

I think it is fair to say that the one event that has dominated the Club over the past few months has been Peter Eggleston's accident that happened on the Cornwall trip.

You will be pleased to know that Pete is making a good recovery - in fact if you were at the May Club meeting you would have seen for yourself, as Pete managed to get along to the "Last". Not bad going, considering it was only 4 weeks since his accident!

While any accident underground makes us more aware of the hazards, when it happens to someone you know, or on the same trip, it comes as a bit of a shock to the system.

However if you look back over the Clubs 30 year+ history, this is the first 'serious' incident involving a Club Member! A short report on the accident appears on page 5.

Hem Heath

On Thursday the 26th May, Hem Heath Colliery re-started production a year after it was closed by British Coal.

The mine, formerly part of Trentham Colliery, has been taken over by Coal Investments Ltd. Production has started on a face under Trentham Gardens, and is expected to yield 10,000 tonnes.

Full production at the pit is planned to start later in the year.

This firm have taken over several other British Coal pits, see page 6.

Car Thefts

While we are all aware of the possibility of having our cars broken into (particularly those of us who live in Telford!), it seems the number of incidents involving cavers parked in remote locations in on the increase, particularly in Derbyshire. In several incidents this year a white van or minibus has been seen arriving at the parking spot or leaving shortly before break-ins were discovered.

If you cannot leave someone on the surface to guard the car, take the number of any vehicles you see in the vicinity, particularly any white vans/minibuses.

NAMHO Field Meet

The National Association of Mining History Organisations field meet this year will be in the Royal Forest of Dean.

A wide variety of underground trips is organised for all abilities as well as several surface visits. The Saturday night promises a pig roast (limited numbers) and social at the Rising Sun, Moseley Green together with a slide show and videos.

For more information send an A4 SAE to: J.Hine, The Grottage, 2 Cullis Lane, Mile End, Coleford, Glos. GL167QF

Llanymynech is not a Roman Mine!

Because:

- (a) skeletons and armbands previously found in the Ogof are more typical of a pre-Roman Bronze Age site.
- (b) the meandering, labyrinthine workings are not typical Roman work.
- (c) the Roman coin horde found in the 1960's is typical of Romans and others having visited an existing Ogof to hide or for shelter.

These were the conclusions of a group at a conference of over 70 experts on "Mining before Powder" held in March to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Agricola.

It is now certain that Bronze Age, Roman and Medieval Mining in Britain is much more common than was ever anticipated.

All these periods will probably be represented in Shropshire, and we should now try to prove with evidence.

There is no doubts about Roman lead working, Hadrian left his name on a pig at Linley - and what of the wooden tools from the Gravels and Llanymynech, tests could be made on them to ascertain age?

Elsewhere documentary evidence is known of early mining laws (eg: N.Wales, Derbyshire, Forest of Dean - why not Shropshire?). Also lamps, candles, clothing, tools and sledges.

If you find anything, please report it to the County Archaeologist.

Ivor Brown

Croesor-Rhosydd Trip Saturday 12/3/94

We had heard various reports of there being a through route between Croesor and Rhosydd slate quarries but until the recent report in a CAT publication it was thought that the route may have been lost due to the rising water in Croesor. The CAT article described a route with vertical drops, tyrollean traverses and a swim; a trip with fascinating potential.

In January, the Rhosydd end of the trip was identified and the flooded area that required swimming was observed; 2 cavers from Llanduddno, who were seeking the through route were attempting this section, without apparently much idea of what lay beyond.

On this earlier trip, the initial pitch (of approximately 70 feet) in Croesor was descended by Stuart Tomlins who briefly examined the large chamber accessed.

Saturday 12th. March

On Saturday 12th. March, a group returned to explore further and possibly achieve the through trip. Alan Robinson, Neal Rushton, Andy Harris, 2 new members, Francis and Tim and myself, re-entered Croesor and descended into the large chamber while John (Fred) Howley and Alan Moseley went initially to drop a rope down the Rhosydd end and then follow the main party into Croesor.

The large chamber in Croesor proved to be of dramatic proportions with a very broken floor. This apparently single chamber has probably been created by the robbing and collapse of the pillars.

At the western end of the chamber, there was another vertical pitch of around 70 feet. This pitch was found to be rigged with a dynamic rope but since it was of unknown age and origin, the pitch was re-rigged.

To permit Francis and Tim to continue further, Fred and Alan following on behind were asked to drop the ladders

which had been placed on the first pitch to re-use on this second pitch.

From the bottom of the second pitch, it is not far to a short awkward drop down a less than obvious hole which effectively leads through a pillar to a series of large levels and chambers.

Taking the most obvious and direct route on, the levels soon come to a wooden bridge over a flooded chamber. The wooden floor of the bridge was in a rapidly deteriorating condition and there was significantly less floor after the group had traversed it in both directions.

A few yards beyond the bridge is another flooded chamber. This one is crossed by traversing round the corner to a large ledge within the chamber.

On the Croesor side of the chamber there is a vague ledge to follow, but I for one was pleased that Alan Robinson had rigged a traverse line by the time that I arrived. The Rhosydd side of the chamber does not have the benefit of a ledge and a couple of in-situ traverse ropes to dangle from are relied upon to regain the level - thanks to Alan Moseley for pulling me up!

A short distance further on, yet another flooded chamber is reached. Across this chamber, the bridge support transom is still suspended from the roof in the middle of the chamber and one of the original main beams lies across it at a crooked angle but apparently not stretching to the far level.

A couple of rails have been placed between the Croesor end and the centre transom; Andy Harris used these to travel to the transom but then discretion directed that the trip be curtailed at this point. There was also a dynamic rope loosely strung between the two levels. Alan and Fred pointed out that they had selected to leave dry clothes within Rhosydd and were somewhat p..... o.. by the prospect of re-crossing the mountain to recover them. The level on the far side of this chamber was

obviously quite short and it was suspected that this lead immediately to the large flooded chamber which forms the final obstacle to the through trip.

The return trip was less than efficient since Andy Harris climbed the ladder on the second pitch to replace the necessary rope protectors before the ladder could be removed for the higher pitch. It is a pity that he carefully placed the rope protectors on top of the ladders. Both pitches have bad rub points and the "make-do" use of tackle bags as rope protectors was clearly not sufficient - my own rope used on the first pitch was badly damaged - I personally suspect that this was due to the extra weight of iron dangling from Andy as he ascended with much puffing and panting.

The trip was as fascinating as I had expected and I am keen to return and explore further. The final obstacle can undoubtedly be surmounted by those who are keen to complete the trip with a swim but I might give this a miss.

Although there are numerous precarious aspects to the trip, I still found the Land Rover descent of the mountain to be the most frightening part.

Steve Holding

Note:

On the following day, I was able to discuss the route with Chris Jones of CAT who had completed the trip last year and wrote part of the CAT article.

The rope on the second pitch was not left by CAT and must be more recent. With regard to the penultimate flooded chamber, CAT did not use the wooden beam, but crossed this chamber only relying on the rope. CAT also thoroughly enjoyed the trips and intend to return soon.

SRH

There is a rumour that the owners of Oakley Quarries may rework Rhosydd, this will destroy or remove access to most the present chamber.

Kelvin

Visit to Leigh Level 27/3/94

Dire warnings of bad air had greeted every suggestion which I had made about surveying the dreaded Leigh Level, but I finally persuaded a few jaded members who were looking for something different that it could be done using breathing apparatus, albeit not specifically designed for the job.

I caught up with them scrambling down from the shaft at Burgam, flushed with the sense of achievement gained from a successful capping operation, and game for anything.

We had three aqua-lung sets, and decided to leave one at the entrance with the backup/spectator team which consisted of Mike Moore, Bob Southwick, John X and Eileen Bowen.

Nick Southwick and myself were to use the other two sets to walk in until one third of the air was used, or for half an hour, whichever came first. We carried the club oxygen meter.

The level is about 2 metres high and about the same wide near the entrance. It bends to the right after about 60m, but

according to my compass only by about 10 degrees. Everyone agreed it seemed more to the eye.

The air was OK, if a bit smelly, until about 20 metres past the bend, and the support party came with us so far and then went back to the entrance after providing me with a target for a back bearing from a few yards further on (340).

Nick and I stumbled on, putting on the breathing sets a few minutes later. The face masks which we wore to inhibit nose breathing did tend to mist up and restrict vision, as well as being uncomfortable.

It was not practicable to measure distance directly, so observations are on the basis of time after the bend. We walked at a fairly steady pace.

The level zigzags by a few degrees every 20 yards or so, but compass readings backwards stayed at about the 340 degree mark all the way.

8 minutes on from the turn there was a

run-in shaft on the right, and the oxygen was holding up at 19.0%.

At 19 minutes we came to a substantial roof fall, almost half filling the passage. The oxygen at this point was 17.2%, and the beeper came on and stayed on.

Two minutes later, and past the fall, it was 16.2%, and when we turned back at 33 minutes it was 13.3%, with no end in sight.

It only took 20 minutes to walk out, but we were both glad we had not stayed any longer. The combination of the weight of the aqua-lungs and the slightly restricted breathing made us feel exhausted. It may also have affected my concentration as I forgot to take oxygen readings at different levels.

I would like to try to reach the end one day, using nose clips instead of the masks. We had more than enough air, emerging with half full tanks, so our half hour limit was conservative. We saw no bats, although several had been seen near the entrance during the previous month.

Mike Worsfold

Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum Auction

Several Club Members attended this very sorry occasion on 14th April 1994. The liquidators had taken control of the Museum and everything had to go, although various disputes and legal battles had left some gaps in the catalogue. Even during the sale people were coming forward and demanding back items which did not belong to the Museum - mostly they could successfully show that this was the case and the item was withdrawn. British Coal had withdrawn 1,500 items which were to be sold separately.

Two items at the sale were identified as being from Shropshire Mines:

1. West Midlands Division (NCB) Accident Prevention Championship Shield. The last dates on it were 1958 to 1961 and the collieries were Granville and Madeley Wood. IJB

remembers the awarding of the shield well, and made a bid for the rather battered light metal shield, but was beaten to £18 by someone from Bristol.

2. A 'Clanny' flame safety lamp made by 'Davis Derby' recorded as "originally the property of an underground manager at Duke of Sutherland Pit Shropshire, also at a Donnington Wood Colliery explosion 1862". IJB was beaten again, it went for **£460 !!** The final purchaser of the lamp was unknown.

Lord Granville of the Lilleshall Co. was half-brother to the Duke of Sutherland and leased mineral rights from him in 1837. It seems the lamp was used originally at one of the pits on the Duke of Sutherlands estate, then taken to the

Lilleshall Companies Donnington Wood Group of mines.

The only explosion in this group in 1862 was at Muxton Barracks Pit and killed 1 person.

In 1908 the flame safety lamps in use in Shropshire were: 2,149 Marsaut (Ackroyd & Best Cambrian and Protector types), 279 Mueseler and 1 Clanny (was this the one from Donnington Wood?).

IJB has a 19th C. original Davy-type (no glass) from Madeley Court Colliery and an Ackroyd & Best Marsaut (pre 1920) from The Rock, Ketley. Others have been given to John Mason, Shropshire County Library and IGMT.

What other Shropshire flame safety lamps survive we wonder?

Ivor Brown

News Round-up 1

by Ivor Brown

Snailbeach

The present contract for work on the Lords Hill Engine House is now completed and for 1994, conservation work is to take place on the Miners Dry and adjoining winding engine house.

John Randall

"Madeley Rest Room Review 1993" contains an interesting feature on John Randall of Madeley (1810-1910).

Even though an 'amateur' he was geological consultant to various local projects; the Severn Valley Railway through the slip areas, Kemberton Pit and Granville Pit. He wrote about 15 books on the area (one on coal and iron industries, another on clay industries), as well as editing 2 journals and a newspaper, all while working full time as a china-painter for 46 years.

POW Miners

Checking out the story that German prisoners worked on the Bog Mine ropeway in World War I, IJB found that they also worked in Shropshire quarries in fair numbers. Handbook to the Shropshire and Montgomery Railway c1920 (p27) says the Ceiriog Granite Co. used German prisoners to work the quarries on the Breiddon Hill and "*after the Armistice in 1918 their places were filled by regular workmen, a large number of whom are now employed*".

BAAS guide

Checking old papers in Leeds University Library IJB found that the British Association for the Advancement of Science held their annual long meeting in Birmingham in 1886. C.J. Woodward gave a paper on the "*Mineral District of West Shropshire*" accompanied by a display provided by the 3 substantive working mines; W Yelland for Wotherton, Mr. Dennis and Mr. Job of Snailbeach and Jasper Moore, MP of Roman Gravels, together with Messrs Waters and Son 'of Shrewsbury'. An '*excursion guide*' to the area of West Shropshire was produced and distributed. Has anyone seen a copy?

A Day Out!

Continuing his studies of past Society visits to the Shropshire Mining areas (see last issue of 'Below') IJB is staggered by the energy of the members of the Severn Valley Field Club, Caradoc F.C., Warwicks F.C. and Liverpool Geol. Society etc.

Warwicks F.C. spent 3 days in S.W. Shropshire in 1867, first day 16 miles, second day (June 25th) walked from Worthen passing Brownlow, Shelve Church, Ritton Castle to Stiperstones, then back to Worthen via Gravels Mine and the "*pretty Hope Valley*". At least 20 miles visiting geological exposures, mines and churches all over rough terrain. Then they found time to write it up!

Copyright Changes

While still trying to locate '*anonymous*' authors of papers dealing with S. Shropshire mines, so that he can republish their material, IJB finds that the copyright rules have just changed.

The copyright on books and papers is to be extended from 50 to 70 years **after** the authors death. However the initial problem still remains - who was the author?

Steam Engines

A request for information from the author of a proposed '*check list of stationary steam engines*': How many remain **outside** of IGMT sites in Shropshire?

Do the engines still remain at Shrewsbury Sewage Works, Bucknall, Bridgnorth Riverside works, Blockleys brickworks,..... any others?

[The engines at Coleham (Shrewsbury) are still there, preserved by Shrewsbury Museums and open to the public on Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

The engine at the saw mill in Bucknall was due to be scrapped/removed in 1974, and I have not heard anything of it since. As for the other 2 sites, I have not come across any references to engines there in recent times. Ed.]

Open Cast

Opencast coal sites listed in Shropshire, Jan. 1994 include:

1. Cleehill (Coal Contractors Ltd), 50,000 tonnes
2. Lodge Coppice, Shrewsbury (C.C.Ltd), 170,000 (Is this really in Shrewsbury Coalfield or an extension of Lodge Lane South?)
3. Lodge Lane South, Telford (C.C.Ltd), under restoration
4. Candles, Telford (Clay Colliery Company).

Post Cards

It is the Centenary of British Post Cards this year. IJB has a number of mining related Shropshire postcards - but not enough for an exhibition or a book (such as has been done in other counties eg: N. Staffordshire, North and South Derbyshire, and North-west Leicestershire).

If anyone knows of any of the rarer cards he would be interested to hear about them (at present about 10 are known in South Shropshire and 4 in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield).

Gold Mine

Lonrho is expected to contribute \$70 million and the World Bank subsidiary International Finance Corporation a further \$70 million towards the development of the \$250 million Amantaytau gold mine in Uzbekistan.

Lonrho will manage the mine, which is expected to begin operations in 1996. It has an expected life of 27 years.

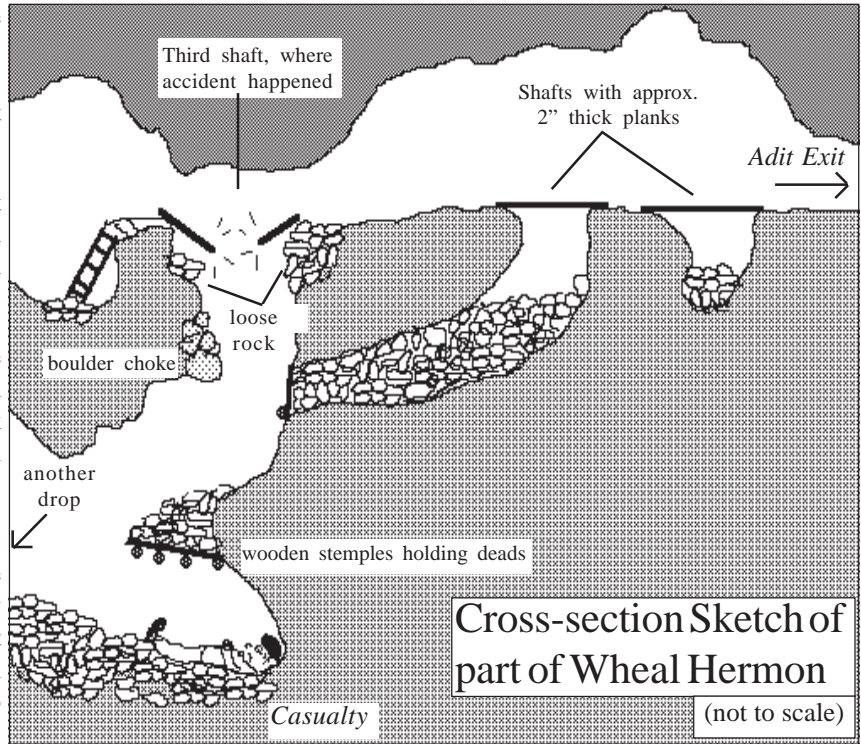
Wheal Hermon Accident, Easter Monday, 1994

On Bank Holiday Monday, during the Cornwall trip a group of Club Members travelled to St. Just, near Lands End, and on to the Cott Valley mainly to visit Wheal Bellan.

While most of the party went underground into Bellan, a few remained on surface to explore beach adits and surface tin steaming sites.

As I was on the main trip, the first we heard of the incident was when Tom West descended into Bellan to break the news that Peter Eggleston had fallen down a stope and they could hear him, but not see him.

Arriving back at the car park the Fire Brigade and Ambulance were already in attendance, with Andy Yapp, Stuart Tomlins and a paramedic down with Pete, the rest of us were only able to help with hauling.



As it was a 'slow news day' considerable number of journalists and TV/Radio crews arrived on site, which accounts for the wide spread publicity.

Luckily, after a 6 hour rescue, Pete was successfully evacuated by Air Ambulance to Trelisk Hospital, Truro.

Despite falling about 60ft. (30ft. vertically, and about 30ft. down a slope), he 'only' suffered a couple of cracked bones and crushed vertebra in his back. It is the back injury that is taking the time to heal, but he is getting around (despite wearing a back support -or 'appliance' as he calls it), and has already made a couple of easy underground trips, one to a Derbyshire gypsum mine and the other to the Bath Stone Mine.

Pete would like to thank all the people involved in the rescue, and everyone in the Club for their kind support and offers of help during his recovery.

A full account of the accident will appear in a later issue of 'Below' when all the eye witness reports have been collated.

Kelvin

Collapse of the (Shropshire) Coal Industry

The last issue of 'Below' listed the outputs of the smaller collieries in Shropshire, immediately prior to Nationalisation. It is interesting, in the light of present day events, to look at the situation with regards to the 13 nationalised mines in Shropshire.

In 1946 Shropshire coal mines (excluding Ifton) produced 506,814 tons, there were 22 separate operations listed and of these 12 were 'nationalised'

having assets valued at £761,400. The last of the 12, Granville (really an amalgamation in 1952 of Granville and Grange) closed in August 1979.

Of the 10 mines that escaped nationalisation 6 were small mines and they were joined by 6 more in the late 1940's. By 1960 only Shortwoods, The Rock (a clay mine) and Hunthouse (in the Forest of Wyre Coalfield) remained.

Ivor Brown

The full list is as follows:

Colliery	Closed
1. Highley (including Alverley),	Jan 1969
2. Granville	
3. Grange - combined 1952,	Aug. 1979
4. Kemberton (including Halesfield),	July 1967
5. Arleston	May 1948
6. Lawley 3 & 4	May 1948
7. Lawley Drift Extension	May 1948
8. Princess End	May 1948
9. Station 1 & 2	May 1948
10. Teeces	May 1948
11. Old Park (Harris's),	July 1949
12. Bayton (later reopened privately as Hunthouse),	Feb. 1950
13. Ifton (never "officially" in the Shropshire Coalfield),	Nov. 1968

Coal News Round-up

Asfordby Mine

On 6th April I visited and toured underground the large Asfordby Mine in Leicestershire. British Coal expect to start production next year with 500 men producing over 2 million tonnes annually. This is expected to cause the closure of 2 or 3 other pits!

So far nearly £600,000,000 has been spent on the new colliery.

“Operable” Pits

The Mining Journal reported on April 15th, 1994 that the British Coal Corporation still owned 32 “operable” collieries, 17 were worked by them, 4 by licences, 6 were mothballed and 5 had licences pending.

Ivor Brown

End of an Era

The closure of the profit making, Tower Colliery at Hirwaun marks an end to deep mining in South Wales.

There was some initial confusion when the 400 miners at the pit voted to reject closure and fight for the pit to be put into the ‘formal review procedure’.

However after threats by British Coal to withdraw £9,000 redundancy “sweeteners” the men voted to accept closure.

The only big coal operations left in South Wales are open cast mines, but there are still 70 small private pits, many still employing pit ponies.

More Jobs Go

UDM Officials have been told that 800 jobs at Harworth, Bilsthorpe and Thoresby pits are to be lost as a result of ‘rationalisation’. This will include miners employed by contractors.

Welsh Pollution

The rapid contraction of the coal industry has caused some concern at the National Rivers Authority - particularly with the recent Wheal Jane

disaster fresh in their minds. They anticipate a similar problem occurring with abandoned coal mines, as ground water levels rise.

A trial system to help contain the possible pollution is about to begin on the River Pelenna in South Wales.

The £1 M scheme will involve the planting of reed beds in an enclosed area lined with clay or an artificial membrane covered with a peat free compost.

The iron rich discharges (which have given the Pelenna the nickname ‘Yellow River’) will be filtered through the beds containing a mixture of reeds such as bulrushes and common reed mace. It is hoped that the reed beds will remove iron and other metals from the water. If it is successful the scheme will be extended to other sites.

Mine Camp

On the 6th April a Judge ordered the last mine ‘*protest camp*’ to be closed. British Coal were granted an order for possession of Parkside Colliery, Newton-le-Willows, forcing women occupying a protest camp at the pit gates to leave.

Thirty to forty women, all members of the “*Women against Pit Closures*” network, had been maintaining a round-the-clock vigil at the entrance to Parkside since January last year. At Easter (1993) 4 women (including Ann Scargill, wife of the NUM President) staged a 4-day sit-in 1,600ft. underground.

Parkside closed in October 1992, and British Coal want to redevelop the site as an industrial ‘*park*’.

Last B.C. Pony

Fourteen year-old Flax, became the last pit pony to be employed by British Coal, when he was brought to the surface for the last time at the end of February this year.

Of the 4 ponies underground at Ellington Colliery, Northumberland, Flax a Welsh mountain pony was the last one to be brought up the 434ft. deep shaft.

Flax and the others (Alan, a dark bay Dartmoor pony; Carl, another grey Welsh Mountain pony; and Tom, a Black Fell cob) had been employed salvaging steel girders and wooden supports.

They had been stabled about 4 miles underground in the main seam. The RSPCA is now looking for new homes for them.

Ellington once employed 80 ponies, ironically the ponies redundancy has made more news than that of the 1,000 miners!

B.C. Sale

The government is expected to sell off British Coal to the private sector later this year or early next. It is likely to be sold in 5 regional ‘*packages*’.

Good News

Betws

Betws anthracite drift mine near Ammanford, Dyfed is likely to re-open under a management buy-out.

Markham Main

Another pit closed by British Coal has re-opened. Markham Main Colliery, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire has been leased by Coal Investments, led by Malcolm Edwards, British Coal’s former commercial director. Production should resume later this year.

Euro-record 22/3/94

A British pit became the first in Europe to produce 3 million tonnes of coal in less than a year.

The 570 miners at Riccall Mine, part of Yorkshire’s Selby complex were “*world class*” according to British Coal.

Bats in Shropshire Mines, Recent surveys by Shropshire Bat Group.



February 1993 saw the introduction of some members of the Shropshire Bat Group to mine exploration, with four very experienced, but I think a little apprehensive, nursemaids from SCMC.

Despite most of us not knowing an electron ladder from a Petzl Stop, we were shepherded down Sheep Shaft at Snailbeach, somehow persuaded to abseil down the Sand Slope (we were committed by then) and a couple of us even went one level lower.

We saw enough bats to make the trip well worth while, and perhaps to influence the course of the pending “redevelopment” operation, and got out relatively unharmed, although I came near to terminal hypothermia when a blizzard descended on us while debriefing on the surface.

One thing leads to another, and we are now in the position of having looked at quite a good proportion of the accessible sites in the area, and are hoping to carry out a systematic programme of survey and monitoring which will go some way towards giving a useful picture of how bats use the Shropshire mines.

A by-product has been that I have become addicted to going down holes in the ground. I have my suspicions about some of the others too.

Bats use mines in winter and summer, but probably the most important use (to the bats) is in winter, when they need somewhere quiet to hibernate because there are no flying insects for them to eat. Quiet is not enough; the temperature needs to be cool but not too cold, and the humidity rather high, with just the right amount of air circulation.

They are a bit fussy about all of this, because their survival through the winter in this country is balanced on a knife edge. They are very small, and can't store a lot of food reserves in their bodies, and they are also in danger of drying out. If they had to wake up to drink or move about much, they would use up too much of their food reserves

before the insects started to fly again. That is also the reason why they can't tolerate disturbance at this time.

Only a few kinds of bat use caves and mines regularly for hibernation, and only two kinds seem to be heavily dependent on them, judging from the numbers seen. These are the Horseshoe Bats, which come in two sizes, the Lesser and the Greater.

Only the Lesser is recorded in our area in recent times, and they are restricted to the south western corner of Britain. They go no further north than North Wales and few are seen east of Shropshire.

Although they are the sort we see most often in our local mines, they are a scarce and endangered species in Britain, and we must look after them. Both of the Horseshoe Bats were once more widespread and common. Other bats commonly seen in caves and mines are Natterer's Bats and Daubenton's Bats. They look rather similar to each other, grey-brown with pale bellies.

Whereas lesser Horsehoes wrap themselves completely in their wings and hang free from the roof or walls, like plums, these other two fold their wings by their sides, and while they may hang more or less free, usually from the walls, they are often found tucked into crevices, the Natterer's often on its back.

Also sometimes seen in mines is the Long-eared Bat, often hanging free and partly wrapped in its wings, but not

completely so as with the Horseshoes, and with its very long ears folded down its back. The thin pointed tragus, which is a sort of inner ear, then sticks out forwards.

In the summer, bats also need somewhere secluded to roost and rear their young, but the requirements for this are somewhat different. They may use caves and mines, but buildings and hollow trees are popular and also more plentiful and widespread, although suitable ones of both categories are, for many species, less abundant than in the past.

The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is rather particular about the kind of building it uses for its summer quarters. It likes old buildings, not too well sealed and tidied up, with a large roof space so that it can fly about indoors before emerging. It wants a good-sized opening, as opposed to the tiny cracks that a Pipistrelle, for instance, likes to crawl through. And it seems to prefer a certain kind of habitat nearby in which to feed. It favours old country estates in the lowlands, with parkland and a nearby body of water.

Since they don't migrate over great distances, this summer habitat needs to be fairly close to the winter roosts. This means that the loss of either component of their environment may lead to their disappearance from both.

Mike Worsfold

New Shrimps Saved

Fifty shrimps have been rescued from a colony living in a dark sulphur-filled puddle at the bottom of a 1,000 shaft at Wearmouth Colliery, Tyne and Wear, just before it was filled.

Dr. Phil Gates, a Durham University biology lecturer brought them to the surface, along with 2 three-litre lemonade bottles filled with the “coal-dust soup” they were living in.

He believes they may be a new shrimp sub-species that has evolved to live on sulphur eating bacteria.

The shrimps in the puddle, which was full of sulphur, sulphur dioxide and hydrogen dioxide, have been isolated from other forms of life for most of this century, and in terms of genetics the biologists think they are absolutely fascinating.

BOOKS

New Publications

1. **Ironbridge Gorge** by Catherine Clarke, pub. English Heritage, 1993 price: £14.99. Contains a large amount of material on the working of coal, iron, clay and limestone in the Gorge as well as many relevant illustrations.
2. **Preserving Mining Past (in Shropshire)** by I.J. Brown, in Mining Environmental Management Vol. 2 No. 1, March 1994.
3. **The Shropshire Lead, Zinc & Barytes Mines, past and present** by I.J. Brown in Inst. Min. Met. North of England Newsletter, No. 19 April 1994 pp7-12.
4. Applied Geology Ltd have just published a Review of instability due to natural cavities in Great Britain. Vol. 1.1 West Midlands costs £100* and the regional map for Shropshire and Staffordshire costs £25 (although not examined in detail by IJB, it seems there might be several sites in Shropshire and a dozen in Staffordshire).

* An order form has been deposited with Adrian for the Library - if you are interested in getting a copy.

Ivor Brown

The Red Hills

by Dave Kelly

176 pages, 53 photographs, 38 maps. Published by Red Earth Publications. £9.99 plus £1.50 P&P.

Once described as an El Dorado more properous than any gold mine, the West Cumberland iron mines tranformed the Lake District's western fringe from a pastoral back-water to a belt of thriving villages and towns.

This is the story of Cumberland iron from the early years when life was cheap and fatalities plentiful, through the decades of growth and prosperity, to the inevitable eclipse in recent times.

Honister Slate, The History of a Lakeland Slate Mine

by Ian Tyler

For his third book of mining history, Ian Tyler takes us to the wild, upland terrain of slate. Here, at Honister and Yewcrag, swept pitilessly by "the wind in the crack", men moved along airy ledges, on precipitous walkways reaching upwards to the heavens in the quest for the beautiful, silver-green Honister slate.

Here, we are taken back almost 300 years to the crude start of its history, when men struggled in the high ground in the harsh, fearsome crags, to wrest a poor living from the earth. Companies were formed and worked, some successfully, some not and in time, Honister slate became known the world over for its quality and beauty.

The lives of the quarrymen were ruled by the weather, the loneliness, the sheer height at which they had to work. They perched on tiny platforms, high in the dark recesses of the underground caverns, lit only by feeble candle-light, whilst they fought to ease the slate from its 400 million year resting place. Sometimes its

beauty was a terrible thing, as men were crushed and maimed in their efforts to take it.

Ian Tyler tells us the colourful story of these men and this industry, the hardship, the pain, the tragedies, the wry humour which must inevitably be a part of such a desperately hard life.

Honister Slate gives us a telling insight into a way of life which took place in wild, lonely crags and hanging valleys,

hundreds of feet above the normal comings and goings of a local community, and the hard, tenacious, bloody-minded men who strove to win the glorious green slate of Honister.

Honister Slate by Ian Tyler is an in-depth history of the quarrying and mining of Honister green slate, and the story of a local community. The book contains approximately 200 pages, over 60 photographs, some never before published, several diagrams, plans and illustrations.

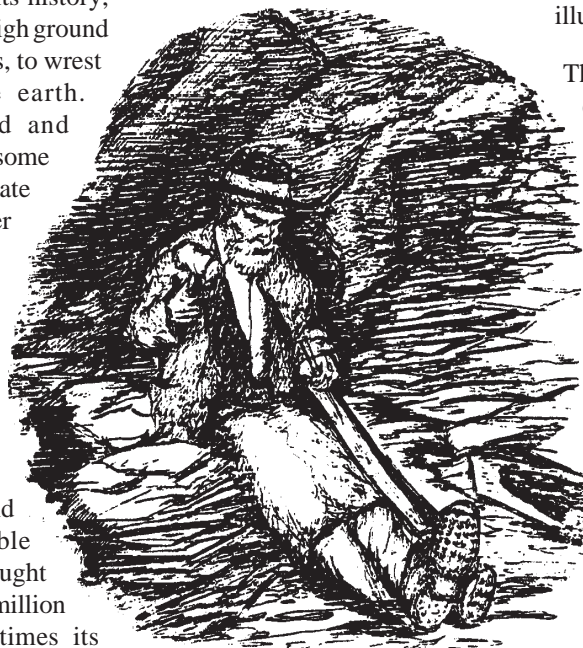
This is a limited print run, so do order quickly. Soft backed it is priced at £12.99 and is available by mail order, direct from the publisher:

Blue Rock Publications, Caldbeck Mining Museum, Priests Mill, Caldbeck. CA78DR.

Tel: 0228-41255 or 0228-561883. Please make cheques/P.O.'s payable to "Caldbeck Mining Museum" and include £1.45 for postage and packing.

This book will be followed later in the year by a further title in the series.

Blue Rock



Caldbeck Mining Museum

This small private museum specialises in Quarrying and Mineral Mining in the Caldbeck Fells and the Lake District. It has displays of original artefacts, mine plans, minerals, photographs and memorabilia.

The associated Shop, can supply a wide range of minerals, fossils and crystals as well as UV lamps, maps and books.

The museum also runs a series of guided walks, if you are interested the next 3 walks are:

26th June (5-6 miles) Honister Slate Mine - meet at Honister YHA car park.

31st July (6 miles) Greenside Mine - meet at Glenridding Tourist Office.

28th August (6 miles) Roughten Gill Mine - meet at Fellside nr. Caldbeck.

For more information contact:
Caldbeck Mining Museum,
Priests Mill, Caldbeck

Tel: 0228-41255 or 561883

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 trials and levels dotted around the mountain - so take care!

Kelvin

3 Men Underground

An item in a local magazine called "*Country Quest*" recently caught my eye. It was about 3 musicians who went "*deep into an underground cavern in the heart of Shropshire*", emerging several days later with a digitally recorded master tape that was "*a fusion of vocal and instrumental music using the natural (untouched) reverberation which lasts for over 10 seconds*".

The recording took place in July 1988,



Azurite - Basic Copper Carbonate.

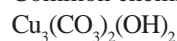
Named due to its blue colour, which makes it a popular collector's item. It occurs only in oxidised portions of copper ore veins.

Formed by the action of carbon dioxide and water on copper sulphides or by action of copper solutions on calcite. Less common than malachite, but once an important source of copper, near surface veins mined out and deeper copper sulphide ores now used.

Found at various Derbyshire sites eg: Middleton Flats Mine, Goodluck Mine.

Old records often call it **Chessylite**.

Common chemical formula:



using a Casio DAT tape machine and a selection of acoustic instruments in Farley. The photograph in the magazine shows the trio standing behind a gated tunnel entrance. Any suggestions for the exact nature of the place?

Malcolm Newton

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the music the details are: **Ravi, Dave and Tony**, *Three Men Underground*, Music Suite MS207.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,
Re- Peter Etchells request for information on Cothecott and Wilderley Mine Railway. The following publications may be of help:

1. Railways Pictorial 1989 SCC. c1920 photograph and information.
2. Bulletin No.14 p39 (PDMHS ?)
3. Mem. Geol. Survey 'Barytes' Vol. II 1922, by G.V. Wilson - see under Wrentnall Mine.
4. Industrial Locos in Cheshire, Shropshire etc. by Ind. Rly. Society see p78.

The steam loco was by Hunslet of Leeds. All their documents including their collection of locos are now in the recently constructed 'mock' mine at Leeds Industrial Museum. It might be possible to get more information from them too and the 'mine' is well worth a visit.

Ivor Brown

Club Officers

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Membership Services:
Mike Moore

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Steve Holding

Rep: Tackle & Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton

Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton

Training Officer:
Alan Robinson

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scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk

Conservation Officer:
Brian Tildesley

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

'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.

10-12 June: BCRA Caving Symposium, English Bicknor Sports & Social Club, Forest of Dean.

25-26 June: MCRO Meet, Dudley

5-8 August: NAMHO 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. See front page for organisers details ('Mole').

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

16-18 September: BCRA National Caving Conference, Harper Adams Agricultural College, Newport, Shropshire.

24-25 September: MCRO Meet, Shropshire.

8-9 July 1995: NAMHO Conference, hosted by US !

