

Welcome

On behalf of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club I would like to welcome you to Shropshire and the NAMHO 1995 Conference.

Shropshire as a County is rich in mining history and this weekend can only give you a *hint* of what has happened in our industrial past. Hopefully it will 'wet' your appetite, and make you want to come back for more. Enjoy yourselves.

Alan Taylor, SCMC President

Lilleshall Hall

On the face of it, it seems a little strange to be hosting a National Mining History Conference in a Tudor style, white stone Mansion in a quiet rural setting. But Lilleshall, and the Hall in particular have very strong mining connections.

Lilleshall is on the NE edge of the Coalbrookdale coalfield (Granville Colliery, the last deep mine in Shropshire was just a couple of miles from here, and closed in 1979), it also has good workable outcrops of limestone along with deeper useable limestone beds.

The parish boasted one of Shropshire's earliest charcoal blast furnaces (1562), but it was not until the 18th Century that the main period of industrial development began, due to the efforts of Granville Leveson-Gower, who became the second Earl Gower in 1754. He was one of the founders of the

Lilleshall Partnership (which became the Lilleshall Company in 1802).

When the present Lilleshall Hall was built in 1829 for the Duke of Sutherland (the son of the 2nd. Earl Gower) the 2 mile long approach road, known as the 'Dukes Drive' cut through the head of the old Donnington Wood Canal (the first canal in Shropshire and built by his father).

Parts of the canal can still be found, including the remains of the Hugh's Bridge Incline plane (SJ739 152). The incline had 3 phases of development. First the goods were unloaded from boats at the bottom and carried up the slope by horses, then loaded back into boats. Later a shaft and tunnel system was developed, with boats floated into a tunnel so goods could be hauled up a vertical shaft).

The third development was the laying of rails down the slope in 1796, so boats could be moved from one canal to another. Today, the incline slope, the tunnel portal, 2 cottages and a stable still survive. The lower canal is still in water, but the upper section, is dry and very overgrown.

In the running of the farms and estate, the Duke used all the latest techniques, the cottages built for the workers are highly desirable properties today.

In 1920 the Hall and estate were sold, for a short period the Hall was a pleasure park, before it became the National Sports Centre.

The SCMC

The Shropshire Caving and Mining Club was formed in 1959 to serve as a focus for people interested in caving and other underground explorations in the Shropshire area. The Club has an active programme of underground trips, there are usually 2-3 per month, either to local sites or caves and mines in all parts of Britain, the Isle of Man and Ireland.

In addition to trips, the Club actively encourages members to publish their research, in the form of 'Accounts' (see page 3), short articles in 'Below' (the Club's quarterly journal) or as longer articles in the Annual Journal.

Projects

The Club has been surveying and recording the remains of the mining industry in Shropshire for over 30 years, during that time, many surface remains have disappeared and underground sites become inaccessible. Two main projects (the Snailbeach and South Shropshire projects) are currently in-hand, with the aim of updating the information on known sites and helping in the continuing campaign to preserve important structures and underground cavities.

As sites inevitably deteriorate in time, the Club has, in association with I.A. Recordings, produced several video tapes, to help 'preserve' (all be it in a different format) something of the size, scale and importance of Shropshire's underground sites.



SCMC & the Web

The SCMC have several World Wide Web pages, providing information about the Club, it's activities and members research. If you have access to the internet and a web browser why not visit us. Club 'background' and research details can be found at:-

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/scmc.html>

These pages are courtesy of Joep Orbons, who operates the Souterrains home page, which you will find at:-

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/home.html>

The Club 'activities', can be found at:
<http://metro.turnpike.net/S/salop/index.html>

These pages are sponsored by Volant Turnpike, <http://metro.turnpike.net/>

Mining History Digest

While on the subject of the Internet, is anyone interested in subscribing to/participating in a 'Mining History' mailing list, where topics relating to Mining History can be discussed and e-mailed in a 'digest' format to other interested parties?

If you are interested I am prepared to try and get it running, (if I can sort out the software!), send an initial e-mail to:-

mines@lake22.demon.co.uk

Kelvin Lake, Editor 'Below'

Iron Age Brass

In a paper 'Llanymynech Hillfort' published in "The Montgomeryshire Collections" 1989, Vol.77 pp 15-26 C.R.Musson and J.P.Northover discuss the possibility of Iron Age brass production at Llanymynech using local copper and zinc ores. This is based mainly on the analysis of excavated process residues found there. A copy of this paper could be a useful acquisition for the Club Library.

Anyone know where we can get hold of a copy?

Ivor Brown

Mining in Shropshire

Written by Members of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club, Edited by Adrian Pearce, published by Shropshire Books, 1995. Price £7.95. (A5, 98 pages.)

Aimed at a general audience, the book sets out to describe the story of mining in Shropshire from prehistoric times to the closing of the last mine. The book is very readable, and allows you to dip into it by 'browsing' the photographs or learn more from the text.

The book deals briefly with each of the main mining areas in Shropshire, these range from the highly productive Coalbrookdale coalfield and South Shropshire metal mines to the small

mining areas around Oswestry and Lilleshall. Each section contains a brief field guide to remains in that area, complete with map references.

Overall there is a nice balance between the amount of 'dry' text, photographs and the superb illustrations. I particularly liked the choice of photographs used in the book, providing a good mix of old period pictures, with present-day views, of both underground exploration and surface scenes.

A very enjoyable book, and one that I have found myself constantly referring back to.

Edwin Thorpe

Tankerville Appeal

Watson's Shaft at Tankerville Mine is becoming very unstable at the top and there is danger that the engine house will become undermined and collapse into the shaft.

South Shropshire District Council and English Heritage had planned to carry out emergency treatment to prevent this but despite the recommendations of their officers, the councillors have refused to consider any remedial work on the shaft or engine house.

We need as many people as possible to write in to South Shropshire District Council to object to their decision not to save Tankerville engine house. They have fenced it off and say that they will demolish it if it gets unsafe. Could everyone writing a letter include the points below and ask anyone else who might be interested to write as well. The letter should be addressed to:-

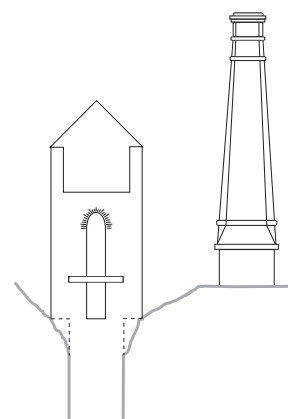
Mr. Graham Biggs,
Chief Executive,
South Shropshire District Council,
Stone House, Corve St,
Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DG.

Points to Make

Tankerville engine house is one of the most complete in the UK and famous throughout the country. It is a listed building and a local landmark.

Even if no funds are available at present to preserve the building, remedial work should be done on the shaft to prevent the building being undermined and falling down the shaft. Less complete mining remains in other parts of the UK have been preserved by the local authorities, South Shropshire will not look good if it lets the engine house fall down.

Steve Holding



Bellpits Found

Shropshire Archaeological Society members report that they have discovered approximately 12 bottle or bellpits, on Ash Coppice Piece, Triangle and Thisley Leasows/Peartree Leasow sites between Lythwood Hall and Hookagate, near Shrewsbury. Further work is being carried out by excavation to confirm this!

Ivor Brown



Club Publications

(Available from the SCMC Stand)

The Mines of Llanymynech Hill

Account No.14 - D.R.Adams (1991)
This unique site on the Shropshire/Wales border has been worked intermittently from at least Roman times up to the last century. Known locally as the **Ogof** the site has often been mistaken for a cave, but it is in fact a very early mine working. The site is near to *Offa's Dyke* (an early defensive earth work) and two iron age hill forts. Copper was worked in the early years, but when this was exhausted, zinc and lead were mined.

Snailbeach - Recent Explorations

Account No.15 - S.R.Holding (1992)
Situating in the South of Shropshire in the middle of the metal mining area, Snailbeach was by far the largest metal mine in Shropshire. The extensive collection of surface remains has made the site very popular with mining historians. Sadly, underground exploration has been particularly difficult since the mine closed in 1911, and it is only in recent years that considerable progress has been made in reaching the upper parts of the 'main' stopes and workings.

Snailbeach - Surface Remains

Account No.17 - Dr. I.J.Brown (1993)
The surface remains at Snailbeach are considered to provide the most complete lead mining complex of the period 1850-1900 that can be found anywhere in Europe. The value of the site lies not in the individual buildings, but in the total setting. No fewer than 11 of its surviving structures have been listed as worthy of retention.

The Mines of Lilleshall & Church Aston

Account No.16 - David Coxhill (1992)
For many years the presence of old limestone mines and quarries, on the East side of Shropshire, around the Village of Lilleshall was virtually unknown and few passers-by appreciated the important role these holes played in the Industrial Revolution in Shropshire. Extensive research by Club Members since the late 1950's, coupled with improved geological information (from boreholes sunk in the 1980's and 90's) has effectively brought the mines back, from being mere folk memories to being fact.

Mining Remains in South West Shropshire (Limited Edition)

Account No.18 - T.Davies, M.Newton & A.Pearce (1993)
First published as the "*Engine Houses of the Mines of South Shropshire*" (in 1969), it was the first attempt to systematically survey the surface remains of the metal mines in South Shropshire. Terry Davies' original surveys have been reproduced and complemented by Malcom Newton's superb sketches of buildings, allowing the reader to quickly grasp what the structure was like, forming a unique study of the local metal mining industry. **ONLY 50 COPIES LEFT!**

Underground Video Techniques

Account No.19-Peter Eggleston (1994)
This Account was originally produced for the 1992 NAMHO field meet, 'Underground Video Workshop'. The increasing use of video equipment underground has given rise to the need for information on how to choose video equipment for subterranean use, the protection of fragile kit, some examples of useful procedures and techniques and some special problems of lighting and sound below ground. All these points are ably covered in this guide.



Mining Videos

(available from the Club)



If you are interested in doing a bit of armchair mine exploration the following videos, produced by I.A.Recordings with help from Club members, may be of interest to you.

A Tour of Clive Copper Mine

£14.95

A comprehensive guided tour of Clive, with Edwin Thorpe acting the 'experienced' expert and Kelvin Lake the 'novice'. The tour covers both the upper and lower levels, plus the Northern stope (the access to which is now a bit dodgy).

Clive Rescue Practice, £9.95

An action packed 'head banging' record of a Club rescue practice, featuring the 'infamous' maypole winze traverse!

Snailbeach, £14.95

The rise and fall of Snailbeach, once renowned as the "*richest per acre of ground in Europe*", is traced in this production through the use of historic photographs, animated plans and sections, and unique underground video footage.

Collections from the Archives

The following tapes contain almost all the footage recorded at the given mine, and are intended as a resource base, not a finished production:

C.15:Dudley Tunnel '88 to '89, £14.10

C.18:Donisthorpe Colliery, £11.75

C.20a:Snailbeach - Final Frontier, £9.87

C.23: Bagworth Colliery, £11.75

C.28: Morse's Level, £9.87

Metalliferous Mines of Shropshire, Volume 1 - Gazetteer

Account No. 20 - A.J.Pearce (1994)

In 1993, the Club began a comprehensive survey of the remaining surface features and accessible underground workings in Shropshire. This Gazetteer is part of the record of the non-ferrous metalliferous mining areas of Shropshire. The study does not include coal, iron, clay or limestone mines, of which there were many in the County. It concentrates instead on those mines which worked; Barytes, Calcite, Copper, Fluorspar, Lead, Silver and Zinc.

6 Mining Sketches

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

All publications are available at the SCMC stand.



Club Officers

President: Alan Taylor

**Tackle & Rescue Officer:
Neal Rushton**

**Chairman/NAMHO Rep:
Steve Holding**

**Training Officer:
Alan Robinson**

Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton

**Conservation Officer:
Nick Southwick**

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

Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold

Treasurer: Bob Taylor

**Membership Services:
Mike Moore**

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

Diary Dates '95

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

Bank Holiday Sundays: OFD II Columns visits. 10.30am from South Wales C.C.Cottages.

22-23 July: Digging Weekend at Wrentnall Mine (*Mike Moore*).

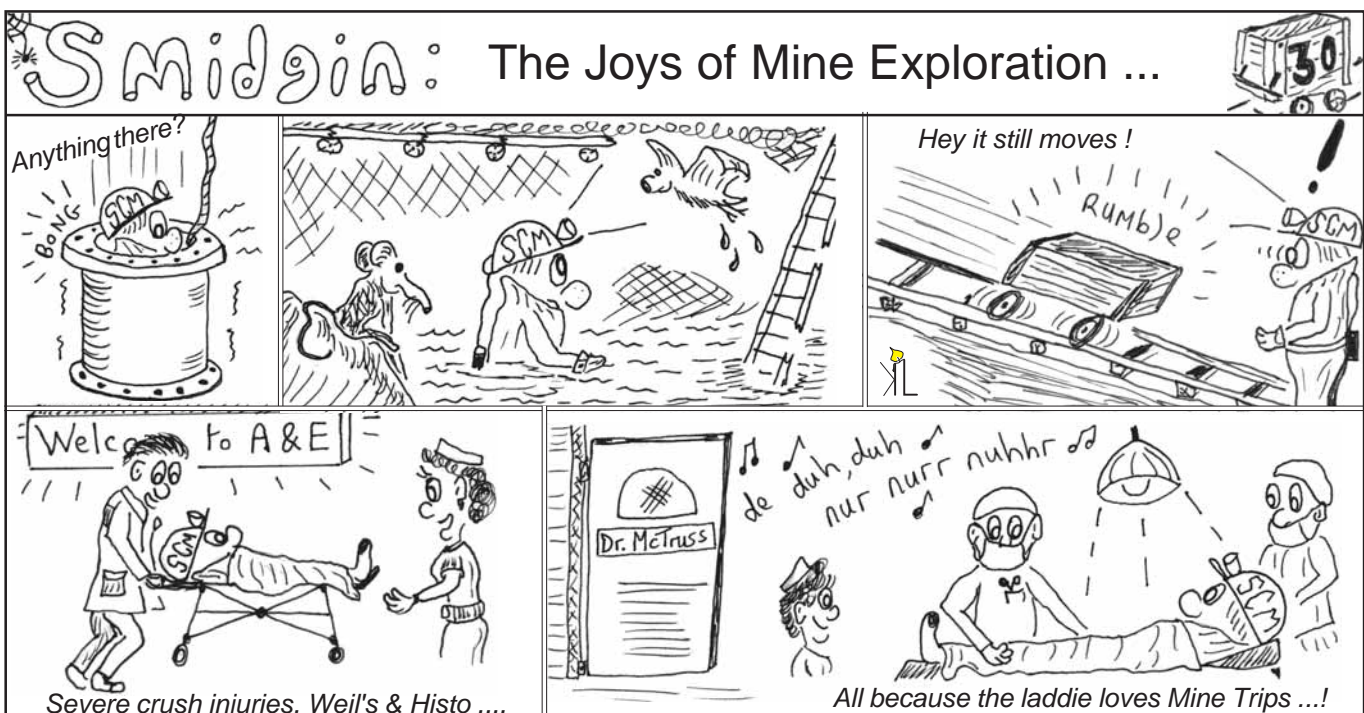
30 July: Mining Heritage Walk (6 miles) to Greenside Mine, Glenridding, Cumbria. Organised by Caldbeck Mining Museum, start 10.30am at Tourist Office car park. Boots, waterproofs and packed lunch essential. Charge: £2.50 per person, Bookings: 01228-561883

19-25 August: International Symposium on Souterrains, Maastricht, The Netherlands. Organised by the 'Study-Group Subterranean Limestone Quarries' and based on the Maastrichtien limestone outcrops, the symposium covers a range of man made underground structures. Cost ~£130.

19-26 August: Nenthead Mines trip. Contact Nick Southwick.

2 September: Snailbeach Project, 10.30am. Contact Adrian Pearce

23-24 September: Rock & Fossil Fair, Dudley.



Catch us on the World Wide Web. Club activities & the labyrinth: <http://www.shropshirecmc.org.uk/>

