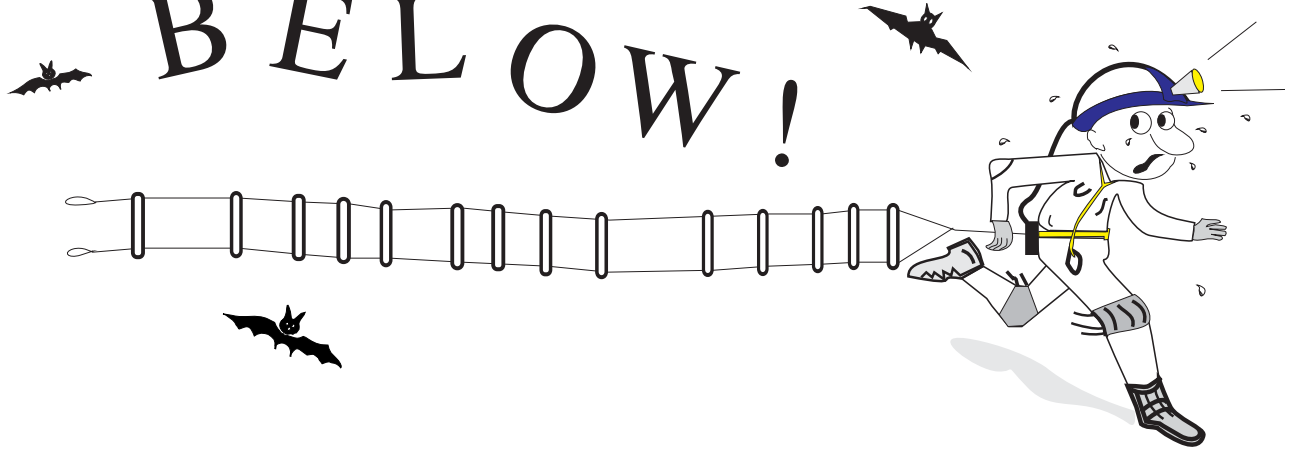


# B E L O W !



Quarterly Journal of the Shropshire Caving & Mining Club

Winter Issue No: 96.4

## Season's Greetings

As the year draws to the end I would like to thank all Club Members, plus contributors to, and readers of 'Below', a very Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year.

In addition to the usual issue of 'Below' you should find attached to the back a supplement. This lists or attempts to list all the publications and main newsletter articles produced by the club since 1960! If there are any glaring errors please let me know so that the list can be corrected.

Due to space considerations a 'heavily' edited index for 'Below' has been included in the listing, a more detailed version will be available in the future, although probably only on disc.

*Kelvin*

## BCRA Cave Science

Following the success of the Symposium held in February this year, the event will be repeated on Saturday 15th March, 1997, hosted by the Limestone Research Group at the University of Huddersfield. Bona-fide students are encouraged to attend and will be admitted at half the rate applicable to BCRA Members.

The Lecture Secretary for the event is:

Dr. J.D.Wilcock,  
22 Kingsley Close, Stafford, ST17 9BT  
Tel: 01785-353446 (work)

## Fly to Dublin

Anyone interested in flying over to Dublin for the AGM of the Mining History Society of Ireland on the 8th February, 1997, should contact Nick Southwick as soon as possible.

## Photo Theft

While Ivor Brown was in Madrid recently he was robbed of his case losing cameras, etc., but even worse, it also contained his complete collection of 35mm slides of Snailbeach Mine from 1960 to the present. He would be pleased to hear from anyone who has slides particularly from the earlier years that he could copy to help rebuild a set.

## Caver Insurance

Underwriting agency GRIP Ltd. have announced an accident and illness insurance policy which will cover people undertaking sports activities including caving and potholing. The Critical Cash policy pays a lump sum of up to £1 million or a monthly benefit after 2 weeks incapacity.

There is no medical examination or loading of the premium. Although caving, potholing and diving are risks covered, exclusions include rock climbing, mountaineering, aerial activities or other deliberate exposures to exceptional danger.

Full information from: GRIP Ltd., 150 Minories, London EC3N 1LS. Tel: 0171-264-2012

*Caves & Caving, Issue 73*

## Good News

Regular visitors to Derbyshire will be aware of the Car Theft problem near certain caves. You will be pleased to hear that a couple of the thieves were caught shortly after breaking into a cavers car in the lay-by opposite Perryfoot Farm (near P8). They were spotted by tourists who took their car number and rang the Police.

*Ian Spibey, Descent, No.132*

## Finally - New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have recently joined the Club:

John Blair, Tim Booth, Roger Brown, Justin Byrne,  
Steve Dewhirst, Roger Evans, Ken Jones,  
Tony King, Catherine Mills, Brian Newman,  
Steve Peters, Mrs. C.Taylor, and  
John Tennent



# News Round-Up 1

## by Ivor Brown

### Clay Mine Rules

A copy of the statutory 'Code & Rules' for operating 'Shropshire Clay Mines' District 9, Established 1902, has been acquired by IJB. A similar copy for Shropshire Coal Mines has also been located. The Clay mines code contains 51 Rules and is 3 pages of small print in thickness.

### Terraced Cave

Estate Agents Herdson Humphries of Bridgnorth are offering a terraced town cottage, 11 St. Marys Steps, Bridgnorth for £47,000. Features include 2 bedrooms, bathroom and a "timber shed opening to cave storage space, 13ft 9in x 6ft 0in overall".

### NUM Buy-out

During August 1996, North Wales NUM were holding "talks with" Clay Mining, a small company based in Telford, with regard to being a joint venture partner in the buy-out of Point of Ayr Colliery. (The talks did not produce a partnership). Min. Journal 16-8-96

### Mrs Davies

Re item on Mrs Davies and the Bog (last issue of Below). Mrs Davies died soon after this item was written, she was 86 and had lived in the cottage all her life.

The cottage is now being 'modernised'. It can be seen to have originally been 2 one room dwellings built of stone, each with a chimney, and each having one front door and a window.

A second storey of brick has been added, probably when the 'cottages' were combined and thatch replaced by slate. There are ruins of two further pairs of 'huts' nearby.

### Mine Share

IJB has acquired his first South Shropshire Mine Share Certificate, "The Roman Gravels Mining Company Limited", No. 6758, one share (of 12,000 shares) value 7 pounds 10 shillings (£7.50), dated 11.1.1871

### Mining Lecture

IJB will be giving a lecture on the "Miners of the Severn Gorge", to Shropshire Family History Society on Tuesday 20 May, 1997 in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury at 7.30pm. Visitors will be welcome.

### Brierley Hill Tunnel

An inspection was recently made of the tunnel at Brierley Hill, Coalbrookdale. It almost certainly is not a purpose built reservoir, it could well be a tramway tunnel predating the shaft and tunnel system later developed on the site. It has all the hallmarks of a simple arched - not oval shaped Reynolds tunnel, the bricks and construction methods are the same, while the shuttering holes are of similar spacing to those in the Tar Tunnel!

### Polish Mines Saved

IJB has recently been to Poland, the number of miners in the Lower Silesian Coalfield has fallen from over 25,000 to less than 5,000 since the last visit in 1985. Conversion of three coal mines to tourist mines is proposed.

In Upper Silesia things are slightly better (There are however two colliery tourist mines already, only one steam winder remains in use in the whole coalfield).

The Wieliczka Salt Mine is still producing after 500 years and also has about 750,000 visitors each year. The tourist area is down a 40m shaft and tourists walk 1.25 miles in 2½ hours viewing original wooden mining machinery etc. All is perfectly preserved, for which the mine has been designated a 'World Heritage Site'.

### Welsh Mines Trust

Members of the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust visited Snailbeach during November. They expressed surprise at the amount of work that had been done both on surface and underground. There was some comment on the way the tops of the walls were being "conserved". An

archaeological dig was underway at the Lords Hill engine shaft complex - it was difficult to make out all the foundations of the Cornish engine egg-ended boilers 30ft. x 6ft. diameter, the single cylinder, 22in vertical winding engine (cast iron beam on pillars with its two egg-ended boiler, 1 of 30ft, 1 of 28ft length, the pair of steam winch boilers, two spur wheels with drum 4ft long and 3ft dia., plus the 8 arm capstan, all as described on the 1884 inventory.

The Lords Hill Baptists were holding a service in the 'ore-house' - their chapel having now been vacated due to dry rot in ceiling and floor. Ways are being sought to preserve the chapel, but Connie the caretaker is still in residence for the present.

SCC have announced that the next job is to conserve the ruins near Chapel Shaft, especially the chimney.

### Old Engine House

A further opinion on the likelihood of a second "vertical steam-engine house now a dwelling" in Jackfield has now been obtained. The recent view is that the building to the South of the new river bridge is a full size engine house designed to completely contain a later rotative engine, perhaps driving rods or even winding spools.

### Spanish Mines

IJB has been in Spain recently. While at the School of Mines, Madrid, he visited the School's experimental mine, actually under the University buildings and yards (as at Birmingham, see last Below). The steel headframe looks quite incongruous dwarfed by 19th Century multi-storey stone buildings. He also spent some time at the mercury mines at Almaden, 200 miles south of Madrid.

### New Book

"Restoration and Revegetation of Colliery Spoil Tips and Lagoons" by RML Ltd, published by HMSO for the D. of E. Price £25, includes many references to reclamation work in Telford, especially Granville Country Park (contributions by I.J.Brown).



# Club GPS Kit

The club has now purchased a Garmin GPS38 "Personal Navigator". GPS systems are units which make use of signals from American Defence satellites to accurately identify their current position. The Garmin GPS38 unit is a similar size to a small mobile phone and in addition to identifying the current position, it can be used to navigate to specific locations or to follow a route via a number of identified locations.

GPS systems have an intrinsic accuracy of around five metres but the American Government impose a "Selective Availability" to deliberately reduce the accuracy. I understand that 100 metres will be the worst accuracy but it is generally believed that this "feature" will be turned off in 1999 to make the full intrinsic accuracy available.

A few moments tuition is all that is required for basic operation but some experience will be required to make the most of the system. There is even a simulator mode of operation to help understand its operation. The most important point to note is the a reasonable amount of sky must be visible such that the signals from at least three satellites can be picked up (usually there will be eight satellites accessible horizon to horizon). Also it is worth noting that the battery consumption is quite high - 12 hours use with 4 x AA batteries.

## Options

There are various options as to how the Garmin GPS38 expresses the position but I have set it to express the position with the National Grid Reference (grid

references for other countries are available in the instrument).

The Grid Reference is given as the two identification letters and a ten figure reference - e.g. SJ 70086 05912 for a location on Brookside, Telford. Clearly a ten figure Grid Reference is not really appropriate but I recommend that when noting the position of mine/cave entrances or surface features, that we record eight figures and emphasize that it is obtained using GPS - the Garmin GPS38 can store 250 positions and it is easy to set the system to point to any of these stored locations !

The GPS unit is available for loan from myself but anyone borrowing it will be responsible for its loss/theft.

*Steve Holding*

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## Trip Reports by Steve Holding

Cwmystwyth,  
10th November 1996

**Present:** Eileen Bowen, Steve Holding, Alan Moseley, Neal Rushton, Ben Shaw and Mike Worsfold.

Despite a comparatively late start, the six of us visited Rosa Level again. This was the first trip to Rosa Level for Eileen, Alan and Mike, the second for Neal and Ben but the third this year for myself.

A bolt was placed on the first pitch to allow it to split into two (giving less wear and more flexibility with ropes) and then the two long ropes were used to descend past Mitchell's Level down to where there is a ladder climbing back up. On this occasion rather than climbing up the ladder, after some bolting, Ben descended the ladder down to a wet level. Ben concluded that it would be very wet exploring any direction and that was the limit of exploration for that trip.

The ladder Ben descending is located in an area of false floor and there is potential for exploring beyond but this requires crossing a significant length of false floor.

Snailbeach,  
12th November 1996

**Present:** Eileen Bowen, Steve Holding, Alan Robinson and Mike Worsfold.

In Perkins Level, a note of some of the dialogue:

Alan:

*"A bat has just dropped at my feet.....it looks injured, I think it has a broken wing."*

A furry ball is seen rolling all over the floor of the level emitting a considerable amount of squeaking !

Eileen to the rescue:

*"Its two bats fighting"*

Mike (suspended on a rope some feet below):

*"They are not fighting; they will be mating"*

At this point, the 'furry ball' is illuminated by three caving lamps and it all goes sheepishly quite. After a few minutes, the two bats fly off with a (contented) squeak !

## 50 year Drag

To celebrate 40 years of organising "mining walks and visits" (the first was for a group of young Methodists in June 1956, walking from the Rock Chapel visiting Rock Fireclay Mine, Rock Coal mine, Princess End Mine (salvaging), Heath Hill and Brandlee Pits - the smell of hot oil, sound of hissing steam engines and heat from cooling boilers can still be remembered clearly) IJB organised a lunch party tour to St. Aidans Opencast Site, Leeds.

Here one of the two draglines also had cause to celebrate - 50 years since it came over from the USA as part of American Aid after the War.

About 25 enthusiasts toured the dragline and site, a large cake was donated by David Higgins, drinks by RJB Mining (non-alcoholic) and a good time was had by all.

In the afternoon the party visited the Armley Mills Industrial Museum, where the mining exhibit (a specialist collection of underground locos from Hunslet, Rustons and Greenwood and Batley) is under threat of closure. Three SCMC members were present.

*Ivor Brown*



## Memories of Moat Hall and Hanwood Colliery 1910-1930

(These “memories” are based on contributions by un-named persons in the Women’s Institute book “Shropshire within Living Memory” published in 1992. This article has been collated, with notes added in brackets, by Ivor J. Brown. The book also contains similar “memories” involving pit girls, pit accidents and life of the stone quarrymen and is well worth purchasing - price £7.95).

Annscroft had a coal wharf (or landsale), it was on the opposite side of the road to the Church. The coal arrived at the wharf from the Moat Hall Colliery, half a mile away, either by horse and cart or a private tramline which crossed several fields. A horse called ‘Curley’ pulled several full tubs at a time from the pit to the wharf and then returned with the empties. In later years (1930’s) there was a youth with a train (this was a very old railway having been commenced by Richard Boothby in 1812).

At about this time it was possible to collect from the wharf a hundred-weight of coal for 11 pence (11d) which was hand-picked beautiful stuff. the quality of coal was lovely, to would burn with immense heat and leave very little ash.

Moat Hall Colliery was owned by Mr. W.T. Shorthouse, who lived in a house in Annscroft call ‘The Laurels’. The

Colliery had an engine house, with steam winding engine for raising and lowering the cage, and also a second smaller engine, powered from the same boiler. This second engine was used to haul the tubs from the coalface to the pit bottom by means of a wire-hawser attached to a drum and ran on jockey wheels down the shaft and along the pit roadway. The tubs collected the coal from the coalface, where the seam was said to be 3 to 4ft. high. The coal was hacked out by pick and loaded by shovel onto dans (sledges with boards around to hold the coal in). Youths would then haul the dans by means of a harness or chain around their waist and a rope through between their legs, along the face. At the end of the face the coal would be transferred to the tubs in a widened length of roadway.

It was the practice for one youth to do the above work for five miners, who were responsible for paying him. The weekly wage for the miner himself was 35 shillings, plus 5 cwt of coal for every 14 days worked. It would cost two shillings and sixpence to have the coal delivered to the miners. In the 1920’s the miners wage was between 30 shillings and 2 pounds per week with 5cwt of free coal after every 12 consecutive shifts.

Mr. Shorthouse sold the colliery (in 1919) to Mr. Nicholas Fielden, who was born at Condoover Hall. He also

bought out Hanwood Colliery. A tunnel was driven underground between the collieries and from then the coal from Moat Hall was carried along this. The wharf at Annscroft was closed down in 1934. There was also a pumping station at Arscott.

The miners at Hanwood and Moat Hall used to get soaking wet daily from lying in water whilst working. They always wore knees out of their trousers and these were patched and patched until they were heavy and sticking out. They had to walk home like this to Pontesbury, Asterley, Minsterley and Pulverbatch and in severe cold weather they would not have walked far before their trousers froze solid. They could hardly run even if a Council wagon stopped to give them a lift. As kids we used to laugh at them and “they’d take a swipe at us - poor old devils”. The pit was “hard work and a poor old place”. Not all was bad however, for even the mine owner, Mr. Nick Fielden, would stop to give them a lift in his car ‘wet and dusty clothes and all’ if he passed them on their way.

### Footnote

A fall of coal killed a Hookagate man during the First World War, his wife was not surprised however because he had turned back to kiss her goodbye as he had left in the morning.

*Ivor Brown*

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## NAMHO Field-Meet, Devon, 27-30 Sept. 1996

**Members Present:** 16 to 20  
I understand that there were around 95 visitors to this years NAMHO Field Meeting, organised by Plymouth Caving Group. Sixteen SCMC members formed a significant proportion of this number and there were other SCMC members present as part of other groups.

Plymouth Caving Group put together a well organised programme with SCMC members participating in a wide range of surface trips, walk in underground trips and complex SRT trips. Although the only organised social event was a slide show, held in the family room of the “Plume of Feathers”, Princeton, since most

visitors visited this pub, there was a good friendly atmosphere and there was ample opportunity to meet with the NAMHO regulars.

I was particularly impressed in that the SRT trips were contained to small groups. I do not know what everyone else got up to but Andy Harris and myself had an excellent trip to Wheal Fanny on the Saturday, Fremontor on Sunday and then joined the real enthusiasts for a Monday trip into Wheal Phoenix.

Wheal Phoenix was probably the hardest trip organised that weekend and Eileen Bowen and Mike Worsfold ended up visiting it on both Saturday and Monday (different routes).

There were only five visitors for the final Monday trip, four SCMC (Andy H, Eileen, Mike and myself) together with John Hine (Mole) from Royal Forest of Dean Club. Our particular thanks to Calum from PCG who gave up his first day back at University to give us this trip.

The only down point of the weekend was when one PCG member turned over his Land Rover on the Sunday. Fortunately the driver was only slightly hurt and his passenger carried on taking a group of visitors underground - the Land Rover will require a bit more!

*Steve Holding*



# Caving Abroad

## By Cara Allison

I thought I'd write this to make the cavers amongst you jealous!

This year I have been lucky enough to go caving abroad on two occasions. In the summer, I went on a joint Eldon Pothole Club/TSG trip to France - the first week in the Dent de Crolles/Chartreuse area, the second week in the Vercors. Details of this trip along with up-to-date information on surveys, etc.. are written up in the latest TSG Journal (Oct. 96). Suffice to say here that a good time was had by all: caving, canyoning and drinking Chartreuse.

My second caving holiday was to Hungary in October/November with BEC Members Emma Porter, John Christie and Sean Howe. The notes which follow are just meant as a taster for anyone considering caving in Eastern Europe.

## Organisation

All Emma's letters to cave organisations in Hungary ended up with Moha, a lecturer at the University, who organised accommodation and trips for us - particularly useful as we had no cave surveys or guide books. We were made very welcome by all the Hungarian cavers we met. Cavers from various clubs around Budapest meet on Thursday nights at the pub at the entrance to the Pal Völgy show cave - a good set up! Caving is popular in Hungary and there is a long history of cave research.

## The Caves

There are about ten caving areas in Hungary. We visited the four main ones - each quite distinct, due to differences in geology and cave development. Most of the caves are developed in Mesozoic limestone and dolomite (mainly Triassic and Jurassic) which unlike our older carboniferous limestone has not been affected by mineralisation.

## The Buda Hills

In the Buda Hills, Budapest, the caves were formed by thermally heated waters from below producing unique roof and wall morphologies and unusual calcite

precipitates. We were lucky enough to start our trip with a visit to Jozsef Hegy Barlang (Barlang is Hungarian for cave) - the best decorated cave in Hungary.

Floor and roof were white with gypsum, the walls were covered with popcorn calcite and there were abundant gypsum flowers, gypsum threads and long aragonite needles. Quite amazing.

In Budapest we were also taken down the Pal-Völgy show cave, the third longest cave in the country (7km). Don't be fooled by the word 'show' cave - adventure type trips are operated. Our 3 hour trip was mainly on hands and knees or stomachs (or backsides down some good 'toboggan' runs) - good fun all the same!

The cave showed excellent examples of cupola-type solution pockets on walls and roof- formed by thermal waters, and of layer upon layer of calcite plates thought to have precipitate in the warm water. There were also good mud formations, natural and caver-made. The 'art gallery' models being much more innocent and cleaner than any in British caves!

These caves are all very warm, the numerous thermometers in the cave all read 11oc - I was caving with only T-shirt and long johns under my oversuit and was still too hot.

## Pilis Mountains

A two hour train and bus ride took us to the Pilis Mountains, west of Budapest. A 1½ hour walk through beech forest brought us to the base of a small escarpment. A number of small cave openings occur in the cliff face above the scree.

We would never have found these without a map and human guide (Katinka). 'Boy cave' is supposedly well-decorated but locked, so we didn't enter. 'Girl cave' next door was tight and grovelly throughout - similar to Mendip caving with steeply inclined bedding plane rifts and maze-like muddy tubes and slots.

## Bükk Mountains

The caves of the Bükk Mountains, North East of Budapest, have much greater vertical development. A 12 hour SRT trip had been arranged for us down the deepest cave in Hungary (István-làpa Cave), but due to a mix-up over keys it was not possible on this occasion. Instead we went down Fekete or 'Black Cave', named after the black dolomite in its upper section. A good SRT trip but with an awkward squeeze at the head of a pitch near the end - it took much time and assistance (and embarrassment on my part!) to get me out (the story will only be recounted after a few beers). But we did bottom the cave (~160m).

The next day we did another superb cave, the Hungarian name of which I've forgotten, but translated means 'Wet cave of .... (the area)' - it was our first stream cave in Hungary (it proved to have no more water than the trickles of yesterday's).

The first entrance we went in had superb cherty humbug striped walls. We followed it downstream a short way, but couldn't do a through trip as there was a ladder missing. The second entrance, higher up on the hill top, involved a well polished but free-climbable entrance pitch, followed by a series of dodgy iron ladders.

When Hungarians say 'fixed' ladders don't believe them! All those we encountered were fixed at the top by one hanger, if at all, and were hinged part-way down, so tipping you outwards and becoming overhanging in their lower portions - very disconcerting. The bottoms were also often missing or free hanging. The rest of the cave was easy - even the crawls being on smooth mud floors, and well decorated with stalagmites and stalactites.

## Aggtelek Karst

This area is on the Slovak border and the longest cave, Baradla cave (25km), extends into Slovakia. The whole Aggtelek-Slovak Karst area (560 sq. km) has been designated a World



# Caving Abroad

by Cara Allison, continued..

Heritage site for both the surface and underground features. This is an area I would like to return to.

Baradla cave is a show cave with various lengths of tour. We had intended to do the 8km through trip from Aggtelek to Josvafo (lit for 2km at either end) but the only tour available at the time was the 1 hour straight in/out, from Josvafo to the main chamber - a huge hall filled with orange stals and supposedly containing the largest stalagmite in Europe. Quite stunning and well worth a visit.

We had the non-English speaking guide to ourselves and not having to say anything he must have thought it was the easiest tour ever, until torches in hand, we continued up the passage beyond the main chamber not realising we were meant to turn back. He thought he'd lost us!

Trips can be arranged in advance to other caves in the area such as Beke cave, the second longest (nearly 9km). Although easy this does involve wading through chest deep water.

We intended to finish our caving in this area with a visit to the thermally heated cave baths at Miskolc-Tapolka, but these were closed for maintenance.

## Show Caves

There are a number of well decorated show caves around Hungary which a) are worth visiting in their own right and b) are a source of cave literature. However, most seem to close in October, presumably reopening at Easter.

## Bats

There are 24 species of bat in Hungary, all but 3 of which use caves. We encountered bats in all the caves we visited - sometimes flying, but usually hanging singly. To me (no bat expert) they looked like Greater Horseshoes, encompassed in their leathery black wings and much larger Daubentians, grey fluffy tummies exposed (or dead leaves and dead rats as they were respectively described).

## Accommodation

**Budapest** - a bungalow over the entrance of Jozsef Hegy cave. Four mattresses in the loft, no electricity, but running water (cold) and flush loo! FREE!

**Bükk Mountains** - bunkhouse belonging to the Bükk Research Group (?). No electricity. Water from a nearby spring. Set in beech forest. 150F/night (~70p).

**Josvafo** - Turista Hostel, run by 'Balda'. 500F/night, central heating, hot water, cooking facilities, beds in dorms. Balda does not speak English, but is very friendly and helpful - particularly to English cavers!

**Miskolc-Tapolka** - out of season so less lucky. Have to stay in Juno Hotel at exorbitant cost of 3500F (£14) each per night with breakfast.

There are also Youth Hostels in both Budapest (Margit Island) and Miskolc.

## Food

**Beer** - outside Budapest, four pints cost £1. The most we paid in Budapest was still less than £1 per pint - bottled and strong (5%).

**Eating** out is cheap. If you ignore all the MacDonaldis and Dunkin Donuts and find a Hungarian restaurant or bar, even in Budapest 1000F (£4) will get you a beer, starter and more food than you can eat - but no good for veggies (typically goulash, beef in a rich mushroom sauce, fried pork ...)

## Public Transport

This is excellent. In town buses/trams/trains (metro) run every few minutes and there is a flat rate of 50F or 60F if bought onboard, (~25p). Tickets have to be validated by punching before travel but only the metro ever seemed to be checked. Even the 3 hour train journey from Budapest to Miskolc only cost a few pounds.

## Currency

When we were there in Oct/Nov. 96, £1 bought you 250 Forin, but this was

increasing all the time. Inflation is 30%.

## Language

Apart from our caving hosts we met very few people who could speak any English. There are few signs in English even in tourist sites, also no English guide books.

## Sight-seeing

Budapest is a beautiful city, set on the River Danube, with many old and interesting buildings. It is well worth a day of two to explore the old streets, churches, museums and monuments. Also, a good end to a caving trip - to relieve all those aching muscles is a visit to one of Budapest's spa baths - if you're lucky you get a massage too!

## General Tips

**Caving gear** - Hungarian caves are generally warm and dry. Heavy overalls/thick furries are not needed, although an exception is Beke cave in Aggtelek and some of the other caves in Bükk/Aggtelek would take more water in wet weather. We had excellent weather all week - blue skies and T-shirt temperatures.

**Carbide** - can be obtained in Hungary by asking Moha or one of the caving clubs. They provided all ropes and rigging. However, you may be advised to ask for lifelines on some of the iron ladders and free climbs (up to 20m combined) - a luxury we didn't have!

A **small syringe** can be useful for getting water out of small puddles/trickles or else take water with you for the carbide.

**Camera** - next time I would take a decent camera and flash to take close-ups of cave formations such as gypsum flowers or light up large decorated chambers/ interesting passage shapes.

**Cave surveys and guide books** - we saw none, but had no shortage of human guides. Maps can be bought in Budapest



# Caving Abroad

by Cara Allison, continued..

## Cooking facilities

A stove is useful as are candles since few caving huts have electricity. We took Trangias and a limited supply of meths. Moha (a chemist) made us up some ethanol.

## Travel to/from Hungary

We went by coach, £119 return from London, 30 hours each way. Not enjoyable, but cheap and no weight limit on baggage.

Travel around Hungary is cheap but restricting. The main down for the trip was having to lug heavy rucksacks and bags around with caving gear, sleeping bags, stove, food etc.. A car would make life much easier and allow more sites to be visited - although it would add to the cost of a trip.

There are many other parts of the country it would be good to visit, including the mining area to the east. Also, perhaps visits to neighbouring countries. Most of the Hungarian cavers can't afford cars so use public transport and foot.

## In Summary

It was an excellent holiday. We had superb hospitality from the Hungarian cavers, without whom we would never have had such an enjoyable time or visited such a variety of caves in only one week.

The caves are superb and varied. Travel, food and accommodation is cheap, plus there are lots of sights of interest to see.

A more detailed account of the trip (by Emma) will appear in a forthcoming issue of Descent.

## Nenthead 1996

There has been no club visit to Nenthead this year but I have joined others to have two interesting visits this year, to date. On the first visit, in July, I joined members of Coventry based Lost World Caving Club (LWCC) and John 'Mole' Hine from Royal Forest of Dean Caving Club (RFDCC).

In October, I joined various members of Wealdon Caving and Mining Society (WCMS), with Mole and Paul Thorn (Kent Underground Research Group, KURG & SCMC) and Tom West (SCMC).

The first visit with LWCC included a through trip from Smallcleugh Mine to Rampgill Mine, via Proud's Sump; a trip through the falls to Baron's Sump Engine House and nearby flats, in Smallcleugh plus a trip into the upper levels around Bogg Shaft, also in Smallcleugh. There was a days excursion to Honister Mine (also worth re-visiting) and an exploratory trip to the start of the route from Rampgill Mine to Brownley Hill Mine.

Proud's Sump Flats are probably not visited very often and there are some interesting artifacts still in place and the route through the falls to the Baron's Sump area were not as tight as three years ago (probably due to many visitors, rather than me losing weight!).

When visiting the upper levels around

Bogg Shaft, Mole and myself also explored most of the sub-levels and some of the flats in this far part of the mine.

The four and half days in October involved three very long trips plus three short trips. On the first day Mole, Tom and myself returned to the Bogg Shaft area of Smallcleugh Mine and explored all parts accessed by re-descending back to the main horse level; time preventing any further exploration of the upper levels.

The next two days involved long trips into Brownley Hill Mine accessing both end of Jug Vein. On the first of these trips, Paul Thorn improvised a pussik system for us all to climb up to the unstable, low and tortuous Brownley Hill High Level while on the second day, keeping below the shale, on the main horse levels gave a much more pleasant trip into the far reaches of Brownley Hill. A round trip would now be practical but there appears little merit to returning to the featureless High Level.

A major trip with Dave Carlisle, into flats access via Gudhamgill High Level was planned but bad air was encountered near the Transvaal Shaft. There was insufficient oxygen to light a gas lighter and a retreat was necessary. The trip was undertaken during a period of high pressure and it seems doubtful whether any return will be possible; a warning notice was

left inside the level entrance.

The visit was finished off with two short trips into the various flats in the near parts of Smallcleugh Mine, which showed that there is still plenty to see without the long trips into the far parts of the mines.

A mega through trip to link Capelcleugh, Smallcleugh, Rampgill, Brownley Hill and Nentberry Hags Mines seems a real possibility for sometime next year but I am also keen for the odd (long) weekend visit to the North Pennines if anyone else is interested.

Will anyone visiting the Nenthead area please note that there is now some level of control to the mines. The entrance to some mines is on land controlled by the North Pennines Heritage trust and while NAMHO members are welcome to visit, we are asked to report our trips at the new Heritage Centre near Rampgill Mine\*.

*Steve Holding*

## \*Footnote:

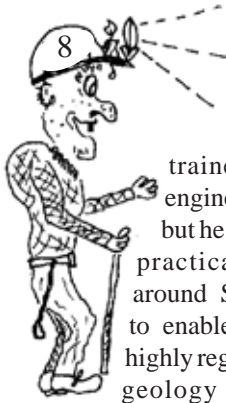
In the last issue of 'Below' there was an article on page 9, covering the Access arrangements at Nenthead, written by the new Centre Manager, Jill Fenwick, please familiarise yourself with the arrangements if planning a visit.

*Kelvin*



## Joseph Prestwich (1812-1896)

by Ivor Brown



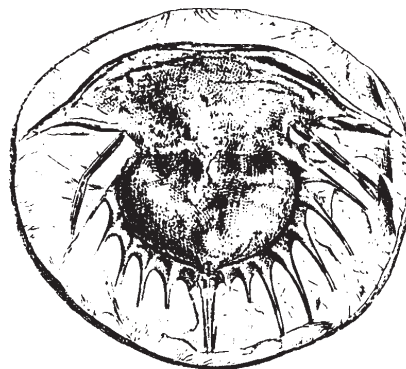
Joseph Prestwich 1812-1896 was not local, nor was he trained as a mining engineer or a geologist but he picked up enough practical experience around Shropshire mines to enable him to write a highly regarded book on the geology of the Coalbrookdale Coalfield by the age of twenty. He then went on to achieve great heights (although at first geology was his secondary occupation) including professor of geology at Oxford, President of the Geological Society and, later, the international Geological Congress and a Knighthood.

Prestwich was born in Clapham, although his mother came from Broseley where his grandmother was Mrs. Blakeway of Broseley Hall. He was educated in southern England and in Paris but his education was mainly classical. Prestwich said, in a letter, that in his time "geology was not taught anywhere in London". He was a student from 16-18 at the brand new University College, London and was able to attend lectures in chemistry and read "Parkinson's 'Organic Remains' in three volumes". He had been given a fossil named 'Conularia' which intrigued him, it was from Coalbrookdale and none of the professors he met could tell him anything about it. Each year he spent his holidays in Broseley, "celebrated for its tobacco-pipe and iron and clay works". He "spent hours at the heaps of ironstone, the seam worked being the Pennystone, so rich in marine remains". He was also keen on sketching and while in France had produced some crude drawings of pit-heads, volcanoes and fossil skeletons, some of which he was able to sell later to buy equipment for use in his geological research.

At the age of eighteen in 1830, he had got a job "in the City" as a Clerk which he disliked but still spent his spare in Shropshire, particularly his summer

holidays in 1831 and 1832. He descended a large number of local pits to "see the underground structure of the fossil plants in-situ". His father was trying to put a stop to these dangerous underground trips but did not succeed.

To visit the Shropshire mine workings he enlisted local "working miners" as guides at 2 shillings for a "long day". He then enlisted the "generally very willing" assistance from the "overlookers". In his own words, "The pits were not large, nor were they very deep. From 150 to 500 feet was the general run. Descending them, however, was often a rough task. Sometimes we descended on trays; at other times we stood on the platform; a chain loop attached to the main rope was handed to each man, through which we placed one leg. At a given signal the rope was drawn up a few feet, when we all (generally there were seven or eight men) swung together like so many herrings at the end of a bunch, and then holding onto one another were let down to the bottom. Sometimes the descent was in an up shaft which would be full of smoke and like descending a chimney. However, I considered myself well rewarded by the sight of the strata and especially faults, nor did I overlook the surface. The one-inch ordnance map of the district was just then published, the cost being 16s a-sheet. On this I laid down the surface geology, and with the aid of the pit sections, which were ever here readily given to me with permission to copy, I drew up my Memoir on Coalbrookdale".



A Prestwich fossil from the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. (See: 4.1840)

Prestwich was helped by the Madeley mineowner John Anstice (see 'Below', Summer 1996, 96.2) who allowed him to study his geology collection and by Sir Roderick Murchison who was studying the Silurian rocks of the Wenlock area. His friends, the Pritchards of Broseley, also placed a room at his disposal which he "soon filled". With regard to his visits to the pits Prestwich says, "I returned night after night with my bag full". All the information collected was embodied in a memoir read before the Geological Society, the first part dealing with the faults was read in 1834, when he was 22 years of age. The second and main part on the geology was read in 1836. It was published in 1838 and contained nearly 100 pages plus maps etc.. It is accepted that the quality of this paper is amazing, it was a first attempt, produced in holiday periods by a largely untrained person who was still only 20 years of age. Prestwich had carefully mapped about 100 sq. miles on a scale of one inch to a mile. According to Sir Archibald Geikie, who was later Director General of the Geological Survey, "The map was no mere sketch, but an elaborate survey" showing the outcrops of the seams, the position and effects of the geological dislocations and the structure of the ground. His "excellent descriptive memoir" covers the stratigraphy and palaeontology, the fossils contain new species, the formations were "discriminated" and "the conditions of deposit luminously discussed". Geikie concludes by calling it a "classic" and stresses how remarkable it was that, when the Geological Survey came to study this area, their findings were so similar that they "followed the lines which he had laid down".

Although, surprisingly, not mentioned in Mrs. Prestwich's book on her husband's life, Joseph also gave evidence about 1840 when twenty eight years old to the Commission on the Employment of Children. He was questioned thoroughly on the conditions underground in Shropshire but his answers do tend to give a rather rosier picture than most would expect





# Joseph Prestwich (1812-1896)

by Ivor Brown

- he said there was no nightwork, the children appeared cheerful and looked healthy, he knew "of no cruelties inflicted on them". "Respectable ironmasters like those of this district would not allow any cruelty". According to Prestwich the miners were more civilised here than in some districts due in part to "the considerable number of resident gentry, by which means a degree of refinement and civilisation is kept up". On the other hand he did admit to wages being only from 8 pence to 36 pence per day of 6 to 12 hours, depending on age and job; to seams as little as 18 inches thick being worked and to miners having to work lying on their sides. Often the boys could not work upright and the girls, who worked on the surface only, collected ironstone nodules on the tips whilst kneeling, loaded them into baskets and carried these to the heaps on their heads. In his evidence he also spoke of mining itself although at this time, of the 30 mines for which he had collected geological sections, only 15 were still at work. Although he visited a great number of mines he did not claim to know them all.

After his Shropshire work, Prestwich, now in "Commerce in the City" (but sources other than his wife describe him as a wine-merchant) had a very wide experience of geology, he was keen on caves of all types in areas from Settle to the Gower, on water supply (worked on Commission) and on other coalfields. He gave evidence on the Somerset Coalfield and on the chances of finding coal in the South of England to the Royal Commission on Coal, set up in 1866 (published in 1871). He was also interested in the Channel

Tunnel Project of the time, but is probably best remembered for the study he did in 1851 on the water bearing strata around London.



Fossil collected by Prestwich from Lincoln Hill, Ironbridge. (See 4. 1840)

Prestwich retired from his business (wine?) in 1872 aged sixty to concentrate on geology and two years later was offered the post of Professor of Geology at Oxford University from which he retired in 1886 aged seventy four. He immediately wrote a two volume book on geology but unfortunately there are few mentions of Shropshire. Prestwich was also persuaded in his last years to write his autobiography but only got as far as aged thirty, fortunately this was enough to cover his Shropshire years. This incomplete autobiography was incorporated into a biography written by his wife. he was Knighted when aged eighty three and died in 1896.

Prestwich and W.W.Smyth, another geologist very much involved in his early days with the mines of Coalbrookdale, were great friends and,

even when Prestwich was sixty five, together they visited some coal mines in France. Smyth was also keen on sketching the mines he visited, his collection was sold a few years ago but what happened to Prestwich's drawings is not known. Prestwich's fossil collection flourished, but nothing more is heard of the 'Conularia'. Mrs. Prestwich does however say it was of the order Mollusca. He is remembered, in the fossil kingdom, since a fossil was named after him, 'Curculiodes prestwichii'. This had been found in Coalbrookdale about 1835. It is said that most of the fossils illustrated in his book had come from William Anstice and eventually Prestwich's collection passed to the British Museum in 1894. Recently a development off Botley Road in Oxford has been named 'Prestwich Place' and a plaque to Prestwich has been put on the boundary wall.

## References

1. Sir Joseph Prestwich by his wife, pub. Blackwood, 1899
2. Child Employment Commission Report, 1842
3. History of Madeley, J.Randall, 1880
4. Prestwich's Shropshire publications:  
1834 On some of the Faults which affect the Coalfield of Coalbrookdale. Proc. Geol. Soc. vol.ii pp18,19.  
1836 Memoir on the Geology of Coalbrookdale, (Abstract). Proc. Geol. Soc. vol.ii pp401-6.  
1840 On the Geology of Coalbrookdale. Trans. Geol. Soc. Series 2, vol.v pp413-495.

## Where is it?

Any ideas where the engine house in the drawing (left) c1950 might be?

It says "lead mine near Shelve" and appears to have a square, free-standing chimney.

from:

"The Cornish worked the Shropshire Lead Mines" by Constance Manders, Shropshire Mag., Sept. 1952



## News Round-Up 2

### Internet News

The UK Newsgroup <uk.rec.caving> has now been created

### What is uk.rec.caving?

It is a standard Usenet newsgroup. It is *\*not\** a mailing list. If you don't know how to receive it, contact your Site News Administrator or Internet Service Provider. Further details are in the main FAQ, posted to the newsgroup.

### What's the group about?

The newsgroup is for caving-related discussions which are primarily of interest to cavers, potholers and speleologists in the United Kingdom (Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland) and the Irish Republic. Because UK cavers go caving around the world, and especially in Europe, the newsgroup will take a broad view of what is relevant.

Postings from overseas cavers are welcome, preferably in English or with a translation. If your topic would be acceptable in a UK caving magazine then it will be on-topic for this newsgroup.

### Where are the FAQs?

There are two FAQs, "Welcome to uk.rec.caving" and "FAQ about Caving in the UK", which will both be posted regularly to the newsgroup. Both the FAQs are archived, together with the newsgroup messages, at: <http://www.mcsolv.demon.co.uk/caving/>

*David Gibson*

### Another Underground UK Group

Also recently created is another UK related underground newsgroup, this time for mainly man-made underground features (at the moment it is biased towards War time Bunkers etc.), this group is:

**uk.rec.subteranea**

*Kelvin*

### 3D Internet Caves

First of all, my name is Jose Aguilera, I live in Jerez, in the south of Spain.

I've created two models of cave systems in VRML format and I've posted it on the WEB site of my grotto or group of cavers at the Cadiz University in Spain.

The URL of the VRML pages are:

http:  
[//www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/r.wrl](http://www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/r.wrl)

and http:  
[//www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/m.wrl](http://www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/m.wrl)

I've created them using a graphic tablet to digitize the elevation curves of the mountains and I convert it with a program developed by me into a 3dmesh in DXF format. The data cave was also processed by me and converted also into a model in DXF format. I've used 3dstudio to join them and a 3dstudio to VRML conversion program. After it I tune the vrml file with a text editor.

You can see also a rendered picture that includes a texture for the mountains of an aerial photograph of the zone and also an animated gif of the same model in

http:  
[//www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/3dmot.html](http://www2.uca.es/huesped/giex/3dmot.html)

I'd like your comments to me at:

[jaguilera@jet.es](mailto:jaguilera@jet.es)

or to the cave-surveying mailing list. I think 3d models of caves are a good theme to talk about.

*Jose Aguilera*

<http://www.jet.es/~jaguiler>

<http://www2.uca.es/huesped/giex>

### Note

Most of these pages are in Spanish. I'm translating them into English but they are mostly graphics.

Enjoy it!

### Museum Closures

Big Pit Mining Museum has provisionally announced that it will close on 31st August 1997 due to the problem of pumping and draining the underground workings. A similar reason has also been given by the National Coal Mining Museum, Caphouse Colliery who has given a provisional date of 1st April 1998 for its closure.

The withdrawal of support and coal privatisation now threatens most coal mining museums that are trying to maintain 'underground experiences'. Both these museums and the Scottish Museum of Coal Mining at Newtongrange in Lothian receive Government funding to compensate them for the loss of NCB support, but this funding ends in 1997.

A similar problem effected Chatterley Whitfield Mining Museum, who went to considerable expense to construct a 'surface' underground feature, but sadly despite this the Museum was closed and the collections destroyed, lets hope the other museums can find a solution to the problem without destroying themselves.

The Ironstone Mine and Museum at Florence Mine, Cumbria is unaffected by the problem as the Atomic Energy Authority currently drain the mine and use the water at Sellafeld.

### Chimney Saved

Following lightning damage to the chimney stack at Gooinis engine house, St. Agnes the Duchy of Cornwall have agreed to re-build it.

*Industrial Heritage,  
Vol.14, No.4*

### Recent Trips

Trips have been made recently to:  
Smallcleugh Mine  
Brownley Hill Mine  
Guddamgill High Level  
Bronze Age workings at Ross Island and Mount Gabriel  
Allihies Mine  
Duneen Mine  
Wanlockhead and Leadhills



## The Shropshire Pit Mouse by Ivor Brown

I have never seen any reference to this subject in print - so here goes!

The Shropshire Pit Mouse is now probably extinct but in the 1950's and 60's each working Shropshire deep mine had a colony numbering many thousands. Mice were the only larger animal commonly found in deep shaft mines, but rats, frogs and occasionally others were found in the shallower mines and drift mines. These other animals might be the subject of other articles later for again very little has been done on the subject.

The Shropshire Pit Mouse is a variety of House-Mouse (*Mus. musculus* Linn) which has been going its own way for some 200 years with of course constant injections of new blood. The mouse seems to have been introduced into deep mines following the first use of ponies when pony fodder began to be taken in in bulk for ponies stabled underground.

The mice spread from the stables to other parts of the mine as miners became more affluent and left food scraps rather than take it home. The mice also moved from mine to mine as workings became connected underground. The period 1920's to 30's, when mines were closed during strikes and recessions, is said to have had a considerable effect on the mouse population, although in most Shropshire mines this was not so noticeable because the ponies often stayed below, as at Madeley. Here the shafts were too small to convey ponies conveniently. Also the reduction in numbers of ponies had some effect but during this time miners seem to have become more wasteful of food. To control the population anti-rodent campaigns using bait were sometimes used, but were not very successful.

Miners generally accepted mice as being fellow sufferers (but not rats), they were often regarded as an indication of safe working conditions and rather than discourage them, often encouraged them a little. The stables usually supported a cat or two who moved freely about the area (using rails for guidance when there was no light!) and

it is said the ponies themselves could develop a habit of catching mice and eating them when resting in their stalls.

Up to the early 1960's there were no central control points for operating conveyors and other equipment, each conveyor, transfer point or isolated unit needed a human hand, a transport worker, who probably only saw one other person, once, during his whole shift. Most of the time he would be awaiting instruction to press a button, the instruction coming by electric bell, telephone call, the snatch or touching up of the receiving conveyor or even the banging of a water pipe. During these long lonely hours he could study his friends the pit-mouse.

The mice were equally active in dark or light but seemed happier eating in the dark - they were certainly easier to trap in the dark. As soon as the miner took his lunch from his tin (it had to be in a snap tin, for obvious reasons) the mice would come around chirping and calling, fighting for places, just like pigeons in Trafalgar Square or the sheep on Clee Hill.

There would be much scurrying if one got something the others wanted. Some of the mice could be identified as regulars from markings, shapes, deformity or habit but family groupings were never recognisable, they all seemed to treat each other much the same.

To relieve the boredom various games were played on the mice using sloping metal plates, pools of water, heaped stones, glass bottles and nooses made of used detonator lead. Competitions were held on who could catch the most in a given time. A sloping bottle, mouth upper most in the right place could often catch up to 20 in one hour, sometimes more. However the noose was much fairer as it required more skill on the part of the miner and gave the mouse a better chance of survival. You were lucky if you caught 2 or 3 in a night.

Very little scientific research has been done on the life of the pit mouse, it is said that mice will not live where there are rats (another reason why the miner tolerated them), but it is not known

whether the rats actually killed them or just robbed them of their food. The mice seem to eat, breed and fight under a l l conditions of light, warmth or

damp. Research in the Doncaster area indicated that pit mice tended to be darker in colour (not just from coal dust) and to be slightly bigger (85.5mm head and body as against 79mm for surface mice). Very few were found to be carrying fleas. It was found that pit mice tended to have smaller feet (hindfoot: 16.8mm as against 17.7mm for surface mice), but no reason can be given for this (49 pit mice were used in the sample against 20 surface mice).

There was no escape for the mice when the last handful of pits in Shropshire were closed down, they would eat up any food that was left, then each other, unless overtaken first by gassy conditions or flood water - the mice tended to live off the floor in holes in the tunnel walls, tell-tale markings of little feet could be followed in the mud along the roadside and a smear of black would lead up to their nesting place. They must be extinct by now.

There is no memorial to the pit mouse, as there is for the miner, pit-women, mine children and pit pony. In some areas mice were carried in boxes by rescue-men instead of canaries to test for gas. In Shropshire it was felt that canaries were safer, if they got overcome they would fall off their perch. If a mouse was seen to lie down you could not tell whether it was through gas or having just fallen asleep. There is however a collection of pit mouse skins and skulls in a case in Doncaster Museum!



## We have a Hole and could use a caver...

In February this year I received an urgent phone call from a local Civil Engineering firm which basically said:

“During drainage and sewerage improvements on a local estate, one of our workmen while trenching alongside an old cast iron pipe had the ground open up under him revealing a large cavity! Using a small drilling rig we hit something hard near this hole a few inches down, but drilling a few metres away the rig hit another cavity and we lost the drill rods. Due to the proximity of the River Severn, we think it might be an underground canal wharf for the old house, would the Club be interested in sending a small group to examine it for us....?”

No problem I thought, however with various ‘away’ trips planned, work commitments, plus a Mines Trust Meeting scheduled for the Saturday, at one stage it looked as if I’d be on my own! However, eventually a small team of Peter Eggleston (with the MineCam), Andy Harris, Edwin Thorpe, Steve Holding and myself assembled by the stable block on the Leaton Knolls Estate near Shrewsbury at 9am Saturday 2nd March.

Brian Lewis (of Lewis Howdell Associates) and the Hon. C.G.O. Bridgeman (the Estate owner) showed us the site of the ‘hole’. Situated part the way up a small valley, several

metres above the level of the River it seemed unlikely to be a canal tunnel, a cess pit or large night soil chamber sprang to mind (I have been caught before by ‘caves’ near to Kents cavern in Torquay, which on ‘closer’ examination were brick vaulted night-soil chambers!).

We re-excavated the hole (it had been covered for safety) to reveal a tantalising cavity that lead to something big, but not big enough to get a head down or the MineCam. After a bit of chiselling of the brick work around the cast iron sewage pipe we were able to lower the MineCam into the cavity.

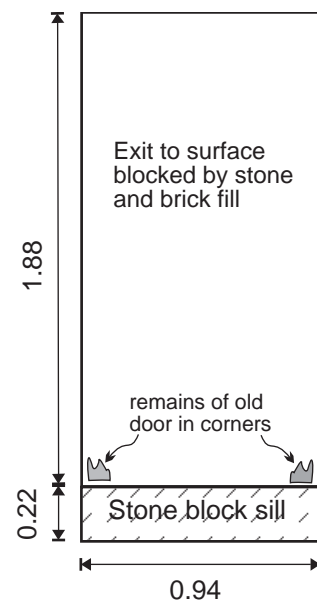
What a surprise it was, the camera passed down a short angled chute to reveal a passageway running East-West. On the South side of the passage was the curved doorway (B) of what was the nicest ice-chamber you could ever hope to see, all in remarkable condition!

That was it, chisel flying, we enlarged the hole to body size and managed to squeeze inside. The drill rods from the rig had actually just glanced down the side of the passage wall, a few millimetres further South and they would never have hit it.

The original entrance to the ice-house had obviously had a stout wooden door (D) at the bottom of some steps.

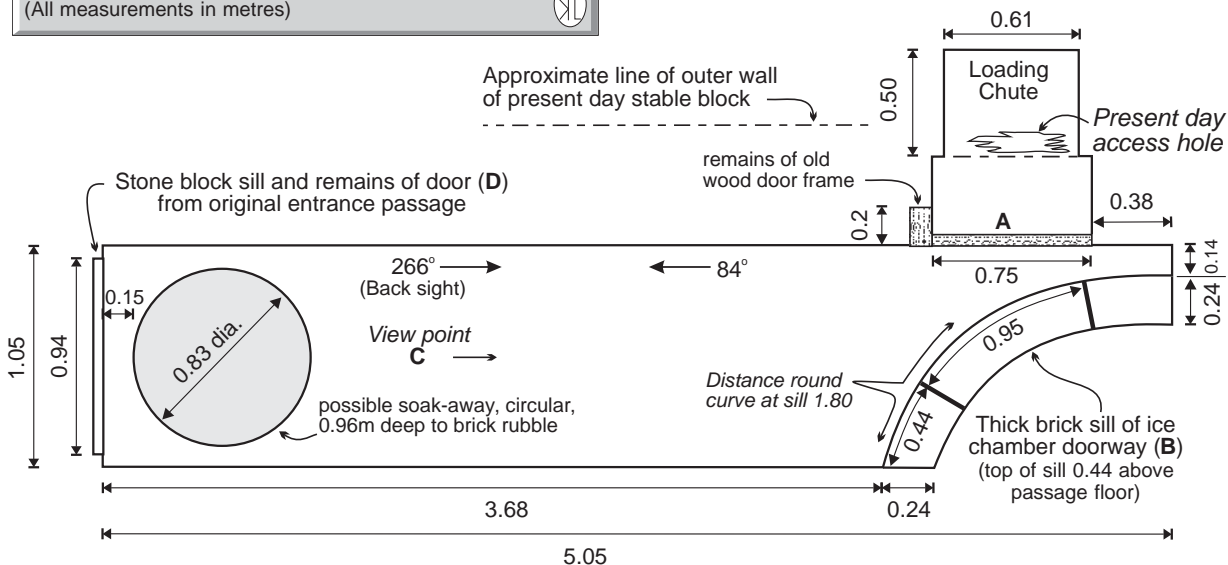
The steps and way down had been filled with rubble and stone while the door was closed. This had subsequently rotted away, leaving a few traces near the bottom and the rubble stacked behind. Immediately in front of the door was a circular drainage/soak-away pit. This had once been covered by brick flooring, but this has now collapsed into the pit.

The current hole to surface (A) actually

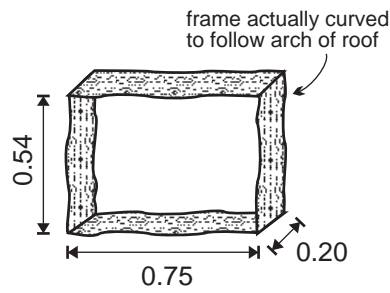
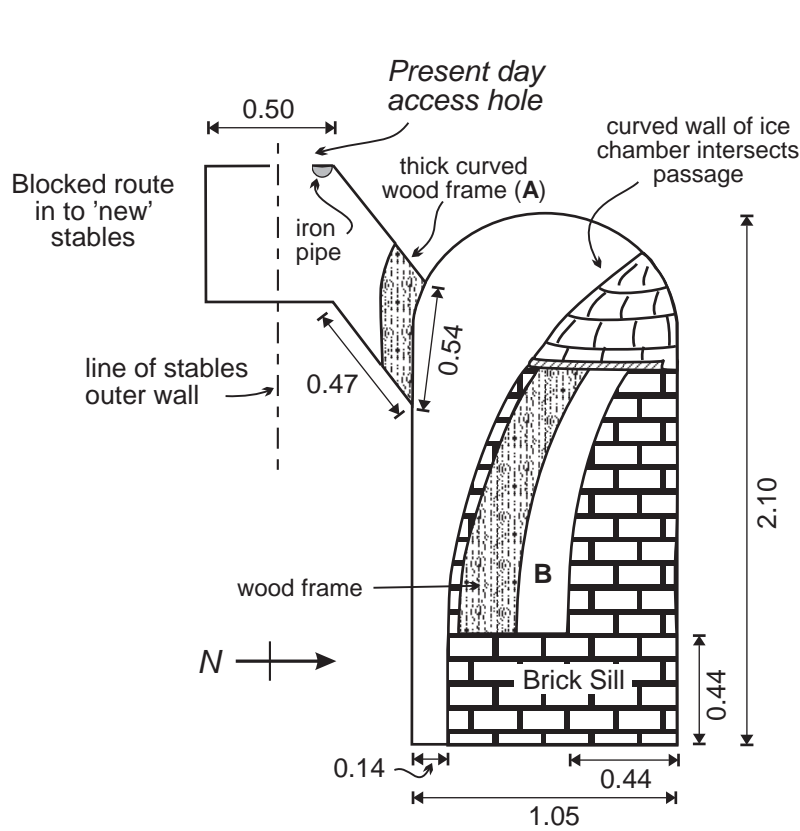


Door way (D); from original entrance passage (square frame), view East

Plan View of ice-house remains, Leaton Knolls  
Compass & tape survey, 2/3/96, A.Harris & K.Lake  
(All measurements in metres)



**We have a Hole  
and could use a caver cont...**



Wood Door Frame remains (A), at bottom of loading chute

chamber was plain, red brick. In the base of the chamber was a central drain, with the remnants of a wood frame and iron grill.

The doorway (B) into the chamber had a very thick wood frame, as did the remains of the doorway at the bottom of the loading chute (A).

A superb discovery, which we managed to measure, video and photograph. We also managed to get Brian Lewis and the Hon. Charles Bridgeman down into the chamber so they could see it first hand. We have offered the Club's services in the future, should they wish to re-instate the original entrance steps and passage to make a feature of the ice-house.

View West, along main passage of Leaton Knolls ice house, to the ice chamber and its doorway (B).  
Compass & tape survey, 2/3/96, A.Harris & K.Lake  
(All measurements in metres)

enters what was probably the loading chute for the ice-house, this is under the present stable block, but they were extended some years ago, probably at the time the ice-house was 'buried'.

Where the ice for this ice-house came from can only be conjecture, there is no mention of the building on any surviving estate plans. It is in a typical position for such a building - on the side of a well drained valley (to allow both surface water and internal melt water to drain away) and near the stable block, where carts could easily be brought when loading the ice-house.

Some estates had ponds especially used for collecting ice in the winter, but the majority had the ice delivered - often from Canada! The ice would be transferred from the ice-house to special lead encased 'cool-boxes' in the main house immediately prior to use. The Estate owner remembers seeing such a box in the cellar of Leaton Knolls house,

when one of his Aunts still lived there (the house has since been demolished).

**The Ice-chamber**

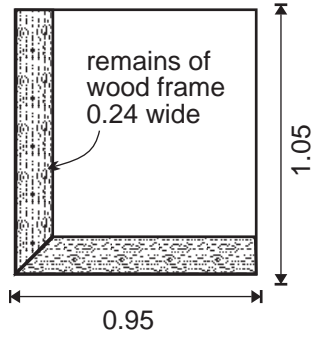
This was fairly small (see diagram) but again a typical 'flask' shaped chamber with domed roof - it was presumably the bricks in the top of the chamber that the drilling rig was unable to penetrate (luckily!). At regular intervals around the walls of the chamber were tiny drain holes, to allow any melted water to run off - it is very important to keep the ice dry, otherwise it does not last.

A nice feature around the walls of the chamber, level with the sill of the entrance door, were soot marks from candles, plus a few signs of hooks, where meats etc.. could have been hung, although it was common practice to put the meats in straw actually on top of the ice.

The top section of the chamber (above the doorway) still showed signs of white-wash, while the main part of the

I would like to thank Brian Lewis for inviting us along to investigate such an interesting site and the Hon. Charles Bridgeman for allowing us access to the estate, for providing us with large quantities of toasted cheese sandwiches and his generous donation to the Club Rescue fund.

*Kelvin Lake*



Doorway (B) into main ice chamber - actually curved to fit shape of chamber



# Answer to Query

## The Shrubbery Colliery, Ketley

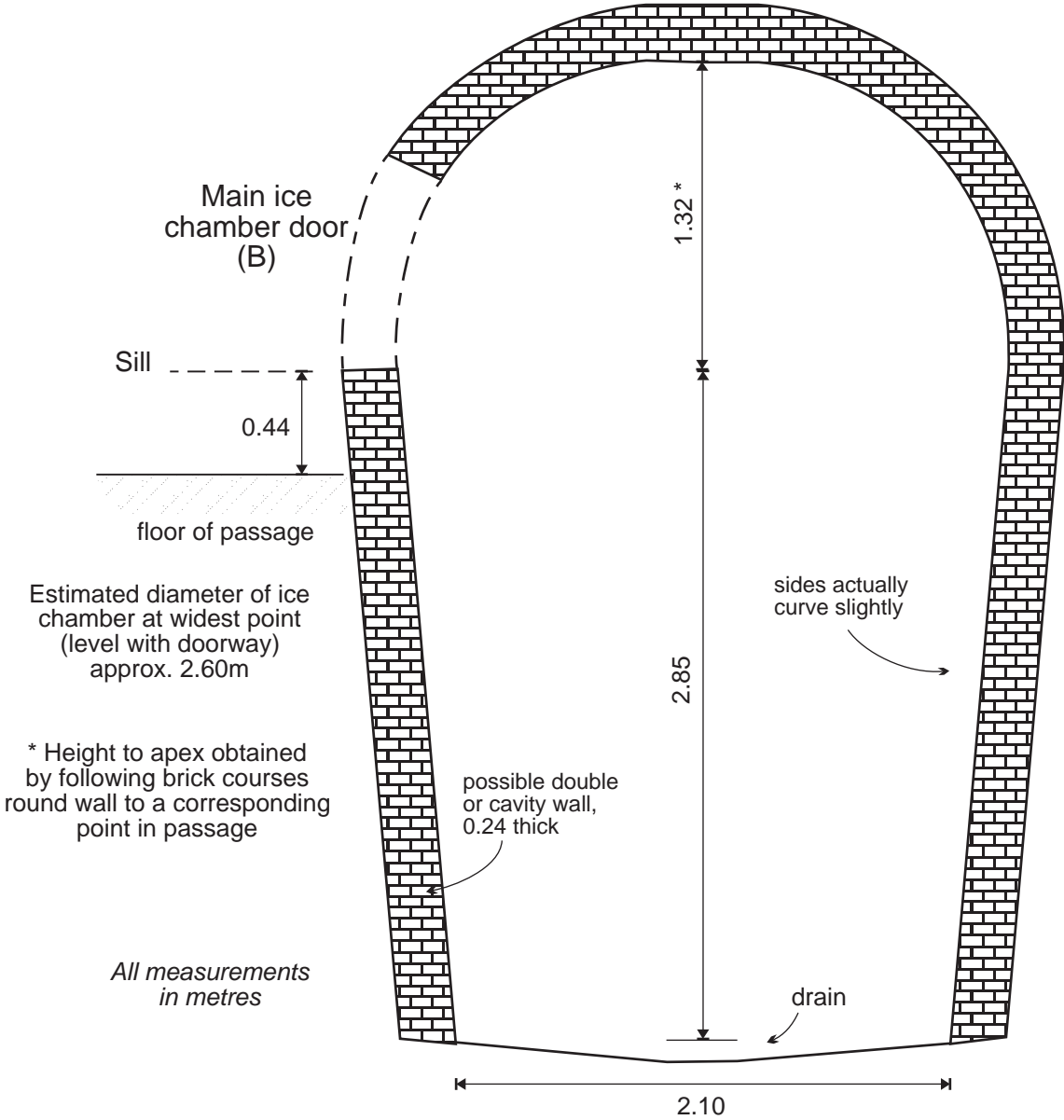
Member David Poyner's father was one of the first students to attend classes for apprentice mining craftsmen (as a carpenter) at the Walker Technical College, Oakengates. About 1943 he travelled from Alveley Colliery (by train to Ketley then a 2 mile walk) on Saturday mornings, then on Monday afternoons, by which time a Whittle's bus was laid on. He was taught mining science by a Mr. Smith, and also had lectures by Ted Carney, later the NCB sub-area engineer. On one occasion Mr. Smith took the trainees down his own mine. This was

across the Holyhead Road from the College and up the road past the Rose and Crown, which mine was it?

Records show that this mine was the Shrubbery Colliery, Ketley (Grid ref: SJ 687 101) owned and operated by J.H. Woodfin from about 1936 to 1948 (other pits in the area were Mossey Green Colliery, closed 1929, Oaks in 1931, Ivy in c1936 and a much older Jacky Pit closed 1914).

Shrubbery Colliery, which is listed from

the early 1920's, employed up to 30 in the mid 20's, produced 2811 tons coal in 1936. This fell during the war but reached 1870 tons in 1944 and fell again by 1946 to 664 tons. In 1937 the mine employed 9 underground, 4 on surface, working Big Flint and New Mine seams, the manager was E. Parton. In 1947 the mine employed two less men underground working New Mine only, A.E. Hand was the manager. At the time of Mr. Poyner's visit the Owner was Mr. Woodfin of Ketley Bank Hall (which was also the Company Office)



**Section of Main Ice Chamber, Leaton Knolls**  
 Shape corresponds to a 'flask'.  
 Compass & Tape survey 2/3/96, A.Harris & K.Lake



## Answer to Query The Shrubbery Colliery, cont..

and Mr. J. Smith was Mine Agent.

Mr. Poyner later supplied the information that when he visited the mine was very primitive. It had been worked by a horse-gin but when Mr. Smith took him underground a motor had just been installed. There were no guides in the shaft and no safety hook between the chains and the rope.

These chains carried a "cage" or box about 3ft. x 3ft. by 9 inches deep (just like the 'dan' at the later Rock Colliery

also a concrete platform by the shaft, a half buried hut of brick with concrete roof (a powderhouse or air-raid shelter?) and the base of a motor or enginehouse.

The surface remained very much like this until the 'Mossey Green Road' was built about 1980, the headframe must have been the last bit of a horse-gin still in place in the area. Parts of it could still be present in the woodland behind the now closed Mossey Green Methodist Chapel.

A report by consultants JP & B would

indicate that the New Mine seam would have been about 100ft. deep, the likely depth of the shaft. The Big Flint Coal would be about 30ft. down and 4ft. 6in thick, Pennystone Ironstone at 90ft. and 16ft. thick and New Mine Coal immediately below this at 5ft. thick (much thicker than usual?).

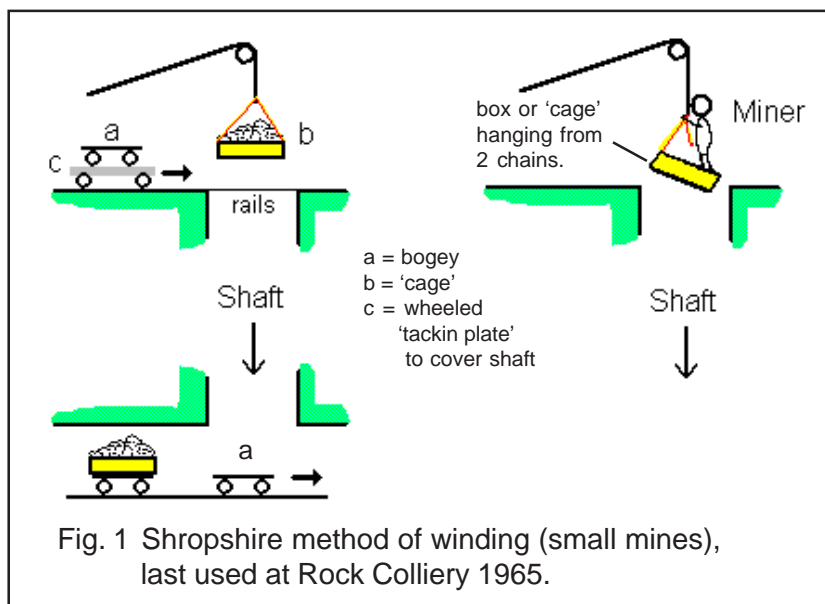
At 60ft. below this there were 6 more seams of coal and two or three seams of useful fireclay. The Abandoned Mine Plan is in the British Coal Collection numbered 9051.

(With thanks to David Poyner and father for their assistance.)

*Ivor J. Brown*

### Footnote:

The day after the above was written, and by a strange coincidence correspondence was received from Alan Smith, son of the SMith referred to above, which gives much more information on Mr. Smith and the Shrubbery Colliery - see separate item on page 16.



visited by the Club in 1964, see Mines of Shropshire by I.J. Brown page 55 and Fig. 1, above). It had a chain attached to each corner, these connected to the winding rope.

The seam was about 3ft. at the face and about 12 men were employed. There was a Siskol drilling machine but everything else was done by hand. The coal was loaded into a small tub, then pushed to the cage by hand. It was emptied onto a crude screen at the surface.

The writer passed the recently closed mine on his cycle in 1952 on his way to the Tech, all surface equipment still remained. About ten years later the headframe looked as in sketch Fig. 2 and the puzzle as to why it looked so much like a horse-gin headframe is solved above. At this time there was

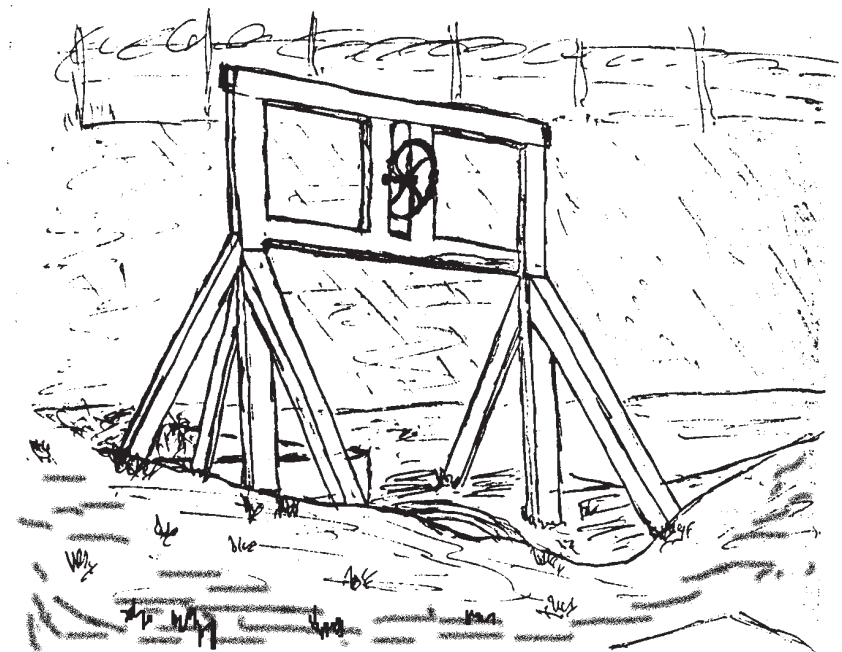


Fig. 2 Shrubbery Colliery, Mossey Green 1964  
As drawn by I.J. Brown



## John Smith, Lilleshall and the Shrubbery Colliery

The day after the article on Shrubbery Colliery was completed (see page 15) correspondence was received from the son of Mr. J. Smith, (who was referred to in the article as a lecturer and manager of Shropshire Mines) quite "out of the blue". Mr. Smith (the son) is seeking more information on his father's work and his own interests in the county. The following is extracted from this correspondence with his permission.

"My father's name was John Smith, and he was born (I believe) in the hamlet of New Invention, close to Shorth Heath, between Wolverhampton and Bloxwich in Staffordshire, on 28 January 1900. I don't know his father's first name - he died when my father was 12 - but his mother was the redoubtable Harriett Ann Henworth, an ardent feminist, suffragette, pacifist and general rabble-rouser (she told me that Attlee 'had betrayed the Working Class: and if I had my time over again, my lad, I'd go to Westminster and shoot him!')."

He started work at Hilton Main Colliery when his father died, to maintain his mother, two sisters and two brothers. One of the brothers went to Cambridge, took a Maths degree, spent time in the RAF Education Branch and finished up as Head of Middlesborough Tech. The other, older than my father, graduated in French from Oxford and Marseilles, spent time in gaol (and on the run, hidden in Harriett Ann's loft) in the 1914-18 War as a conscientious objector; and ended as Headmaster of Clacton County High School.

My father studied at Night School, obtained his 1st Class Certificate of Competency (Colliery Manager's 'ticket') and a Pass BSc in mining from Birmingham University, and during the Depression migrated to Wombwell in Yorkshire, where he was I think Head of the small Technical College there. He met my mother there, they married, and I was born in Wombwell in 1930.

That same year they moved to Lilleshall in Shropshire - the village had only recently ceased to be a feudal fiefdom of the Duke of Sutherland. He had a job as Deputy Head (and Head of the Mining

Department) at Oakengates Commercial & Technical College; which he combined with the post of County Organiser for Mining Education - a job that took him from one end of the county to the other: Wrexham, Oswestry and Bridgnorth I remember as being places he taught at regularly, often not getting home until very late.

Shortly before the second World War, in 1936 or '37, my father was engaged rather busily, with an older geologist named Mr. Cragg, in what seemed to me at the time (I was 6 or 7 years old) to be urgent and somewhat hush-hush survey of the mineral resources of the county.

I remember that it took the two of them many weeks of field trips to complete, and involved the compilation of detailed notes and sketches of a very large number of quarries, outcrops and other exposures which filled many a long evening of my father's time. The episode was memorable for me, because Mr. Cragg, a large man in tweeds whose name seemed peculiarly appropriate to his appearance, visited our home many times, and taught me much about natural history.

I believe that their efforts in Shropshire were part of a much broader national survey of strategic materials which was undertaken in anticipation of the War.

I do not know which Government department was responsible: it may have been the Geological Survey, or the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. But the purpose was evidently to establish the extent to which the country could expect to be self-sufficient in time of war - rather than to contribute to geological mapping or historical recording."

*Although it appears that others thought that they were searching out sites for deep bunkers or other wartime necessities. Does anyone know the present location of the survey carried out - it may have been one of the "Wartime Pamphlet" series on minerals?*

IJB.

"My father also did some consulting work, becoming Chairman of the Wellington Rural District Water Committee, and nominal 'manager' of a couple of very small mines: one of which I shall always remember. It was the Shrubbery Colliery, owned by a bewhiskered Edwardian gentleman named 'J.H. Woodfin & Co.' (or so I thought); the main winding engine at that pit was a horse named Betsy.

The horse-gin, which was some 20 or 30 yards away from the shaft, was of the undershot variety (so that the horse Betsy stepped over the rope at every revolution), rather than the better-known overhead variety in which the horse passed under the rope at each turn. I think the vertical winding drum in the centre of the horse-circle was a patent device by a local manufacturer - though alas I cannot remember the makers' name - and the rope passed through a buried channel which formed part of the assembly. As a child, I was allowed to ride on the rotating beam as Betsy walked slowly round: but never to sit on her back.

As I recall, this 1-hp. system was replaced during my father's management of the mine, by a tiny 1/4-hp. synchronous A.C. motor. Even as a little boy, I was impressed that so small a motor could do the work of the big old horse like Betsy.

John Smith was a fairly conspicuous character around the county. He wore his hair *en brosse*, like a Frenchman, and always wore a heavy tweed plus-fours when he was 'dressed-up'. I remember the students at the Tech loved him, because he was so easy to caricature. One cartoon I saw of him in their student rag: it showed a pipe and a pair of plus-fours coming round a corner, and the caption read:

"Will they never wear out ...?"

In their younger days my parents were great hikers and campers and cyclists - they thought nothing of cycling from Lilleshall to Rhyl or Llanfairfechan on a tandem.





# John Smith, Lilleshall and the Shrubbery Colliery

In 1943 my father decided to move back to Yorkshire, I suspect because his mining 'cover; for exemption from Military Service was wearing a little thin, and he became manager of Birkenshaw Colliery near Bradford. He remained here through the nationalisation of the colliery until about 1952, when he became manager of a rather larger pit at East Ardsley, just outside Wakefield. He died 'in harness' in 1958.

I cannot tell you much more about his mining work in Shropshire, except that long after his death I met an old mining engineer from the area who recognised me (by my ears, which I inherited from him) and talked to me animatedly about how well-liked he had been around the County. I do know that the mining engineer my father most admired during out time in Shropshire, and with whom he kept in touch long afterwards, was a Mr. H.J.Wroe: who was a Catholic with many daughters whom he wanted to become nuns - strange ambition, we always thought, since they were all very pretty. Wroe left Shropshire to go to Canterbury Technical College; he was a good few years older than my Dad."

H.J.Wroe was the manager of Lilleshall Co's Woodhouse Colliery, after the colliery closed, pumping continued there until the 1960's.

IJB

"My father's students were always very loyal, including the Shropshire students and many of them came to his Quaker funeral in Leeds in 1958. I have never explored his antecedents, for me genealogy is a bit of a waste of time, but I did go back to Shortheath to see one of my Aunts who still lived there. It must have been 20 years after my last previous appearance there as a boy. I called at the village shop, to pick up some cigarettes before meeting my Aunt (who smoked like a furnace) and the old lady behind the counter took one look at my ears and said "you must be Jack Smiths lad". There are some family traits one can never live down...

My own career has been quite chequered, you can read the gory details in Who's Who."

*Alan is a mining engineer who has worked in British Government Offices around the World - for the rest see Who's Who.*

IJB

## Newcomen Engines

Mr. Alan Smith, (the writer of the above) of 63 Abbey House, 1a Abbey Road, London NW8 9BX is researching the early history of the atmospheric steam engine of Thomas Newcomen - precursor of every steam engine in use today.

He is keen to know whether any Member can inform him of the location (or any other details) of any beam engines of that type which may have been installed at Shropshire mines between 1712, the date of the first known engine near Dudley Castle in Staffordshire: and July, 1733, when the Patent expired under which such engines were worked. (They were known as "Fire Engines").

Particular interest attaches to the activities of a colliery entrepreneur named George Sparrow, of the Glasshouse, Wolstanton, Staffs., who is known to have operated early engines in other coalfields, and was a lessee of some of the Duke of Sutherland's (Earl of Granville, Leveson-Gower) mines at Lilleshall or Wombridge.

Sparrow, in partnership with one Stonier Parrott of Bignall Hill, Staffs., was a licensee of the Patent Proprietors from a date before the death of Captain Thomas Savery, the patentee, in May 1715.

Some tantalising details about him were revealed in a book entitled *Estate Management in the Eighteenth Century*, by Wordie; which was mainly about the Leveson-Gower estates in Shropshire and elsewhere.

Some of Mr. Smith's researches on this subject have been published in Volumes 49, 50 and 66 of *The Transactions of the*

*Newcomen Society* (for the study of the history of engineering and technology), whose headquarters are at the Science Museum, South Kensington of which he is a former Executive Secretary.

He has also contributed to the standard textbook on the subject: *L.T.C.Rolt & J.S.Allen. The Steam Engine of Thomas Newcomen* (Hartington: Moorland Publishing Co., 1977).

Another person who may have been involved in steam engines was the Rev. George Plaxton, the Leveson-Gower's estate manager: who contributed notes on the natural history of the area to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in ca. 1707; who is believed to have compiled a manuscript *History of Lilleshall*, which Mr. Smith has not yet seen.

Please send any response to this query direct to Mr. Smith, rather than to the Editor.

*Ivor brown*

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## Letters to the Editor

### Re: the article on the University of Birmingham training mine.

The 'mine buildings' are still standing (4/11/96), and were in use as the Birmingham University Speleological Society tackle store when I was there '77-'81. The mine heads towards the location of a multi-storey car park, adjacent, and rumour was that the workings had been filled.

Most of the buildings in the immediate area are newish ('60's), housing the big machinery of the physics department, so I doubt that very much of mining history interest remains.

WMCRO people such as Joppo and Simon Amatt will no doubt be in contact with BUSS if you want to pursue it further.

*Dr John Heathcote*



## News Round-Up 3

### Trenchless

All over the world there are groups that promote modern underground construction technologies, mostly called "trenchless techniques". These techniques very often relate to cable-laying without digging up the road. But the techniques are progressing rapidly, also towards large scale tunneling etc. They recently opened a web site. It is called the "Digging-Deep Homepage". It can be found at: <http://www.digging-deep.demon.co.uk/>

and is well worth visiting.

### Foreign Journal

The publication "SOK-Mededeelingen No. 26" was out recently. In it you'll find articles on:

- ★ the Catacombs of Valkenburg in Limburg by Joep Didden.
- ★ Clay-pipe finds in Southern-Limburg quarries, Han Bochman, P.K. Smiesing and A.M. Vöte.
- ★ inscriptions underground referring to the harsh winters of the 18th century by Ton Breuls.
- ★ the two "Kleinberg" quarries by John Knubben.

The publication can be ordered at the price of 15 Dutch Guilders at the following address:  
Editor SOK-Mededeelingen,  
Ton Breuls, Bovenstraat 28,  
3770 Kanne/Riemst, Belgium.

An extensive summary of all SOK-Mededeelingen publications including this one, can be found at: [http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/sok\\_eng.html](http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/sok_eng.html)

Submitted on behalf of the UIS commission on artificial cavities by

*Joep Orbons*

P.O. Box 1614, NL 6201 BPMaastricht,  
The Netherlands  
E-Mail: [jorbons@xs4all.nl](mailto:jorbons@xs4all.nl)  
WWW: <http://www.xs4all.nl/~jorbons/home.html>

### The Hat Bashing Affray!

Kirkintilloch Parish Church, near Glasgow, has a mural around its wall depicting the hat bashing affray of 1896. This would have been avoided if the Church had had grooves for hats under the seats as at Snailbeach (have YOU ever seen them?).

At the end of the last century everyone wore hats. At Kirkintilloch there was friction between a man and two sisters. They sat together every Sunday in the same pew and the sisters were usually there first. One Sunday, though, the gentleman was there first and he put his top hat on the seat beside him.

When the ladies came in one of them asked him to remove his hat so that she could sit down. He refused, so she sat on it, squashing it flat. Full of indignation, the man whipped the lady's hat from her head, pins and all, and threw it into the aisle. When she rose in indignation, he took his squashed hat and plonked it on her head.

The Church was in uproar. Everyone (except those involved - and the minister, according to the mural) loved it!

The other sister remonstrated and the man pulled off **HER** hat and threw that in the aisle as well.

The next Sunday there was a much bigger congregation than usual, eagerly awaiting a repeat performance!!!

Not the best way of increasing Church attendance, perhaps. There are no rows like kept rows, whether local, national or world-wide. So much bitterness can be caused even from those who should have the love of God in their hearts.

It's not so much what's **ON** your head as **IN** your head and in your heart that really counts.

*Brian Tildesley*

### Mineral Spot

#### Feldspar

A complex group of potassium, sodium and calcium framework silicates, where aluminium has replaced 0.25 to 0.5 per cent of the silicon. Feldspars are the most abundant mineral group forming almost 1/2 the earth's crust.

Feldspar can be roughly divided into two main groups:

#### Orthoclase series

*Microcline* ( $\text{KAlSi}_3\text{O}_8$ ) is the most common potassium feldspar, abundant in granites and other silica rich igneous rocks. It is different from other potassium feldspars in that the distribution of silica and aluminium ions in tetrahedral sites is regular (ordered) rather than random or partially ordered. It is formed at high temperatures during a slow cooling process. *Sanidine* ( $\text{KAlSi}_3\text{O}_8$ ) - disordered potassium feldspar. Formed when a rock crystallizes at high temperature and is rapidly cooled. Common in lavas. It is notably more glassy than microcline. *Orthoclase & Adularia* ( $\text{KAlSi}_3\text{O}_8$ ) - both exhibit partial ordering among the tetrahedral ions. They are the results of special crystallization conditions particularly when water is present at low temperatures (25° - 400°C). The term Orthoclase is generally used for monoclinic crystals with well formed faces, while adularia is used for monoclinic crystals with a distinctive rhombic cross-section. Others in the series: *Perthite*, *Anorthoclase* (both sodium/potassium mixtures), *Celsian* (a feldspar with barium).

#### Plagioclase series ( $\text{Na,Ca})(\text{AlSi})_4\text{O}_8$

This is a complete solid solution series, ranging from *albite* ( $\text{NaAlSi}_3\text{O}_8$ ), through *oligoclase*, *labradorite*, *bytownite* to *anorthite* ( $\text{CaAl}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_8$ ). A plagioclase can have a composition of any value between albite and anorthite. Plagioclase is one of the main components of the toadstones (lavas, ashes, tuffs and dolerites) in the Peak District. One notable feature of these feldspars is the occurrence of a blue glow in reflected light. Certain labradorite's are particularly prized for this glow



## Books, Videos, Places & Events

### 'Violet' in Steam

'Violet' built in 1886, is a 350 HP Pollit and Wigzell Horizontal Tandem Compound mill engine, she has a 5ft stroke, a 14ft - 18 ton flywheel and gear drive to the Mill Shaft.



After driving Nortonthorpe Mills for over 76 years, she was finally stopped on completion of electrification of the mills, where she lay derelict for more than 30 years. Now thanks to her present owners and two dedicated volunteers, she has been fully restored to her original working condition. The engine is a superb example of Victorian steam engineering, and can now be seen working under steam on open days at Nortonthorpe Mills, Scissett, Huddersfield.

The next steam days are: **26/27th April 1997**. The engine will be in steam from 12 to 5pm.

If you are interested in going the mill is at Scissett, on the A636 Denby Dale to Wakefield Road, about 6 miles from junction 39 of the M1 (follow signs for Denby Dale). The Mill engine house is about 500 yards from the village church and the Pine Factory Shop.

### Sygun Copper Mine

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

Bookings/inquiries to:

Sygun Copper Mine,  
Beddgelert,  
Caernarfon,  
Gwynedd, LL55 4NE  
Telephone: 076686 585  
24 Hour infoline: 076686 564

You can now visit the mine in 'virtual reality' if you have a web browser:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/SnowdoniaMine>

### St. Barbara

**Journey of a Saint through Time by Rolfroderich Nemitz and Dieter Thierse** (*Abstract of review by Professor Albert W. Davies*)

This fascinating book about the patron saint of miners, metallurgists and others, was published on the 4th December, the Saint's day, in 1995.

The authors, who are prominent mining engineers in Germany and world-wide, have researched the history of St. Barbara very thoroughly and produced a very interesting book, which is a first in its field. The very detailed research and the quality of the illustrations makes the book rank with the work of Georgius Agricola who produced the first well-illustrated text book of mining and metallurgy some 440 years ago.

Following years of intensive research by the authors and their assistants a picture emerges of the importance of St.

Barbara down the ages. Her presence is depicted in religious, historical and artistic spheres, manifested in her legendary role in ancient Christianity, or as an object of art. Her name has been given to countless churches and hospitals, and her influence has extended beyond the Christian faith. The authors discovered the unusual attraction of St. Barbara and became increasingly interested in her historical origins and the role she has played up to the present.

Clothbound with paper jacket, 380 pages, 250 four-colour and 30 single-colour illustrations and maps. Available from:

Verlag Glückauf GmbH, P.O. Box 1856  
20, D-45206, Essen, Germany.  
Fax: +49+20 549241 29

*Submitted by Geoff  
Warrington*



### 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
- C.29: SCMC in Cornwall, £16.45

For more details contact: I.A. Recordings, PO Box 476, Telford, TF8 7RH  
e-mail: [info@iarecordings.org](mailto:info@iarecordings.org)  
or visit them on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.iarecordings.org>



# Club Officers

# Diary Dates '97

**President: Alan Taylor**

**Tackle & Rescue Officer:  
Steve Holding**

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

**Chairman: Neal Rushton**

**Training Officer:  
Alan Robinson**

1997

**8th Feb.:** AGM of the Mining History Society of Ireland, in Dublin. Contact Nick Southwick.

**Vice Chair: Malcolm Newton**

**Conservation Officer:  
Nick Southwick**

**15 March:** BCRA Cave Science Symposium, hosted by the Limestone Research Group, at University of Huddersfield.

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

**Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold**

**20th May:** Talk "Miners of the Severn Gorge" by I.J. Brown, to the Shropshire Family History Society. 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**Treasurer: Bob Taylor**

**NAMHO Rep:  
Colin Armfield**

**14-17 July:** NAMHO Conference '97, Darley Dale, Matlock. Hosts: Peak District Mines Historical Society.

**Membership Services:  
Mike Moore**




**CCC/CNCC Rep: Ben Shaw**

**July:** International Congress of the History of Sciences, Liège, Belgium. Includes a symposium on the study of "Coal before the use of coke in Europe".

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

**10-17th August:** 12th International Congress of Speleology and 6th Conference on Limestone Hydrology and Fissured Aquifers. At La Chaux-de-Fonds, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Lots of excursions and field trips will be organised from July 27th to August 30th, plus many other attractions.

## Smidgin: A few handy SRT Self-rescue tips ...

<p>1. If possible conduct a remote pitch head rescue... <i>take in..</i></p> 	<p>3. Take care when cutting rope for a pitch head lower... <i>fair</i> <i>warn</i></p> 	<p>4. As a <b>very</b> last resort, you could try a 'down' prusik and abseil off.. <i>are you feeling a little dickey?</i></p> 
<p>2. A pitch head hoist with a mechanical advantage helps..</p> 