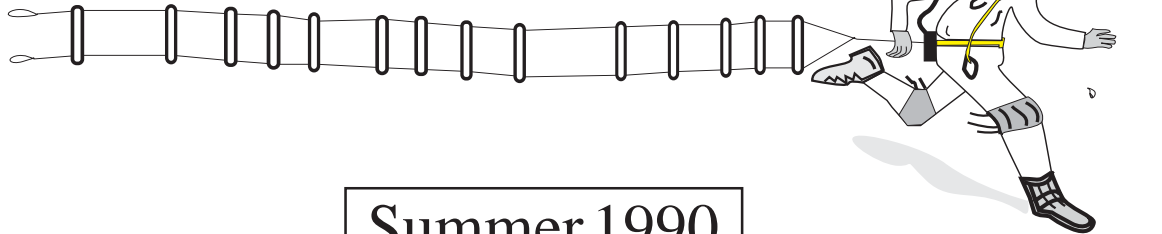


B E L O W !



Summer 1990

Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Club Slides

As Club Members are becoming in demand for talks and “After Dinner” speeches, a collection of slides have been put together for use by members at such events. Peter Eggleston has written a set of notes to accompany the slides and they are currently stored in a Kodak Carousel magazine that Peter has kindly donated to the Club.

While we have been able to assemble quite a few pictures of recent Club activity we are very short of pictures of the early days and caving trips!

If you have photographs or slides that you think would be of interest eg: recovering the Siskol Coal cutter, let Peter know and he will arrange to have them copied as slides and included in the collection.

Earthquake

The April earthquake -which measured 5.4 on the Richter Scale, and appears to have been centred on anywhere between Newtown, the Long Mynd and Wrexham, does not seem to have caused many changes in the mines the Club are currently exploring. The rock flake in “New Roberts” has shifted slightly and the slope at Bergam has increasing a bit.

Snailbeach Bipod Shaft has changed, but this is probably due to the continual collapse that appears to be happening.

Clogau Gold Mine

Following the rejection of Mr.Roberts plans to turn the mine into a tourist attraction, he has now leased the mine to Bob and Anne Gunn (both qualified mining engineers).

The couple plan to start mining operations again and have already brought the machinery and buildings at the mine back into use. They have identified a number of seams, which they believe will be very productive, although the proof will be in the digging.

The Gunns plan to do the digging themselves in between their other business commitments (one of which is selling jewellery made from Clogau gold).

Rib’s Gone West

I am sure Club members would like to wish Tom West a speedy recovery from his cracked ribs, caused by being hit in the back by a largish “rock” while descending the Bipod Shaft at Snailbeach.

Although Tom didn’t discover he’d damaged his ribs until a couple of days later, he says he is “on the mend”, and it only hurts when he laughs.

Kelvin

STOPPRESS: We would like to wish Neal Rushton a speedy recovery from his recent accident at work. Hope you are soon on your feet again Neal.

Moel Fferna Slate Mine Sunday 28/1/90

Members Present: Mike Moore, Steve Holding, Chris Lucas, Andy Harris & Karen, Tom West, Malcom Newton, Edwin Thorpe, Jayne Horton & Graham.

After about 20+ telephone calls and thanks to the insistence of Malcom (the Hard man) Newton the party duly met at 10:30 in Llangollen and then had to wait 45 minutes for Edwin, who despite having a Land Rover protested about the snowy conditions (but probably had more to do with a party the night before!).

The farmer had cleared the snow off the road up the valley although the road was quite icy, Mike Moore led up in his Fiesta as Edwin felt the road would not be passable, even in a Land Rover. Once at the top the cars were manoeuvred around.

The party eventually set off at 12:30 through various snow drifts up to 2 feet deep. The incline had disappeared under the snow and was found by Andy Harris who ended up crawling through the drifts. The

entrance was duly located, decorated with superb icicles.

Thanks to snow blindness it took about 20 minutes for our eyes to adjust to the dark grey slate, by which time the dodgy entrance had been passed. A rope and short ladder were left on the climb down into the lower levels.

Owing to unknown weather conditions the trip was completed in less than 2 hours, visiting both inclines and winding drums, a large water pump and the interesting roof support. The water in the lowest level was just over knee deep and could well flood if all the snow above ground melted. During the trip the water level did rise about 3-4 inches.

Malcom Newton proved what hard men the older cavers are by not changing soaking wet socks, boots or trousers before travelling home.

Mike Moore

Clive Copper Mine 25/2/90

Members present: Andy Harris, Steve Holding, Chris Lucas and Tom West.

A visit to Clive was arranged with the main aim of removing digging implements etc.

Everyone descended the Rubbish Shaft and after a quick examination of the upper level (to see if the earthquake had changed anything), Andy and Tom descended the Maypole Shaft and collected most of the digging implements.

While Andy and Tom were in the lower level, Steve and Chris examined a short cross-cut believed to

correspond to the depression appearing in a garden. It was difficult to conceive that there could be a shaft at the end of this level, but the small void (less than 18" across) was dug at, material did fall from above.

Two short sections of wood were placed in this void to limit the fall and retain the infill, this should only be considered a temporary measure. Hitting the material in the floor at the end of this level gave a hollow sound - is it possible that this corresponds to one of the filled shafts leading to the lower level?

Steve Holding

News Round-Up 1

by Ivor Brown

Burgam Mine

IJB has been researching the history of Burgam Mine and hopes to publish an article on it shortly. There is still much of interest here and no proper survey of the underground workings has yet been found. It is currently used by the local Activity Centre, although a couple of "off the cuff" Club trips have been made there this year.

The Bog Mine

George Hall has been working on the Bog Mine and its history. The results of his research were published in the April 1990 issue of Mining Magazine.

Snailbeach Study

The Lancaster University team have now completed their study of Snailbeach Mine and a draft report is being circulated to selected persons (IJB hasn't seen it).

[Has any Club member actually seen the team at work, or did they just wander around the site for the £60,000 survey? Ed.]

Oakengates Drilling

During April drilling was carried out at Oakengates in a search for odd ironstone workings. Other drilling has recently taken place at Snailbeach and Lilleshall. Some back-filling of voids is proposed.

Radon Gas

This naturally occurring gas (coming from some local rocks) has been reported recently in some Shropshire properties - mainly in the Oswestry area. Some thought is also being given to the likelihood of other gases eg: methane and carbon dioxide occurring more frequently now that active underground coal mining has ceased.

Lloyds Shaft

IJB has inspected the Lloyds Shaft, Jackfield, the pumping spear is now collapsed across the shaft (I believe an MSC Community Programme "tidying" the area some time back, actually cut it off with a chainsaw! Ed.).

Nearby are old miners houses formerly rented by his ancestors. The home of his great great grandfather, a single storey squatter-type house on a pit heap is still inhabited by descendants of the same family. The Browns worked at the Madeley Wood Companies Mines for 200 years, being taken by Reynolds from Ketley to look after the engines in the 1780's. More about this another time.

Little Wenlock Mines

Lance Smith of the IGMT has done a study of the Little Wenlock Mines in preparation for a fight against proposed opencast mining in the area.

Early Mines Abroad

IJB spent a week in May 1990 on a study tour of pre-Roman and Roman Mines in Spain and Portugal.

The pre-Roman workings at Chinflow and Monte Romero (in the Rio Tinto area) needed a lot of imagination but there was little doubt about the Roman workings at Corta Lago, Cueva de la Mora, Planes and Aljustrel (Portugal). Some amazing finds have been made like plaques giving the rules for working the mines and a series of wooden water wheels.

A very modern mine at Neves Corvo (near Faro) was also visited.

News Round-Up 2

by Ivor Brown

Local Authority Booklets

In April all 3 local authorities involved in Telford produced glossy booklets on "land reclamation" projects being undertaken.

Shropshire County Council described 10 projects in hand including Snailbeach, Ironbridge Limestone & Newdale Opencast site. Wrekin District Council listed Granville Colliery, Brandlee Bank and Red Lees, while Telford Development Corporation commissioned their consultants (Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick) to do a full history of land reclamation in the New Town - it runs to 38 pages.

Wrekin D.C. will shortly take over all responsibilities from Telford D.C. Telford claims to have reclaimed 3,450 acres of land covered by mine spoil and other dereliction and treated over 1,600 mine shafts of the 2,957 mine openings recorded before and during their development operations.

Industrial Railway Society

The I.R.S. have a book available called Industrial Locomotives of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire, published in 1977 it describes over 80 railway systems in Shropshire mainly at mines and quarries. Of particular interest are those at Snailbeach and Llanymynech. One little known railway was at Cothercott Mines, from grid reference SJ 406 003 to the mines at SJ 414 002, the 1ft. 10 3/4 in gauge loco was built in 1877 and scrapped in 1942, the track was removed in 1946.

Recent Publications

Geology in Shropshire by Peter Toghil, 188 pages price **£9.95**.

Women at Shropshire Mines by I. J. Brown, in Shropshire Magazine June issue 1990.

The Shrewsbury Coalfield and the Pontisford Lead Smelters in Welsh Mining Society Newsletter No.21, December 1989.

Mineral Resources of the Coalbrookdale Coalfield in Mercian Geologist Vol.12 No.1. 1989. This has been produced by IJB, R. Hamblin (IGS) and J. Ellwood (formerly NCR). It contains 23 pages including 8 photographs and 5 diagrams/maps.

It has been published separately as an offprint and a few copies are available at **£2** from: **IJB, 95 Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield WF27DL**

** 25 Years Ago **

From early Club Newsletters:

January 1965

The Siskol coal cutter was removed from the Rock Fireclay Mine. Does anyone have photographs of this happening? If so any chance of taking copies for the Club "Slide Show". By the way what has happened to the Siskol coal cutter?

The Club had recommended to the owners of Lilleshall limestone workings that they be sealed for safety.

February 1965

4 of the 5 trips this month were to North Wales, two to a newly discovered cave in Llanarmon Area.

Reprints of the South Shropshire Survey were available at 3/- (15p) each plus 6d (2p) postage.

March 1965

Work on hauling the winch out of Glyn Ceiriog continued. (What happened to this?)

Derbyshire caves revisited and Church Aston shaft descended.

Bob Clough gave the Club a copy of his new book "Lead Smelting Mills of the Yorkshire Dales".

P8 (Jackpot)

Members present: Alan Robinson, Andy Harris, Steve Holding.

After a late morning rendezvous at Buxton, we dashed into Caving Supplies in search of goodies. Steve “stop me when I reach £100” Holding managed to keep Phil Brown smiling whilst Andy and myself browsed. Dragging Steve back to the car we made our way to Perryfoot Farm.

Our arrival was met with an increase in wind speed and a decrease in air temperature, ideal conditions for a struggle into an unforgiving wetsuit. “Damm, I haven’t forgotten any kit. It’s too late to cop out!”. Andy’s curiosity got the better of him - he just had to know why I was wearing an oversuit as well as a wetsuit, well, it needed a good WASH.

P8 or Jackpot’s main entrance is a small shaft which takes a streamway, such that you get totally soaked entering the cave. The flow on this occasion was about middling.

Following the stream we made our way, via “Idiots Leap” (moist) to the top of the first

pitch. Here we met Alan Bennett (Stafford Speleo) exiting. A quick “hallo” and then an abseil down through the waterfall. Andy doesn’t seem over impressed with the wet bits, but then he hasn’t got a nice oversuit, **WITH A HOOD!**

The trip down to the main sump and Old Mans Rift was uneventful, but take care on the fixed ladder, it isn’t any more!

Steve was able to demonstrate the need for cowtails in the Rift, when he took a very close look at a sixty foot drop back into the stream-way. The mud makes every hand and foothold treacherous when descending - so its a good idea to clip into the fixed line on the way down.

None of us felt keen enough to go through the crawls for the round trip, so we soon made our way back to the ladder pitch. Once again, the water managed to numb all the parts that other waterfalls couldn’t reach (and Heineken have never heard of). However, a clean exit was made by all, including my oversuit.

Alan Robinson

Oxlow Mine Closed “Keep Out”

The land owner at Oxlow has closed his land to all cavers. This effectively means that Oxlow Mine, Maskhill Mine or Mountbatten Pot, and Nettle Pot are “off limits”.

Mr. Rowlands, the land owner has taken this step because of a series of incidents, due to the bad behaviour of cavers. He is due to enter negotiations with the Derbyshire Caving Association sometime in June to discuss the re-opening of his land.

Thus you are asked to stay away from his land and not to bother him until the matter has been resolved, as he has stated that the ban will be extended if any trespassing occurs.

One likely outcome will be that the 25p per head access cost will be considerably increased.

The DCA have also suggested cavers should not enter Oxlow via Giants, as in the event of a rescue, exit would have to be through Oxlow.

South Shropshire

2 & 10/2/90

Members present: (2/2/90) Kim Dempsey, Steve Holding, Alan Robinson, Andy Yapp. (10/2/90) S.H., A.R, A. Y. and Mike Moore.

We visited a number of mine sites on the 2nd February. A mine was visited which we subsequently believed to be Calcot Mine, but the description did not correspond well with Account No. 12. Powis Shaft, Cliff dale Mine was visited and the top confirmed to be open, although Account No. 12 indicates that it is probably blocked a short distance down. The Air Shaft at Ladywell Mine was found to be open and appeared to be clear for a considerable distance.

Finally Burgam Mine was visited, the various shafts identified and the longest of the roadside levels entered - there were various signs of use by Squilver Centre (cryptic messages) and there was noticeably less wooden supports than when visited by Steve four of five years ago.

On the 10th February Burgam Mine was revisited. The main purpose was to inspect a shaft with no record of descent. Andy descended it on a ladder and after squeezing through a small space about 20 feet down communication became near impossible (a classic site for the radio's).

Eventually Andy called for a fourth ladder and Alan abseiled down to join him. They descended over

clear infill, with little space, down to a distinct level which was explored for a short distance until further progress was prevented by a 30 foot winze. After exiting the shaft, an effort was made to fence it.

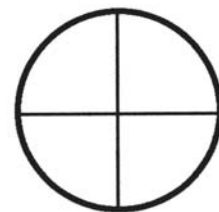
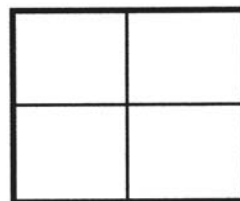
While Andy and Alan were underground a party from Squilver appeared and some descended a short shaft with wood stemples, our party followed them down some time later and found a short, branched level. Mike was far from impressed by the "rope" left hanging down the shaft, an encouragement to the uninitiated to try out the trip for themselves!

Steve Holding

Burgam Survey

There seems to be a consensus of opinion amongst Club Members that if we are ever called out to a real rescue, it may well be here. Thus it would be a good idea if more Club trips were arranged to Burgam, so more members are aware of the mine. Ivor Brown in his "News Round-Up" has noted that no proper survey of the underground workings here can be found - I think we should do one, even if its only a rough compass and tape survey. Then in a rescue situation we would be in a much better position for planning our response.

Kelvin



"Now did Neal say the other stope was through the SQUARE window or through the ROUND window?"

South Shropshire 2

22/4/90

Mike Moore and myself visited a number of mine sites as part of the exercise in updating Account No. 12.

Nipstone Level

After clearing away some of the stones from the entrance the level was entered and investigated. The position and description of this level appear to correspond with the description in Account 12. (under "Bog Mine") for "Nipstone Adit" other than the fact that it has not collapsed and does not pass under a road!

The level is 300 to 400 ft. long, the later part being half back filled. At the end of the level there is a stope with an iron pipe protruding up; water could be seen approximately 30 feet down, but this was not descended. If this is the adit described in Account 12, then this winze would in fact be the top of a stope with reported varying water level.

Roof signatures for "D.Bick" and "G.Hall", dated 1958 were observed at the end of the level. There were no obviously productive workings, but in a very short branch a bat was unfortunately disturbed.

As this level is just off the map being used the accurate location still needs checking.

Snailbeach

A search of the woods at the top of the hill failed to reveal the site of the shafts reported to be there, but it was a pleasant walk.

Cothercott and Wilderley

The Account 12 description of these mines appear to still be valid, although the line of the tramway could not be determined. Wilderley Mine was very obvious, but with an excessive amount of scrap metal blocking any access.

Near the road the machine footings and millstones are clearly visible and there is much evidence of past workings, but no open entrances. On the back side of the hill open workings were visible, but not entered on this trip.

Any further information on any of these workings would be appreciated.

Steve Holding

News Round-Up 3

by Kelvin Lake

Home Bank Chert Mine

The Derbyshire Caving Association have circulated details of the new arrangements for access to this mine.

At weekends or when the Smiths Runners Works are closed, call on Mr. Lawrence Moseley at 1 New Lumford, Bakewell (his house is the first "semi" past Lumford Cottages). If you are very late returning or if you are after the works closing time during the week, put the key through the letterbox of the green and black shed near the weighbridge.

Rhiwbach Slate Mine

NAMHO have received notification that this slate mine at Blaenan Ffestiniog is due to be gated to prevent access.

The entrance is on Forestry Commission land and they are concerned about possible damage, due to forced entry, to the new gate.

Clubs are asked to ensure they do **NOT** damage such gates and enter with the land owners permission.

News Round-Up 4

by Kelvin Lake

Caving Tragedies

Phillip Tamms of the Bangor University College regrettably drowned in Kingsdale Master Cave while going to summon help for another member of his party, who had got into "SRT" difficulties. It appears that Phillip fell 20ft. and landed face down in a stream.

Although the party was 12 strong, it seems as if he was unaccompanied at the time. Members are reminded that when numbers permit at least 2 persons should go out to seek help.

Stoney Middleton

A body found in a cave at Stoney Middleton is believed to be that of Michael Boulton, aged 16, who disappeared 13 months ago. Derbyshire C.R.O. was called in at the time to help Police search for Michael in caves around the Eyam area, but without any success.

The body was found in a cavern at the end of a long crawl. It is known that Michael had been caving with the scouts and thoroughly enjoyed it.

It is a great pity that his enthusiasm was not directed towards a local caving club - perhaps this highlights a need for Caving and Mining Clubs to establish links with Scouting organisations, to help educate younger people into the dangers of caving without the proper equipment.

What Are We In?

The S.C.M.C. are members of the following "bodies"/organisations: -

The Cambrian Caving Council (CCC)
The National Caving Association (through membership of the CCC)
The National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAMHO)
Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation
British Cave Rescue Council

What Are We In? continued

We have also applied to be associates of:-
The Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC)

- I think that's the lot but I couldn't decode Mr. Moores drunken, curry stained scrawl.

Kelvin

Brecon Beacons

Caves in the area of the Black Mountain are now the responsibility of the Brecon Beacons National Park. As some caves are within the public water supply catchment area, access to these caves will in future be restricted, if not banned. This is largely due to increasingly complex water legislation.

Accordingly cave exploration on land owned by the B.B.N.P. will in future be controlled by a Permit System. This system will be overseen by the Cambrian Caving Council.

Bolt Failures

Yorkshire caves have seen a spate of bolt and anchor failures - one of which caused serious spinal injuries to the caver concerned, due to shock loading, even though his second backup belay held. Now you see why a second belay is so important.

In some of the cases the failure was due to stripped threads in the anchor, in others the rock failed with a chunk coming away still containing the anchor. A few long standing natural belays have also failed recently.

The NCA equipment committee are looking into possibilities of a better type of artificial belay.

While we are on the subject Neal reports that the 2 bolts he put in, in the Bipod Shaft have "gone" along with a huge chunk of rock !

Club Publications and Videos

Publication Stock Clearance

All publications must GO at ridiculous knock down prices!!

Account No.8 "Survey of Llanymynech 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 (90 feet straight down!) without flinching - well almost.

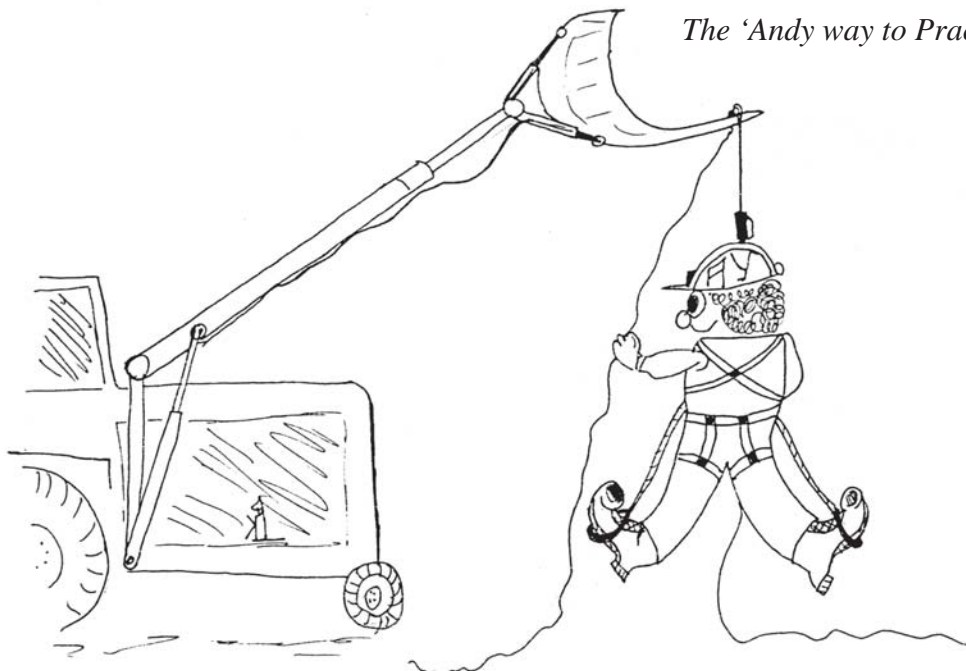
Complete with Library case and designer label for **£5.00 + £1.20 p & p.**

A Tour of Clive Copper Mine

Edwin Thorpe brings all his charm and talents to bear as he guides a "newcomer" to the mine around its assorted features. Coupled with dynamic computer graphics a brief insight into Clive Mine's development and history is possible, as Edwin explains (all without the aid of a script!!).

Complete with library case:
£9.50 + £1.20 p & p.

All items available from Mike Moore (see back page for address)



The 'Andy way to Practice Prussiking

N.T. Gower Caves Advisory Group

This group was created in 1987 to manage and preserve the caves and cave sediments of the Gower which are of exceptional geological, geomorphological and archaeological importance.

A survey of cave records for the area between Worm's Head and Port Eynon has just been completed along with the classification of the known caves.

Those of you familiar with the area, might like to know that the original 4 cave categories have been increased to 5, which are:-

- A. Of no apparent interest to cavers
- B. Of no archaeological interest
- C. Of archaeological importance - no digging allowed
- D. Of unknown archaeological importance - needs further survey
- E. Of interest to cavers seeking extensions by digging.

The Cambrian Caving Council have published the results of the survey, which lists 58 caves and includes the cave name (where known), its map reference and categorisation.

The C.C.C. and the G.C.A.G, stress that digging cannot automatically take place in caves that are listed as "BE".

Most of the area is an S.S.S.I. as well as parts being a Nature Reserve and owned either by the National Trust or Glamorgan Wildlife Trust.

The G.C.A.G. would like the ban on digging to continue for those caves classed as "D" until detailed surveys of the sediments have been made.

The survey is due to be extended eastwards to The Mumbles, more details later.

Mining USA

Hopefully accompanying this issue is an "insert" produced by Pete Etchells about some of the mine sites he visited recently in the USA. Pete has produced this separately because he wanted to include photographs of some sites.

If the "insert" is not with this issue **DON'T PANIC** - you will get it with the Autumn issue.

While we are on the subject of the USA, I was recently given a leaflet about Bingham Canyon Mine in Utah. This mine claims to be the world's first open-pit copper mine!

Started in 1906 by the Utah Copper Company and the Boston Consolidated Mining Company, the

mine was working very low grade ore for its day - 2% copper.

The photographs of the present day "Open-pit" are quite impressive, however if I am not mistaken open-cast mining took place a long time before 1906 - what about the surface workings at Parys Mountain?

There are several, typically American claims about Bingham eg: "The World's Tallest Building, the Sears Tower, 1454 feet tall, would reach only half way up the side of the mine. The Eiffel Tower at 984 feet, only one fifth of the way up the side of the mine." - Try your maths out on that one !!

More about this mine, in a later issue....

Reviews

BOOKS

Race Against Time

Lyon Books, 208 pages.

This book sets out to be a potted history of the Cave Rescue Organisation, tracing its origins from the 1930's up to the present day.

Written by Jim Eyre and John Frankland, two experienced and long serving members of the C.R.O. it provides a fascinating insight into the early years of cave exploration in Yorkshire as well as fulfilling its intended aims.

The selection of "incidents" covered in the book is suitably varied to maintain your interest throughout. I found it very gripping, and almost impossible to put down at times.

The inclusion of photographs of early cave explorations, and the clothing of the participants in the pictures really brings home to you the efforts that went into caving not so many years ago - compared to the pioneers we have a really easy time, what with drysuits, wetsuits, metal ladders, modern nylon ropes etc.

No overall comments are made about the accidents dealt with, they are treated in a very detached way. However one thing that struck me, was that a large proportion of accidents seemed to be attributable to the lack of lifelines on ladder pitches. The Neal Moss tragedy, that occurred in Derbyshire is a classic example. The argument going that the shaft was too small for him to fall off the ladder - in the event it was too small for him to climb it as well!

This book is a must and at £9.95 well worth it, although I don't know how long the flimsy binding will last with continual reading.

Kelvin

This Issue of "**Below**" has been sponsored by

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