

35 Years in Action

Ivor Brown has informed me that the Club has been involved in publishing for 35 years. The early milestones are:-

1959: Informal group calling themselves the Shropshire Mining Group began to record mining remains. Their 'Survey' of the Lilleshall Mines was published as Account No.1 of the Shropshire Mining Club in Oct. 1960.

1960: The group became formalised as the Shropshire Mining Club in January 1960, they announced that they were to undertake a systematic survey of the South Shropshire Mines.

1961: The Club obtained the use of an empty flat in St. Mary Street, Newport for use as a Clubroom. The inaugural meeting and formal establishment of the Club took place on Sept. 6th 1961. An exhibition of "Hobbies in Newport" included the Club's activities and this led to many other enthusiasts making contact.

1962: The first AGM of the Club was held and Account No.2 on the South Shropshire Mines was published, also the first "Yearbook".

1963: The Survey of Llanymynech Ogof was commenced with further survey work in South Shropshire, the Coalbrookdale coalfield and the Eglwyseg escarpment. The Associate Members Section was formed.

1964: The Club room in Newport was abandoned in favour of the cottage

near the Last Inn, Church Aston. The first monthly newsletter was produced and edited by Ivor Brown.

1994: The Club, now the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club is still in the publishing business, Accounts are still produced. The Yearbook has become the Journal, while the monthly Newsletter has become the quarterly journal, 'Below'.

Further articles on the Club history will appear in the Annual Journal.

If you would like to become a part of this long tradition, articles, trip reports or short news items are always welcome for printing in 'Below' or the Annual Journal. If you normally type your material on a P.C. compatible computer, why not let me have your copy on disc? I can cope with files created by Wordstar 4, Wordperfect or Microsoft Word, or plain ASCII files and I promise I'll give the discs back when I have finished with them, honest.

Kelvin

Pete Etchells is Appealing

Pete is researching the light railway (1' 10³/₄" gauge) that ran from Cothercott (or Wilderley) Mine to the mill and then on towards the Wilderley drainage level. If you have any information about the railway (or mine) or can suggest any possible sources, then please ring him on: 0922-640519

Help Wanted

A Mr. R. Valentine of Worcester has asked for help in tracing his family in Madeley. His great, great, grandfather was named William Lloyd, he lived at Lincoln Hill, Madeley. In 1841 he was aged 60 and was a miner. 10 years later he was a chartermaster, holding the contract for an ironstone mine in Madeley Parish and employing 22 men, 12 boys and 15 girls.

One of William's sons, Benjamin seems to have followed his fathers footsteps becoming the owner of a mine employing his own son and up to 4 brothers. Mr. V. believes that there was a mine accident in the 1870's or 80's which killed all of them.

IJB has only been able to trace 4 multiple death accidents in Madeley since the 1840's (In 1864 - 9 killed, they were buried together in Madeley Churchyard, 1868 - 3 killed, 1888 - 3 killed and 1910 - 7 killed at Kemberton pit), but he has not seen the reports of the HMI for 1884 - when 6 died.

Does anyone know of any other multiple death mine accidents in Madeley, particularly in there years?

It seems more likely that the Lloyds were killed separately or perhaps the information has been exaggerated in the telling.

Ivor Brown

Dudley Rescue Practice January 8th-9th 1994

We arrived at the Windmill on Saturday morning where Neal Rushton had already set up his stand. After a short introduction by Dave Bowdley the meeting split into workshops. Neal ran a rigging workshop on the roof covering rigging and hauling techniques. Alan Robinson gave a talk and demonstration of air and gas monitoring.

John from the Dudley Club gave a talk and slide show as an introduction to rescue.

Colin Armfield held a discussion about First Aid and the response to an incident underground.

After a break for lunch most of the group either concentrated on stretcher packing with the Neil Robinson and

Cocoon stretchers or hauling techniques from the roof. Both types of stretcher were hauled up to the roof and manoeuvred through the frame from which the ropes were rigged. For this exercise the stiff frame on the N/R. was far better for hauling and for the comfort of the casualty. The day ended with a de-briefing session.

Sunday started at 9 o'clock with a short briefing session followed by workshops on hauling, gas monitoring and a brainstorming session on first aid response to an incident.

Colin then presented a flow chart as a memory aid for response to an accident after which Joppo talked about call-out procedures.

After lunch a rescue practice was held using all of the problems possible at the Mill. This involved 2 casualties one of which required hauling in a harness with an injured shoulder, the other casualty needed evacuation in a stretcher due to an injury to his lower leg.

The weekend ended with a short de-brief from Dave, Joppo and Neal followed by a vote of thanks from all to the Dudley Club for an excellent weekend.

The Windmill provides an excellent venue for these meetings and allows a social atmosphere as well as a training forum.

Colin Armfield

Incident at Clive (Maypole Winze) or 'The Case of the Disappearing Rope'

On the 26/2/94 I took my twin daughters (Jennie and Gemma) to Clive Mine, I was planning on doing some ladder training in 'Maypole Winze' with them.

When we arrived 'The Club' were already there (Liz & Colin Armfield, Mike Moore, Nick Southwick and Adrian Pearce, plus various friends).

Colin was rigging the Winze and traverse, Nick had already rigged the other Winze. Julie, Julies friend and Mikes friends were planning to do the infamous crawl, lead by Nick. Liz and Adrian were taking the others across the Winze into the top of the mine, while Colin life-lined the ladder.

Jennie and Gemma got to the bottom with no problems. I then abseiled down and showed them around the bottom of the mine. This is where we met Nick and party at the crawl exit.

I then said to the twins that we would go back up the ladder, (while Nick showed his party the rest of the mine). Gemma was to climb first (I would SRT up with both of them or that was the plan). I crabbed Gemma into the life-line, and she started to climb up. About 10 to 15

feet up, she shouted to Colin to 'Take in'. I was just about to start to SRT when Gemma shouted (and I quote) "*Dad the rope has disappeared, I can't see it anymore*".

Shining my lamp up the Winze I realised that the rope had indeed disappeared! Just before this Colin had shouted down that Gemma must have been climbing very quickly because the life-line was coming up so easily!

I told Gemma not to move and hold on very tight, then with Jennie holding the bottom of the SRT rope, I prussiked at top speed towards Gemma.

On reaching her I 'cow tailed' her to the ladder wire and shouted to Colin to lower the life-line. It was at this point that we all realised that the end of the rope was trapped, so Colin lowered the middle of the rope down to us. It was then the rock hit me on the forearm. As I couldn't move it for 2 or 3 minutes I thought it was broken.

Gemma helped me to tie a 'figure 8' knot in the life-line, which I then clipped into her again.

By this time I had started to get the feeling back into my hands, and my forearm seemed all right, so I continued to SRT up the rope while Gemma climbed the ladder. When I reached the top Colin checked my arm and said it did not appear to be broken.

It was not until later when the twins and myself were talking about the incident that Gemma said that the rock had hit her helmet and then struck my arm before glancing off Jenny's helmet at the bottom.

In view of this 'lucky' escape from what could have been a serious accident. I would stress to all Club members, **PLEASE** double check screw gated crabs, and remember when fitting a novice to a life-line that the gate screws towards you not away from you. Also ask them to check you - ie: the Buddy system.

The only other thing which is of some concern is where did the rock come from, as there did not appear to be any loose 'stuff' at the top of the Maypole Winze when we checked it.

Alan Moseley

Black Morfa Copper Mine Amlwch Rescue

Sunday and Monday the 23rd and 24th of March 1969 at Black Morfa Copper Mine, on the Isle of Anglesey was the scene of a major underground rescue attempt, involving several mining and caving clubs of the day, plus large civil engineering firms and NCB Rescue teams from Gresford.

The incident started when a 12 year old boy fell down 'Footway' Shaft. Sparking a major call-out of CRO's and other services.

The Shropshire Mining Club team (SMC, as we were then called) consisted of D.B. Corbyn (President), M. Summerfield (Chairman), A. Hawkins (Vice Chairman), D.R. Adams (Secretary), J.M. James, P.J. Appleton, G.K. Lyon, P. Summerfield, R. King, J.N.R. Mason, M. Hinks, plus 1 other.

The original depth of 'Footway' shaft was known to be 126 feet, but due to the unstable nature of the shaft collar, initial attempts to reach the boy were made by a combined SMC, S.C.C and L.U.C.C team entering the drainage adit.

This team penetrated the mine as far as 'Engine' shaft, where a telephone link to surface was established, however at this point a complete collapse of the passage had occurred. This collapse in turn had caused water to back-up the adit, beyond 'Footway' shaft. The

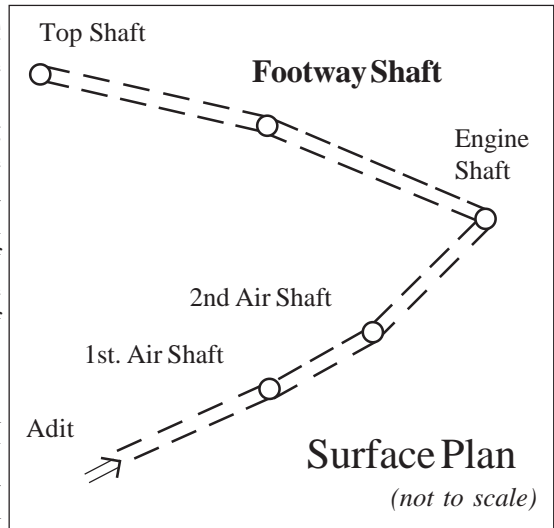
section of passage beyond the blockage was also found to be in very poor condition. The fill was then excavated by relays of men working from crane buckets.

Another team of SMC members, descended the 140 foot deep, 'Top' shaft, with the aim of reaching 'Footway' shaft from the up-hill side. They managed to reach the edge of the fill near the bottom of 'Footway' shaft but were restricted by the amount of water present.

The civil engineering firm Taylor Woodrow aided by SMC members attempted to pump this water, from the adit out via 'Top' shaft.

A telephone link was also established down this shaft to help co-ordinate the operation. Sadly this attempt was ultimately beaten by the depth and volume of water.

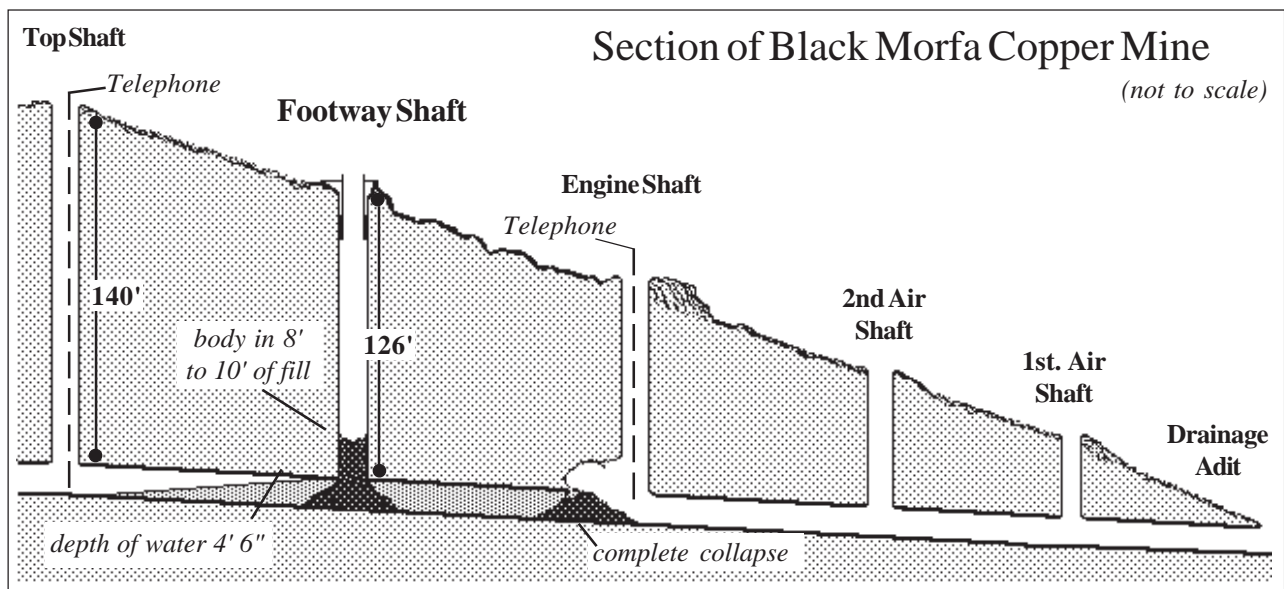
While these rescue attempts were underway, Wimpeys constructed temporary shuttering around the collar of 'Footway' shaft, based on original timber shuttering still in-situ in the shaft. When the collar was suitably stabilised, SMC member J.M. James descended 'Footway' shaft by ladder. He found the depth to the fill to be about 110 feet, and could find no sign of the body.



By 9 o'clock in the evening the volunteer rescue teams were shattered, and the NCB Rescue team from Gresford Colliery was brought in to relieve them. After working for some 6 more hours, they eventually discovered the boy's body. He had fallen head first down the shaft, and was buried in 8 to 10 feet of what appeared to be 'pea-gravel', and had apparently died almost immediately.

'Footway' shaft has since been capped and filled.

Article based on a diagram by Dave Adams



News Round-up 1

by Ivor Brown

Mine Accidents

To add to the note about accidents in mines in the last issue of 'Below' - the Lane Pit (Madeley) accident in which 9 persons died in 1864 was the second worst shaft accident in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield of which IJB has records.

The Kemberton Pit (Madeley) shaft accident in 1910 (7 killed) came third (the Memorial to these men was in the colliery power house, but vanished shortly before the pit closed). There is another mass grave for the 8 miners killed in the Springwell Pit shaft accident (1872) in Dawley Churchyard.

The worst mine accident in the coalfield was at Darklane Colliery in 1862 when 12 were killed (the site of this mine is now under the Telford Town Centre). Second worst was 11 miners suffocated by smoke at Slaughter Pit, Donnington Wood in 1875. Five of the dead were named Guy, another Guy was the Banksman, who let them down and a further Guy was the Chartermaster who said he had previously inspected the workings.

The worst surface accident was at Granville in 1864 when a boiler tube burst killing 3. The worst accidents to non-employees were very similar, both were in Broseley in 1889 and c1948. In both cases one lad had gone into a mine adit and got overcome with blackdamp, the other lad had sadly gone after him, all were suffocated. **BE WARNED!**

Children & Shafts

There are many instances of children falling down shafts, in the 1930's James Nock was looking at a Memorial on Broseley, the ground opened up and he was gone. [*The shaft he fell down was at the corner of the walled grass area in the middle of Broseley High Street. Ed.*]

At Priorslee about 1947 Barry Onions (a relative of IJB) was birdnesting, when he fell down a shaft and his body was

never found. [*A Memorial plaque to Barry is on the wall inside Priorslee Church. Ed.*]

Lilleshall Minerals

A paper in Quart. Journal Geol. Soc. 1883 by C.J. Woodward describes the minerals to be found in Stump Leasow Limestone Mine, Lilleshall. They include quartz, copper pyrites, iron pyrites, haematite, barytes, calcite, dolomite and erubescite [*Bornite - see 'Mineral Spot'. Ed.*].

The mine had just closed following expiration of the lease - unlike the other mines abandoned due to influx of water, it was by the canal near 'Old Farm' as shown on the 1" Survey. The stone had been used for flux and for lime.

Shropshires First Mining Club!

In 1868 the Caradoc Field Club (a group of Shropshire Gentlemen, Ladies and Parsons) got the 'mining bug'. It started with a visit to the Gravels Mine, "where the process of extracting lead ore is operating", then a trip "to explore certain underground passages" at Buildwas Abbey (15ft. deep shaft, 5ft. square).

Some members had a visit to similar tunnels at Wigmore Grange, then a trip to the Clee Hill mining area (and a lecture on geology on top of Clee Hill) and a trip into the Lincoln Hill Limestone Mine where workmens candles "glimmered like stars". A report of each visit was given in the "Annual Proceedings".

Land Reclamation

IJB has recently assisted in the production of a book on Land Reclamation for the EC (available price £157 hardback, plus £3 postage). It contains some material from Shropshire and is being promoted by a series of Conferences. So far IJB has been one of the speakers (showing local slides etc.) in Nottingham and Brussels.

Opencast Coal Book

A new book "Opencast Coal Plant & Equipment" by Bill Huxley (a Shropshire exile) published by Nynhead Press, Wellington, Somerset, contains 130 good photos including a couple relating to Shropshire.

On page 7 there is a photo of the Coalmoor Basalt Companys industrial tractor and trailer in the 1940's (with IJB's Uncle Jim alongside).

The Company's Malthouse Site at Little Wenlock was, in 1942, one of the first nationally approved sites under the Wartime regime and had a Ruston No.6 steam shovel of '½ yard' capacity. Compare this with the recently commissioned 'Big Geordie' dragline in the North-east, it has a bucket capacity up to '65 yards'.

Tin Mine Shares

Having now traded in his useless Geevor Tin Mine shares for Malcolm Edwards Coal Investment Company shares (on the basis of 80 Geevor to 1 Coal Investment) IJB has gone rash and bought more Coal Investment shares on the basis of 2 for each one swapped with Geevor, so he now becomes a small part owner of Cwmgwili Colliery in South Wales.

What makes mining men do such stupid things? Don't tell me, I know.

Gwynfynydd Tours

Nick Warrell, the owner of Gwynfynydd Gold mine has opened it up for tourists. A special courtesy bus takes visitors from his "Welsh Gold" shop, in the large car park, Dolgellau to the mine. Visitors to the mine **must** assemble at the shop, vehicles are not allowed up to the mine.

At the Gold Mine they have re-opened Robert's Level and connected it to the No.6 adit. Underground exhibits include a crusher and Wilfley Table.

M.C.R.O. - Huglith Rescue Practice

The 'Post Mortem'

The exercise was organised by myself with the following objectives.

1. Promote team spirit and develop a good working relationship between teams within MCRO and with representatives from other CRO's notably Gloucester and Mid Wales.
2. To attempt a complicated rescue from a remote position following an elaborate search operation covering a large area.
3. Afford an opportunity for the controller and all participants the chance to participate in a realistic practice in the knowledge that they are under the scrutiny of the press and are required to liaise with representatives of other rescue groups. (myself)

It is not my intention to outline in detail what happened but to set out my impressions of what happened and I would welcome reports from any or all participants.

The initial meet was managed well and once the permission for car parking at Huglith Farm was known to be available this operation went smoothly.

The controller (subsequently known by the name of Colin) was given the scenario and began the exercise.

I am uncertain as to how long it would have taken to amass the participants had a real call-out have been made and this problem of difficult locations needs addressing.

Initial Reactions

Colin did not outline in sufficient detail the scenario as he had read it and copies were not distributed broadly enough this resulted in team leaders and wardens not being familiar with the facts and may have slowed down the location of the casualties.

Whilst prominent members of a team should in certain instances be kept back it is my opinion that it was a mistake to

send out teams unfamiliar with the location and without experienced rescue team members from the local area. Knowing the location is not enough even in a search situation.

The teams were undoubtedly dispatched too quickly!, whilst details of those present were recorded their location and team designation was confused. It is at this time that the exercise or real rescue is won or lost.

The controller must exercise his authority and execute his solution to the scenario in a very positive manner utilising all the resources available to him, notably his volunteers particularly those who are most experienced.

Tackle management

This was good although the elements were not explained well to the visitors and the lists of gear in rescue bags seemingly overlooked. These bags are designed to provide 1 kit! for a casualty in each bag but not to go underground in this form as the bags are unwieldy, however, the people carrying this kit underground (usually very competent first aiders) must stay with it, know what is available and how to use it to best effect.

Comms

The communications systems were set up by the most experienced people from Shropshire and Gloucester using CB and emergency frequency radios, both the systems had their short-comings - bad reception with the rescue frequency radios and limited common channel availability with the CB's, however, the combination of both could be used to good effect as only having the Rescue Frequency system would have left search teams out of contact for very long periods of time.

There is a need for extensive training among the CRO members in communication, both surface and underground and it was evident that mistakes were made and delays caused by poor communication underground.

First Aid

Having successfully diagnosed all the injuries from which the 3 casualties were supposedly suffering, they were given little appropriate treatment.

In Julie's case, the quick evacuation from the scene and then to surface was excellent but warm drinks and food could have been provided much sooner.

In Alan's case, his arm and hand were well padded but little attention was paid to his heat loss and pain relief, a walking casualty is best not given a lot of pain relief as it is likely to detract from his ability to "help himself" on which the rescue team is depending, but some is appropriate. The availability of a "Parka Coat" from a sleeping bag was overlooked entirely.

In Nick's case, the immobilisation of his legs and springing of his pelvis were not carried out effectively and internal injury could have resulted in a real situation. The injury was designed to test the rescuers ability to load and move a stretcher with the casualty well padded at his middle, this did not happen.

His head although only a superficial injury should also have been bandaged with either a pad and cap or pad and neck brace before his helmet was replaced with extreme caution. A cervical collar should have been fitted as a matter of course where substantial fractures and compressive injury is diagnosed, this would have reduced his alarming head rolls.

Drugs

Pain relief for Nick was also hit and miss but Temgesic was said to have been given although not from the 'dummy' packs provided in which dosages and instructions were included. Entonox was not called for although in Nick's case probably ideal!

Records of drugs were not attached to the casualty, this is **VITAL** as word of mouth is a very poor and unreliable medium.

Huglith - 'Post Mortem' cont..

Casualty care and behaviour around the casualties was good but a discussion on "how are we going to get him out of here?" still went on within earshot of Nick, this is very poor practice and can result in the casualty taking a downward turn very quickly.

Rigging and Hauling

This was done very well and it was encouraging that all rigging, both found (dummy pitch) and installed was checked and rechecked.

The 'Z' rig used to lift Julie was very smooth and efficient although it made hard work for the hauler. The life-line was provided through the jockey on a short cow tail and this system worked very efficiently.

Alan was raised on a conventional lift but his ride was very bouncy. An extra bolt was needed for the stretcher haul and its placement was done by three people, myself, a rescuer and the controller!

Questions

- What on earth was the controller doing there?
- Why did it fall to me as a so called "fly on the wall"?

The lifting teams worked very well at Badger level and from other reports, very well below ground also. It is significant that a six man team could not raise the stretcher off the bottom of the winze, this is attributed to rope friction on the sloping side wall and the inert weight at the bottom (only about 11 stone in all).

Good control from below and use of man power in a Christmas Tree formation although unorthodox worked to assist the team above. It is proof again that resourcefulness is essential in a team whilst safety is always paramount.

Manpower deployment

This was generally good and the change

of team designation after the search phase is to be expected as individuals specific ability becomes of prime importance. However, very good and experienced people were completely overlooked and when their skills were needed they were no longer available, there is a danger of keeping "A" team at the rear. There is also a need for control to be on top of redeployment and to keep a record of who is where all the time.

Moving Control

Moving control was a good thing and it is a credit to the communications team that a base station was re-established next to Badger Level entrance this is ideal as an in-touch control position. Colin's decision to go underground was unwise and he should have remained here having deployed a pitch top controller to the winze.

The post casualty evacuation was good and all tackle and equipment was recovered except for my "dummy" rope, perhaps this is justice?

The only tackle damaged was a bag into which a double ended pick was placed and carried, resulting in a blue and white ships anchor appearing at the car park!

Congratulations

Whilst the report concentrates on the negative points, it is my wish to **CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN WHATEVER CAPACITY** for their efforts and the successful completion of the exercise, all three objectives were realised and the overall performance of the teams was a credit to them and does indicate on-going improvement across the board based on training/practice and experience.

Well done to everyone who attended!

Neal Rushton
M.C.R.O. Chairman

Buried Treasure

Three enthusiasts are opening up the old Glencrieff leadmine at Wanlockhead, Dumfriesshire in the hope of rescuing an 1833 hydraulic powered pumping engine, believed to be the only one of its kind still in existence. The engine was abandoned when the mine closed in the 1920's.

Initially discovered in 1983 by Jeremy Landless, in a side passage 180 feet down the shaft, attempts to reach the engine last year were foiled by a rockfall which had blocked the main tunnel to the pumping room.

Landless, Gilmour Harris and Charlie Smart, have decided to dig through a series of roof falls in an old drainage tunnel to try and reach the engine once more. They reckon it will probably take them about 4 years to break through.

The engine is expected to be listed by Historic Scotland as an important artefact that should be preserved.

Engine Details

The pump was built sometime before 1833 by "Mr Dean of Hexham", Northumberland, a small manufacturer of mining equipment. It was a double acting engine - its large cylinder filled alternately with water first from one end and then from the other. The water to power the engine was collected from streams in the surrounding hills and was fed under pressure from a tank 136 feet above the engine.

It replaced an earlier Watt steam engine in the North Cove seam of the mine. The engine was damaged by a large stone at this site and after its repair was moved to the South Glencrieff seam.

Service Centre Closure

Bestwood Mine Service Centre closed at the end of February with the loss of over 200 jobs. British Coal closed the centre, which maintains pit equipment, because there are not enough pits left to keep it going!

Gloucestershire Rescue 3rd-4th April 1993

This major 24 hour rescue was hosted by Gloucester CRO and based on the Westbury Brook Iron Mine. The essence of the rescue was to recover a victim from a point some 2 km into the mine.

Due to the nature of the mine, a large number of rescuers were needed for this incident and teams from all over Wales the Midlands and even further a field were called in.

A contingent of almost 20 SCMC members made the journey down to the Forest of Dean, and we were all duly booked in by about midday on the Saturday. Only to learn that our 'stints' weren't scheduled until the early hours of Sunday morning. As it was 'hissing' down with rain we were confined to the Hall and Gym of the school being used as the Rescue base.

After browsing the Sales stands (Neals included), drinking numerous cups of tea/coffee supplied by the WRVS, a few of us tried a bit of SRT practice in the Gym to help while away the time.

The main criticism during the waiting period was that we didn't really know what was going on. A notice was put up to say that "the first teams out report 'conditions a little muddy'." but judging by the state of the shower room floor this was an understatement - I have

never **ever** seen a floor ½ to 1 inch thick in mud before!

Due to the size of our team we were split into 3 groups, 1 group to work the 3am slot, another to work the 6am slot and the third to fill gaps in a food run team that was scheduled to go about 10pm and who were a bit short handed.

To pass the time before tea, we decided to nip down the pub for a quick pint. As you might guess, we were only gone for an hour, an people were screaming for us - they had brought the food run time forward. Neal quickly grabbed buckets of chips for Pete Etchells, Daniel, Liz and Colin etc. so they could have something to eat in the bus on the way to the mine, we waved them a fond farewell.

A couple of hours later while we were trying to get some sleep, Neal was summoned out of the Gym with an urgent request for our oxygen meter, bad air was reported in the overnight underground base camp.

Luckily Pete Etchells had taken it with him, and arrived at the camp as panic was setting in. Using the meter to prove the air was ok he managed to calm the situation, and after due deliberation the Controller called the rescue off.

The next morning, ambulance crews and other rescue teams and TV crews

were still arriving, all eager to join in. Breakfast was a bit of an anti-climax for those of us who had not made it underground.

As we were the only team with an oxygen meter, we were elected to enter the mine and assess the condition of the air, thus clearing the way for the de-tackling crews.

The trip into the mine, was certainly interesting. Due to all the rain the mud had all the properties of superglue. The mine was actually on 3 levels but roof falls and collapses meant that you were continually climbing up from one level to the next or descending down narrow rifts into a lower level. A very sporty mine - even a year after the event my wellies still have traces of Westbury Brook mud on them !

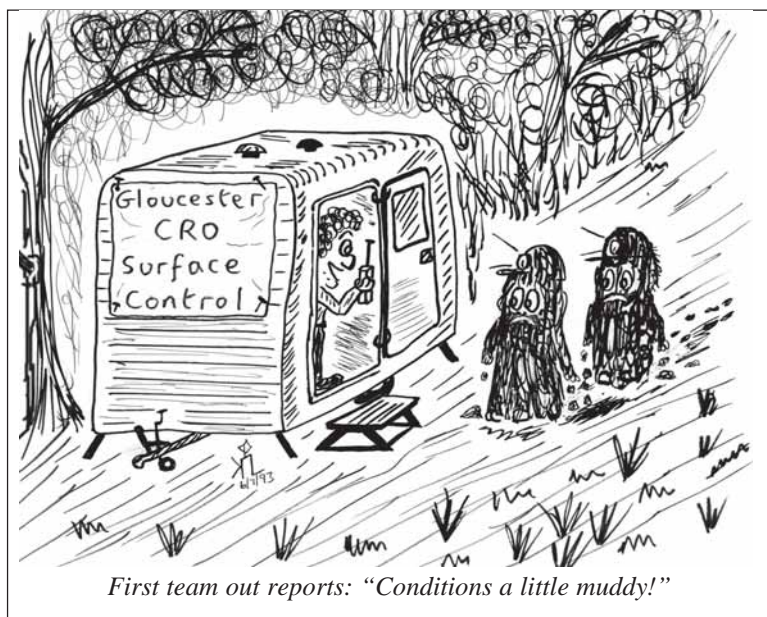
Chaos Cavern

As we approached the tunnel leading down to cavern used for the overnight camp, the smell of paraffin/fuel was very strong. Alan and Vicky Robinson and myself were the first people to drop down through the narrow hole into the cavern and we could not believe our eyes. The scene of total chaos was unbelievable, it was obvious that what ever had happened in this small cavern was sheer panic, there is no other way to describe it.

As we started to pack-up, luckily 'Mole' arrived and he new exactly what went where (having brought it all in almost single handed!). Using the combined teams of SCMC groups 1 and 2, Dudley and Birmingham, we all started on the long and arduous trip out. Every time you put something down, it glued to the floor or got rocks stuck to it, I'm convinced the mud was really an alien life form!

We eventually arrived back at the school, where Bob Taylor took a picture of us all grinning like Cheshire Cats, caked in mud. In hindsight it was an excellent trip - but getting the tackle out was bad enough I would not have liked to work with the stretcher!

Kelvin



First team out reports: "Conditions a little muddy!"

Book Reviews

“Mines of the Gwydyr Forest. Part 5 Coed Mawr Pool, Cyffty and other Mines”

by John Bennett and Robert W. Vernon. A5 144pp ISBN 0 9514798 4 9. Price: £6.50 post free from Gwydyr Publications c/o John Bennett, 7 St. Johns Way, Cuddington, Cheshire CW8 2LX.

This is the fifth book in the series of seven and covers as the title indicates the mines on the high ground west of Betws-y-Coed and on the north bank of the Llugwy river.

The principal mines in this area were Cyffty, Coed Mawr Pool and Ffridd and the main body of the book is taken up with a most interesting description of their histories.

As with the majority of Welsh mines much more money was generated by the promoters than was ever won from the ground and it is quite remarkable how little was in fact brought to “day” in any of these ventures. Cyffty is one of the better known mines of N. Wales and is perhaps so because of the excellent surface remains which were extant until 1966 when they were needlessly demolished. In the last 2 years an interpretation trail has been completed and the much reduced remains consolidated after the completion of a limited amount of

excavation. This trail is described in the book as are the present day remains at the other sites.

At the back of the book is a 12 page Appendix which is an extract from the Royal Commission Report of 1864, known as the Kinnaird Commission, which was appointed to inquire into the condition of all mines in Great Britain. This extract deals exclusively with Coed Mawr Pool mine and evidence from Lord Willoughby’s agent and the mine Captain, Matthew Wasley.

The book is written in the usual easy reading style from these authors and the chapters are arranged in such a way that the individual histories of the mines are easily unscrambled from their often interrelated activities.

There are 33 maps and diagrams including four very good fold out plans and 10 photographs. Again in this volume, as in the others, there are not many old photographs, but I am informed by the authors that this is simply due to their extreme scarcity and not a reluctance to publish. This volume stands well on its own, for those just interested in this particular area and for those who have already acquired volumes 1-4 it must be simply a formality to rush out and get Volume 5!!

Damian J. McCurdy

“The Milwr Tunnel”

by Cris Ebbs. 51 b/w photo’s 14 plans and sketches, ISBN 0 9522242 0 8.

This book describes in detail a major engineering feat in North Wales: the Milwr (pronounced Milloor) drainage tunnel, running some 10 miles from Loggerheads down to the Dee Estuary. It covers, the working methods and records miners tales, there is the Powells Lode Cavern the largest in the UK where waste materials were tipped into its lake for over 6 years without affecting the water levels. During the tunnels lifetime it gave access to previously inaccessible mineral lodes and limestone, it had also caused the St. Winefrides Well some 2½ miles north of the tunnel to dry up.

The book is both well written and supplemented with photographs and easy to follow plans. Unlike many publications of this type it is addictive reading and difficult to put down. The author has had the advantage of the tunnel being a working mine until 1977 and therefore being able to interview the last miners and their manager with the luxury of many old and new photographs being available. This is a must for any mining historian or serious book collector it will also appeal to those who know little of the subject.

The book costs £4.95 and is available from me.

Mike Moore

First Aid

The Mountain Rescue Council of England and Wales have issued a recommendation that team members should have the following minimum First Aid knowledge in order to be on a call-out list:-

1. Maintain airway with no mechanical aids by appropriate position of the patient and his airway. Absolute priority over spine considerations.
2. Be able to stop major external haemorrhage.
3. CPR
4. Have examined (in training) for vital signs, be able to repeat UNDER radio control - pulse - respiration - pupils reaction - transmit to base - record on Cas Card.

It would seem sensible that if the above points are considered necessary basic requirements for Mountain Rescue, then they should also be the requirements for basic Cave Rescue team members.

Darren Incident

On Saturday 29th January, Matthew Ward, a member of Bristol Caving Club was trapped for 24 hours by a fall in Darren Cilliau, Llangattock. Rescuers used hydraulic jacks to lift boulders that were trapping his legs, and Mr. Ward, an experienced caver and mountaineer, helped dig himself clear of the surrounding debris.

Midlands CRO were put on **stand-by** in case of problems at the long crawl on Darren, however things went ok, and Mr. Ward managed to hobble the 3 miles to surface where an ambulance took him to Nevil Hospital, Abergavenny.

Underground Evening

To commemorate the opening of the Channel Tunnel (May 6th?) BBC 2 is to broadcast an ‘underground evening’. The BBC keep changing their minds about the transmission date, but it is currently scheduled for May 1st. (or thereabouts) at 8.25pm.

It is interesting to see how the mining industry has virtually disappeared during one persons working life. Seventeen collieries closed in Shropshire while IJB worked there.

At vesting day in 1947, there were 22 Shropshire Collieries, these had dwindled to just 5 in 1962, when he left the area.

By contrast, a plan in the Shropshire Records Office of about 1860 (SRO 5607/2/115) shows 32 mines to be operative in SW. Shropshire working lead and copper and a note on the plan adds "There are 17 steam engines in the Rea Valley working at Collieries and lead mines and 4 others are now ordered."

Notes:

1. Ifton and Bayton (Hunthouse) were also usually regarded as Shropshire Collieries but were often listed elsewhere as they were so remote from the main working area.
2. Mines over 30 men were generally nationalised but this was avoided by 'splitting' between 'shafts' and in some cases "volunteered" by adding together men from different mines.

IJB arrived in Yorkshire (West) in 1977 to keep an eye on planning details at 30 British Coal Mines, with recent closures at Sharlston and Frickley, only 1 out of the 30 is left (Prince of Wales at Pontefract), over 35,000 jobs have gone. But that is mining!

Ivor Brown

Mines of 1947	Production in 1946	No. of men	Position in 1962
Alveley (Highley)	n/a	826	Working
Kemberton	n/a	548	Working
Grange	n/a	139	Working
Granville	n/a	327	Working
Princess End & Lawley	7465 tons	70	Closed
Shrubbery	664 tons	11	Closed
Shortwoods	12077 tons	50	Working
Rock	1524 tons	9	Working Clay
Common	3325 tons	15	Closed
Brandlee	2649 tons	23	Closed
Huntington	2954 tons	20	Closed
Farm	5680 tons	23	Closed
Moors	8159 tons	40	Closed
Wellington	118 tons	2	Closed
Goodhope	2295 tons	11	Closed
Plants Farm	1097 tons	5	Closed
Stoney Hill	1938 tons	10	Closed
Smalley Hill	3743 tons	15	Closed
Old Park	3203 tons	11	Closed
Woodside	3724 tons	20	Closed
Castle Place (Pontesford)	60 tons	2	Closed

Midlands Pits Saved

Malcom Edwards has been successful in his bid to operate Trentham Colliery (Stoke-on-Trent) and Coventry Colliery as private mines. The mines have been on 'care and maintenance' since B.C. closed them. It is thought that about 150 jobs will be re-created at each pit (less than half the original workforces).

Morse's Level Video

The latest video release from I.A. Recordings is compilation No.28 "Morse's Level". This enhanced compilation, with the aid of commentary and graphics takes you on a unique underground tour of one of the surviving Dean Free Coal Mines. £9.95 (VHS) available from Kelvin.

Grotto Sociologist

An Italian sociologist recently completed an epic 365 day underground trip! Maurizio Montalbini (aged 40) was taking part in an experiment, 80 feet down a cave near the eastern city of Pesaro, where he spoke to no one and survived on 18 types of food pills.

His only contact was with his wife, who he communicated with via computer. Making do without clocks and calendars was part of his experiment and he soon lost his sense of time.

He said he thought about speaking several times but without feeling any need for it.

"I never talked to myself audibly. A few times I played the harmonica and hummed tunes but the result was not very pleasant - almost an intrusion in the grotto."

Foreign Mines South Africa

Rescuers were searching for almost 100 people missing in 2 mining disasters, amid demands for an urgent inquiry into safety conditions.

Wednesday Feb. 23rd 1994

Fifteen people died and 80 are still missing in the Orange Free State mining town of Virginia, when a gold mine waste heap burst containing walls and buried a suburb in mud.

Thursday Feb. 24th 1994

Thirty five coal miners were trapped underground by a fire in the Koornfontein mine in the eastern Transvaal. Nineteen others were missing, feared dead.

The National Union of Mineworkers accused mining firms of failing to carry out the recommendations of their official guidelines on safety. Since the NUM's formation in 1982, the rate of accidents and deaths in South Africa's mines has fallen. Employers sat there were 605 deaths underground in gold mines in 1983 and 397 in 1993.

NAHMO Field Meet 5th-8th August 1994

This years NAHMO field meet will be held in the Royal Forest of Dean and hosted by the R.F. of D. Caving Club, Gloucester Speleological Society, Hades Caving Club, and Clearwell Caves.

There will be a large variety of underground trips for people of all abilities, and several surface visits to mining related sites.

Iron mining has occurred in the Forest of Dean since the early Iron Age (2,700 years ago), and ended with the Second World War. In the years between, an intriguing and extensive series of workings have been created. This is a good opportunity to choose a range of visits to these mines and see some of the recent new discoveries.

A visit to a working Dean Freemine is also planned, which will be an opportunity to go underground into a unique type of coal mine.

On the Saturday night there will be a pig roast and social at the Rising Sun, Moseley Green where there will also be a slide and video show throughout the evening.

Registration is on the Friday night or Saturday morning, at Clearwell Caves. Camping and other accommodation is available nearby, details will be sent with the booking forms.

For information and booking forms, send an A4 SAE to:-

John Hine Esq., The Grottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Glos. GL16 7QF

Sygun Copper Mine

One mile from Beddgelert on the A498 road to Capel Curig.

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.

Each stage of the mining process is clearly explained by audio presentations, as you make your way around the quarter mile route which rises 140 feet via stairways to emerge at the Victoria Level for a breathtaking view of the Gwynant valley and surrounding Snowdonia mountain range.

Special rates for SCMC Members:

If you present your Club Membership card at the desk you can get a 10% discount on the entrance fee.

Bookings/inquiries to:

Sygun Copper Mine, Beddgelert, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 4NE

Telephone: 076686585

24 Hour infoline: 076686564

If you have not visited this mine before, it is well worth it. You can also combine 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, including a dressing floor, stopes and a horse gin circle.

Not far from here (603 472) are a series of steel towers (although many have recently been removed) - all that remains of the Cwmbychan ropeway down the valley.

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

Murchison's Memorial

It is understood that plans are afoot in Shropshire to commemorate the work done there by Sir R.I. Murchison (1792-1871). It appears however that there is already a memorial, a Walk at Roman Gravels as the following suggests:

From an article entitled "The West Shropshire District & Mines" by Mr. Jasper More, MP (The Advertiser Feb. 27 1903).

"Sir R. Murchison paid his last visit but one of his life to Mr. Jasper More at Linley, giving his account of his experience in Shropshire 40 years before. He said that there was not a square yard of Shelve on which he had not put his foot....."

He said he was astonished to see Shelve so little worked. .. Sir Roderick authorised Mr. More to say that Shelve would prove to be the richest part of England for minerals, after Allenheads in Northumberland The Walk above the Gravels Engine near the road was christened by Mr. More, the Murchison Walk, when Sir Roderick Murchison stood upon it."

Ivor Brown



Bornite - Copper Iron Sulphide.

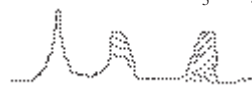
A common copper ore (minor source of copper) found in high temperature veins, intrusive igneous rocks, pegmatites, and contact metamorphic rocks. It is often associated with Chalcopyrite (the most wide spread copper mineral - also a sulphide) and Chalcocite (copper sulphide - a major ore of copper).

It's characteristic red or brown colour and purple iridescence gives it the nickname "**Peacock Ore**".

It crystallises in cubic systems, but rarely as cubic crystals, usually as masses. Found in Shropshire and Derbyshire - it was the second most important copper ore at Ecton.

Some old records often refer to it as : **Erubescite**.

Common chemical formula: Cu_5FeS_4



Kelvin

Books for Sale

“**Slate and Slate Quarrying**” by D.C.Davies, 1877 (a rare 1st ed.) £19

“**Preliminary Mineral Reconnaissance of Central Wales**” by T.K.Ball and M.J.C.Nutt, Institute of Geol. Soc. Report N0.75/14, pub. 1976. Includes 12 maps 1:100,000 scale showing distribution of copper, lead, zinc, tin, manganese, barium and cerium from sediments and panning tests. £15

“**Mortons Geology and Mineral Veins of Shelve Shropshire, 1869**” (photostat), see next column, over 40 pages) £8

“**Industrial Archaeology Review**”, with 12 pages on the mines of Madeley Wood and the Lloyds, Shropshire and 100 pages on preservation, wind engines and hydraulic machines etc. pub. 1991. £7

All available from:
Ivor Brown, 95 Manygates Lane, Sandal, Wakefield, WF2 7DL

More Books for Sale

N.M.R.S. Publications

British Mining No. 17, The Cwmystwyth Mines

Simon J.S.Hughes, 1981, A4 78pp

British Mining No. 22, The Richest in All Wales

Marilyn Palmer, 1983, A4 47pp

British Mining No. 23, Memoirs 1983 Various Authors, 1983, A4 79pp

British Mining No. 25, Memoirs 1984 Various Authors, 1984, A4 50pp

British Mining No. 26, The Old Mines of the Llangynog District

R.A.Williams, 1985, A4 128pp

British Mining No. 27, The Rheidol United Mines.

R.J.Pritchard, 1985, A4 36pp

British Mining No. 28, Memoirs 1985 Various Authors, 1985, A4 64pp

British Mining No.33, The Yorkshire & Lancashire Leadmines

M.C.Gill, 1987, A4 68pp

British Mining No.34, Memoirs 1987 Various Authors, 1987, A4 55pp

British Mining No.35, The Goginan Mines

Simon S.J.Hughes, 1988, A5 88pp

Geology and Mineral Veins of the Country around Shelve 1869

This is the earliest book yet found on Shropshire lead mining. G.H.Morton gave 2 papers to the Liverpool Geological Society which were so well received that he followed them up in 1869 by publishing a small book of this title. The only copy the writer has seen is in Shrewsbury Library (ref. TV15) and is of A5 size, hardback with 39 pages.

It contains 12 text figures (line drawings) and several lists of fossils and minerals and the mines where found. There is much mining information too, particularly on the Gravels, Grits. Pennerley and the Bog Mines with passing mentions of most of the other mines. He refers to the ‘27’ mines in the area of which 8 were working lead at that time and 3 were working barytes (Old Church Stoke, Rorrington and Meadow Town).

He also mentions a number of copper mines of which Westcott seems to have

been most important. He includes a ground plan of Pennerley and the Bog prepared by ‘Captain R.Waters’ who was possibly Arthur Waters’ father (see last issue of ‘Below’). According to Morton, White Grit was then 600ft. deep, East Grit 630ft, Pennerley 1080ft and Bog 1200ft.

A number of important persons are mentioned including Mine Captains W.Bennett, R.H.Vivian and R.Waters and a clue to early smelting sites is given. The earliest sites seem to have been on the flat ground on Shelve Hill, just over the North Veins above the Gravels. Possible later sites were opposite the back of the Tankerville Arms and “at East Grit Mine”.

It is a fascinating book and would be well worth ‘checking out’ on the ground today.

Ivor Brown

British Mining No.36, The Kelton & Knockmurton Iron Mines 1852-1923

R.E.Hewer, 1988, A5 84pp

British Mining No.37, Memoirs 1988 Various Authors, 1988, A5 78pp

British Mining No.38, A History of the Manor and Mines of Marrick, Swaledale. L.O.Tyson, 1989, A5 72pp

British Mining No.39, Memoirs 1989 Various Authors, 1989, A5 116pp

British Mining No.40, The Darren Mines

Simon S.J.Hughes, 1990, A5 153pp

British Mining No.41, Memoirs 1990

Various Authors, 1990, A5 110pp

A4 Issues - £7

A5 issues - £6

CAVING BOOKS

Caves of Derbyshire,

T.D.Ford, 3rd Edn 1976, 42pp

The Caverns & Mines of Matlock Bath - 1 The Nestus Mines,

Flindall & Hayes, 1976, pbk, 72pp

Caves of South Wales,

Tim Stratford, 3rd Edn 1986, pbk, 115pp

Northern Caves - Vol 1, Wharfedale & Nidderdale,

Brook, Coe, Davies & Long, 2nd Edn 1975, pbk, 144pp

Northern Caves - Vol 2, Penyghent & Malham,

Brook, Davies & Long, 1st Edn 1976, pbk, 120pp

Northern Caves - Vol 3, Ingleborough, Brook, Davies & Long, 1st Edn 1975,

pbk, 144pp

Northern Caves - Vol 4, Whernside & Gragareth,

Brook, Davies, Long & Sutcliffe, 1st Edn 1975, pbk, 144pp

Northern Caves - Vol 5, The Northern Dales,

Brook, Davies, Long & Ryder, 2nd Edn 1977, pbk, 160pp

Interested?

I am open to offers on any books for which I have not quoted a price.

No prices include any postage - I would prefer the buyer to collect if possible.

These books are just a few of the ones I am selling off. I have a more complete list, please send an SAE if you are interested.

J.G.Isherwood,

1 Arundel Close, Randlay, Telford, TF3 2LX

Tel: 0952-591-985

Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

**Chairman/NAMHO Rep:
Steve Holding**

Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton

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

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

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**Tackle & Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton**

**Training Officer:
Alan Robinson**

**Conservation Officer:
Brian Tildesley**

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

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

Diary Dates '94

For organised Club trips please refer to Adrian's Monthly Meets lists.

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

9 April: Subterranea Britannica Day Conference, Royal School of Mines, Imperial College, London SW72AZ. Members £6.50, Non-Members £7.00.

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

5-8 August: NAHMO Field Meet, Royal Forest of Dean. Underground trips to Iron and Coal mines, plus surface visits. Saturday night pig roast & social inc. slide shows & videos.

12-14 August: Subterranea Britannica Study Weekend, Greater Manchester, Lancashire & Cheshire.

17-18 September: BCRA Conference

24-25 September: MCRO Meet

