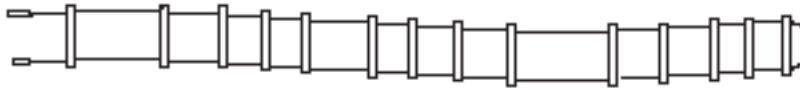


B E L O W!



Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Autumn 1993 Issue No: 93.3

Trust Moore

Always on the look-out to do something different, Mike Moore posted the Club's subscription to the Cambrian Caving Council while on the Cornwall trip. However, not wishing to miss any of the trips he waited until he found a convenient underground post box!

When the renewal dropped through the C.C.C. Secretary's letterbox it proudly bore the legend 'posted underground at Poldark Mine' - I wonder if this is a first for Caving Club Subscriptions?

Will we now get a string of envelopes marked "found on the Forty" or "rushed from Ramsden's Shaft" etc..

Real Rescue 'Russell'

While you may have laughed (I hope) at the odd escapades of "KP the Rescue Russell" in the Smidgin cartoons, it seems that Dan-yr-Ogof are taking the idea seriously.

Sophie, the 2 year old labrador is reputed to be, being put through her paces by the South Wales CRO to help find trapped cavers in the Dan-yr-Ogof system. Pictures of the dog, complete with a pouch holding chocolate bars and a blanket, and a lamp strapped to her head appeared in National Newspapers recently.

She has only been used on the main tourist routes at the moment, but as her training proceeds, she will be used to squeeze into passages that rescuers find it hard to get into, to carry essential supplies to trapped cavers!

Trail Guides

Mike Moore sent out Severn Trent Water, trail guides to the Bryn-Tail Mine area with the Annual Dinner menus, which you may or may not have had time to read yet.

If you get the chance it is well worth a visit to the mine site. The area has been conserved and interpretation boards explain most of the remains.

The stone tanks mentioned in the trail guide, which were used to 'bleach' the barytes at Bryn-tail are interesting - if only for the fact that they are reputed to have been moved to their present site from Clive Copper Mine, when it closed down.

Apart from the mining remains, the dam is quite interesting - claimed to be the highest concrete dam in Britain. You may also remember it from a Land Rover advert a few years ago, when a Land Rover actually winched itself up the dam wall!

Not far from the Bryn-Tail site are numerous other lead mines, notably Dylife, Penyclun and the Van Mine - although it is mainly the waste tips and a couple of chimneys that now remain at the latter.

More details on the mines in this area can be found in "The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales Part 4, West Montgomeryshire" by David Bick.

Magpie Mine Engine House Appeal

The Peak District Mines Historical Society are appealing for donations to help preserve the Magpie Mine Engine.

While the engine house may not fall down immediately, unless repairs are started very soon the building will deteriorate.

Essentially the rubble-filled walls of the engine house are being damaged by rain-water percolating through the walls and washing out infill.

PDMHS hope to raise enough funds by the end of this year to allow the remedial work to be completed during the

summer of 1994 - weather permitting!

If you wish to make a donation to the appeal, or obtain further information please contact the organisers via:

The Peak District Mining Museum,
The Pavilion, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR
Tel: 0629-583834

If you wish to visit Magpie Mine, you are welcome to do so, at any time without any formality, but please note that there is no access permitted to any of the underground workings.

Minera Lead Mine

The recent opening of Minera Lead Mine near Wrexham, as a tourist attraction may be of some interest to members. The more senior ones will no doubt remember the various expeditions there in the 1960's, yes the bitter is just as good in the pub opposite!

Apart from the general landscaping of the area, interlinking pathways have been laid out to connect most of the mining remains. The main development has concentrated around the Cornish engine house, where the vast accumulation of rubbish has been removed, to reveal the dressing floors and winding engine house with its attendant boiler house. A set of well worn stone steps have also been uncovered leading to the top of the masonry ore bins. A circular buddle has also been revealed.

The Cornish pumping engine house has been restored to a very high standard. It has been re-roofed and the

floors re-instated and linked by staircases. The bob opening has been closed with weather board and includes 2 doors leading out onto the bob plates.

When the museum closes for the winter months, plans have been made to begin work on putting in an engine, made from timber, yes that's what I thought! Until I saw a similar undertaking in Bristol Docks, where the restorers of the SS Great Britain are building the marine engines designed by Brunel out of the same material.

Some of the finished parts of this engine are convincing enough and only a tap with your knuckles gives the game away, the attendants don't like you doing this by the way!

If they reach the same standard at Minera the engine should look quit impressive, especially as the pump rod balance boxes are also to be included, together with a reconstruction of the

headgear. Plans are also in hand to rebuild various parts of the dressing floor machinery.

The interpretation centre is rather small at the present and a half scale model of the mine when it was at work has been commissioned (no it's not one of mine!). It is I think a well planned development and shows what can be done with a small area, although I am sure it will have its critics, as do all such undertakings. If you haven't been, its well worth a visit.

Food for thought on Snailbeach perhaps?

Malcolm Newton

Photos Wanted

If any members have got any old photographs of Minera Lead Mine, Bob Slater the site archaeologist would be very interested to see them. You can contact him at the site or via Malcolm.

Access Permission

As part of the South Shropshire Project, the Club has obtained access permission to several areas. In addition, current work being carried out at mines means that access to some areas is restricted. Members should note the following:-

1. Snailbeach Mine - work is being carried out on site to infill and cap several unsafe areas of working. Until further notice, there is **NO UNDERGROUND ACCESS** to any part of Snailbeach Mine.
2. Huglith Mine - We have obtained permission from the Forestry Commission to explore and survey the workings on Riddleswood Vein and around the Main Shaft. The permit expires in December and prior notice of visits is not required by the Forestry Commission. However, please ensure that you do not do anything to leave surface entrances in a worse condition than you found

them. The area to the south of the Main Shaft belongs to Mr. R. Hulton-Harrup and he has given access permission as long as we notify him in advance of the dates of our visits. Please contact the Secretary if you wish to visit this area.

3. Wescott Mine - the engine house is in the garden of Miss Shepherd who has given permission to carry out a surface survey if we give prior notice of the dates. Please contact the Secretary if you wish to visit. The open adits to the south of here are on land belonging to Mr. Hulton-Harrup - please contact the Secretary before you visit.
4. Sallies Mine - this belongs to Mr. R. Hulton-Harrup and he has given permission for a surface survey if we notify in advance. Since the adit is used as a domestic water supply, there is **NO UNDERGROUND ACCESS**.

5. Rorrington/Wotherton Mines - Rorrington Estate has given permission to explore, as long as we notify dates of visits in advance. Please notify the Secretary before visiting these mines.

6. Myttonsbeach/Perkinsbeach Mines - English Nature has given permission to explore, but we must notify dates in advance. Please notify the Secretary before visiting these mines.

It is vital that we comply with the terms of these access permissions. Any member who visits without prior notification risks losing access for the whole Club and the possible permanent closure of a mine. We have built up a good relationship and the reputation of the Club can be permanently damaged by a thoughtless action.

Adrian Pearce

Huglith

21/8/93

Members present: Colin & Liz Armfield, Richard Fowler, Ben Shaw, Nick & Rob Southwick, John and myself.

The tramping level was reached via the shaft from Badger Level. The main purpose of the trip was to explore below the tramping level with Nick and Rob obviously having ideas of going for a swim.

Initially the whole group descended down the slope at the far end of the level. At some point it may be possible to safely descend to the water by bolting and traversing beyond the loose rubble edge.

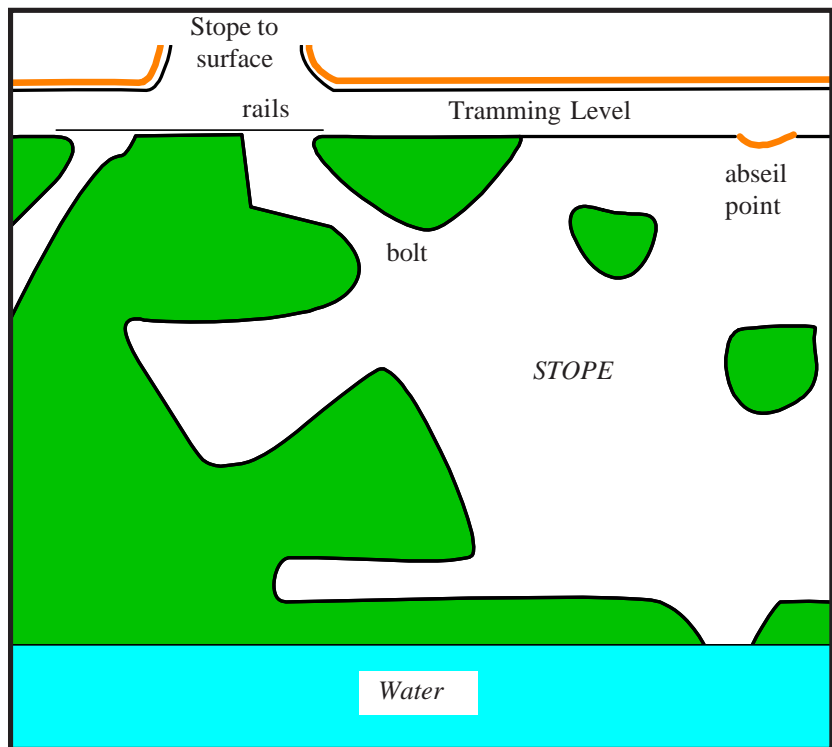
The tramping level beyond the slope was explored but it did not go very far.

Where the rails cross over the hole in the floor, this was descended again and the edge of the rubble was bolted by Nick, Rob and myself.

A 20 ft. ladder climb gave access to a slope down to water again. This area was explored by Ben and myself.

Approximately 12 ft. above the water there was a level stretch for 20 to 30 ft.; this level could be followed back under the slope for another 15 ft.

At the same time, Colin abseiled from



Section of Part of Huglith Mine (Not too Scale)

one of the holes in the floor of the tramping level to a point only a few feet from the level.

The area below the tramping level is largely stoped out, with a few pillars left in place.

From subsequently considering the plans for Huglith, it appears that the

water is approximately at Middle Level. Just above this level there appears to be a series of long flat pillars and the top of these probably form the 'level' which can be walked across. The slope down to this 'level' must be fallen rubble that was once stacked on various pillars and the section back under the slope is clearly under another long flat pillar.

Steve Holding

Geevor Mining Co. Re-started

Former Former British Coal Commercial Director, Malcolm Edwards has succeeded in underwriting a £1.75 million fund-raising share issue by Geevor, clearing the way for the return from suspension of the former tin mining company, with Mr. Edwards as Chairman and a new management team.

Geevor, to be renamed Coal Investments, will immediately acquire the Cwmgwili coal drift near Ammanford, South Wales. They also hope to become the operators of any of the British Coal pits awarded to Mr.

Edwards as a result of the Corporations invitation to the private sector to lease and licence surplus mines.

Three of the pits they are applying for, Markham Main, Rossington and Betws are subject to rival bids from RJB Mining.

However Coal Investments application to resume mining at Trentham and Coventry Collieries are thought to be unchallenged.

Safely Listed

On page 4 Ivor Brown mentions that 8 engine houses in the Snailbeach area have been listed, let us hope that the listing of these buildings, means that something is done to conserve them - unlike the listed Shawfield engine house at the back of Blists Hill, which was neglected to the point, where a wall blew down in a storm, and it had to be subsequently demolished.

Most importantly it is up to **us** as a Club, along with other groups, such as the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust, to ensure that the remaining engine houses do not suffer the same fate.

News Round-up 1

by Ivor Brown

New Club Publication

SCMC Account No.17 'Snailbeach Lead Mines - a short history of some of the surface remains' by Ivor J.Brown. Now available price £4.00

New Publication

"The Stiperstones Lead Mines" by Peter Francis, 12 pages, 50p from 'Riddle of the Past' publications, c/o Shropshire Promotions, Kynaston House, Worthen SY5 9HW.

It contains a number of bloomers, but very little fresh information.

Cothercott Mine

Planning permission has recently been given for some trenching in search of barytes at the former mine site.

The company Baker Sullivan Ltd. have now completed the work which was to consist of 5 narrow linear traversals, about 1m wide, 2m deep and 200-300m in length.

Results of this work have not yet been published.

PDMHS Bulletin

The Bull. of PDMHS Vol. 11 No.6, Winter 1992 contains two papers on Shropshire:-

1. The Chartermaster System of Mine Management in Shropshire by IJB.
2. Translation of Moisseneto article in 'Annales des Mines 1862' on Lead smelting in Welsh Furnaces at Pontesford, Shropshire by H.M.Martell and M.C.Gill.

A further translation by Dick Hasgard and others is to be found in the Ironbridge Gorge Library. There are some interesting differences (eg: a "store for fume" in the former, becomes a "fume disperser" in the latter).

Snailbeach Mine

Work continues on the conservation of the buildings.

IJB called in on July 28, 1993 and found that the contract ivy-strippers were using the old coil of rope as an incinerator. He complained to the Council about such a historic item being used in that way.

[**Note:** As the rope was actually a hemp cored wire rope, presumably the fire has destroyed the inner hemp core. *Kelvin*]

Wanted

A drawing or photograph of Nick Knolls engine house, any date. Please send to the Editor or IJB.

IJB now has drawings or photos of about 30 engine houses in South West Shropshire.

As yet only 8 engine houses have been listed by the D. of E.: -

Tankerville (2),
Snailbeach (3),
The Grits (2),
Ladywell (1)

Backfilling Old Mines

Originally the Government had planned to spend £120 million, before the year 2000, but now have decided to slow it down.

According to a recent D. of E. report £50 million has been allocated to backfilling mines in the Black Country and Shropshire since 1983 (Planning Magazine 30 July 1993).

Engine Houses

As well as the two converted engine houses in Jackfield and 3 in South Shropshire, it is reported that there is another at Billingsley near Bridgnorth still used as a dwelling (IJB has a poor photo).

Large Engine

Was this the largest Shropshire Colliery engine?

'bought by Manchester Collieries from Highley Colliery 1944.

Twin cylinder horizontal 24" bore, 48" stroke by Worsley Mesnes. Drum 11ft. by 7ft. 4".'

Highley Colliery began production in 1874, so the engine was probably of 1872 vintage.

[**Note:** The engine was moved from Highley to the No.2 Pit, Wheatsheaf Colliery, Pendlebury, Manchester, during up-grading. At the same time a new steel head-frame was erected over the No.2 pit.

The Highley engine actually replaced a single cylinder vertical, 36" bore by 60" stroke engine, with Cornish valves, built in 1847 by J.Musgrave of Bolton

Wheatsheaf Colliery, was actually one of the oldest pits in the area, sinking started there in 1846. No.2 pit was 413 yards deep to the sump, while No.1 pit was 602 yards deep. This pit closed in 1961.

The only other thing I can add about the Highley engine is that it was fitted with piston valves and Allan straight-link valve gear.

Kelvin]

Potash Mine

Miner Bernie Amos (aged 45) was trapped for 8 hours in Britain's deepest potash mine. The accident happened at a private drift mine in Boulby, Cleveland. Mr. Amos was trapped when a section of bolted roof half a mile down and 4 miles out to sea collapsed. He emerged without a scratch, but 3 rescuers were injured in a second roof fall, one of them seriously.

There have been 14 deaths at Boulby since it opened 20 years ago.

News Round-up 2 by Ivor Brown

Perkins Beach

Old Perkins Beach (ex. Primitive) Methodist Chapel closed in March 1993 and a new one has opened in Stiperstones Village.

The old chapel was very much a miners chapel, built in the 1860's when the mine was active and the valley was filled with miners squatters dwellings. (As the miners left the landowner would remove the roof from their cottage, to stop anyone else living in it - which explains the many ruins.)

All timber work in the chapel was done by Parbutts, the mine carpenter and over the pulpit was written "Reverence my Sanctuary". Over the small gallery at the back was the traditional miners inscription "Prepare to meet thy God". The building is now being reconstructed as a dwelling (with cafe next door).

The old chapel was badly affected by the 1895 Snailbeach disaster, at least one of the 3 local preachers killed was a member - Joseph Evans (age 45). One of the other victims Thomas Jones (age 32) was also active there.

The late 19th Century miners ballad (of which extracts follow) gives some insight into their lives:

"I thought I'll call at Perkins Beach
(Chapel)
and when I went in at the door,
I shall never forget

Friend Purslow said now let us sing,
Come ye that love the Lord

The brother Gwilliam, Jones and Pryce,
Engaged in fervent prayer ...

Then brother Hayman rose and told
His present state of grace

Then brother Perkins closed with prayer
and God did bless us each

And there's brother Preece and Bennett
too

That also go to preach,
And brother Evans good and true,
They all live at Perkins Beach.

Mines Book

A book on the Mines of Shelve and Minsterley.

About 100 years ago (1898) a meeting of the Shelve Reading and Recreation Society was held in Shelve School to consider ways of revitalising the mining area and to hear a lecture on the mines by Jasper More MP, local land and mineral owner.

It is reported that the room was "well filled". Several suggestions were discussed, these included:

1. Writing a book and doing an historical survey of the mines of the area.

Various specialists were to write the separate chapters, geology, history of mining, transport etc. A Mr. Higgins was to collate the chapters. (IJB has a copy of the Preface and First Chapter - more about this next time).

2. Exhibiting the model made of the mines of the area for the 1861 Exhibition at the new museum in Shrewsbury.

3. Extend the S.D. Railway to Tankerville and beyond and construct other railways.

4. Captain Oldfield (a mine Captain at Snailbeach) suggested they overcome the 3 bogies of the area; high royalties, bad management and the 'broker' system.

5. Mr. Marston suggested that shareholders should forego their dividends and put the money back into the mines. (Mr. More was not pleased with the suggestions of high royalties and putting back dividends).

6. Mr. Gwilliam thought that setting up a School of Mines (like London and Cambourne) would bring in interested capitalists and improve management.

Other suggestions included 'finding gold' as had happened at Pontesbury and near Newport (I think the Adams family were involved - IJB).

The Shelve meeting lasted for "three hours" and there were several cheers and 'hearty votes of thanks' to Mr. More.

Ivor J. Brown

Dinas Silica Mines

Danger notices have been posted at the entrance to Dinas Silica Mines, Neath. It was originally thought the mine entrances might be sealed for safety reasons because of the development of Industrial Archaeology trails in the area, but to-date they have not been closed.

Society Restricted

The Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority have placed an enforcement order on Chelsea Speleo. Soc. restricting the use of its cottage (Whitewalls, at Llangattock), to full club members only, although cave rescue personnel etc. have been exempted from the order.

Loo with a view

A British expedition is to examine ways of installing a public lavatory on Mount Everest to cater for climbers.

Members of the British Mount Everest Medical Expedition are to investigate 3 possible methods of dealing with the waste problem, brought about because of the thousands of climbers reaching the 17,500ft. base camp: incineration, freeze-drying and a solar powered composter.

The main problem is that waste does not break down in low oxygen levels, and temperatures which can, at times drop as low as -40°C.

Ad-Spot

Annual Dinner

The Club Annual Dinner will be held at the Wroxeter Hotel, Wroxeter (on the Buildwas to Shrewsbury road, near Attingham Park and the A5) on Saturday 16th October. The meal will start at 7.45pm, guest speaker: Rob Vernon, talking about mining in Spain. Cost for the dinner: £14.00 per head.

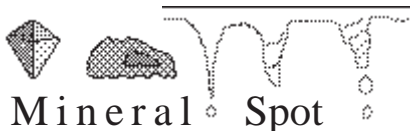
Sygun Copper Mine

Open all year round. The fascination of history and the wonders of modern-day technology combine to create an unforgettable experience at this Prince of Wales award-winning family attraction, set in the heart of the stunning Snowdonia National Park.

Bookings/inquiries to:
Sygun Copper Mine,
Beddgelert, Caernarfon,
Gwynedd, LL55 4NE

Tel: 076686585
24 Hour infoline: 076686564

If you have not visited this mine before, it is well worth it. You can also combine



Galena - Lead Sulphide.

The chief ore of Lead, it is one of the most abundant and widely occurring Sulphides. It often contains valuable amounts of Silver.

It is lead-grey, opaque, metallic luster and usually appears as cubic or octahedral crystals.

It is found in hydrothermal veins crystallized over a wide temperature range, in a variety of deposits and lava flows.

Nearly always found with **Sphalerite**, and often with **Fluorite**.

Common chemical formula: **PbS**



a visit with a walk over the mountain to Llwynddu (OS. ref: 606 483), an interesting copper mine site that was worked for about 6 years in the late 1830's-40's, and has a variety of surface remains. Not far from here (603472) are a series of steel towers - all that remains of the Cwmbychan ropeway down the valley.

The area makes interesting walking, with numerous trials and levels dotted around the mountain - so take care!

Kelvin

Accommodation

Broadrake Farm, Chapel Le Dale, Ingleton LA6 3AX.

Location: Down the lane opposite the Hill Inn, across 5 cattle grids (0.9 mile), then turn right onto track, leading to Broadrake Farm.

Bed and Breakfast, evening meal & refreshments.

Static caravan to let, which has 2 bedrooms, shower, toilet and fitted kitchen area.

Contact: Peter or Helen Hawes. Tel: 05242-41623

New Battery

A rechargeable battery, the 'Pinnacle NX3' has been developed to replace the 4.5v flat-pack battery used in the Petzl zoom. The battery gives almost 6 hours of light with a 4v 0.5a halogen bulb.

It is even suggested that the 'Pinnacle' could be used with a standard Oldham headset to remove the need for a heavy belt-mounted battery.

Quoted price for the new battery is £22.60 and is available from:

Speleo Designs,
Unit A,
Meadowbank,
Draycott Road,
Shepton Mallett,
Somerset, BA4 5HU

Tel: 0749-344281

Club Publications

All Accounts currently cost £3 (to members), available from Mike Moore.

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!).

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 sites, plus 16 B\W photographic plates.

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.

Account No.16

The Mines of Lilleshall and Church Aston, Shropshire.

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

Account 17

Snailbeach Lead Mine, nr. Minsterley, Shropshire.

A short history of some of the surface remains of this fascinating mine site, written by Dr. I.J.Brown. Many of the buildings mentioned in this Account are currently being restored/preserved.

6 Mining Sketches

From the 'pen' of Malcom Newton. These superb drawings need **NO** explanation, you **CANNOT** afford to be without them! **Club price: £5**

Rescue Round-up

Mountain Rescue

The RAF is to re-arrange the air cover of SAR helicopters throughout the UK. Discontinuing the use of Wessex helicopters (replacing them with Sea King) and reducing the number of bases.

The advantages of using Sea King's is increased passenger capacity (17 instead of 8), greater flying time (6 hours against 2), better radar, auto hover and night-time capabilities using night vision goggles.

Despite the reduction in bases, due to a reduction in scramble times the response should be 1 hour in the daytime, 2 hours at night.

A training session on the use of night-time helicopter procedures would be useful, since the use of bright lights could lead to brown trousers as you blind the night vision gear.

Cave Rescue News & Diary

Swildons Rescue

A student has recently been rescued from Swildon's Black Hole series by the Mendip Rescue team. The accident happened when a rock belay gave way. It took a team of 32 rescuers over 10 hours to bring the victim out.

Carno Adit Rescue

Three cavers from Oxford UCC were trapped by rising water in Worm Passage, Carno Adit back in May (31st.). Despite a rescue call-out, the cavers were never in any real danger and were able to make a 'normal' exit a few hours later when water levels fell.

Box Mine Rescue

Two motor-cyclists had a lucky escape from Box Stone Mines recently, after venturing into Lady Hamilton's Hole and expecting to walk straight through to Jack's Entrance, with only a box of matches between them! About 300ft. into the mine they ran out of matches and were lost.

They entered the mine on a Monday lunchtime (hiding their bikes in the woods). Luckily they were not that well hidden, and were seen by a local, who raised the alarm when they were still there the following day.

The MCRO was called out about 10pm on the Tuesday and found the bikers within an hour. They were brought out to surface 35 hours after venturing underground.

If their bikes had not been seen, it is likely that they would have remained undiscovered underground until the following weekend, which without any water would probably have been too late.

USA Cave Accident

During an adventure caving trip in Buzzard's Roost Cave, Kentucky, caver William Coughlin became stuck and subsequently died. Several 'accidents' had happened to him during the trip.

While exiting he had fallen 10m from a flexible ladder, but recovered enough to continue.

As he carried on out, he fell down a slope and became stuck headfirst in a crevice, blocking 2 other members of the party in the cave.

The alarm was raised and despite efforts of the Fire Service (who treated him for hypothermia) and other Cavers he sadly died.

The equipment being used by the party was described as being minimal, no lifeline was used on the pitch.

This idea of adventure caving is quite popular in the states, however, litigation is likely to result from this incident which may have repercussions throughout the US commercial caving world.

See article on page 9.

Rescue Call-out

If you are ever unfortunate enough to have to make a call for cave rescue assistance what should you do?

1. Find a telephone and dial 999
2. Ask for 'Cave Rescue', if in a minor caving area ask directly for the Police.
3. Speak clearly and spell out the cave/mine name(s)
4. Give the Police your telephone number and its location
5. **STAY** by the telephone, because the CRO Warden will need to ask you more detailed questions than the Police.

Note: This is not a waste of time. A little time spent now, obtaining the correct information can save a lot of time later - and possibly the life of the casualty.

What details will you need to know?

- a. The exact location of the incident (eg: name of cave/mine, if possible the map reference/sheet number).
- b. Location of victim(s) in the cave/mine
- c. Suspected injuries
- d. Cause and time of accident (eg: fall, trapped by flood water, physically stuck etc.)
- e. Clothing of victim(s)
- f. Is anyone with the victim(s)
- g. Is there anyone at the underground entrance
- h. What equipment was used to descend underground (eg: SRT, ladder etc.)
- i. Any other problems (eg: very wet pitches etc.)

British Coal

Bilthorpe

Coal mining news during the past few weeks has been dominated by the accident at Bilthorpe Colliery, Notts. on 18th August, when 3 miners were killed and 2 others trapped.

The accident happened 4 miles from pit-bottom, 2,000ft. down, when a 6 man team involved in driving a new roadway were trapped by a massive roof fall of several thousand tons of rock.

Miner, Paul Smith was on the shaft side of the fall and managed to claw his way out into a rock shelter, rescuers released him 4 hours later after cutting through steel supports.

Two other survivors, Orest Kocij and Russ Turner managed to raise the alarm on the telephone, but were trapped on the wrong side of the 160ft. fall. To keep the large rocks off them they built a shelter out of steel bars.

Due to the narrowness of the heading, only 1 rescuer at a time could dig at the fall and it took 7 hours to clear the first 45ft. To speed up the rescue, one team attempted to crawl under a conveyer belt, while others went over the fall into an old abandoned level.

Sadly, under-manager David Shelton, Bill McCulloch and Peter Alcock were killed by the roof collapse. The sixth member of the team, escaped with minor injuries and was able to walk clear to waiting rescuers.

The blame for the accident is being placed on the use of rock bolts, rather than the traditional arch supports. The bolting system is thought to have failed because of the unknown level above the new roadway.

While roof bolting has been widely used in hard rock mines, it is a very controversial subject in coal mines. Bolting is very quick to install and about 50% cheaper than traditional methods. It also has the advantage that it leaves roadways clear of arches.

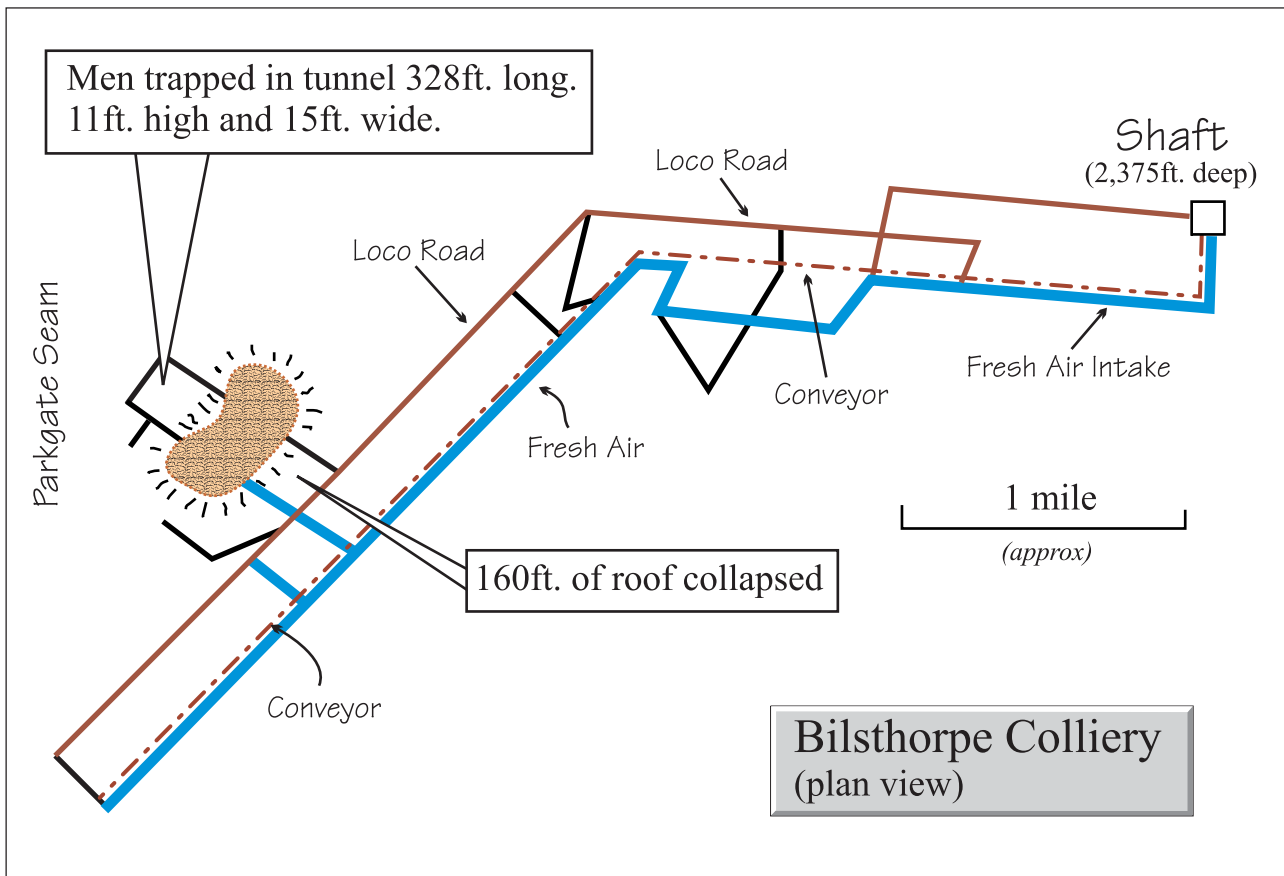
On the negative side, the pattern and lengths of rods is crucial and movements as little as 1mm per month have to be measured to indicate problems.

Mine Facts

Bilthorpe was one of the 31 pits threatened with closure by British Coal last October, but was reprieved after the public out-cry.

After the closure announcement miners at the pit, mostly members of the Union of Democratic Miners smashed production records in an attempt to save their jobs. Last February they produced 60,000 tons of coal in a single week - 3,000 tons more than its previous record set in August last year.

Its 2,200 ft. shaft was sunk between 1925 and 1928 and its coal goes directly to the power stations in the nearby Trent Valley. It employs about 630 miners.



Adventure Caving

On a recent visit to The Cave of the Winds, Colorado Springs, USA, I was interested to see adverts for their "Manitou Grands Wild Tour". It was billed as a 'sporting' tour around areas of the Cave system not normally visited by show-cave visitors. Judging from the pictures it included a few tight squeezes and muddy crawls and interesting formations. However at \$30.00 per person, it was a little beyond my pocket.

These tours are good ways to get people interested in caving and more aware of the cave environment and the trips (in groups of up-to 10 people - 12 years old and over) were designed to build upon the Show-cave's normal tours and to put more emphasis on conservation.

I was interested to see that their list of 'things to bring' only included 3 things:

Flashlight with new batteries
Old clothes for the tour
A change of clothes and shoes, for afterwards.

No mention of helmets or head protection. While the average domestic 'flashlight' is not really suitable for caving, the most surprising thing was that helmets or some form of head protection was not requested or supplied!

In fact of all the mines and caves visited only 1 actually had any hard hats, in contrast to Britain where almost all underground sites insist on the wearing of hard hats. After the recent fatality in Buzzard's Roost Cave, Kentucky, I expect (hope) this situation will change, with at least some advice on how to 'dress' for the cave environment.

Kelvin

Medieval Mines

Archaeologists involved in a survey of the Beaudesert area of Cannock Chase have discovered mine workings which they believe date back to medieval times.

Over 700 different workings ranging from shallow pits to the remains of shafts and coal seams have been identified by Staffs County Council planning and economic development department.

It is hoped that the site can be protected from Forestry operations and preserved.

Fossil Find

Fossil hunter, Chris Moore (no relation to Mike) has recently discovered one of the biggest skulls of the pre-historic fish-lizard, *ichthyosaur*, embedded in cliffs at Lyme Regis, Dorset.

RJB Mining

This private coal group aims to bid for all or part of British Coal when the Corporation is privatised in the spring of 1995.

The group is bidding to lease and licence 4 currently unwanted pits (believed to be Markham Main, Rossington, Bevercotes and Clipstone Mines), in an effort to build a track record running profitable deep mines prior to 1995.

Both RJB and Geevor (see page 3) aim to find markets for their pits where British Coal has failed, such as targeting household and industrial buyers. This will involve switching production strategy away from mining the maximum possible volume of coal in small fragments to producing at least half their output in larger chunks suitable for domestic fires.

While high quality household coal can fetch prices of more than 200p a gigajoule, according to Budge, licensed mines will be able to produce coal at less than 120p a gigajoule (the price of recent coal imports).

Cartoons from the Archives



"I thought you said this place was 'super severe'? ... It's been easy so far"

from Cave Humour by D.Stevenson 1970

Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

**Membership Services:
Mike Moore**

**Chairman & NAMHO Rep:
Steve Holding**

**Tackle & Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton**

Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton

**Training Officer:
Alan Robinson**

Secretary: Adrian Pearce
scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

'Below' Editor: Kelvin Lake
e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk

Diary Dates 1993

The names in brackets indicate the trip organiser or contact.

26 September: Cave Rescue Practice Shropshire [Neal Rushton]

16 October: Club Dinner, Wroxeter Hotel, Llanymynech Ogof on Sunday. [Mike Moore]

12 November: Nottingham Caves [Mike Moore]

5 December: South Shropshire Project [CA/NR].

The South Shropshire Project involves surface surveying and underground exploration/surveying. Meet on each date at 10am in the car park by Snailbeach Village Hall (SJ373023)

1994

25-26 March: 2 day celebration of 500th Anniversary of the birth of Georg Agricola, Chemnitz, Germany

17-20 April: I.of M. & M. Extractive Industry Geology Conference, Sheffield University.

