

Radon Peril ?

The Atomic Energy Authority journal "Atom" has recently published an article detailing the risk that potholers, mine explorers, mineral collectors, and bat researchers are taking when they venture underground, other 'august' journals such as "New Scientist" and "The Independant" have also joined in the fray with major articles on the subject.

West Country Levels

The Devon and Cornwall Prospecting Society (DCPS) have recently surveyed the radon levels in 37 mines and found levels as high as a million becquerels per cubic metre. This compares with the government set "action level" for homes of 200 Bq per cubic metre.

Safety Regs.

While most of us who go underground, do so for fun and are not covered by Health and Safety regulation, it should be realised that teachers or other leaders taking groups underground are subject the regulations.

It has been suggested that cavers should not enter mines and caves with radon levels more than 100,000 Bq per cubic metre, without breathing apparatus (but how do you know?).

However the DCPS are at pains to point out that even in a mine with radon levels as high as 2,500,000 Bq per cubic metre, the risk of fatal cancer from 1 hours exposure is only the same as

smoking about 300 cigarettes.

People at risk would be those engaged in lengthy underground digs lasting several days.

The Conclusion

Without getting in to technical figures and exposure rates/levels, the upshot of the argument is that if people find smoking a tolerable risk, then they will probably be prepared to accept the cancer risk involved, even in the highest radon mines.

Remember the high readings were only found in a few sites, and even then some days the levels were lower - so don't say I've put you off the Cornish trip.

Pant Mawr Accident

The Dudley and Birmingham Rescue teams had chance to put the skills learnt at the February Rescue Practice to good use sooner than they expected when on a visit to Pant Mawr Pot.

While they were there, a girl at the bottom of the 50' entrance pitch was just about to climb out, when her lifeline fouled on a scaffold pole abandoned at the pitch head. The rope dislodged the 8' pole causing it to fall down the shaft, luckily it bounced off the shaft sides a couple of times so that it hit the girl side on, on the back of the head.

Aided by a member of South Wales

CRO who also happened to be in the pot, the Dudley and Birmingham teams managed to affect a rescue. Initial reports suggest that the girl escaped with a few lacerations, bruising and a bad headache - it just goes to show, how important a good helmet is.

Rumours about the land around the Pot being sold off are not true, so access to the pot is as normal, however if you do visit the area, you should be aware that the army still use the moors around Pant Mawr for training so if you meet any army personnel or the gamekeeper, just explain where you are going.

Bill Little

Club Members will be sad to hear, that Bill Little of South Wales CC passed away on Boxing Day at Neath General Hospital, aged 73. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Elsie.

Bill was one of the pioneering stalwarts in South Wales, responsible for and involved in, a number of important finds in OFD and Dan-Yr-Ogof. He began caving back in 1946 and although a shade slower in recent years he was still venturing underground.

Bill can rightly be described as one of cavings' "characters", and the scene will be poorer without him.

Recent Caving Trips by Alan Robinson

Can it be a 'renaissance' in caving for the Club with regular outings into those 'natural' holes in the ground. Anyway here's a round-up of some of the recent trips to not one, not two but all four caving areas in the last month or so.

6-7th December

Vicky and myself managed to squeeze in a jaunt up to the Dales just before Christmas. It was a pretty wet weekend, so we contented ourselves with a short trip into King Pot on the Saturday.

This is supposed to be a dryish cave but the first pitch was quite sporting with all the rain. Fortunately you can just about climb the pitch in one breath!

We only went as far as the tight traverses after the second pitch, but it is a definite advantage to be very slim in this section.

The evening was spent with the Leicester Poly C.C as they celebrated the Christmas festivities, anything to escape having to buy Xmas presents.

Sunday was an even shorter trip with an invigorating splash through Lower Long Churn cave, down Dolly Tubs and as far as the Bridge in Alum Pot.

This must rate as one of the busiest caves in Yorkshire - its the first time I've ever seen a caving club turn up in a coach. Spent lots of money at Ingelsport too - so I can retire my old overcoat to the grottiest of digs.

16-17th January

The middle of January saw us down to the Mendips for a Swildon's Round Trip, through the ducks (bailed sumps) and returning back with an immersion in Sump One.

Exiting was more interesting with two lamp failures and getting lost around the junction of the Dry and Wet ways.

Sunday saw us over at Charterhouse

and a trip into G.B Cave. This is a very pleasant cave with a nice streamway, waterfalls and ideal for a photo trip.

Anybody interested? Steve Holding, Corey and Cara had a trip there in the previous month, and Steve seems quite keen for a return trip.

6th February

Next came a trip to Derbyshire and a big turnout for a Giant's Round Trip.

The group included Colin & Liz, Corey & Amanda, Jonathen Dyer, Iain Whittaker, John Howley and myself. We bumped into some of the Dudley lads off on a trip to Geology Pot and the East Canal. Everybody had lots of fun and I'm sure Liz will tell (if not show you) where she managed to get bruises.

This was only Colin and Liz's second caving trip ever. We'll have to see if they are to be sometime converts from Welsh Mines.

A trip afterwards to Caving Supplies saw the ever resourceful 'Meko' extracting pound notes from Phil Brown in exchange for SCMC publications. Looks like the printing presses will be working overtime again as club sales hit the big time.

13-14th February

For once a dry weekend, all be it 'a little misty'. And a trip to Marble Steps, after a comfortable night in one of Mrs Moffat's caravans. The 'mist'

was infact a thick fog and the walk to the cave took us two attempts and the best part of an hour, instead of the usual fifteen minutes.

Eventually, Val & Dennis Jackson, Vicky, Steve Holding, Pete Etchells and myself reached the entrance. This is normally easily seen as a clump of trees from the car park.

We were looking to do the 'Sidewinder' route as a practice for SRT rigging. After the initial traverse around the gully on the dry route, the streamway is followed to the first pitch of about 15 metres.

This was followed by an interesting descent across the roof of the main chamber to the lower part of the cave. From this point the guidebook warns of flood danger, but on our visit there was hardly any water to be seen in the streamway or anywhere else for that matter.

Fortified by good beer from the Marton Arms and a greasy breakfast at the Fountain Cafe we decided to spend Sunday above ground, as the weather was sunny and the skies without a cloud in sight.

Once again we parked at the top of Masongill, where the route to Marble Steps could be plainly seen. Our walk took us entrance spotting along the Turbary Road as far as Bull Pot, then over Gragareth to Ireby Fell Cavern and back again past Marble Steps and Rift.

Minera Dig

Part of the Minera mine site, near Wrexham is currently being investigated by an archaeological team.

Their trenching through old mine waste has so far revealed the presence of an earlier crusher house and dressing floor underneath.

Places to Visit

White Scar Caves, Ingleton, North Yorkshire, telephone: 05242-41244. Situated in the Yorkshire Dales, White Scar is claimed to be Britains biggest tourist cavern. The one-mile guided tour of the caves takes about an hour.

The site has a Cafe, Gift shop and picnic area and is open from 10am every day (except Christmas Day), last tour 5.30pm.

C Stands for Christmas or even Slate

In attendance on all trips: Adrian Pearce, Richard Fowler, Colin and Liz Armfield and Mike Moore.

Corwen, 27/12/92

Plus: Julie Pearce and Pete Etchells

This mine has not been visited by the Club too often. I now see why; after all the Xmas pudding etc. everybody was gasping up the extremely steep incline from the A5 and even the fittest required oxygen.

The mine however proved to be interesting, the mine buildings were located and it was discovered that someone had carried out an archaeological excavation in the cutting shed exposing the base for machines etc.

The mine itself was entered via the pit some two levels above this.

The mine is quite interesting and worthy of a visit with inter-locking chambers and inclines. There is also an excellent free hanging 30ft. abseil through the roof of a chamber, with an easy path back to the upper level, several people did this three or more times. All in all, a worthwhile visit and training ground.

Ceriog, 30/12/92

Plus: Edwin Thorpe and Stuart Tomlins.

The purpose of this trip was to achieve the ledge behind the Caban in the far pit through a very wet cold waterfall.

This was a particularly cold day and the trip in the wet parts of the mine was carried out at high speed. The only delay was in looking at a few artefacts and watching Edwin put a plastic bag on, to avoid the waterfall over the letterbox entrance, the only problem being that it did little to protect knees from the stream.

In spite of complaints everyone entered this part of the mine and four of us went into the thigh deep water to achieve the

ledge using the four piece extension ladder I had borrowed from work.

Unfortunately the ledge only leads to a chamber, an old Club ladder was left for the benefit of future visitors - although **NO** guarantees are given to its safety!

After this a quick visit to the rest of the mine was made and we returned to the cars where everyone complained of cold and stood talking to Edwin who seemed to have a bottomless flask and every few minutes filled his cup, at the seventh fill, frost-bite began to develop amongst the audience and after a polite cheerio we left, leaving Edwin to his eighth cup and steaming flask.

Corris, 3/1/93

As Ceriog, plus Neal Rushton and Steve Holding.

As there were nine in the party we split into two groups myself; Adrian, Richard and Stuart opting for the Hill walk, we were now hardened after Corwen and Ceriog, lack of oxygen and cold did not affect us and amazingly I had no difficulty in finding the far entrance.

Route finding underground was straight forward as we went along I remembered various landmarks and paths. We left candles in appropriate places and met the other group at the carved miners walkway. This fortunately was the only point where I couldn't remember the way on!

After taking directions and descending into the lower workings I ignored Adrians pleas to sit down for food and a cigarette and only stopped when we reached the wooden incline.

At this point we could see two of the candles and more interestingly Steve Holding, about 2 levels above. He shouted down to us assuming we were the rest of his party, as he had taken an alternative route to the others. This proved that this chamber is enormous and in fact the through route merely meanders conveniently around it.

We later descended the incline and visited the various galleries and removed a Banqueting table discovered by the other party.

This consisted of a sheet over a convenient slate table, various paper plates, remains of candles, a couple of bottles and a container of suspect brie cheese.

The group responsible should be ashamed of themselves after obviously having a good time leaving their litter for others to find and remove.

On exit we arrived back at the vehicles within a few seconds of the other party which had taken the simple route down the road. I must admit I had opted for the top trip to avoid wet feet but this backfired as the mine bottom level was unusually dry.

All in all, the Christmas programme worked very well, although I was a little surprised about numbers on the trips.

Mike Moore

Slack Cottage

If you want a quiet holiday in tremendous surroundings with good food and good company, then Chris and Liz Lane offer accommodation at their Ambleside home, Slack Cottage.

This 16th century building on the shore of Lake Windermere, is an ideal base for visiting the area.

The guest accommodation consists of a double bedroom with washbasin and adjoining toilet and bathroom. Cost: £15 per person, per night, bed and breakfast. No smoking in the house, and No pets.

For further details contact:
Mrs E. Lane, Slack Cottage,
High Way,
Ambleside, Cumbria,
LA22 0JQ
Telephone: 053-94-32127.

News Round-up 1

by Ivor Brown

Cornish Mining

News has been received from Stuart Smith, former Director of IGMT. He brought a fax and some letterheaded paper and within no time at all was appointed to lead a project to establish a county-wide museum on Cornwall's mining, transport and social history, which will be the first museum of landscape in Britain.

At present he is living in Trevithicks Cottage (thatched roof, cob walls) for 2-3 weeks then a holiday in Madeley (his unique house in Madeley is at present for sale).

Winter Quiz Answered

There is an outcrop of coal in the cellar of the Pheasant Inn at Broseley, it is also said that there is one in the Travellers Joy at Doseley, but IJB has not investigated.

Shropshire Folklore

Re: Adrian Pearce's item, the Buildwas Tunnel is said to go to Madeley Court.

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries the Abbot of Wenlock retired to the Court, but Buildwas Monks would not let him pass over the River. It is unlikely then that such unfriendly monks would have a connection underground with the Abbots retirement home.

Perhaps the monks of Wenlock made the tunnel under the River to avoid annoying the monks of Buildwas when they needed to cross it.

Hazelgate Mine

The Hazelgate Mine is listed as Hazelor Mine in Burt's Mines of Shropshire and Staffordshire, page 10, and dated 1860-65.

Great Rock Sandwich

An article on the Jackfield Mining and Geology Gallery appears in the new geological newspaper (12 pages, quarterly, FREE if bulk ordered, from

Chris Darmon, Geo Supplies, Chapeltown, Sheffield, S30 4XH).

It says IJB opened The Great Rock Sandwich, he didn't, but he liked his picture!

Read the paper to find out more, better still VISIT.

[A Members review of the Gallery appears later on in this issue. Ed.]

Oil & Gas

A licence to search for oil and gas in East Shropshire has been granted to Kinetica Ltd. and Taurus Exploration Ltd., licence number EXL 282 dated 15 Dec. 1992.

Two other licences also cover parts of the County, No.281 Concord Gas Ltd. and 283 Puffin Resources Ltd.

Oil Record

According to the South African Mining Journal one of Britain's oldest onshore oil wells situated on a Dorset Cliff, has just produced its 3 millionth barrel of oil - this leaves the Tar Tunnel standing!

1851 Census

The 1851 census shows that there were in Shropshire 4580 coal miners, 1142 iron-miners, 715 stone quarries, 573 clay brickmakers, 335 lead miners, 3 tin miners (?), NO copper miners and 19 local government officers.

Note: Of the 3 tin miners, 1 was 20-25 years old, 1 30-35 years old and 1 50-55 years, all three lived in Clunn District.

Where was their tin mine? Perhaps they were father and 2 sons who had migrated from Cornwall to work Shropshire lead mines!

[A detailed analysis of the 1851 Census, by Adrian Pearce, with regards to miner workers appeared in the Spring 1991 issue of 'Below', pages 8-9. Ed.]

Book Review

"Opencast Coalmining in Britain 1942-1992", by P.N.Grimshaw.

This is a new publication sponsored by British Coal Opencast.

IJB contributed some material to this but only the frontispiece, a sketch of a Staffordshire open coal works in 1849 and a re-write of the first chapter has resulted. This chapter gives brief references to working before 1942 but its real extent is overlooked.

In Shropshire for example outcrop workings are shown on a plan of 1620 and Reynolds describes opencasting in 1788. This century saw fairly extensive workings around Little Wenlock.

The book does mention production figures for some sites in the 1940's and early 1950's. Spring Village 1950-51 produced 65,672 tons. These workings were very shallow and the area has been gone over at least twice since this time.

Despite this affront to Shropshire, this is a very interesting book with numerous old photos of opencast and drilling equipment.

There are a couple of amusing 'errors' for example on p34 one wonders how it was possible to "rescue a ventilation shaft" from demolition and transfer it to a museum.

"Shropshire with living memory" produced by the Shropshire Federation of Women's Institutes, 1992, over 250 pages, price £7.95.

This book contains a fair number of memories relating to mines and mining across both coal and metal and also stone quarries, peat working and brickmaking.

The pits of Hanwood and Telford are referred to in several sections as are the miners of the Stiperstones. The book forms a good social record of life in the first half of this century.

Underground “Nuggets” from the Past by Brian Tildesley

The following item was discovered during recent researches:

“

A SEWER LABORER’S FEAT WALTHAM. MASS., September 13, 1894.

To the Editor of The Engineering RECORD.

SIR: A feat performed by a laborer of the Sewer Department of this city may be of interest to your readers connected with sewer work. On September 11 an undersized Hungarian, nicknamed “The Rabbit,” his real name being Gustave Mosial, went through some 850 feet of 15 inch pipe running from 2½ inches to 4 inches deep with sewerage, in making an inspection of the same. In some places he reported pipe which were crushed and flattened, and 12 joints in one spot which had offset for something like 2 inches, virtually reducing the height of the sewer to 12½ and 13 inches in the various points. Besides this there was an accumulation of sand and sludge so that there could not have been over 9 inches of clear space between the top of the pipe and the surface of the sewerage at some points during a portion of the time while he was in and pushing the sludge ahead of him. One of the sections that he went through was 350 feet between the manholes. Though of small stature, he is an exceptionally strong and wiry individual. I regard this as a noteworthy feat, which could be paralleled by but few men, so far as my observation goes. Those familiar with sewer work will appreciate his difficulties.

FRANK P. JOHNSON,
City Engineer and Superintendent of Sewers.

”

Seen at the exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian posters at the Elton Gallery, Coalbrookdale, 28th February 1993.

The Theatre Royal, Worcester

Monday 12th May 1829

A new melodrama called

The Cornish Miners, or The Maniac’s Den

- Act I,** *Scene 3,* The Shaft, or Entrance to the Mine.
 Scene 4, Interior of a Tin Mine, Miners at work, implements scattered about and mine basket constantly ascending and descending the Shaft
- inc. Chorus,** “*We merry miners few cares know*”.
 The stoppage of the Steam Engine.
 The awful Breaking-In of the Mine, and appearance of the **Maniac**.
- Act II,** *Scene 1,* The Shaft
 Scene 6, Gallery of the mine. Miners discovered in despair. The rocks burst with terrific explosion and the miners are saved.
- Last Scene,** Exterior of Mine
 inc. Finale “*Success to our Cornish Miners.*”

Dudley Rescue Practice

7th Feb. 1993

This very informative session was held at the Dudley Cave Rescue Teams' HQ. For those of you who have not been to the site, it is an old Chapel, half of which is used by the Scouts and half by DCRT.

In their section DCRT have rigged climbing ropes and ladders up the walls and into the loft space. This allows a wide variety of underground techniques to be practised, all in the comfort of the Club house (its a pity we can't get one of the Shropshire District Councils to let us use an old unwanted Chapel).

With such a good setting it promised to be a useful day although I think the Dudley team were very nervous at the start of the day, with visions of things going wrong or nobody turning up, however they need not have been, everything went smoothly.

Joppo kicked off the session with a short lecture on belay techniques, load factors and failure points, this was followed up with talks by Gloucester CRO on radio techniques and a brief overview of the forth coming rescue weekend in the Forest of Dean.

A study of stretchers, in particular the new plastic fold up stretcher developed by Joppo, produced a great deal of interest. After a "table top" guide to the stretchers features, the audience, of some 30+ people from all over the Midlands, moved into the "rope room" for practical demonstrations; of putting a body (kindly supplied by Dudley) into the stretcher, carrying and hauling techniques (ie: how to get it through a small hole in the roof).

Our Clubs old style stretcher was also put through its paces, although Dudley

found it very useful for strapping up one of their members and propping him up against the wall, while everyone had lunch.

While the hauling was going on Peter Eggleston demonstrated his latest MineCam (Mk.V) in the "lecture" room and John Smith, one of the founder members of the Dudley CRT showed some early slides of the Castle Hill and Wren's Nest mines (a lot of which are now filled or too unstable to enter).

I think all those who attended the event agree that it was a worthwhile day, not just for learning new skills, but also for making new friends.

Thanks to everyone at Dudley for providing a superb venue, catering facilities etc. it was much appreciated.

Kelvin Lake

Great Rock Sandwich - A Visitors View

Having heard a lot about the "marvellous" new mining gallery and being at a loose end the other Sunday I decided to stir myself and venture East on a visit to Jackfield.

To say that the IGMT prides itself on being one of **THE** premier Industrial Museums in the Country, the Great Rock Sandwich comes as a bit of a disappointment.

The much vaunted entrance through a "coal seam" sadly looks like a load of bits of 2x2 painted black and sticking out at silly angles, and bears as much resemblance to rock and coal strata as a Sinclair C5 does to a car!

Passing quickly by, the visitor reaches a mock-up of a haulage incline, which at first glance is not too bad, apart from the obvious gaff of using a modern small link chain draped through the "forks" of tubs which are clearly intended for a rope haulage system.

Beyond the 'incline' the visitor enters what is supposed to be a timbered mine level, but I can only describe it as a joke, I've got thicker timbers in my garden trellis-work. Surely a big Museum like the IGMT is capable of getting some decent timbers, after all, a quick trip to the Forest of Dean would furnish the necessary wood!

The odd exhibits situated off this level are ok, a small "tableaux" features the Siskol coal cutter recovered by the Club from the Rock Fireclay mine, at least it was nice to see it again, and at long last on display to the public.

Probably the highlight of the whole gallery is Malcom Newtons superb model of a mine scene, based on a geological section. If nothing else this model is worth seeing.

Unfortunately, I can only describe the rest of the gallery as "non-descript". The general impression of the whole thing is of something that has no clear

idea of who it is aimed at, or what story it is trying to tell. It certainly does not give the visitor an idea of the wealth of local mining history or much of an insight into mining nationally. The half hearted section on the local brick and tile industry seemed to consist purely of a hodge-podge of chimney pots, that came from elsewhere!

I am sad to say I came away with the feeling that it was a cheap cobbled together exhibit, designed to make use of a few odds and ends the Museum happened to have lying around!

When you contrast this with such excellent mining exhibits like the small low budget one at Millom, Cumbria run by the local history society which has authentic reconstructions of mine working places and the pit cage or even exhibits at other Industrial Museums like the Black Country Museum, I can only say it is a poor effort and give it 2 out of 10.

DM

OFD II

Saturday 30th.

On the Saturday there were two club groups in OFD II. Cara, Cory, Pete Etchells, Mark Neason and Andy Harris made up one group which travelled up the main streamway as far as the waterfall. The other group, consisting of Colin and Liz Armfield, Ian and Helen Whitaker, Andrew Stanton and myself travelled through the Chasm to the Poached Egg climb and Straw Gallery before coming via Timo's Table to Salubrious Passage and the Trident and Judge before making our way out.

Sunday

On the Sunday, Cara, Cory and Pete hiked across to Pant Mawr Pot while a group consisting of Alan Moseley, John Howley, Greg Payne, Phil Crowcroft, Daniel Barrett and myself returned to OFDII.

On this trip we went directly to Salubrious Passage visiting the Trident and Judge again before carrying on via the Cross Rift to Moonlight Chamber which was found to have SRT rigging disappearing into the roof.

We then climbed down into Midnight Passage and followed this as far as the Main Streamway. Reversing from here, Selenite Passage was visited before returning via Edwards Shortcut. A mistake on this "shortcut" came to a traverse where I proved correct in my expectation of coming off, by coming off and finding myself dangling from the traverse rope! Eventually the correct route was found and Gnome Chamber reached after negotiating a rather slippery climb.

A total of 16 Club members and probationary members, participated in the weekend and it appeared to be enjoyed by all.

Steve Holding

Pant Mawr Pot

SN 8908 1612

Following a good trip on the Saturday into OFD II we decided to take on the one hour walk across the moor.

After following instructions on how to find it, we rigged three ladders from an iron bar concreted into a step. The actual vertical pitch is approximately 50 feet - next time SRT is the answer: 100 foot rope with one good rope protector is required.

At the foot of the 50' pot the one way leads up stream to a waterfall and a climb up to a bedding plane. Some fascinating rock forms and a liberal supply of fossilised coral.

Down stream the passageway is 20 to 30 feet wide even 50 to 60 in places beyond the third boulder choke.

We took some time to find the way through the first boulder choke, the second soon after presented no problem and lead into a Straw Chamber, from here the pretties start to appear.

A side passage accessed up a boulder slope on the left wall was totally full with pretties. The Helictites were a good 5" long and so numerous in places they looked like grass - a camera is a MUST. *[If you were at the Club meeting a couple of months ago Alan Robinson showed some superb photographs of these formations, Ed.]*

The third boulder choke was passed which lead into the Great Hall. Following down stream there is a side passage which is being dug. Continuing on down stream the passage starts to narrow and finally sumps out.

We re-traced our steps and climbed out. An excellent trip well worth the long walk to get to and from, 6 hours total including 2 hours walking across the Moor.

Pete Etchells

Sandwell Mine to go

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council have been given £15 million by the DoE to infill the Cow Pasture Limestone Mine. The Environment Minister, Tony Baldry, says the mine has to be filled in, as monitoring and repair has failed.

Porth yr Ogof

Following the inquests into the deaths of Lance Corporal Amanda Stead and Graham Lipp, verdicts of accidental death were returned.

The Cambrian Caving Council and other concerned groups have come up with a paper suggesting modifications and other suggestions for the Resurgence Pool, Deadmouth Cave section of Porth-Yr-Ogof.

If you are interested in seeing this paper and the proposed safety changes, please contact Adrian who has a copy in the Club Library.

Mine Collapse

We are all aware that old mine workings can be dangerous, particularly when near the surface. This problem has recently been highlighted by a collapse near Matlock Bath, on what was thought to be part of the Riber Mine.

Unfortunately for the landowner, the collapse took a big chunk of his recently landscaped and re-seeded garden with it, leaving a hole almost the current size of bipod shaft at Snailbeach and about 50ft. deep.

Cara Allison Wins

At the North Wales Caving Club's glittering Award Ceremony, Cara won the NWCC "Best Newcomer Award" for 1992.

Apparently she impressed the judges by her strength of character after spending 2 hours, on an SRT practice, stuck 10' up a sycamore tree.

BOOKS

Club Publications

“The North Wales Coalfield - a collection of Pictures” Vol.1 by Ithel Kelly, pub: Bridge Books, Wrexham 1990.

This is a soft covered book of over 40 pages with some 80 photos of the collieries in the coalfield, particularly Hafod, Bersham, New Broughton, Gatewen, Westminster, Gresford, Llay, Brynkinallt and Ifton.

Ifton shaft (sunk in 1913) was not in North Wales but Shropshire and was connected underground to Brynkinallt.

The Shropshire Mine is well covered by photos including one of its miners on the last working day: 23 November 1968. Gresford of course was the site of the 1934 mine disaster when 266 men died including 3 rescuemen and a surface worker (when the shaft cap was blown off by an explosion 3 days after the first explosion). The shaft was named after one of the Dennis family, who also had interests at Snailbeach Mine.

While this volume is described as Volume 1, it states that the other volumes will be prepared if sufficient photos come to hand.

Ivor Brown

“British Mining Volume 45, Memoirs 1992”

Northern Mine Research Society

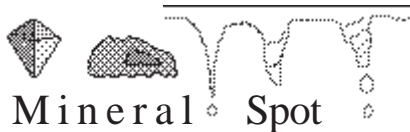
The latest publication from the N.M.R.S. is a little sad in some respects, it has been published in memory of Geoffrey Greenough and John McNeil two very active Society Officers who have died during the past year. It also marks an end of an era, in that this is the last N.M.R.S. publication to be edited by Dick Bird, who is retiring from honorary post after 16 years.

In many respects it has been Dick Bird's enthusiasm for the job that has enabled N.M.R.S. to produce such excellent publications over the years. It will be a hard act to follow.

That said, this latest British Mining contains a series of short articles on Lead Mining, mainly in Yorkshire and Northumberland. Closer to home there are articles on mine sites in Clwyd and Nant-Y-Mywn, Dyfed.

All the articles are interesting, well written and upto the usual high standards.

Kelvin Lake



Baryte or Barite - Barium Sulphate.

Occurs as a common gangue material in Lead-Zinc veins and as cavity fillings and precipitates in sedimentary rocks.

If you have been to Snailbeach, you will have climbed all over it. There is a very large ‘chunk’ at the foot of the rock slope below Paint/Sheep Shafts.

It has a variety of names, but is commonly called: Cawk, Calk, Caulk or Heavy Spar.

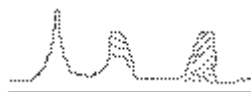
Common chemical formula for Baryte:
 $BaSO_4$

Witherite - Barium Carbonate.

Associated with Baryte, but less common.

It occurs in low temperature veins in which Galena (Lead Sulphide) is the major ore. It can be altered to Baryte by Sulphate bearing water.

Common chemical formula: $BaCO_3$



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 legible 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)

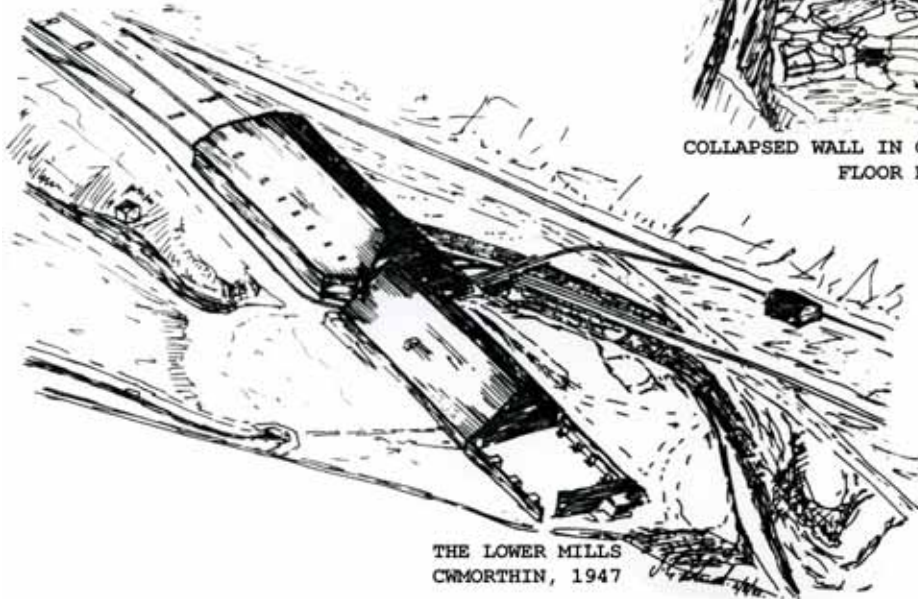
Welsh Quarry Scenes



REMAINS OF BRIDGE IN CHAMBER 2 WEST FLOOR D CWMORTHIN



COLLAPSED WALL IN CHAMBER 1 EAST BACK VEIN
FLOOR E, CWMORTHIN



THE LOWER MILLS
CWMORTHIN, 1947

by J.G.Isherwood

SCMC - Basic Training Techniques

by Alan Robinson

Aims

Nothing will ever replace experience underground as a training ground for learning all the pros and cons to caving and mine exploration. The only drawback is that failing to learn quickly enough could be fatal. It is fundamental to safe caving that good practices are adopted from the onset.

It is far more comfortable to become 'strung-up' on your first go at SRT in the warmth of an indoor climbing wall than on wet pitch of a cave in flood.

Ropes

For a detailed explanation of rope types and construction, refer to one of the 'thicker' cave training manuals. Sufficient to say that the rope is always an important part of any 'assisted' vertical ascent or descent - your life may be hanging from it, even on a short handline or traverse. There are four types of rope which require consideration:

a) SRT

These are made of nylon or polyester fibres in a 'kernmantle' construction. The bonding between the core and sheath is tighter than with climbing ropes, since a cavers' jammers will actually climb on the outer sheath.

Practical rope diameters are in the range of 9-11 millimetres and a tensile strength of over 2.0 tonnes is appropriate, with perhaps 30% of this in the sheath. The rope has a low static stretch, no more than 2 or 3 per cent under the weight of an average caver.

Rope colours are generally fairly plain, often white with blue/black flecks. As well as SRT, these ropes are ideal for lifelining, provided they are not used for lead climbing above the belayer or across traverses that would allow long falls before loading the rope.

b) Climbing (dynamic)

These are most suitable for lifelining and protecting the lead climber on exposed traverses or rock-climbs.

Dynamic climbing ropes are also of a kernmantle construction and have a very flexible feel to them, making them easier to handle than SRT rope.

They have a much higher static and dynamic stretch factor, which should be easily recognisable when comparing say a 10-20 foot length of the two ropes.

Sheath colouring is normally brighter than the SRT ropes (SCMC buys the gaudiest colours it can find to help identification). Climbing ropes are not well suited to SRT as the stretch makes the rope very bouncy. This may also be a problem when abseiling with a Petzl Stop.

c) Hawser laid

This was the original type of rope used in both climbing and caving. It predates the use of SRT as method of ascending pitches, thus it is only suitable for use as lifelining rope on ladders or for fixed handlines/traverses.

Always ensure that the rope is made from a synthetic material. Avoid any natural fibre ropes underground as they quickly rot.

Try to avoid abseiling on hawser laid ropes if they are mud encrusted or look particularly ancient.

d) Polypropylene

This rope type has only one real advantage - it floats. Often coloured bright blue or orange, it is also made from a hawser laid construction. It will not withstand high shock loads and it has a very low melting point.

It would be lethal to abseil on. Suitable for short handlines or draglines for boats or on digs.

Rope Pointers

A few pointers for rope care:

- 1) *ALWAYS wash ropes after use underground.*
- 2) *Don't leave ropes in direct sunlight any more than necessary.*
- 3) *Carry ropes in tackle sacks wherever possible.*
- 4) *Don't step on ropes.*
- 5) *Avoid acid/alkali spillages from batteries.*

Knots

A knowledge of only a few simple knots is required for personal protection and rigging for handlines and ladder/lifelining.

- a) *Figure-of-Eight: Two methods: On a bight, and retrace on one end of a rope.*
- b) *Bowline*
- c) *Stopper knots: Clove hitch, double fishermans or anything!*
- d) *Munter hitch Or Italian hitch Used as a friction device for belaying.*

More later.

Communications

A system of clear and concise signals are essential between the top and bottom of a pitch for all aspects of vertical movement underground.

For SRT or 'self-lining', each person moves independently and the only calls required are to indicate when the next person may ascend or descend and to warn of falling objects.

The calls are **ROPE FREE** and **BELOW** respectively.

SCMC - Basic Training Techniques continued..

Laddering requires a more complex set of calls between the climber and lifeliner. The following have been adopted as universal for caving and rock-climbing.

It is particularly important that a consistent approach is used to avoid confusion, both within SCMC and on joint meets with other clubs or rescue situations.

1. TAKE IN (Climber)

Indicates climber attached to rope and that slack rope should be taken in.

2. TAKING IN (Lifeline)

Lifeline is belayed and is pulling through slack rope.

3. THATS ME (C)

The rope is taut on climber

4. CLIMB WHEN READY (L)

Signals that the lifeliner is ready for the climber to ascend.

5. CLIMBING (C)

Indicates climber is ready to ascend.

6. OKAY (L)

Verifies that the lifeliner has heard and is taking in.

No ascent should start before 'OK' is heard, as a last minute problem (apparent to only the belayer) may occur.

A call of **SLACK** may be used if the rope is too taut, but **NEVER NEVER** use the phrase 'Take-in slack'.

Whistles

When verbal contact is not possible, then whistle signals should be used as follows to inform the belayer:

One blast = **STOP**

Two blasts = **UP**

Three blasts = **DOWN**

Four blasts = **ROPE FREE**

Six blasts = **HELP** (Emergency Call)

Ladders & Lifelines

A few cardinal rules for those who want to be around long enough to get the hang of it.

*THE ZERO TH LAW OF LADDERING:
ALWAYS USE A LIFELINE*

1. Ladder and lifeline to be attached to separate belay points.
2. Direct belay methods should always be used in preference to body belaying.

The following are acceptable belay devices:

Figure-of-eight descender

Petzl stop descender

Sticht plate (not in muddy conditions)

Munter hitch/Steel karabiner

3. If belaying from an exposed position the belayer should be protected e.g. cowtails or tied in to a belay point.

In an ideal situation this belay point would be independent of both the ladder and lifeline belays.

4. **NEVER** lifeline from a single bolt belay, but you may hang a ladder from a single bolt.
5. Ladders should not be hung from a krab/maillon with only the top C-links connected.

Always use a spreader or wire tether as the connection from the C-links.

6. Wire tethers should be used in preference to rope/tape slings + spreader if abrasion from sharp edges is likely.
7. Avoid hazards such as water and loose rock if possible.
8. Rig the ladder for easy reach at top/bottom of pitch. Protect with traverse line or sling for clipping into on awkward take offs.

9. **NEVER** rig the ladder so that wire tethers are on top of a rope. It will cut through when loaded

THE LAST LAW OF LADDERING: ARE THE LADDER AND ROPE LONG ENOUGH FOR THE INTENDED PITCH.

Emergency Container

Whilst it is not essential for every person on an underground trip to have a first aid kit and bivvy bag - it is important to bring one in the car with you, just in case everyone else forgets.

ESSENTIAL items

The **ESSENTIAL** items for every trip are:

Secondary light source e.g. Petzl headtorch, Maglite

Nourishment

Whistle/prussik loop

BELAYS, BELTS AND OTHER STUFF: wetsuit or drysuit or just old clothes (please no jeans!), kneepads

Guide Books

In a complex system a survey is vital and a guide very useful.

Most Caving Shops, or magazines advertise surveys and guide books, which can be purchased over the counter, or sent mail order (in a plain brown wrapper).

Future Articles

Hopefully in future issues other topics of basic training can be covered, not only to re-fresh the tired little grey cells of "experienced" Club Members, (although it should all be imprinted in your genes by now!), but also to help new Members quickly gain the necessary 'survival' skills.

This way we can all practice safe caving.

Club Officers

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Mike Moore**

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Steve Holding

Tackle & Rescue Officer:

Neal Rushton

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Diary Dates 1993

The names in brackets indicate the trip organiser or contact.

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

15-16 May: Britannia/Sygun Mines, North Wales [Steve Holding]

29 May - 5 June: Family/Mining Holiday in Cornwall [Adrian Pearce and Neal Rushton]

19-20 June: Cave Rescue Workshop at Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, South Wales [Neal Rushton]

26-27 June: Box Mine/Swan Mine, Wiltshire [Adrian Pearce]

16-18 July: Caving in Yorkshire [Steve Holding]

25 July: Frongoch Mine, Mid-Wales [Steve Holding]

7-15 August: Nenthead Mines, Cumbria [Adrian Pearce]

26 September: Cave Rescue Practice Shropshire [Neal Rushton]

16 October: Club Dinner, Wroxeter Hotel [Mike Moore]

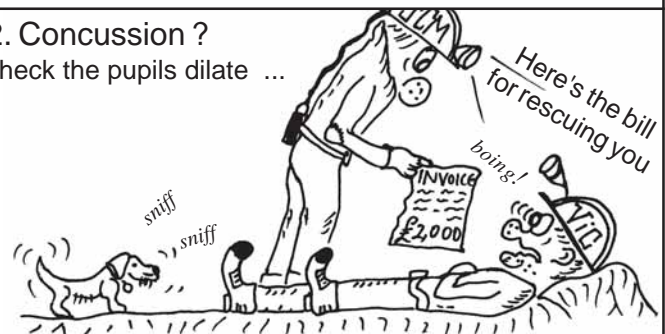
Smidgin: Underground First Aid Tips (Advanced)

20

1. Slow down, compose yourself, take a patient history ...



2. Concussion ? check the pupils dilate ...



3. Applying manual traction with the aid of a rescue russell ...

