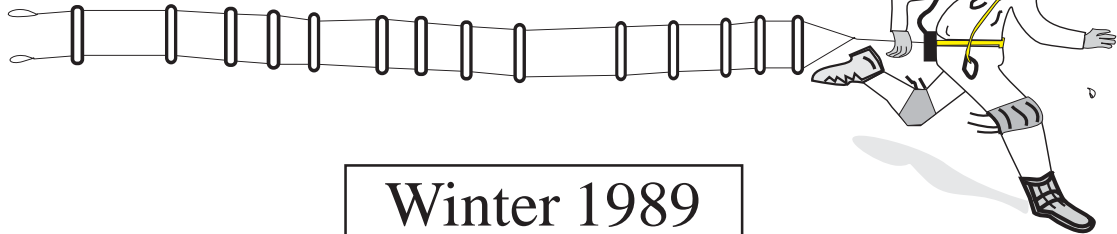




B E L O W !



Winter 1989



Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Mine Biking

Back in the Spring issue of 'Below' I mentioned this new so called "sport" of riding mountain bikes down abandoned Cornish tin mines. Since then another article has appeared in the magazine 'Mountain Biker UK'.

This article sensationalises the "sport" even more with such phrases as:-

"You can scream down a 45 degree slope, then zoom up the wall like banking to get round the bend at the bottom".

Due to their concern over such articles appearing in popular magazines, (lets face it they are bound to encourage someone else to try it) NAMHO have taken the matter up with 'Amateur Photographer' and 'Mountain Biker UK', the magazines involved.

Archaeology Day School

This one day event was held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 4th November, aimed at informing local amateur archaeologists about the current goings on in Shropshire. Talks ranged from a dig at Oswestry Castle to forthcoming excavations on the route of the M54 extension, and were all well attended, almost filling the Council Chamber!

During the afternoon session Ivor Brown gave a talk on Snailbeach coupled with some interesting old photographs of the site. This talk was attended by 7 SCMC Members.

Our stand in the foyer attracted some attention as it was the largest and directly behind the Tea-Lady. Alan Robinson also rigged up some of his gear on an easel, while Mike Moore managed to sell a few publications - mainly Llanymynech, as it was roman and they were archaeologists, he felt a little depressed about sales being low, until he sold the electron ladder on Alan's equipment display to a lady requiring an emergency fire escape!! Peter Eggleston also provided a video and telly for showing a mixture of videos, including lowering the MineCam down various shafts and the Rescue Practice.

NAMHO Conference

The October/November issue No.90 of Descent magazine, carries a report on this years NAMHO conference by Chris Jones. It includes a mention of our "talk" on the Sunday:-

" Of particular interest to me was the video shot in Clive Copper Mine by members of the Shropshire Mining Club. This was perhaps a little over long but showed exactly what video potential mines have. The film was enlivened by particularly fine computer-generated maps and plans on a par with anything found on national TV, Watch out Sid Perou."

It's so nice to see that the SCMC contribution made a good impression.

The Quarry Journal

IJB has now gained access to early issues of "The Quarry" Journal. They published long articles on Clee Hill and Grinshill Quarries in the 1890's and contain many references to other workings in Shropshire - also excellent descriptions of North Wales Slate Mines.

Peat Machinery

A picture of the large Peat-getting machine at Whixall Moss is shown in a recent National Conservancy Council publication. Croxdin Compost Ltd. have a sister machine on their peat workings in Manchester. On IJB's last visit to Whixall in 1951 there was a narrow gauge railway system in operation. Although the railway is still there, it is no longer in use as the peat machine and works have been derelict for some years

Granville Country Park

The Park now has a trail around the remains of Barnyard, Muxton and Freehold Collieries - Muxton Bridge has the most significant remains, I.A. Recordings also made a video of the shaft capping operations here, if anyone is interested.

The Park also contains a life sized iron ore truck on rails complete with iron horse - 4 legged type, courtesy of local scrap sculptor Garry Foxall. Who started building a mining sculpture on a mound outside the Miners Arms, Madeley, about 8 years ago, but has only built the horse and cart so far

Old Tunnels

Excavation work at The Friary, Bridgnorth has found a network of tunnels. Have they been surveyed?

Clee Coal Reserves

The firm Coal Contractors Ltd. have acquired Clee Hills Mining Ltd., the company controlling large reserves of coal at Clee Hill.

Snailbeach Contract

The contract for an archaeological dig at Snailbeach Mine has been awarded by the County Council to a group outside the County. The present Consultants have just produced a further in-depth report on possible uses for the site.

Women In Mining

IJB has been to Germany assisting with this exhibition. The British example is Shropshire. It includes a photo of Mrs. Payne of Madeley, at 103 years, the oldest surviving woman mine-worker - at least in Shropshire. A book has been published (in German) to celebrate the exhibition at Germany's Bochum Mining Museum. The Shropshire chapter appeared in the British Mining No.39 - reviewed in the last 'Below'.

Colliery Railways

Excellent photos of the railways at Snailbeach, Cothercott Barytes and Ifton Colliery are shown in the recent County Library book on the subject.

Mine Rescue Vehicle

The Mines Rescue Vehicle from Kemberton Colliery has been found in an Orchard at Broseley.

Steeraways Drilling

It is rumoured that drilling into the old limestone workings is about to commence at the Steeraways.

S. Shropshire Metal Mines

IJB gave talks on this subject to the Institute of Chartered Surveyors at the Haling Dene Centre, Penkridge in October and to Shropshire Archaeology Day School (see separate article). He is also giving a talk on Ironstone Mining in Shropshire to the Geological Society, Shrewsbury on 13th December.

Moel Fferna

Sunday 17th September 1989

Members present: Steve Holding, Mike Moore, Chris Lucas, Roland Gibson, Sean Bostock, Andy Harris, Edwin Thorpe.

As usual confusion arose over start times and meeting places. The author arriving 45 minutes early at Trench Hall.

Despite chaotic arrangements the party duly assembled in Llangollen and made our way, eventually choosing the right track (reversing on the A5 in a Land Rover on a sunny Sunday morning added some vague excitement to the repartee). Whilst changing the local farmer investigated our activities and was promised a guided trip on a future visit [*I trust someone made a note of his name and phone number. Ed.]*.

Concern over two adits was pronounced by Steve Holding, although the adit is now big enough to easily accommodate a new reduced in size Moore and Eggleston. The party split into two with Steve Holding, Chris Lucas and Sean Bostock taking the sporting entrance via the Air shaft. Andy complained

about not being able to show off his latest multi-coloured, most expensive he could buy 'Truss'. Although the lure of an open adit was greater than that to POSE!!

There is need for an extra hand-hold on the adit climb down to the lower levels, as the bridge is considered a little too uncertain. After several scrambles and one level too high up, a previously unexplored incline with a still intact winding drum was encountered.

The groups re-grouped (as all good groups should), then all six/seven levels of the mine were explored, with Steve and Mike getting wet up to the Ooh-zone level, to entering a blocked adit. It was not fully explored and there is a need for wet gear to check it out properly on a return visit. After visiting all the levels the pattern of the mine becomes more obvious. For those members not present, it is a trip worth doing, to see quite a few artefacts and a reasonably intact Slate mine that only ceased operations in 1959.

Mike Moore

O.F.D. II Sunday 8th October 1989

Members Present: Dave Newell, Dave Jukes, Vicky Gamblin, Andy Harris, Steve Holding, Alan Robinson.

The two Dave's on their first trip for two years came out of retirement to take us on a trip down the main streamway of O.F.D. II.

Un-aided by Mike 'Pathfinder' Moore, there was the occasional question on route, however the party soon found its way through the Brickyard and Salubrious Passage to the top of Maypole Inlet; the furthest limit of the last trip. On this occasion after some hesitation the way down was remembered by Dave Jukes (although most of the party chose to classic abseil down). The tight Maypole Passage

was then followed until the climb down into the main streamway was reached. The main stream-way was followed to the far end of the oxbow, where the party then retraced its steps.

On the return, the climb up the Maypole Inlet was reasonably straight forward, but out of choice I would prefer to rope both this climb and the climb into the main streamway. Logically those club members who this year have started to learn the route through O.F.D. II should visit Cwmdaw on the next trip!!

Steve Holding

Who's Heritage Is It Anyway?

There seem to be four distinct phases in the development of Industrial Archaeology.

1. 1950's-1960's: A small number of volunteers campaign to save industrial monuments from destruction. There is no popular appreciation of industrial heritage, so there is very little money available, but the feeling of doom generates great enthusiasm.
2. 1970's: Volunteer groups start museums, which become businesses with paid employees, and so have to make money. Volunteer help is now discouraged, as it detracts from the new "professional" atmosphere. The museums help to make I.A. popular, and many people begin to realise the importance of the Industrial Revolution. It even enters school history teaching.
3. 1980's: Volunteer group membership declines, as most people think that industrial monuments are now safe in the hands of museums, and that everyone else is now so enlightened that nothing important will ever be destroyed. Professional and commercial interest grows, with "Heritage Developments" in almost every industrial town.
4. 1990's: The Heritage Industry mushrooms, exploiting the techniques of Disneyland to make more and more money for the speculators. Now I.A. is big business, and much of it is controlled by anonymous entrepreneurs without a lot of concern for history.

An undercurrent of discontent has started in the late eighties.

It is noticed that important monuments are still being destroyed, often with the excuse that a similar thing can be found in the local museum. It is seen that museums themselves destroy genuine relics, either to provide building materials for their own imita-

tions, or because they are "in the way" or do not fit into the "overall plan". There is less and less to be found on its original site and in its original state. Surviving members of the original voluntary groups who retain their beliefs shun many museums, and search in more and more remote locations for untouched and un-sanitized remains, record them, and try to keep them from the clutches of the speculators.

It is however possible to find some schemes which have benefited from the new popularity of I.A. without sacrificing their credibility to Mammon. Several deal with mining history, such as Sygun and Big Pit. In the future there may be Clogau and Great Orme. A little farther a field is Killhope.

Killhope Wheel

Killhope Wheel Lead Mining Centre is in Weardale in County Durham in the richly mineralised northern Pennines not far from Nenthead, O.S. ref: 87 NY 827 429. It is easy to find beside the A689, although it is not marked on some maps.

Killhope Wheel is the only surviving waterwheel on a North Pennine lead mining site. Remarkably it stood for years beside the crushing mill it once drove, clearly visible from the main road. Restoration started in 1980.

The centre is based on the crushing mill and dressing floors that served Park Level and Killhopehead lead mines. Beside the portal of the Park Horse Level is a large restored mine shop used for visitor reception. The top floor has displays including a model of the Northern Pennine mining area with lights showing the location of mines, processing plants etc. Downstairs is a stable and a smithy. Park Level is closed to visitors but being explored with a view to opening. A row of bousesteads is served by a reconstructed tramway and tubs, beside them is

Who's Heritage Cont...

the dressing floor, with dolly tubs, hotching tubs, trunks and Brunton buddles. Above these are the mill buildings that once housed circular buddles, jiggers and a crusher, driven by the 33' diameter waterwheel and served by a railway incline.

Following the launder up the hill leads to the reservoirs and most dramatically, several hushes which remain as open gorges. There are also reproduction jack rollers and a miners cottage.

What sets Killhope apart from the "run of the mill" industrial museum is that despite the fact that many outdoor exhibits have to be reconstructions there is a real feeling of a workable mine plant. Interpretation plaques are kept to a minimum and carefully sited to be unobtrusive. Some exhibits are workable by the visitor.

Exhibits are preserved or reconstructed because they are important to the process, not because they are attractive to the public. The site is not sanitized, rather it has some of the rough, honest appearance of working industry.

Surely there will eventually be a reaction against the brash plastic history of the Heritage Merchants. If so, places like Killhope will come into their own. In the meantime, they are quietly providing a genuine alternative for the discerning enthusiast and leading the way for future high quality schemes.

Peter Eggleston

Club Sales

Account No.8 "Survey of Danymynech Ogof, Roman Copper Mine" by D.R.Adams, 1970.
£2.00 (£2.50 non-members)

Account No.9 "Mines and Caves in the Area between Llanymynech and the Dee" by D.R.Adams, 1972.
£2.00 (£2.50 non-members).

Account No.12 "Survey of the Metal Mines of S.W. Shropshire", J.Heathcote, 1979.
£2.00 (£3.00 non-members).

Account No.13 "Lincoln Hill Limestone Mines" by I.J.Brown. £1.50 (£2.00 non-members).

The 1980 Journal - including a report on Huglith.
£1.00 (£1.50 non-members).

Clive Rescue Practice

Follows the SCMC's intrepid band of rescuers, as they boldly rescue where no man has been rescued before. Stare in amazement as the helpless victim crosses the Maypole Winze without flinching (well almost). Complete with library case and designer label for £5.00

A Tour of Clive Copper Mine

Temporarily out of stock

All items available from Mike Moore (see back page for address). Postage and packing extra.

Ogof Igam Ogam

When visiting this cave, you must ensure that you pay the 40p access fee to Mr. Griff Davies of Dyffryn Nedd Farm. Reports from the Cambrian Caving Council indicate that if people keep on avoiding payment then he will blow the entrance of the cave in.

Hush Sump

The boulder choke at Hush sump has started moving again. Cavers are warned to take extreme care when going through. Slim people can get over the top, but do not shout as you go through - hence the name HUSH sump!

Agen Allwedd

A similar problem to Hush, is happening at Aggy. The first boulder choke is moving here. It is thought due to desiccation/shrinkage of the mud. There are a few large blocks perched in dodgy positions.

There are alternative routes at lower levels, but the operative word is CAUTION.

Pentre Gwenlais Quarry

Despite reports to the contrary the Quarry operators do not intend to quarry away the caves.

Ogof Corryn Cawraidd

Or the Cave of the Giant Spider.

This cave was discovered recently by members of the East Dorset Speleo. Soc. The cave is a dry entrance to the Little Neath River Cave and is about 40 yards downstream from 'Flood' entrance.

At the moment due to the low water levels it is not known if the entrance will be affected by a rise in the river level after heavy rain. I will keep you posted.

Hand Made Caves

Nottingham County Council, with the aid of Wimpey and Tarmac have built an Urban Adventure Centre at Lady Bay Bridge, Nottingham. Using a mixture of limestone and concrete pipes 120 feet of 'cave passage' have been built along with 2 'mine shaft' entrances and an adit. The idea is to get people involved in caving, but without putting pressure on classic sites in the area. Sounds a good idea to me.

Pippikin to Gavel Pot

Geoff Yeadon and Geoff Crossley have managed to connect Pippikin Pot to Gavel Pot, taking the length of the Ease Gill system to 75km. If you're thinking of trying it out you will need a drysuit and at least two 110 cubic foot air bottles (contents silly, not dimensions) plus a support team.

On the subject of Gavel Pot, I understand that the bottom section of the walled shaft is in an extremely unstable condition and should NOT be entered.

Porth yr Ogof Incident

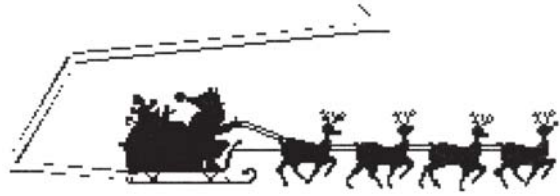
If we think we have problems with rescues, the incident on Sunday 9th July shows that even the 'best' do too. A member of the Welsh section of the Cave Diving Group ran into problems and had to be left in a deep-water airbell about 60 metres from the exit.

As the key members of the South Wales CRO were up in Yorkshire, the resultant rescue was a shambles. There were no experienced cave divers available, no spare supplies of air and the Police divers gear was too bulky.

The rescue was eventually affected, 4 hours after it started by an open-water diver pulling the victim to safety.

Christmas Crossword Puzzle

Following on from the success (?) of last years crossword puzzle, here is another one to help the Christmas diner go down. There is no prize this year, it's just for FUN!



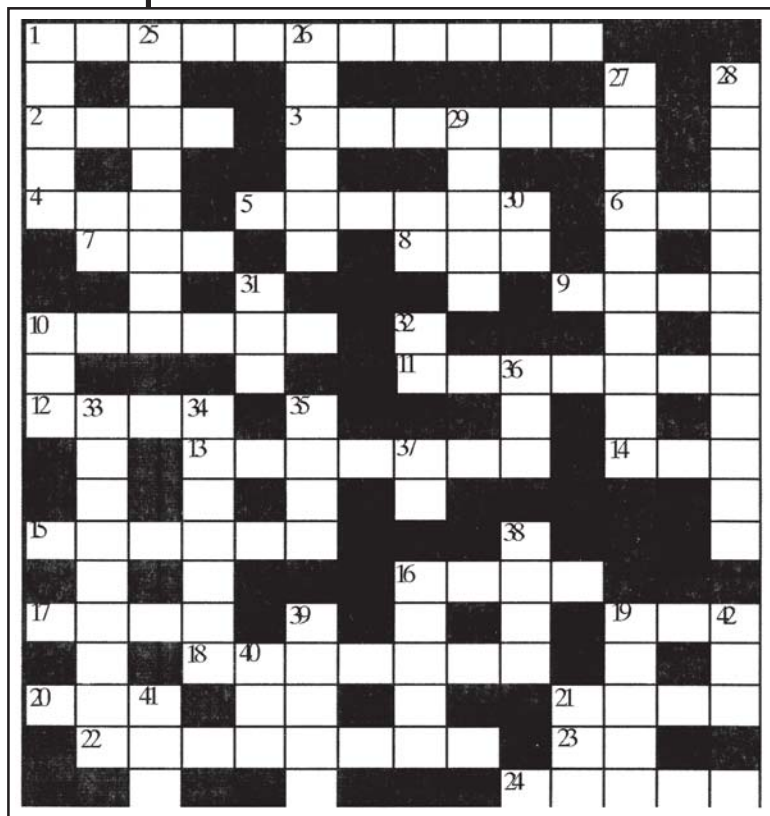
Across

1. A prusik method using a foot, hand and chest jammer.
2. Name given to each "floor" in a mine cage.
3. produces acetylene when wet.
4. The latest Dudley Tunnel.
5. Coarse grained metamorphic rock, but quite nice.
6. A shortened Nature Conservancy Council.
7. A small orifice between 2 things.
8. Metal mined in Cornwall.
9. A natural underground chamber.
10. Main Ore at Snailbeach.
11. Huglith miners were after this.
12. A group of mines on the same vein e.g.: Gritt.
13. Once mined in Cornwall, considered useless, used to colour glass.
14. The extreme limit of a mine tunnel.
15. A bucket for raising ore - we found one at Clogau.
16. Old instrument used for underground surveys.
17. The ore body.
18. A famous name, who knows the ropes.
19. Yorkshire term for underground chamber.
20. A local liquid, found in a tunnel.
21. Irate farmers do this with Beat, to cavers.
22. Wetsuit substance.
23. A certain zone, reached in a wet level.
24. Derbyshire drainage level.

27. Construction of SRT rope.
28. Where 2 faults have rubbed together, noticeable in Clive.
29. Geological feature formed by all beds dipping to a point.
30. Chemical name for 8 across.
31. Theoretical number of ropes used in SRT.
32. A disease you wouldn't want.
33. Person in charge of a pump or winder at a mine.
34. Efficient water powered device, generating electricity today.
35. Derbyshire name for old open stoping.
36. A dangerous Welsh sheep.
37. Modern method of distance measuring or focusing cameras.
38. The type of hat for Club Members.
39. Derbyshire name for several mine claims.
40. A non-horizontal coal seam does this.
41. The Cambrian Caving Council, -- Dragon journal.
42. A heap of mine waste.

Down

1. Nasty gas found in Tin mines, also gives concern in caves.
16. A Welsh cave, --- Cilau.
19. Famous underground film maker.
21. Don't say this to your Christmas goose.
25. Stone pillars built to support the roof and sides in a coal mine.
26. Coming up.



Flue Gas Programme

To help reduce the emission of sulphur dioxide Drax Power station is embarking on a Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) programme. Unfortunately FGD requires a lot of good quality limestone, which is mined from the Peak District.

In caving circles there is concern that this might mean the loss of some cave systems. However the CEBG point out that far more limestone is taken for roads, and even if a few caves are lost it's a small price to pay for the environment.

Clogau Gold Mine

Developments at the mine have suffered a severe set-back with the refusal of planning permission by the Secretary of State for Wales. The main arguments against the scheme appear to be on environmental grounds and in the words of the Welsh Office Planning Inspector "In a village where nearly 70% of the inhabitants speak Welsh, the large influx of English speaking visitors making use of local facilities would put the continuation of the language at risk, harming the fabric of the community".

A different Vein

The prospective mine developments at Llandudno are also in the same position. Great Orme Mines Ltd. are having to wait until sometime in November before they hear if their scheme can continue.

Mandale Sough

If entering the sough - which is currently dry, take care, there have been reports of bad air. It may be methane building up due to the lack of water and moving air. Although by the time you read this, judging from the recent rain the problem may be over.

Parys Mountain

The new mine developments on the mountain are on schedule. Work has started driving the first level, 280m down and the permanent headframe and winding gear is already in use.

The company Anglesey Mining, have managed to acquire and install a pilot plant for ore processing. At the moment ore forecasts are looking good, it is relatively homogeneous and 90% ore recovery is predicted.

Happy Christmas
and a
Merry New Year



to all
Club Members



Kelvin

Huglith Rescue Practice

Sunday 15/10/89

Team 1: Alan Robinson (Leader), Mike Moore, Terry Middleton (Stafford Speleo), Martin Cooke (Stafford Speleo), Andrew Yapp.

Team 2: Neal Rushton (Leader), Andy Harris, Sean Bostock, Edwin Thorpe, Roland Gibson, Steve Holding.

Surface Co-ordinator: Kelvin Lake.

Victim: Steve Rodenhurst.

The rescue “started” at 11 am from the lay-by at the end of the track to Huglith, with the rescuers being split into 2 teams by Neal.

The scenario:-

.. *“A casualty is underground at Huglith in an unknown position, possibly the adit level. The objective is to find him and get him safely to surface. He is reported to have sustained a broken leg and ribs.”*

Team 1 was detailed to enter the mine via Badger Level and search the mine towards the main stope to surface. It took the team sometime to locate Badger Level, however once there the pitch was rigged quickly and the search started.

Team 2 was assigned to the main stope - the intended route out for the victim. The pitch was rigged quickly and their first members were down by 11.30 am. Unfortunately it was while rigging that the mistake was made that proved disastrous later in the day. The new 265m SRT rope was used for the pitch, but doubled with both free ends at the surface. When various members of the team abseiled down with figure of eights, numerous twists and knots were introduced - this was not immediately spotted.

By 12.30 Team 1 had reached the victim along with the advance members of Team 2 (carrying the stretcher).

About this time Edwin was starting to put another rope protector in place. This involved pulling the main rope up to the top of the stope. As he did this the rope coiled itself up into tight knots, around the ladders (which just reached to this point), and the radio aerial. After unsuccessful attempts to untangle the rope, Edwin returned to surface at 13.20 - the stretcher and victim had by now reached the stope.

Attempts to untangle the rope on the surface were partially successful. Ideally it should have been replaced, however the only ropes long enough were in Badger Level!

An additional aid would have been a bolt for a re-belay at the lip into the top of the stope. Even if the rope had not been tangled the rescue would have had to wait for Team 1 to reach the stope. It actually took 1 hour 40 mins. for them to do this (de-rigging Badger as they went) - a time worth remembering for future rescues.

The pitch in Badger should not have been de-rigged until the stretcher, at least was on the surface, since this effectively cut off a second escape route for the underground team. Numerous problems were encountered with the rig in the main stope, most stemming from the twisted rope.

At 16.00 the decision was made to abandon the rescue due to fatigue and cold setting in underground. It was another 3 hours before everyone reached the surface - the victim, Steve Rodenhurst being the last man out!

On the whole not a bad effort, luckily Pete’s radios worked well throughout the day enabling constant communication between surface and underground, better for things to go wrong on a rescue, so we can learn from them, than they go wrong when it’s for real!

BOOKS

Mining Museums

The Darkness Beckons

by Martyn Farr.

“An exciting tale of tenacity, dynamism, technical ingenuity, close escape, humorous incident, spine-chilling risks and epics, gruesome tragedies and great human courage.”

- the history & development of Cave Diving.

£9.50 hardbound, 224 pages.

Industrial Archaeology Review

Vol. XII No. 1

This latest in the A.I.A.'s series of reviews is devoted to Metalliferous Mining. It includes articles from a variety of authors including Ivor Brown and David Bick.

For me a short article on “The William Bruntons and their Buddles” was particularly interesting. Other topics covered are early Cornish stamping mills, 19th C. tin and lead dressing, the archaeology of washing floors, Rio Tinto, Mining and Tourism in southern Australia (IJB), mines in the Gwydyr forest, Beam engine houses in Wales, and lead industry remains in the Yorkshire Dales.

One article covered the mine site at Glyn Pits, describing how the site was being investigated by a team of archaeologist, it went on to rave about the iron beam floor supporting the engine cylinders - surely the ENGINES were more important items to worry about!

Glyn Pits is a particularly sad scene these days, considering that the engines and buildings were preserved almost from the moment the mine closed, and are now in ruins - it would never have happened to a Stately Home.

Llywernog Silver-Lead Mine

Ponterwyd near Aberystwyth. Tel: 0970-85620.

This museum has changed a lot over the past ten years (when the Editor last visited it!). It includes an adit with underground exhibits, restored waterwheels and preserved mine buildings, all in an open area typical of so many Welsh mining sites.

The Good Museum Guide rates it as “*One of the best commercial museums in Britain*”. Well worth a visit.

Blue John Cavern and Blue John Mine

Castleton, Derbyshire.

Open 10 a.m. to dusk during the winter.

Visitors are taken on an easy walk through some interesting caverns, some up to 200 feet high, with a mixture of interesting formations.

The mine is still worked for “Blue-John”, claimed to be the rarest natural formation in Britain. At the present rate of limited mining, estimates put the known reserves at 20 years!! So it might be a good idea to see it while there is some left.

Pennerley Mines

Peter F. Claughton of the NMRS is appealing for information about Pennerley Mines. He has recently found an assignment of mortgage (in Bristol Record Office, BRO ref: 09467(7)), concerning lead and copper mines in “the lordship of Neither Heath called Pennally” dated 1732. He initially thought it was Penally in Pembrokeshire, but has revised this to Pennerley near Stiperstones.

If any members have information for Peter, let me know and I'll pass on his address or the information.

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