victim over onto his/her face!



## End of Blue John

It is now believed that the reserves of the mineral known as "Blue John" (a form of blue/purple fluorspar) found only at Treak Cliff Cavern, Castleton will run out in 20 years time. This is despite the fact that only half a ton a year is currently mined.

There have been suggestions that the scarcity of the mineral has caused the recent spate of thefts from Castleton shops where the Blue John stones in items of jewellery are considered of more value than the gold mountings!

## New Fluorspar Mine

Staying with Derbyshire, Laporte Minerals have obtained planning permission for a new fluorspar mine at Great Hucklow. The site is estimated to hold 1 million tonnes of reserves - the biggest in the country.

Mining is planned to last 10 years and make use of a new technique, where the voids are backfilled with a mixture of mine waste, tailings and concrete as mining progresses.

Part of the conditions of the planning permission is that Ladywash Mine buildings (apart from the Engine House Chimney) be demolished.

## BAT-Base

The Nature Conservancy Council are developing a "Bat-base" a database of all known underground sites where bats have been seen. The database will be used to speed up the N.C.C.'s response to threatened sites e.g.: places

## BAT-Base . . . .

where the entrance is due to be blocked.

The fact that bats have been seen in a mine and recorded on the database does not mean that access to the mine will be restricted - unless it comes under the newly agreed codes of practice.

Club members are asked to contact Mrs. Stephanie Maude c/o School of Life Sciences, Leicester Polytechnic, Scraftoft Campus, Leicester with details of mines e.g.: name and 8 figure grid reference (that's 4 figures for Northings and 4 for Eastings - before Edwin starts complaining).

The information about bat sites in not one way. The Kent Bat Group recently supplied a list of underground sites known to them, some of which were previously unknown to the Kent Underground Research Group (Kents equivalent to S.C.M.C.).

## Dorothea Vandalised

Those Club Members familiar with the Dorothea Engine House at Nantlle will be saddened to learn that person or persons unknown have cut down the wooden shearlegs. It really is about time that the 'powers that be' get their act together and preserve this superb engine house before there is nothing left.

Various rumours about it becoming a museum appear to have proved groundless. At one time it was claimed Dorothea Engineering owned it and were going to restore it, to its former glory, if only this were true.



# Competition Results



This is the moment that you have all been waiting for, the result of the Christmas Competition.

First the answers, the hidden words in the Word Square were:-

DESCENDER	ACETYLENE	KARABINER
LAUNDRER	SQUEEZE	PHREATIC
CALCITE	HARNESS	GINGING
CAPTAIN	STEMPLE	MAYPOLE
FATHOM	GALENA	ABSEIL
PRUSIK	FOSSIL	PILLAR
	BLOWER	STAMPS

Where were they, you may ask?

The words were positioned in the square as follows:-

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R . . . . .
E . . . . .
W . . G N I G N I G . . . . .
O . . . . . K A R A B I N E R . D . . .
L E . . . E L O P Y A M P R U S I K E . .
B T . . . . . S . . . . .
. I . . . . . E N E L Y T E C A . . C . .
. C . . . . . E . N
. L . . . . . L N . I
. A . . . . . S . . P . S S . . . I D M A
. C . . . . . Q . . H . . T S . . . E E O T
. . . . . U . . R . . E . . S R H P
. . . . . E . . E . . M . . . . N . B . T A
. . . . . E . . A . . P . . . . R A . A C
. Z . . . . . T . . L . . S P M A T S A . F P
E . . I . . E . . . . . H . I
. . C . . . . . L
. . . . . R E D N U A L . L
. G A L E N A . . . . . L I S S O F A
. . . . . R
    
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Not an easy puzzle I admit, but who said life was easy!

The lucky winner is

Sean Bostock

- although he didn't get all 20 words, he was the closest and receives the VHS copy of "The New Dudley Tunnel" by I.A.Recordings.

As he only got 18 out the 20 words, the last 4 minutes of the video have been erased !

If you tried the Crossword puzzle, the answers to the clues are:-

## Across

1. Shaft
2. Sough
3. CA
4. Pumping Rod
7. Goaf
10. Suit
12. Electron
14. Hats
16. Pitch
18. Winze
20. Trommel
22. Choke
23. Dig
24. In
25. Traverse
26. No
30. Incline
31. Wall
33. Dip
36. Up
37. Speleologist

## Down

1. Single Rope Technique
2. Sump
3. Crop
5. Tip
6. Huglith
8. Face
9. Ore
11. Resurgence
13. Fan
15. Swallet
17. Chimney
19. Engine
21. Ogof
23. Dive
27. On
28. Kneel
29. Reap
31. Wing
32. Leat
34. Lamp
35. CRO

Well, that's a-a-a-all Folks!

# S.C.M. Club Officers

President :	David Adams
Chairman :	Mike Moore
Secretary :	Steve Holding
Treasurer :	Bob Taylor
NAMHO Rep.:	Mike Moore
Tacklemaster & Rescue Officer :	Neal Rushton
Newsletter Editor:	Kelvin Lake

## Future Trips

As trips are likely to be changed at short notice future trip details will not be printed in Below. For information about any trip contact Steve Holding.

