

## AGM Changes

As a result of the AGM held at the "Last Inn" at the beginning of October, various changes have taken place in the Club Committee.

Alan Taylor, Malcom, Bob, Neal, and Mike Moore stay on in their posts of President, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Tackle Officer and Membership Services respectively, but Steve Holding has been "promoted" to Chairman and Adrian Pearce joins the Committee as Secretary.

I am sure other members would join with me in thanking Alan Robinson for all his efforts as Chairman on the Clubs behalf.

However we have not lost his skills, he was elected to the Post of "Training Officer" and plans a series of training exercises both on the Madeley Wall and elsewhere - so please support Club Training sessions, none of us are perfect (yet), but practice is supposed to get you there!

## Tarif Re-adjustment

A slight rise in membership charges was also voted in at the AGM, Full membership rises to £14, Joint membership £20, Associate £6 and Probationary membership becomes £7.

It was felt that a little rise now was better than a big rise at some later date.

The Club has made the news on several occasions in the past few months:

## Newspapers

A half page feature on a trip to Huglith appeared in the Shropshire Star on the 14th July. Written by Richard Haynes, who went underground as part of the NAMHO Field meet, the article features a full frontal picture of Nick Southwick beside an Ore-chute.

## Radio

The Club was also mentioned on radio Shropshire, during the a feature on a new database developed by the Library Service which holds details on local societies. A test of the database was to find a "potholing" Club - guess which was the only Club to appear!

## TV

Finally Andy Yapp was interviewed as part of a new series of "Midlands Report", a local programme that went out on BBC2 on Thursday 8th October,

## Field Meet

I think all Club members involved in the NAMHO Field Meet deserve to give themselves a "pat" on the back for their efforts in making the meeting a success.

Special thanks to Adrian for co-ordinating everything, and ensuring everyone knew what they had to do. We made a lot of new friends from the event, most people went away happy, even those with curry burns!

## In the News

about industrial pollution (mine pollution in particular), unfortunately because Andy was "pro" mining, and did not say what a nasty place Snailbeach was with all its industrial pollution, it would seem that his piece was edited out.

Snailbeach white tips were also featured in the programme along with some video footage of Alan Robinson wading along "New Roberts" level, taken by I.A. Recordings - the Club received a mention in the end credits for this.

## Shirts

To crown it all the new Club T-shirts and Sweat shirts are now available. Stocks are limited, but a repeat order is possible - so if you have not already purchased a garment and wish to do so, make sure you pass any particular orders/requirements on to me, so you don't miss out on the type of shirt you want.

*Kelvin Lake*

## End of the Line

Earth Matters (an environmental magazine) has reported that the last mouse-eared bat in Britain has died. It is claimed that its extinction marks the first mammal to disappear in the country since the wolf.

At the rate that underground cavities are being filled (including known bat habitats), it probably won't be long before we loose a few more like the Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats.

## Trips Round-up by Steve Holding

### Snailbeach: 11/7/92

**Members present:** Stuart Tomlins, Bob Savage, Cory Jones (Prospective Member), Steve Holding and 3 members of Orpheus Caving Club.

One of the Orpheus members only descended as far as the top of the Sand Slope, the rest of the party descended as far as the top of the Ore-chute. At this point, Stuart and Bob opted to ascend the stope up towards Bipod Shaft, while the remainder descended to the Forty Yard Level.

While the Orpheus members generally explored the level, Cory and myself proceeded towards Black Tom Shaft and examined the rise previously observed, by climbing on one another!.

It is clear that there is potential for pushing this route upwards.

### Snailbeach: 1/8/92

**Members present:** Colin and Liz Armfield, Neal Rushton, Cory Jones (Prospective Member), Alan Robinson, Vicky Gamblin, Steve Holding and 3 members of Hereford Caving Club.

Colin, Liz, Neal, Cory and myself descended to the 112 yard Level where the water level was found to be low enough to permit some exploration.

We all proceeded in the direction back towards the main stoping and then

followed the branch to the base of Chapel Shaft. The base of the shaft was found to be a solid pillar of repulsive rubbish; the whole level had a bad smell and the oxygen level appeared to be a bit low (there is reason to question the meter reading).

The level in the direction of Yew Tree Level was accessible, but not explored on this occasion.

The trip was reasonably uneventful, but Cory was slightly concerned when water suddenly went deeper near the main stoping and was a bit more alarmed when he was told that it was about 450 yards deep. His composure was not helped by a bit of the roof dropping in the water just behind him.

The other group entered the mine somewhat later than ourselves. Alan and 2 of the Hereford visitors descended to the Ninety Yard Level, while Vicky and the other Hereford visitor returned to the surface a bit earlier.

### Huglith: 2/8/92

**Members present:** Alan Robinson, Vicky Gamblin, Steve Holding and 2 members of Hereford Caving Club.

Before entering the mine, Cathy Turtle was met as she went to examine nesting boxes in the woods. We had a brief discussion over the situation at Snailbeach and she was interested in

knowing what we knew about changes to the Shooting Rights at Huglith.

The party entered Badger Level and descended the winze to the main tramway level. While the others were busy photographing the cave pearls and the ore-chute, I placed a couple of bolts to allow descent below the rails at the far end of the level.

Where the rails cross a depression of about 12 feet there is a hole coming back under the main level; some gardening was required to make the squeeze through the hole safe.

When through the hole, a further descent of 20 feet lead to a shelf produced from a collapse. From this vantage point it became clear that there is extensive stoping below the main level. It was possible to see a considerable distance, with no far wall and it was possible to see down quite a long way.

We found it quite easy to communicate with the main level via the hole in the floor some distance away. It was obvious that the floor to the level must be fairly thin. The vein was quite distinct at this point.

There is clear potential for further descent via this route or via the hole in the level's floor. In the past the water has been visible below this hole, but that was not the case during this visit.

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## Welsh Mines Preservation Trust

This newly formed Trust (incorporated during the Summer) is dedicated to the preservation of the mining heritage of Wales and bordering counties.

The Trustees are drawn from specialised members of the Welsh Mines Society - a long established body devoted to the history and archaeology of mines and mining.

The aims of the Trust include the raising of funds to implement repairs and consolidate structures. Where possible the final aim will be to make sites

accessible to the public, to enable a proper appreciation of their historical significance and to ensure the maintenance of their fabric in the long term.

One project they are looking at in Shropshire is the repair of the White Grit engine house - initially on a temporary basis to stop it falling down, but eventually to obtain substantial grants to make a proper repair.

If you are interested in joining the Trust or helping out with repair work,

membership is £3 (extra donations will not be refused).

The Trust has a limited liability, so nobody will be responsible for more than £1 if things go wrong.

More details from:

**The Hon. Sec. J.S. Bennett,  
7 St. John's Way, Cuddington,  
Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2LX.**

Tel: 0606-889325

or contact SCMC member:

**Colin Armfield.**

## MineCam & Ramsdens Shaft

After a successful examination of Ramsdens shaft, using the MineCam Mark III, on what was an exceptionally wet day, Pete Eggleston was so pleased with how the camera worked that he completely pulled it apart and immediately started on his next development stage - MineCam IV.

This one is even more compact than the Mk.III (which if you saw it was no more than 12" long and 6" wide!).

The new Mk.IV will have/has extra features which Pete is keeping secret at the moment, until he has built and tested them, but I can tell you that it will be fully movable - ie: there is a pan and tilt control, and the new camera being used is much more sensitive than any of the older versions.

pipe or electric cable conduit), at various points there are remains of chains and support brackets for compressed air pipes.

The only major items in the shaft, are two timber balks across the shaft, (which the camera hit head on!) possibly the remains of a platform. These obstruct the direct route down the shaft from the manhole cover at surface and it was necessary to "swing" the camera around to get past them.

An interesting feature near these timbers is a broken out section of wall, which reveals a small level (brick or block lined) complete with timber props.

The entrance of the level into the shaft was obviously made after the shaft was lined.

## Russian Sub

Obviously Pete Eggleston's development work on his MineCam has reached foreign parts, not to be left out the Russians have developed a miniature remote controlled camera to investigate flooded underground structures.

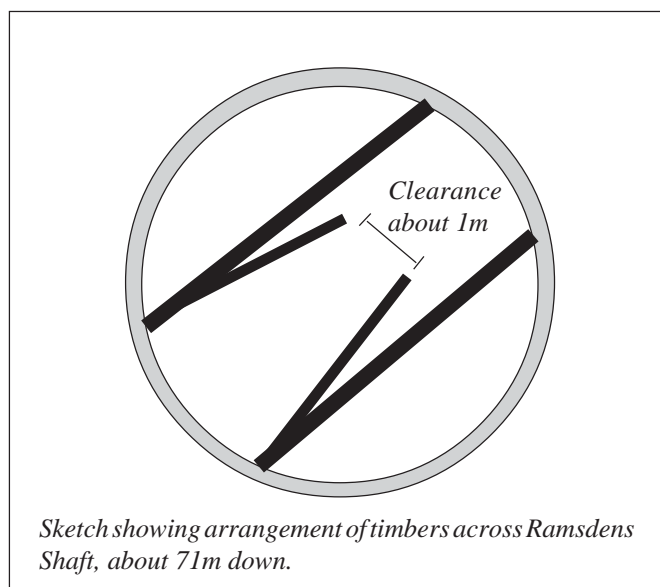
The unit specifically built to explore a flooded bunker in the Ukraine, once used by Hitler is claimed to be the size of champagne bottle and is equipped with sonar and video camera.

However I expect the Russians have spent rather a lot of money developing their machine, compared to Petes work using a mixture of second-hand, scrap and donated parts.

## Training Video

The Club has recently purchased a copy of a new training video called "Cave Safe", produced by Andy Sparrow and Third Eye Films of Bristol (a professional video production company run by Andy Sparrow and cameraman Peter Issacs), this tape is the first of 3 caver training films in production.

The video is quite interesting and does show a few interesting ideas, which are worth adopting - I particularly liked the idea of sticking a candle up a survival bag to keep someone warm - this is certainly worth trying on a long rescue or rescue practice when the "victim" is getting cold.



## Ramsdens Shaft

As for Ramsdens shaft, it is a straight, well built shaft. Lined with concrete blocks in the upper sections, changing to brick lower down. Construction rings are visible every 15m or so, with a large amount of water flowing down the walls below the 20m mark.

Little remains of any shaft furniture, apart from what appears to be a pipe/conduit running the full length of the shaft (possibly a high pressure steam

At the 117m mark the main level to the Boat Level is still open, although only just, with the bottom of the shaft full of a mixture of rubbish including barbed wire, pipes, wheelbarrows, cockroaches etc. If some one was to descend they would need to be very careful not to impale themselves on the rubbish or cockroaches.

A question mark still hangs over the strength of the shaft cover, but Ramsdens shaft is still a potential winch testing shaft.

## Gold Video

After this years Annual Dinner, with its talk on gold panning by Ron Callender you might be interested in a new video which has recently been released showing all the modern techniques used in gold prospecting and mining, including a demonstration of panning and sluicing.

The video costs £19.50 and runs for 90 minutes. It is available from **Goldspear (UK) Ltd, PO Box 203, Beaconsfield HP9 2TQ**

# News Round-up 1

## by Ivor Brown

### Geo. Soc.

The Proceedings of the Shropshire Geological Society No.9 (for 1989) have been published. They contain articles on geological research progress in the County over the last 10 years, plus articles on Shropshire Quarries and Ironstone Mining by Ivor Brown.

### Mining Gallery

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum have now opened their Mining and Geology Gallery in the Tile Museum at Jackfield.

It forms an interesting display (can you spot the pit clothes and tools of an early Club Member/Miner of the 1950's in the collection?).

Well worth a visit.

### 40th Anniversary

Ivor Brown celebrated his 40th Anniversary in "Mining and Minerals" on the 5th July 1992, by appearing as principal witness against British Coal at the Public Inquiry into the proposed Sutherland Opencast Site!

### Shortwoods Opencast

An application to extract over 1 million tonnes of coal by opencast methods from an area at The Shortwoods, near Wellington is causing some concern.

This is a very old mining area, workings are shallow and often still accessible. The last private coalmine in Shropshire was here (it closed in 1970).

### Clive Mine

Ove Arup have won the contract to carry out a "feasibility study" into potential problems at Clive Mine. [By the time this issue appears, the Study period, will be almost over].

### IGMT Change

Stuart Smith has resigned as Director of the IGMT. He will be greatly missed.

### Lords Hill Engine House Madeley Wood Visit

Work has now started on the conservation of the large Cornish Engine House on Engine Shaft at Snailbeach. Does anyone have details of what the West Wall looked like before its collapse?

The following is a description of a visit in 1797 to an ironstone and coal mine at Madeley Wood (near Jockey Bank, Ironbridge) just published in "James Plumtree Britain - Journal of a Tourist in the 1790's" edited by Ian Qusby, published by Hutchinson.

### Coalbrookdale N.Z.

In 1860 two prospectors (Haast and Burnett) found an 8ft. coal seam near Waimangaroa in New Zealand. The operation came to be known as the Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge Mines. They closed about 1940. The workings were 2,000 ft. up a mountain and used an 83 chain (1826 yard) long incline, which dropped 1700 ft. and was opened in 1880 - it was destroyed several times by earthquakes.

Only one point is not clear, the boy is said to have slid down the 300ft. rope to bottom and rested to change legs and ease hands. "Easing hands" is well understood by Club Members, but what is "changing legs"?

Perhaps he wore old rag as "leggings" which many miners still did in the 1950's and legs is a corruption of this. Leggings would of course have prevented friction burns.

*"Went to Maid wood (or Bedlam) mine. Walked thro the burning coak, and up by iron road to mouth of the pit. Put on trowsers & smock frock & miner's hat, and tying Rover (his dog), descended, with a boy who came up to accompany me, in a chain fastened to roap & was let down by windlass 100 yards to bottom of pit. Went along the level some way, by iron roads very dirty and stooping. Got into carriage & went to end. The level 400 yards, went in carriage 160 of it. Saw the men at work. candles. A man was killed in mines in March. Came back stooping all way. Shewn a place where they had come to coal. Several different ways to different shafts - 2 kinds of ore or stone: cross stone & penny stone. A mixture makes the best iron. Men work for 2<sup>s</sup>..4<sup>d</sup>. p<sup>r</sup> day or 2<sup>s</sup>..6<sup>d</sup>. Some work by great \*. Men work at night to get the refuse away. Work from 6 in Morn. to 6 in Even.*

*Might have come out foot way but preferred ascending. Ventured to look up & down, & not giddy: going down only looked strait to wall. Glad to get on terra firma again. When up the boy slid down rope to bottom & rested to change legs & ease hands."*

\* great means "task not time", ie: piecework or contractwork.

## A Welsh Weekend by Steve Holding

### Dyfnwgwm: 25/7/92

**Members present:** Colin and Liz Armfield, Cara Alison, Steve Holding, Nick and Rob Southwick, plus their friend John

The first 4 of us entered the main flooded adit and explored down the shaft and along the branch levels. At the same time Nick, Rob and John dug open the low adit in the direction of Castle Rock.

We later joined them and squeezed into this level and after examining the small waterwheel (photograph in Bick's book) and crossing the flooded winze, the remainder of the level was explored in water generally neck deep (on me anyway!).

The levels were found to be quite extensive with a very photogenic large chamber with 5 routes off.

### Bwlchglas and Ystrad Einion: 26/7/92

**Members present:** Colin and Liz Armfield, Cara Alison, Steve Holding, Stewart Walker, Pete Etchells and Phil Amies.

The 4 of us who had stopped overnight were joined by Stewart, Pete and Phil in visiting Bwlchglas.

The upper adit was entered and after descending three fixed ladders, a 70 foot abseil gave access to the

underground headframe and cages. In addition to these cages, there are a number of other mining artefacts and some passageway beyond the cages.

In the outward direction, the level was visible many feet below, but not accessible.

I also entered the main adit. Some distance in there was a squeeze beyond which there was deep water but the level was drafting strongly and this probably connects through to the level observed inside.

Prior to entering the mine, two other individuals were met who were collecting the mineral pyromorphite. One of these recognised me from a visit to Clive when he had come with a Dr. Braithwaite. We later met these 2 mineral collectors again inside the mine.

On leaving the mine, Nick's friend John was met outside the mine and discussions were had with two other persons about to explore neighbouring mines. Stewart left for home and a trip to the States in the morning whilst the rest of the party travelled on to Ystrad Einion.

After an eventful convoy of vehicles up the single track road the whole party entered the adit. The very impressive waterwheel (photo in Bick's book) is only a short distance inside the adit, but there are other parts of the level also worth inspecting.

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### Police Called

After a trip into Agen Allwedd a group of cavers were reported to the local police for "indecent exposure" by a local female resident. The call may not lead to prosecution - possibly just a police caution. While it seems to be the macho thing for cavers to shed their clothes upon reaching the surface, it should be borne in mind that residents or passers-by may not think along the same lines. So be discrete!.

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### Underground Wine Bar

Bachelors Wine Bar in the underground sand mines below London Road, Reigate is to be closed. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council have placed a compulsory purchase order on the bar, as they wish to fill it in as a safety precaution - the bar runs under the road.

Presumably when all mine workings are filled in, the Councils will have to start on peoples cellars!

## News Round-Up 2

### Rescue Thanks

Dave Bowdley, who was recently rescued by the Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group from Slaughter Stream Cave in the Forest of Dean has presented the team with an air compressor, which had been donated by his employers Severn Trent Water.

The compressor had previously been used for servicing water mains in the Gloucester area and will allow power tools to be operated (see lower down).

Some members may remember Dave (a member of Dudley Cave Rescue Team) from our rescue practice held at Clive earlier this year.

Gloucestershire CRG have done quite well this year, in the spring they were donated a 110v drill by Kango Power Tools, to allow them to fit new DMM resin rock anchors (which incidentally proved invaluable in the rescue of Dave Bowdley) and National Freight Carriers (Bedford) aided the group by donating funds to allow them to purchase 2 portable hand-held radios on the S&R frequency.

### Cornish Prints

A series of 26 photographic prints of the main mining districts in Cornwall (dated 1819-1871) have now been made available from the Cornwall Record Office, County Hall, Truro, TR1 3AY.

The prints vary in size from 21" x 20" to 60" x 42" and the cost varies from £7.50 to £20.00 each plus p.&p. and VAT.

### Old Ham

All the entrances to the Old Ham, Lambsquay and Old Bow Iron mines in the Forest of Dean have been closed upon the orders of the Health and Safety Executive. These drastic measures have been taken due to toxic waste being tipped down the New Dunn Shaft.

## Stirchley Tunnel 12/8/92

# BOOKS

**Members present:** Pete Eggleston, Dig Haswell, Steve Holding, Dave Coxhill, Kelvin Lake, Nick Southwick.

After noticing that the bat grill had been pushed down at the entrance to the tunnel a trip was suggested to crawl through the shaft fill and survey the area beyond, to ensure that the rescue records were up to-date.

An eager group made their way to the Stirchley pools car park then walked the short distance to the tunnel portal, only to be greeted by a brick wall, complete with wet mortar!

Having walked the dog past the portal on the Sunday before - when it was still open, it came as a bit of a surprise, to say the least, to find it blocked.

At least we can be sure that we won't need to rescue anyone from there for a while.

Un-daunted, we decided to make a trip to "Nations Pot", after negotiating the duck in the "doorway" series, followed by the squeeze into the "bench by the door", we had an enjoyable and lengthy trip.

The evening was rounded off by a tight crawl home.

*Kelvin Lake*

## Ribden Swallet

A few months ago cavers on a trip down the deep shaft at Ribden Swallet had a nasty experience when the first person to go down passed out on the rope, it is thought due to the lack of oxygen because of the large amount of rubbish being used to fill the shaft.

To remove him quickly, a Transit van was reversed up to the shaft, the spare tail of rope tied to it, then the van driven off !

Luckily the caver recovered near the top of the shaft, and expressed some surprise at what was happening!

## Combe Martin Mines

A 32 page booklet produced by Peter Claughton and published by the Combe Martin Local History Group.

This short booklet gives an account of the history of the silver-lead mines at Combe Martin in Devon from the first documentary evidence in 1292 up to the last working in the 1870's.

The account is not concerned with the actual aspects of ore excavation but covers the development of the various mines and some insight into their working.

If you have not visited the area, there are still quite a few relics visible - in particular a very nice engine house.

The booklet can be obtained from:  
**Peter Claughton, Blaenpant Morfil, Rosebush, Clynderwen, Dyfed, SA66 7RE.**

Cost £1.95 + 0.36 postage.

## Cantabaco Cave

A combined expedition from Bristol Exploration Club and the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines has discovered a magnificent cave along with 4km of passage, making it the Philippines fourth longest system.

The find in the Cantabaco Cave, near the Toledo copper mining region of the Philippines includes excellent stalagmites, stalactites other calcite formations and 2 underground rivers.

## Clearwell Caves

Following problems with vandalism to the entrance of Clearwell and thefts of relics from the mine the access procedures have been tightened up.

The problem came to a head when 3 children had to be rescued from the mine after wandering in and getting lost for 12 hours.

## New Publications

**No. 155** A list of Museums with mining exhibits in Colliery Guardian Guide to the Coalfields 1992.

**No. 156** Years of Hope for a Shropshire Mine (story of the exploration for coal between Telford and South Staffs) in Bulletin P.D.M.H.S. Vol. 11 No.5 Summer 1992.

*Ivor Brown*

## Club Accounts

Don't forget if you are short of any of the recent Club Accounts - we are now up to Account 16 with the recent publication of Dave Coxhill's "Lilleshall and Church Aston", contact Mike Moore, address on back page.

## Salt of the Earth

Salt mining is something we usually think of as happening in Russia, yet just over the border in Cheshire salt has been mined for several centuries.

ICI still operate a rock salt mine at Winsford - which recently had its main winding gear up-grade to the modern style mining "lift".

The Salt Museum at Northwich has recently opened a new mining gallery which tells the story of rock salt mining in Central Cheshire since the discovery of the rock salt beds at Marbury in 1670.

ICI has assisted with the development of this new gallery at the museum, including providing most of the contemporary equipment and some of the early tools. A sizeable financial contribution towards the gallery has also come from the Salt Manufactures Association.

By the end of 1992 the museum hopes to have completed a new visitor centre.

## British Coal Industry

### Mine Closures

By the time this issue of "Below" reaches you, British Coal are expected to announce the closure of a further 20 pits with the loss of 20,000 jobs, with a further 10 colliery closures to follow, leaving a total of just 20 mines in the whole country.

It is predicted that by the end of the decade or even by 1997-98 there will only be 8 mines left.

If the number of pits falls to such a low number, Britain will be a net importer of coal, yet we will actually be sitting on 300 years of coal reserves!

The effects of "cheap" imports and the switch to gas (which British Gas admits has a very short life-span) by the generating companies is signalling the end of the British Coal Industry.

How long will "cheap" imports stay cheap, with a falling pound?

What do we do when the gas runs out - predicted to be 10 years at most.

Once a mine is closed it can't be re-opened, development costs and lead-time for new mines in another 10 years will be so great, nobody will want to make the investment.

Who cares? Nobody with any "clout" or influence it seems.

### Taff Merthyr

The closure of one of the last 3 mines run by British Coal in Wales has been brought forward with the loss of 600 jobs.

Taff Merthyr colliery at Trelewis in Glamorgan will close towards the end of this year - 6 months ahead of schedule.

Miners had put forward a survival plan designed to extend the life of the pit by 5 years, but it has been rejected by British Coal.

Taff Merthyr is of particular interest to Mining Historians. It was sunk in the 1920's, on a compact site and includes a coal washery and 1920's power hall, housing both winding engines and ventilation fan.

### Last in Lancashire

Parkside Colliery near Newton-le-Willows, the last of British Coal's Lancashire pits is to close sometime after March 1993, by which time it will be 'no longer viable'.

The impending closure will mean either redundancy or relocation packages for the colliery's 725 staff, as well as marking the end of a local mining tradition that goes back nearly 500 years.

British Coal has said that "Parkside is no longer capable of providing the level of performance necessary to secure a long term future, with the increasing pressures of market forces".

### Daw Mill

Up to 300 jobs could go to Warwickshires last remaining pit - Daw Mill. The workforce are waiting to hear about a voluntary redundancy package, although there is some hope for a reprieve for the pit. The pit is to close due to the north face of the mine being exhausted.

### Trentham Colliery

It seems almost certain that this "local" pit (Stoke-on-Trent) is to close, possibly by Christmas.

The Clay Colliery Company has converted an ex-US Army bus to transport its employees around the Symon opencast site at Horsehay, Telford. The 10 year old International Bus seats 45, and has been converted by the company's own mechanics.

Those members that perhaps visited the Symon site on its open day in

## News Round-Up 3

### Slate Jobs Go

The Penrhyn Slate Quarry (reputed to be the largest in the world) has announced 70 job losses. The quarry which makes roof slates, employs 20% of the male workforce in the area.

These job losses from a workforce of 350 will be a huge blow to the area.

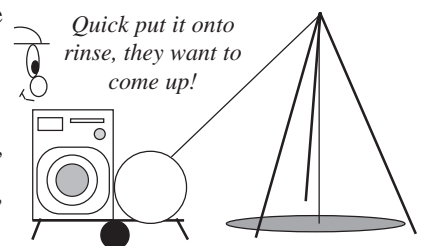
The Managing Director is said to be upset by the redundancies, but the slump in the building trade with its loss of orders and the floating pound which has pushed the price of spares for machinery up by 15% is to blame.

### Winch Warning

Various Clubs which operate winches for underground trips have discovered that it is **NOT** possible to insure their winches as man-riding devices - they can be insured and tested as lifting machines only.

The B.C.R.A. only covers winches for "third party" insurance, provided they are not man-riding.

The NAMHO leaflet on "General Guidance on Mines and Quarries Legislation" states no members of the public should be carried on winches at any time.



### US Army Bus

September, will have seen the bus along with an impressive range of excavators and other equipment.

Of particular interest was the open cast area itself (60m deep) with a coal horizon swept clean prior to excavating, revealing old mine workings with a few relics (although the relics were actually found elsewhere on the site).

## News Round-Up 4

### Mining Heritage

In a previous issue of "Below" mention was made of an emergency meeting being called by amongst others NAMHO, to discuss the preservation of Coal Mining records. This conference was held at Preston on 13th May.

While various individuals or organisations are working on preserving something of our coal industry, the main feature to emerge from the conference was the need for urgency in any recording or preservation work (as artefacts and records are disappearing so fast), coupled with a need for good local contacts within British Coal in the absence of any National policy.

Unfortunately this need does not seem to get through to British Coal, who have a general hostile, or could not be bothered attitude to requests for recording work at certain mines.

### Porth-Yr-Ogof

Following the recent death of a Lance Corporal from the Signal Corps in the resurgence pool in Porth-Yr-Ogof, and since warning signs are still being ignored efforts are being made to place a permanent 10mm diameter stainless steel handrail alongside the pool.

It appears that the Lance Corporal was not wearing a wetsuit or any form of flotation aid and attempted to swim out of the pool.

It is now claimed that Porth-Yr-Ogof is Britain's most dangerous cave, with 10 fatalities so far!

### Ogof Heseop Alyn

A recent pollution incident has occurred in O.H.A. Members of the North Wales Caving Club detected a strong smell of diesel oil plus an oily film on the water and other surfaces. The Club informed the National Rivers Authority but they did not seem to be overly bothered about the situation.

### Mine Leadership Scheme

The Mines Inspectorate, NAMHO and the NCA have agreed the guidelines for the introduction of a Mine Leadership Assessment scheme for leaders of novices from Outdoor Pursuit Centres, schools etc..

It is stressed that the the scheme does **NOT** apply to clubs within NAMHO and the NCA either for their own exploration or for the training of their own novices.

If you wished to become an "approved" Cave Leader, the NCA offers 2 training schemes:- Cave Instructor's Certificate (CIC) and a Local Cave Leadership Assessment (LCLA).

The former is aimed at those who are

involved in introducing others to caving, teaching technical skills to others and instructing in a variety of caves throughout Britain at different technical levels.

While the LCLA is intended for cave leaders undertaking limited objectives within a single caving region - it is designed as a report on the competence of cave leaders who take responsibility for others underground, for the benefit of employers or other responsible bodies.

It is the LCLA which is due to be replaced by the new *Local Cave & Mine Leadership Assessment (LCMLA)* scheme, hopefully by the end of 1993.

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## Roman Lead Works at Linley Hall?

A passage in the book "The Cornovii" by G. Webster (1975) describes some excavations made at Linley Hall in 1856. They uncovered Roman remains, some of which could not be adequately explained at the time.

*"A site which could be associated with the mines is that found in the grounds of Linley Hall in 1856. The structures recorded by Wright are quite extraordinary and difficult to interpret. They appear to extend over an area of about twelve acres with extensive and complicated earthworks in places but only parts of the southern end of the site were investigated."*

*The remains consisted of two different massive structural elements at an angle to each other, such that one could hardly imagine they could be contemporary. The westernmost of these includes a wall, said to be almost 4m thick, which seems to be a boundary wall enclosing a vast gravelled area, including the site of the present hall.*

*The other buildings, at an angle to*

*this, are even more difficult to explain. There is a small block of three heated rooms, each about 3m square but without any sign of a praefurnium [stoking house of a bath house].*

*On the east side is a well-built drain bordered by what appears to have been a channel formed of curiously constructed flue tiles.*

*On the other side of the heated block is an aqueduct consisting of a concrete channel on a stone wall, traced 260m to the north to a point beyond the hall. The aqueduct runs parallel to and by the side of the River West Onny, suggesting that the river levels were too variable for a reliable and constant flow or that the head of water was a major factor. The fall of about 30m could have provided power for a system of water wheels for grinding and/or a trip hammer for crushing the ore.*

*There is an open channel at the top end which is wide enough to have been a canal for narrow barges and higher up is a by-pass and a basin.*



## Video Tapes

### 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 label for £9.95. (CLUB price).

### A Tour of Clive Mine

Edwin Thorpe brings all his charm and talents to bear as he guides a "newcomer", to this threatened 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 designer library case and matching label. £14.95.

### Linley Hall cont..

*Beyond this the channel narrows to become a leat taking water from the river.*

*The heated block of three rooms, connected with the aqueduct and drainage system, seems to be associated with some industrial process and is probably part of a larger and more elaborate arrangement. The nearest mines considered to be of Roman origin are three miles away but there are shafts of unknown date in the hills above the hall.*

*Although the site would seem to be a fine choice as an administrative centre with the offices and residence of the procurator, some processing could also have been carried out here."*

Wright, T. (1888) "Roman Mining Operations in Shropshire & North Wales", Trans. Shropshire Arch. Society, xi, 272

Adrian Pearce

### Snailbeach

This tapes needs no introduction, since it's launch it has proved very popular, particularly with the inhabitants of Snailbeach - I can't think why !!

Providing a "potted" history of the development of Snailbeach Mine, it features unique underground footage of Club explorations, and is superbly supported by Peter Eggleston's computer graphics. Price: £14.95 (including library case & label).

### Snailbeach:-

#### The Final Frontier

This **compiation** tape (as shown at the 1990 Annual Dinner) follows the exploration of Snailbeach by Club members down as far as "Robert's Level". Price (with library case): £11.05



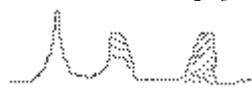
### Mineral Spot

#### Hematite - Ferric Oxide

The major ore of iron. Large deposits were laid down as sediments, then altered by ground water and sometimes metamorphism. Occurs in 3 major forms:-

1. *Red Hematite* or *Kidney Ore*, a very dark ore, often found in columnar or radiating masses and fibrous clusters. Named because of its shape. In Britain it was notably mined around Hodbarrow in Cumbria.
2. *Specular Hematite*, occurs as brilliant black thick or thin tabular crystals, commonly foliated.
3. *Ocherous* or *Earthy Hematite*, red or yellowish with a dull, earthy appearance. Occasionally oolitic (in small round grains cemented together). It's usually mixed with clays and sands.

Common chemical formula:  $Fe_2O_3$



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## Club Publications

Please note all prices quoted are those to Club Members only, non-members pay slightly more.

### Account No.12

*A Survey of the Metal Mines of South Shropshire*

This publication is a revised and updated version by Steve Holding, taking into account a lot of the recent changes to the mine sites in South Shropshire.

65 pages, plus 17 maps/plans (which are legable this time!). Club price £3

### Account No.14

*The Mines of Llanymynech Hill*

Originally written by Dave Adams, as Account No.8, this version has been edited/re-written by Adrian Pearce and includes reference to recent discoveries at ancient mine site, plus 16 B\W photographic plates, and more..

Club price: £3

### Account No.15

*Snailbeach Recent Explorations*

A new publication written by Steve Holding, charting the Club's activities in exploring Snailbeach over the past few years.

It includes sketch map sections of the areas around and below Chapel shaft and "Sheep" shaft etc..

Club price: £3

### Account No.16

*The Mines of Lilleshall and Church Aston, Shropshire*

Written by David Coxhill, this informative account, drawing heavily on David's Geology background it brings up to-date an old Club account originally written by Dave Adams.

Club price: £3

### 6 Mining Sketches

From the 'pen' of Malcom Newton. These drawings need **NO** explanation, just buy them! Club price: £5

*All tapes and publications are available from the Club, Via Mike Moore (address on back page)*

## Club Officers

## Diary Dates 1993

**President :**  
Alan Taylor

**Treasurer :**  
Bob Taylor

**23-26 April:** NAMHO '93 Conference,  
Douglas, Isle of Man.

**Chairman:**  
Alan Robinson

**Membership Services  
Officer:**  
Mike Moore

### NAMHO 1993

If you are interested in going to the Isle of Man for the 1993 Conference (23rd to 26th April), it is being held at the Manx Museum, Douglas and will be hosted by the Laxey Mines Research Group.

**Vice Chairman :**  
Malcolm Newton

**Tackle & Rescue Officer :**  
Neal Rushton

There are numerous mining relics on the Isle of Man, some members made the trip there the other year and were rewarded with a visit to the 'preserved' Hydraulic man engine at Laxey Mine.

**Secretary :**  
Steve Holding

**'Below' Editor :**  
Kelvin Lake

If you have not been to the island before it is certainly worth taking the opportunity now.

If you are thinking of camping a word of warning: trailer caravans are not allowed on the island, however self-propelled motor caravans and tenting campers are welcome. The Club does have a list of camp sites and prices if you are interested.

Mike Moore will have more details on the conference, so please contact him.

