

## New Members

Welcome to Richard Clifton, Simon Saye who have become full members of the Club.

## Additions to the Library

A number of publications have been added to the club library since the last issue of 'Below' these include:

**Cave and Karst Science** (BCRA) Vol. 25 No. 1 April 1998

**Caves & Caving** (BCRA) Issue 80, Summer '98 - *has an introduction to the Cave Surveying Group and surveying techniques.*

**Mining History Society of Ireland** Newsletter No. 7 May 1998.

**North Wales C.C. Newsletter:** No. 245 March 1998, No. 246 April 1998, No. 247 May 1998, No. 248 June 1998,

**Plymouth Caving Group Newsletter & Journal**, Feb. 1998

**Stone Chat** (Journal of Norfolk Mineral & Lapidary Society), Vol. 18 No. 4 Summer 1998 - *contains an interesting item on accepting slag minerals as minerals in their own right.*

## Annual Dinner

A reminder that the Annual Dinner is on Saturday 10th October 1998 at Tern Hill Hall Hotel, accommodation available at venue or camping locally.

Cost per head: £15.50. Speaker still to be announced.

## BCRA Job

The British Cave Research Association is advertising for the remunerated post of **Communications & Public Relations Officer**.

This is a new post of part-time self employed status. The successful applicant will carry-out the following tasks:

- Publicity and Marketing for BCRA
- News Editor for Caves & Caving, the Bulletin of the BCRA
- Design and layout of publications and publicity material for BCRA

If you are interested, the applicant should be familiar with computers, e-mail, the use of the internet for publication and information purposes, wordprocessing, spreadsheets, database management systems and desktop publishing/layout packages.

Applications should include a CV, a photograph, a personal statement of how the applicant could contribute and develop this role, the number of hours per week potentially available, and the remuneration required.

Send them to: **the Chairman, BCRA, Clive Gardener, 23, Landin House, Thomas Road, London, E14 7AN** by 31st July 1998.

## Mine Works

**Wood Level:** Stabilisation work is underway at Wood Mine by T & L Mining. **Roman Gravels:** Work is continuing here. **Snailbeach:** The headgear on Georges Shaft is to be re-erected.

## Recent Trips

Since the last issue of Below, trips have been held to:

the Hanwood area, Bridgnorth (*investigating assorted holes or 'caves', plus a walk through the Severn Valley Railway tunnel*), Ritton Castle (*see brief report in this issue, p3*), Great Hucknall, Taylor's Level, Snailbeach sand slope (*see report of closure of dig at intermediate level, p3*), Dudley caverns, Apedale, Fox Fields Colliery, Silverdale Colliery, Burgham, Brown Clee (*report on p3*), Tower Mine, Nenthead (NAHMO Conference), Ireland, Clive and Forest of Dean.

## Late Entry

Richard Haszard has sent his answer to the Christmas "Managers Exam" Competition (received by IJB 21 April 1998 - 3 months late). Richard was the only one to answer the 'cube root question' by calculation from basic principles - using the Mining Students Journal No. 15 Vol. 111, June 15th 1895 as a guide. After 3 foolscap pages of calculation - he got completely the correct answer - well done Dick.

(Dick found another way of working out the answer in the Mechanics Magazine, published 1828).

## Canals

An article 'Underground Canals in Shropshire Mines' has been published in Mining History (Bull. PDMHS) Winter 1997 issue, by IJB. A special copy has been sent to Mike Moore. This was the paper given at the 1997 NAMHO Conference (see report Below 97.4, p11)



# News Round-Up 1

## by Ivor Brown

### News Report

The following is based on a report in the Wellington Journal, 15 July 1892. The Oddfellows Club Anniversary, Earl of Tankerville Lodge.

Members assembled on Sunday at Tankerville Mine, and at 11.00am had a walk (2 miles?) preceded by Shrewsbury Oddfellows Band, to Snailbeach Chapel, where the sermon was preached by Rev. L. Jones of Lords Hill. Afterwards they walked to Snailbeach Mine and then returned to Tankerville Mine, where they partook of a very good dinner.

Among those present were Rev. Macleod (treasurer), Stanley Leighton (Member of Parliament), J. Rose, W. Toye (Perkins Beach Mine), Captain Waters (Roman Gravels), Captain Job and Captain Oldfield (Snailbeach), Captain Smytham (Tankerville & The Bog), Dr. Sutton (Surgeon to the Club) and Rev. Jones.

Mr. J.W. Moore (secretary) reported that during the year calls on the sick pay had been very heavy. This was followed by 'addresses' by those present (in all nine speeches were given). At 9.00 pm the band brought the proceedings to a close by playing the National Anthem. The weather had been fine except for a slight shower during the evening.

(In all the 'Anniversary' had taken 10 hours, we know what the VIPs had been doing, but where had the band been all this time? Had any miners been present? Mr. J.W. Moore was the school master but who was J. Rose?

*[Could J. Rose have been linked to the firm of J. Rose in Coalport? Kelvin]*

(\* This was a branch of the national Order of Oddfellows Friendly Society, a 'club' for sick and injured persons.)

### Pit Ponies

Watching the loading of Smokey, one of the Caphouse Colliery pit ponies (formerly 12 years at Ellington Colliery) into a van to be taken to be 'put down' on 23rd Feb. 1998, brought back memories of days at Madeley Wood Colliery. In 1953 helping to off-load a

tub from the cage, the tub contained the body of one of the last 6 ponies in that pit - it had been crushed in an accident underground.

In 1955 the last three there were put to rest during the annual holidays - there was much sadness when everyone returned to work.

### Spread Eagles

There is a good article on 'Coalmining earthworks' at the Spread Eagles site, Little Wenlock by L. Smith in Telford Historical and Archaeological Society Journal No.1 1997. It describes mainly the visible reminders of 1700's workings, unusual survivals for that part of Shropshire.

### 5 Star Quarry

Criggon Quarry, Shropshire has won a 5-star Environmental award for 1997. Recent activities at the quarry are also described in 'Quarry Management Journal', March 1998 (page 58).

### Memorial Lecture

IJB attended a memorial lecture at the Miners Hall, Barnsley, to commemorate the deaths of 2 Yorkshire miners killed during picketing in the 1984/5 miners strike. A large chapel-like Victorian building with large plaster models of 19thC. mining scenes high on the wall, banners, memorials and glass cases. One case has a large open book entitled 'The address and a purse of £700 as presented by Members of the Miners Federation of G.B. including the Counties of York, Lancs, Cheshire, Staffs, Derbys, Notts, Leics, Warwicks, Gloucs, Somerset, **Shropshire**, Cumberland, Fife & Lothian (Scotland), North Wales and the Coal Porters (?)'. No date but circa 1880.

### Miners Grave

There is in Madeley Churchyard, a gravestone inscribed with the information: J.E. George, 1940 age 29 years "a token of respect from his old workmates at Kemberton Pit", also of course the communal grave to the 9 victims of the 1864 pit disaster. Elsewhere in the churchyard, there is a stone engraved with a wheel in memory

of one of the area's earliest motorcyclists who died age 22 in 1924 in a road accident.

### Madeley History

Over 100 persons attended a conference in Madeley on March 28, 1998 to consider the history of the town. Two of the speakers: M. Wanklyn and J. Smart gave some interesting information on local mining. The influence of the "illegal Roman Catholics" of the 17th Century seems to have been considerable - especially as they were in charge of the mines before the Derbys arrived.

### Opencast Site

'Opencast Mining' Journal 1997, lists only one active site in Shropshire (Hall Constructions Windmill Lane site), 2 others are being restored together to form a golf course and a waste tip (Symon and Candlely) one site is at Appeal (Dawley Road - 600,000 tons coal) and another is being proposed (Candles Phase 3). One site in Wales is now using the American Auger System of mining, where parallel tunnels are augered out from the opencast site bottom into surrounding land in order to get further coal from underground.

### Praying Miner

There is in St. Georges Churchyard (near Oakengates) a memorial which says "John Tudor - The Praying Miner, Stone erected by the vicar". The Anglican vicar did this in memory of a saintly Methodist miner because the Methodists could not afford to themselves. The miners' great grandson, now a retired Methodist Minister would like a sketch plan showing the location of the stone with the date it was erected. First to send it to IJB will receive a mining item as a **reward**.

### Whitemoor Mine

This mine (one of RJBs Selby Complex pits) is to close in June, the shafts will then be filled after 10 years life. Asfordby and Monktonhall Mine headgears have already been dropped. The miners who put their redundancy money in the latter have now lost it. (from: *RJB Newscene*, April 1998).



# Recent Explorations

## Snailbeach.

After much effort, principally by Steve Holding, Mike Worsfold, Eileen Bowden, Ian Davis and Ben Shaw the dig on the first intermediate level has been abandoned.

The digging involved poking a long iron bar up into a choke of boulders and gravel in a small stope at about 45°, then getting out of the way as loads of material came crashing down. This material was thrown down the level and the process repeated, a large number of times!

Having surveyed the area around the dig we now know that we are nowhere near where we thought we were, see below.

Going down the next pitch leads to a steep slope of compacted sand and boulders, down slope (fixed rope) leads to the window into the second intermediate level whilst up slope has recently been explored by Ben Shaw.

An awkward climb (two bolts were put in for protection) of about 50ft leads to a choke of massive boulders, this point is approximately 30ft above the first intermediate level and more or less over the dig mentioned above.

Andy Yapp has descended the 'Sand Slope' beyond the window into the first intermediate level. After putting in some bolt re-belays a previously unknown level was reached; this fairly short level comes out *above* the window into the second intermediate level. It would be possible to continue to descend but the whole area is most unstable, presumably you would come into the big stope and could carry on down to the 112 yard level.

There are several open and almost open leads on the 90 yard level.

Some progress has been made on the survey although enthusiasm for surveying appears to be in fairly short supply.

*Ben Shaw*

## Ritton Castle

Over the past week (8-12 June 1998) significant progress has been made digging the blockage just in-by of the flooded winze. Basically we have to dig through a fault full of very loose, wet material. We are uncovering lots of old timber, presumably original shoring.

Most of the digging to date has been

done by: Ian Davis, Eileen Bowen, James Goddard, Steve Holding, Ben Shaw and Mike Worsfold. Anyone who wants to join in the fun is most welcome, give me a ring on 01743 246555. We usually go on Thursday nights. We are still in need of timber, both planks and 3 inch by 3 inch (at least) posts.

*Ben Shaw*

## Trip to Brown Clee, 9/5/98

**Present;** about 20 members and guests. The Brown Clee is the highest hill in Shropshire. It has twin summits at Clee Burf and Abdon Burf topped by dolerite. This has protected the underlying coal measures. Further down the hill is a band of cornstone known as the Abdon limestone, close to the top of the Old Red Sandstone measures. Accordingly, limestone, iron ore, coal and dolerite have all been worked.

The trip commenced by the Burwarton Estate Nature Reserve and Picnic Area on the eastern flank of the Brown Clee, on the road from Cleobury North to Abdon (SO608872). A possible sink hole was noted, where a stream went underneath the road but failed to re-emerge. This coincides roughly with the Abdon limestone, and would merit further investigation. The party then drove to Nordy Bank on the west of the hill, passing the extensive remains of the Ditton and Abdon lime works. The lime was last worked just before the 2nd World War, and at the roadside at Cockshutford the remains were noted of the crusher plant for this working, linked to the quarry higher up the hill by an incline (SO580850).

At Nordy Bank (SO572850), the party began the walk up the old road to Clee Burf, passing an Iron age hillfort, and then crossing the Abdon limestone outcrop, marked by trenching and shallow pits. Close to the summit at Clee Burf (SO592843) coal and ironstone bell pits became visible. Although some of these were destroyed by the Clee Burf dolerite quarry in the mid 1930s, they still cover an extensive area as the quarry only occupies about 20% of the summit region. The quarry remains consist of foundations of the crusher plant.

From Clee Burf, the walk continued to Abdon Burf, passing the subsidiary summit of Green Lea (SO598848), where again there are extensive remains of coal and ironstone workings in an isolated patch of carboniferous strata. Abdon Burf (SO594865) is the highest point on the hill at 1771', but much of the overlying dolerite cap was removed by quarrying by the Abdon Dhestone Company in the first part of this century, much evidence for coal and ironstone mining has been destroyed, although it is possible to find considerable debris from these workings.

However, there are good remains of the quarry crusher house, powder magazine (with roof still intact), brake drum and incline leading to Ditton Priors. The trip was concluded by walking down the incline and driving to the site of the former Ditton Priors station (SO612892), on the Cleobury Mortimer and Ditton Priors Light Railway. This at one time was used by the quarry company and then was turned into a munition dump in the 2nd World War. When it was finally vacated by the military in the 1960s, it became an industrial estate.

There are good remains of the old station (including water tower) and also of the military buildings. The main purpose of the visit was to see the stationary steam engine from Walker Technical College, which was used in the 1940s and 50s for teaching mining students. It is now owned by Mr Ray Matthews of Matt Pressings, who also steamed his traction engine and steam roller, and provided the party with refreshments.

*David Poyner*



## Log-Boat Found complete with cargo of stone

Archaeologists recovering a log-boat, probably dating from the middle Bronze Age (circa 1300 BC), still carrying some of its cargo of quarried stone, have described the find as "spectacular".

The ten metre long oak boat was exposed at Shardlow quarry, nr Derby by recent floods on the nearby River Trent. Recovery work funded by quarry owner ARC, with advice and specialist support from English Heritage, is being carried out by the Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust - part of the University of Nottingham - and will take four weeks.

Daryl Garton, Director of the Trent & Peak Trust, said: "Log boat finds are rare but to be able to investigate and record one in this condition and with its cargo intact is spectacular."

At first quarry workmen thought the boat, lying on its side in a three metre deep gully, was the trunk of an oak tree but further flooding washed away the surrounding silt to expose the find. This was confirmed as a boat by local archaeologist, Dr Chris Salisbury, who has been monitoring the Shardlow site under an informal agreement with quarry manager Robin Woolley.

Five large blocks (up to a metre across) of Bromsgrove sand stone were found in the boat, with others spilled alongside.

They were believed to have been quarried from a sandstone outcrop situated two kilometres up river. Originally the bow and the stern were missing but the bow has now been located.

A few days after the discovery, Jon Humble, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Derbyshire, was called in to provide advice.

He said: "I realised immediately that this was a find of national archaeological importance which needed to be recorded and studied properly. It is likely that the boat was built by an agricultural community. The River Trent was undoubtedly a major economic lifeline during the Bronze Age. This

boat, with its thickly hewn sides, was possibly custom built for ferrying stone."

Its location, buried in the bed of a former side channel of the River Trent, suggests three possible scenarios:

- \* It was being used for taking stones from the outcrop up river to strengthen a stone and timber platform built across the side channel. Some 250-300 oak posts have been found driven into the bed of the channel as evidence of this platform or causeway.
- \* It was transporting stone robbed from the platform for building elsewhere.
- \* The boat was deliberately rammed full of large blocks of stone in order to sink it as a gift to the gods.

Humble added: "This log-boat is rare. It is one of the very few which survive of the 400 or so recorded examples found in Britain, and is possibly unique in this country in having its cargo still on board. Log-boats were used in Britain between the Mesolithic period (circa 7,000 BC) and the Medieval period.

"The boat provides a rare opportunity for study using modern archaeological techniques. It will yield important information on Bronze Age craftsmanship and technology. Excavations will also include examination of the surrounding earth which will tell us about the environmental conditions prevailing at the time - the flora and fauna and climate.

"Our next priority, working closely with Derbyshire County Council's Archaeologist, Dave Barrett is to try to find a museum willing to take on the long-term preservation of the boat."

Garton said: "Over the next few weeks we have some difficult decisions to make. We will assess the possibilities of lifting the boat. We may also consider water-logging it in a pit to help preserve its condition."

## Minerals '98

The find comes as mineral operators all over Britain prepare to open sites to the public under the industry's Minerals '98 initiative. Many of these sites have been responsible for archaeological discoveries.

John Hopkins, ARCCentral's managing director said: "This find of a Bronze Age boat with its cargo of quarried stone demonstrates once again that our forebears used minerals to make more of their lives.

"This is one of the key messages of Minerals '98 which seeks to explain the vital role of minerals in our everyday lives, in the past as we have seen today, and also in the present and future. The minerals industry is as old as Britons themselves and will remain important for the country's continuing prosperity. "This find also emphasises the important and valuable relationship between the minerals industry and archaeologists in the discovering and helping to fund the interpretation of our past."

For more details contact David Harding on 01509 503161  
(for more details about Minerals '98 see page 8)

*ARC press release  
12 June 1998*

## Bronze Age Find at Ecton

Ecton Copper Mine in the Peak District is well known to cavers in the area but a recent find has caused some surprises.

A tool made out of a deer antler was carbon dated and found to date between 1880-1630 BC. Ecton is thus likely to have been a Bronze Age copper mine and this is an exciting find.

The only other Bronze Age mines in the UK appear to be at Llandudno, Cwmystwyth and Llanymynech, with more at Mount Gabriel in Ireland.

*Adrian Pearce*



## Thomas Wynne 1807-1891 Mines Inspector for Shropshire (1852-88)



Thomas Wynne was Her Majesty's Inspector responsible for Shropshire's non-metalliferous mines for 37 years (Jan. 1852 - Dec. 1888).

Shropshire was, however, only part of his area but his association with Shropshire for so many years, in fact throughout its peak mining years, must have given him a wonderful insight of the county's mining life. He was there from the time when the mines and methods were exceedingly primitive through to the development of large, modern mines such as Granville and Kemberton which survived into recent years.

Wynne was born on 7 February 1807 and was educated at Tenbury in Worcestershire. His 'official' obituary says that the early part of his life "was occupied in trade" but about the year 1830 (age 23) he moved into Staffordshire, where he turned his attention to mining. By 1838 he had become the managing partner in the Mossfield Colliery Company, then being developed into, what was for the period, a large undertaking. He was in this position for 7 years and then became "the agent for several proprietors" for a further 7 years. During this time he also practiced as a consulting engineer, valuer etc. and for a time was partner in a firm of china manufacturers.

At age 44 (in Jan. 1852) he was appointed a mines' inspector (only two years after the passing of the first Coal Mines Act). His first appointment was to the Lancashire District but after 4 months he was transferred to the recently formed Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire District. At first the Inspector's powers were limited to 'Coal' mines but in his first report in 1852 Wynne pointed out that in addition "12 deaths in ironstone and limestone mines in his district" had been reported to him. He believed that these mines ought to be included with the coal mines under his jurisdiction. At the time in

Shropshire many mines worked both coal and ironstone (and a few, limestone and/or clay as well) and it was difficult to ensure that "fatalities" in such mines were not moved from reportable to non-reportable areas. In fact on at least one occasion the reverse occurred and Wynne was called to 'Lilleshall', where someone had been killed in a mine, only to find it was a limestone mine accident and he was not the right inspector to be there. The mine came under the Metalliferous Mines Act, not the Coal Mines Act. With his usual enthusiasm however he stayed and "sorted" the situation out afterwards.

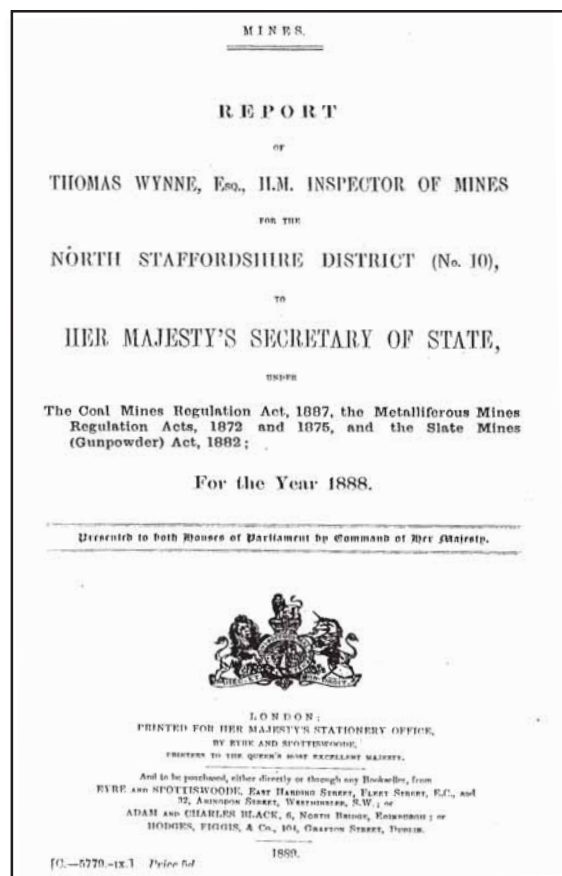
Although it took 20 years for the collection of information on ironstone, clay and limestone mines to come officially under the Inspectors, the information was often provided voluntarily by the mine owners and the results given in the Inspectors' Annual Reports. Wynne found another problem, which he complained about in a later report, while the Act prevented women and boys under 10 years from working underground, he found it alarming to find so many females, and girls as young as 8 or 9, working around the shaft top. The finding of females who had (apparently) fallen down the shafts so frequently being reported to him was also a cause for concern. At least 4 females died in the shafts in Shropshire in the 1860s alone. Why were there so many females dying this way? There was a suspicion that they could have been put here from another point of death.

In his early years as Inspector, Wynne lived in Longton (Stoke on Trent). In 1856 the Districts were re-organised and he was made Inspector of North Staffs, Shropshire and Cheshire District and

Wynne moved to Stone. In 1879 his District's title was amended to 'North Staffs' but still included Shropshire. By this time he had (in 1875) moved house to the Manor House, Gnosall, only some 4 miles from the Shropshire border and 6 miles from the Coalbrookdale Coalfield. He remained here until his death.

During his 37 years as Inspector Wynne investigated the causes of many serious colliery accidents of various kinds. More than 90 were due to explosions and the principal one was at 'Talk of the Hill' in Staffordshire involving the loss of 91 lives. The result of this was to convince him of the need to carefully control the use of explosives and he worked closely with his colleagues in bringing about the necessary Regulations.

Wynne was not afraid of controversy, either with his employers or the mine owners. He did not like the manner in which his employers tried to control his work, for example, when the inspectors were asked in 1860 to submit weekly



Front Sheet of Wynne's final report, published 1889



# Thomas Wynne 1807-1891

## Mines Inspector for Shropshire, cont...

reports or diaries of their activities, all the other Inspectors eventually complied but Wynne was continuing to refuse at least as late as Dec. 1865.

Wynne did not consider himself too highly paid either, and he often gave his employer a reminder of this. In his 1878 Report for example, he wrote "Much to my regret, my able assistant Mr Gilroy has left the service to take the management of Powells Dyffryn Collieries in South Wales, and let us hope that what is my loss will be Sir George Elliot's gain, but it is rather remarkable that both my assistants have left me to 'better themselves' so that it does not appear that the inspectorship of mines is that easy and lucrative a calling that some suppose it to be".

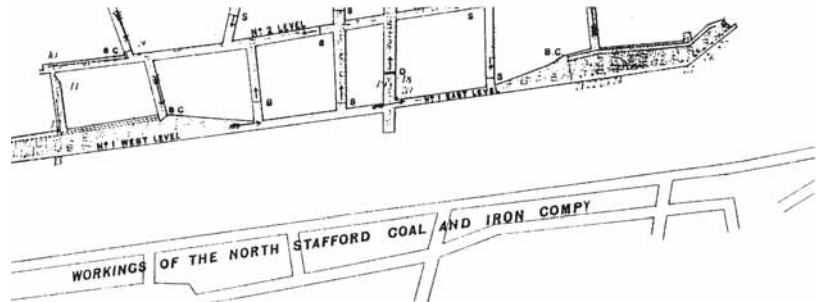
Wynne seems to have had a running battle with some employers notably the Lilleshall Company, who by 1870, were producing nearly one third of the mineral produced in the County of Shropshire. In that year, for example, he noted that 4 lives had been lost in explosions at the Company's mines which "if the commonest care had been exercised then 4 lives would not have been lost at Lilleshall, and what is still worse, Mr Jones, the manager, thinks such things unavoidable and cannot be prevented".

Despite having had several clashes such as this with the Company, it seems that, in the 1870s, his own son was being employed by them, although by the 1880s he had been given the sack. Local tradition has it that this was righted when after further accidents and heavy criticism from Inspector Wynne, the manager of the Lilleshall Mines, was, in turn, sacked. This seems to have been the result of two more explosions at the Lilleshall Company's Mines in 1884 which cost 3 lives. Wynne wrote that these were due "to the grossest negligence on the part of all concerned, from the manager, chartermaster and firemen to the men themselves". The manager had to leave the Company-provided house and in 1886 was in financial difficulties. (see earlier issue of 'Below').

Problems did not end here since, three years after the 1884 incident, in 1887, another explosion occurred at the Lilleshall Mine costing 3 lives, Mr Wynne wrote that this "was the result of the greatest carelessness that has ever come to my notice". A verdict of 'manslaughter' was returned against one of the persons involved, who had

Company and would probably claim to have been one of the first to ride a steam engine on a public highway.

At the end of 1888, Thomas Wynne resigned as an Inspector of Mines, aged 81 although he had at one stage in his career signed himself as Chief Inspector of Mines!



From: Report of Bunkers Hill Colliery Disaster, Stoke-on-Trent 1875 (43 dead)

*Thomas Wynne*  
Chief Inspector of Mines

survived, but he was bound over when Wynne told the judge "that the management of the colliery had been so utterly neglected".

By this time Wynne was, aged 80 and still working, the next year, however he retired and in his annual report he was allowed 6 pages to survey his successes over the past 37 years. He began by pointing out that during the first *half* year that he was in post in 1852 there were 111 deaths while in the full year, 1862, there were 179 but by 1887 this had fallen to 82, about half the number. In his present district (N.Staffs, including Shropshire) in 1862, there had been 64 deaths, in 1 887 32 deaths, exactly half. This "when the number of men employed is no less and the 'get' of minerals vastly increased": The rest of the report is in similar vein.

Less than two years later he met with a "carriage accident" from the effects of which he never recovered "sinking slowly until the end" which took place on the 4th June 1891. "He displayed much firmness of character, combined with great energy and excessive activity almost to the end of life". He was a "man of powerful physique and hardy constitution, his genial disposition and kindly nature secured him many friends", so said the Institution of Civil Engineers of which he had been a member since 1854, almost the whole of his Inspectorate career.

Outside the mining industry, Wynne was also very active. During his 24 years at Longton he was twice elected Chief Bailiff under the Local Police Act, he was involved in bringing about the construction of the N.Staffs and Shropshire Union Railway, and the Staffordshire and Uttoxeter Railway. He also studied gas engineering and became Chairman of the Stone Gas

Thomas Wynne is known to have had at least one son in mining, the one who was sacked by the Lilleshall Company, and this is believed to have been the same T.T.Wynne who became Manager of Cheny's Pits near Priorslee in the 1880s. Another relation, R.H.Wynne, of Fenton, Staffs, was also a mining engineer, he too had a son, F.H.Wynne who was trained as a mining engineer at the Butterley Company's Silverdale Colliery, North Staffs. F.H.Wynne became an inspector in 1904, in Thomas Wynne's old North Staffs district which still included Shropshire. In 1914 F.H.Wynne was promoted in the Durham district, then in Scotland and



finally he became Chief Inspector of Mines in the 1920s.

Little now remains of Thomas Wynne's time in Gnosall, his Manor House has gone to make room for a new housing estate but there is still a Manor Road and local people have told the writer that part of the Manor garden wall still survives. No memorial has been found in the Church or yard and no one questioned by the writer remembered the name Wynne in the village. There is however, a collection of books in Staffordshire University library that was given by the Wynne family.

The writer would like to thank member Barry Job for his assistance in the preparation of this paper.

## References

1. Obituary to Thomas Wynne, Proceedings Inst. Civil Engs. Vol. 106, 1891. Job B.
2. The British Mines Inspectorate - the early years, Bulletin P.D.M.H.S. Vol. II No.4 (Winter 1991).
3. Annual Reports of the Inspectors of Mines 1852 - 1 888.

This was the last multi-fatality that Inspector Wynne investigated in Shropshire before retirement. The incident resulted in the loss of 3 lives.

There were five wagon roads leading onto a longwall face in the Clod Coal Seam, beyond the fifth there was an 'end' and a 'snicket' airway, the air was coursed around this end by having a regulator door (ie: part open) to allow enough air to trickle through to keep it clear, but avoid short-circuiting of the whole.

A fireman reported to the underlooker (undermanager) named Skitt, that he had found an accumulation of blackdamp in the end. Skitt collected his Davy safety lamp and supposedly taking two nearby miners with him went to clear it. When they did not return a search was made, Skitt's Davy lamp had been hung up in fresh air before the accumulation was reached and the blackdamp was still in the end. The searchers closed No.5 road with sheets, the air then circuited around the end and 3 bodies were found. They had been overcome by the blackdamp.

Wynne could not understand why an experienced underlooker should:

- a) having left his lamp in fresh air, have entered the accumulation
- b) presumably have taken the others with him
- c) not just have sealed off No.5, using sheets or fully closed the door (as the rescuers did) and removed the gas naturally.

### OR

had two men been ahead of Skitt, got overcome, and Skitt, having found the 'gas' with his lamp, immediately hung it up and attempted an heroic rescue?

Such an attempt would have been foolish - no miner should go in where his lamp will not burn. The lesson was not learnt - in the next year (1889), a boy went down a shallow shaft in Broseley, he collapsed, his friend fetched the boy's father, who went down the shaft - he also died.

Beware 'blackdamp; in Shropshire mines.

Ivor Brown

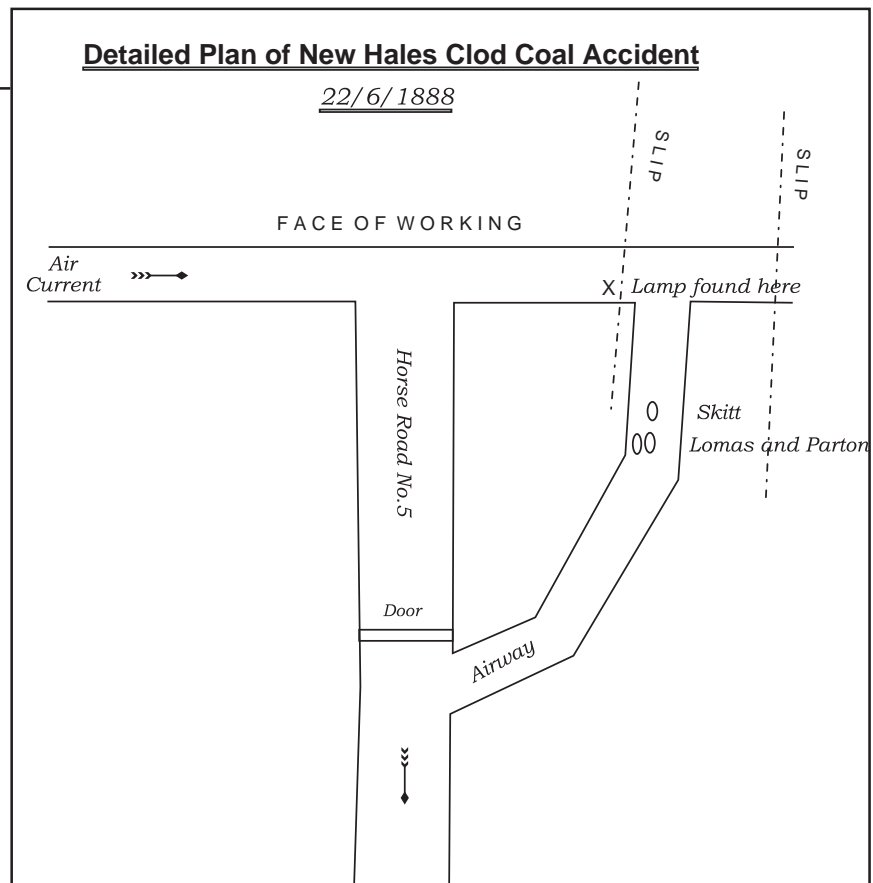
Ivor Brown

Plan of New Hales Accident:

Traced and re-drawn from Wynne's Mines Inspectors Report. On the original Wynne signs himself:

J. Wynne  
Inspector of Mines

Unlike on the Bunkers Hill Accident (13 years earlier) when he signed himself "Chief Inspector of Mines"



# The Knockers

## By David Coxill

Paul and Graham Bond, two brothers who had leased an old Cornish tin mine from a major multi national company two years ago, were sure at the time of acquiring their lease that they were on to a winner. Armed with local geological knowledge, together with information about the mine that their grandfather had told them before he died, they felt sure they would strike a rich vein that would make them a fortune over the next few years as the commodity markets were shooting up. But much to their disgust nothing of importance had come up and time and financial backing was running out.

‘The old man must have been wrong’, Paul said as he ditched his pick to the side of the tramway. Graham, already resting sighed: ‘It would be the first time he was.’

‘But he was so sure of it Graham. He worked in the mine as a lad and the only reason it closed was because the owners were too mean to give the men a decent wage, so they left taking with them any secret where the new ore lay.’

‘Paul, he was eighty when he told us that and on his deathbed.’

‘So what.’

‘Well look at his state of mind. He gave us directions about where to tunnel and told us not to worry since if we were losing our way he would come back as a spirit and knock to us in the right direction to where the ore was. If he were not out of his mind he would never have come up with a fancy idea like that. We were nuts to put out life savings into this.’

‘What do you mean’

‘I mean we have just received an invitation in the morning post to pay a visit to the bank manager to discuss the merits of continued investment in our business’

Paul and Graham realise that they are going to have to do something drastic to avoid bankruptcy. Knowing it was too late to turn back they were faced

with having to risk everything on one last-ditch attempt to locate the tin ore. They remember the old man’s promise to come back as a knocker to guide them to the ore, so despite great reluctance they go to his graveyard and mentally ask for his help before returning to the mine for the final attempt.

Standing by the gravestone in the middle of the cemetery, the two brothers stood in silence, heads bowed but not dejected, their eyes fixed on the lettering on the tomb stone.

‘We did what you said granddad’, said Paul. Graham, putting his hand on his brother’s elbow sighed: ‘We put our life savings together, taking out second mortgages on our homes and even talked the bank manager into letting us have unsecured loans to take out a lease on the Trivoke Mine.’

‘Now two years later, no meaningful tin vein, certainly not the rich ore you talked about and the bank’s threatening to close on us.’

‘You said you would come back and guide us to the ore if we couldn’t find it ourselves.’

‘No luck, no help and if we can’t come up with anything by the end of the week, no homes, no money, but definitely an appointment with the official receiver.’

‘Don’t waste your breath Graham. The old man meant well, but he’s dead and so shall our bank balances next week.’  
‘We can’t give up Paul’.

‘No, we’ve still got one more shift to try our luck before our money runs out, but good luck is all the hope we’ve got left’.

Standing there for a few minutes in silence, these two once hopeful prospectors’ faces told the story. Blank numbness, confidence drained, Zombie like figures just stood there for a while, not knowing why. Did they expect their grandfather to speak to them from the grave and direct them to the ore?

If so, then why then! He hadn’t come

to them in the mine and knocked the right direction or was it out of fear, desperation, faith and rallying around the flag for one last desperate effort for the cause?

Neither of them knew or probably was even aware that the afternoon sunlight had suddenly turned to dust when a schoolboy on his way home had shouted to them, breaking their trance.

But one thing both men knew as they went home that night to get a good night’s sleep before going to their make or break shift. It was now or never.

‘Come on Paul’, Graham shouted.  
‘Hold on a minute Graham’.

Paul, getting hold of the two protective picky medallions and chains their grandfather had given them to protect them from hearing knockings from evil spirits trying to lure them to their deaths, dashed out of his cottage.

‘Put this medallion on Graham.’

‘Don’t be a fool. Its that sort of superstitious rubbish that has got us into this position in the first place.’

‘But Graham he warned us.’

‘Sure he did. Good does not come without evil, nor vice versa. Ask the help of one and the other will lurk nearby. Wear these medallions and your only hear me; don’t and you’ll be led by the evil one’s to your death!’

‘There’s a limit to how much I can put up with this and now I’ve reached mine.’

Picking hold of one of the medallions, Graham flung it far and wide over the cliffs into the Atlantic.

‘Now let’s get on with it,’

Climbing down the ladders at the mine entrance they walked along a sub-horizontal tunnel that went into the side of the hill down into the depths of the earth, illuminated only by the lights on their helmet torches and silence broken by the noise of their boots and the dripping of water.





## The Knockers continued ....

Arriving at the face where they were to place their financial futures on the line, they drilled a hole with a pneumatic drill and placed a charge in it. Quickly walking around the corner with the coiled wire they ignited it. The blast would have deafened their ears without wearing the eardrums. Waiting for the dust to settle, the miners rushed back to the scene of the blast to examine the debris and the face.

‘Nothing. Absolutely nothing. We’re as good as finished’, exclaimed Graham as he threw the last piece of gangue rock down. Sitting down, heads in their hands, life gone from them, the two exhausted men were just flaked out in disappointment.

‘What’s that noise’, Paul whispered.  
‘What noise!’  
‘Shush ... and listen’.  
‘There it goes again’, Graham.

Faint but distinct, both men could have a distinct knocking noise just to the right of the new blast. Paul, quickly rejuvenated by this unexpected ray of hope, quickly grabbed the pneumatic drill and made a hole in the direction of the knocking.

Graham, by this time had got himself together and placed the charge in. Wasting no time the two men scurried to safety and pressed the detonating button. Hardly waiting for the dust to settle they dashed back to the firing spot and caught a silvery glint. Then as the air finally cleared, there lying in the rubble were fragments of dark silvery grey cassiterite ore, beneath a thick rich vein in the face itself.

‘We’ve done it’, shouted Paul.

Grabbing hold of each other, the two brothers hugged each other as they knew they had found what they had searched in vein for the past two years, only to discover it at the last possible moment in time.

‘Wait a minute’, Graham ordered.  
‘There’s another knocking noise.’  
‘Where’, said Paul? ‘I can’t hear anything’.

‘Over there’, said Graham, pointing to the possible side of the tunnel.

Grabbing the pneumatic drill, Graham in double quick time drilled a hole and placed a charge in the direction of the knockings.

‘Get back over here Paul’, Graham commanded his brother.

Paul, quickly doing as he was told was astounded. He couldn’t hear anything. ‘But Graham, I heard the first set of knockings, but I can’t hear these at all.’ ‘Shut up Paul’, shouted Graham. ‘Can’t you see he’s guiding us to the whole lot, so we can make a kill.’

‘Graham don’t’, Paul pouncing on his brother, knocked him over before he had the chance to explode the charge.

‘What the hell did you do that for’, Graham demanded.

‘Graham, you didn’t hear the first knocking noises, but I did. I don’t hear these but you do. Don’t you see? I am wearing the protective medallion and you aren’t. The noises I heard came from grandfather, directing us to the ore. I was the only one wearing it because you threw your medallion away. This medallion is protecting me from hearing the knockings of evil spirits who want to lure us to our deaths, but because you haven’t got one your being lured into a trap, just as grandfather warned.’

‘Get away’, and with a swift punch Graham knocked Paul over and before he had time to recover, Graham had detonated the charge.

‘The blast shuck the whole honeycomb for a time before silent normality resumed.’

Dashing over to the face Graham desperately searched for ore but to no avail.

‘What’s that noise Graham’, Paul paused.

Slowly but surely a rumbling noise could be heard becoming louder and louder.

‘It’s the Atlantic’, Paul shouted.

The two brothers froze in silence, stared at each other, eye balls wide open, then suddenly dropped tools and ran for their lives. Moments later the place where the second detonation had taken place was blown inwards by the mighty force of intruding seawater which immediately began to flood the mine.

A race against time. Two young thirty-year-olds dashing to the mine’s exit; behind them an intruding wall of death. Who would reach the exit first; or more appropriately, would the mens bodies contain their souls when they came out; life or death.

No words can fully describe the feelings of Paul and Graham as they ran the fastest sprint of their lives, adrenaline pumping through their veins, pain of exhaustion not registering as they were in a dumb state. That race covering a few minutes seemed timeless; this wasn’t no ordinary race, it was the turning of the wheel of fortune at the crossroads of destiny.

Paul grabbing hold of the steps of the ladder, started to haul himself up.

‘Paul’, shouted Graham, who had tripped up over a pit prop, which had fallen due to the reverberating vibrations of the last blast, lay hopelessly on the fall.

Paul, looking back at the sound of his brother just saw a wall of water about to engulf him and in the nick of time threw himself over the top of the ladders into safety.

Regaining his breadth after near exhaustion, he scrambled back to the shaft top. The mine was completely flooded, but air pressure had stopped the floodwaters from bursting over the top. Everything was still now, but those murky dark were as impenetrable as the abyss itself.

Paul just stood holding his protective medallion, but where was Graham who ignored the advice to wear his for protection against knockers who were evil spirits.



# Minerals '98

## The Earth Gives up its Secrets

Many interesting archaeological remains have been discovered as a result of the minerals industry's extractive world and it is also a major funder of archaeological digs. It is industry practice to give archaeologists access to sites where interesting remains are revealed.

Preservation is often excellent because of the damp conditions frequently linked to quarrying and mining, and archaeologists appreciate the exposure of large areas of landscape rather than 'keyhole' exploration ditches which are dug where remains are thought to be. Over recent years the aggregates sector alone has committed over £10 million to archaeology.

### Rare Finds

Examples of rare finds include:

\* Boxgrove Man A disused gravel pit in Sussex was, in 1993, the site of the discovery of the oldest human remains found in Europe. The shin bone was revealed, as were perfectly

formed flint hand tools dating back over half a million years.

\* Stanwick Roman Villa A substantial villa estate with associated settlement of cottages and agricultural buildings was revealed in the Nene Valley, Northants. ARC's quarry has opened up the overlay which developed from an Iron Age settlement and has allowed a detailed analysis of the transition from Iron Age to Roman times.

\* Christian Roman graveyard Around 30 bodies were recently discovered at Castle Cement's quarry at Ketton, Lincolnshire, in a wooden mausoleum. It has been described as an exceptional example of a Christian Roman graveyard and includes children's skeletons. Remains of buildings were also found.

\* Saxon Helmet A rare boar-crested Saxon helmet, only the second found in Britain, was unearthed at

pioneer Aggregates' Earls Barton sand and gravel quarry at Wollaston near Wellingborough. It was found together with other trappings of a high-born warrior. It is now in the Royal Armouries in Leeds and will be loaned to the British Museum later this year.

\* Farms and Vineyards Three Iron Age and two Roman farms have been discovered at Wollaston Quarry and, more important, a Roman vineyard which would have allowed for production of about 15,000 bottles of white wine a year. It was confirmed when buried vine pollen was found and analysed.

For more information please contact Vivien Martin on 01491 410987 or see <http://www.minerals98.com>

[Minerals '98 is an industry partnership initiative coordinated by the Confederation of British Industry]

*Minerals '98 Press Release*

### Glyn Pits Engines

The Western Mail, Saturday 18 April 1998, p. 8. reports that the two historic engines at Glyn Pits colliery near Pontypool may be restored following a bid for Lottery funding. The houses, containing the beam pumping and vertical winding engines, are in a poor state of repair.

This ambitious £1m. project, supported by the Council, hopes to create a tourist trail in the area.

Torfaen council is seeking more funding for a multi-million pound regeneration scheme for the historic mining town of Blaenavon, it has already won backing for its attempts to confer World Heritage Status on Blaenavon.

*Peter Claughton*

It is a shame that the engines have been left so long. If you have not visited the site they are (were?) superb. The winding engine still has a flat wire rope winding drum.

*Kelvin*

### Hidden Earth 1998

#### !! Group and Student discounts at the 1998 National Caving Conference !!

This year's UK National Caving Conference, hosted once again by the BCRA, will take place on the weekend of 18th-20th September at Southport, in the north-west of England.

We are offering admission discounts to groups - but only if you book in advance - and don't forget to read the small print below!

- \* 20% discount for groups of 6 or more - a weekend ticket for £12
- \* 33% discount for students - get a weekend ticket for a tenner!

For further information about the conference, look out for our brochure in caving magazines and shops,

or mailto: [he98@caves.org.uk](mailto:he98@caves.org.uk)

or check out the web site at:

<http://www.caves.org.uk>

If you would like to give a lecture, please contact:

Paul Mann,  
57 Argyle Street,  
OXFORD, OX4 1ST.

Tel: (mobile) 0467 702263

mailto: [paulmann@compuserve.com](mailto:paulmann@compuserve.com)

If you can display a poster, or if you would like some brochures to distribute, please contact us.

\* **Group discounts - small print:** To qualify for a group discount you must be in a party of six or more, booking in advance for a full weekend ticket. To qualify for a student discount you must be part of a group booking, as defined above, and also an undergraduate / college student. A full price list will appear in the brochure.

*David Gibson*

*Publicity: Hidden Earth 98*



# Midland Mining Commission First Report

In 1843 this Commission chaired by Thomas Tancred published a report covering South Staffordshire and parts of Shropshire. Although Halesowen, then part of Shropshire, was specifically under consideration, Tancred's sketches and description equally apply to this area:

*Ivor Brown*

11. In traversing much of the country the traveller appears never to get out of an interminable village, composed of cottages and very ordinary houses. In some directions he may travel for miles, and never be out of sight of numerous two-storied houses; so that the area covered by bricks and mortar must be immense. These houses for the most part, are not arranged in continuous streets; but are interspersed with blazing furnaces, heaps of burning coal in process of coking, piles of ironstone calcining, forges, pit-banks, and engine chimneys; the country being besides intersected with canals, crossing each other at various levels; and the small remain-ing patches of the surface soil occupied with irregular fields of grass or corn, intermingled with heaps of the refuse of mines or of slag from the blast-furnaces.

Sometimes the road passes between mounds of refuse from the pits, like a deep cutting on a railway ; at others it runs like a causeway, raised some feet above the fields on either side, which have subsided by the excavation of the minerals beneath. In one place, observing that the turnpike road sloped a good deal to on one side, I asked the driver if it would not be repaired, to which he replied that they were still working the coal beneath it, and that they would probably wait to see if the road would not right itself by sinking on the opposite side, and so become level again.

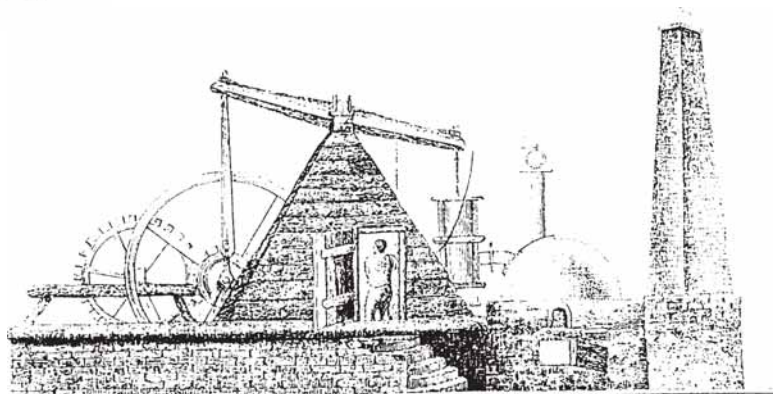
The geologist would find no country more instructive for the study of the subsi-dence of dry land. The whole country might be compared to a vast rabbit warren. It is a matter of every day occurrence for houses to fall down, or a row of buildings inhabited by numerous families to assume a very irregular outline from what they term a "swag," caused by the sinking of the ground into old workings.



A sketch of housing (c1843) that accompanied the report, to illustrate the affects of subsidence on the area.

Old Form of engine - still in use in 1843.

*[Note: the engine is very similar to the Lightmoor engine, recently returned to Coalbrookdale from the USA, and to engines made by Adam Heslop. Kelvin]*



# Books, Videos, Places & Events

Not strictly mining - but I know there are a few members with an interest in quarrying.

**The Slate Quarries of Pembrokeshire**, by Alun John Richards, published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst, 196pp, ISBN 0-86381-484-0. Price £5.50

This is, I believe, Alun Richards fourth book on slate quarrying and follows the style set in the earlier books. A comprehensive detailed account of each site including its history and surviving remains. Includes a useful index by name and grid reference. Despite its title the book also covers the southern edge of Ceredigion and western Carmarthenshire. Unfortunately the photographs have not reproduced very clearly and, on a minor point, I would query his occasional reference to 'metal trials' on sites which were clearly initiated as slate workings.

Good value and invaluable for anyone interested in slate quarrying.

*Peter Cloughton*

**The Slate Quarries of Pembrokeshire, Second Review:**

Having lived in what is now Pembrokeshire for the last 22 years, this is the book I have been waiting for. Reading it from cover to cover I was amazed at the number of sites I have yet to visit. The author is very thorough, I could not find any omissions. Naturally this book is much more detailed than his "Gazetteer of the Welsh Slate Industry" (1990) and includes some good historical accounts of some of the larger undertakings. It identifies and describes almost one hundred sites in Pembrokeshire, southern Cardiganshire and western Carmarthenshire. Underground working is rare in this area, but the numerous tunnels, drainage and trial levels, are all noted. SB £5.50 or £6.00 post free

*Tony Oldham*

For more details about videos contact:

I.A. Recordings,  
PO Box 476,  
Telford, TF8 7RH

## Secondhand and Rare Mining Books

Already Britain's largest supplier of mining books, the Peak District Mining Museum is offering a new service, the selling of secondhand mining (and mining related) books.

Only one of the same book will be accepted at a time, on a sale or return basis. The books will be on display and if the response is sufficient a booklist will be issued periodically.

The price can be set by the vendor, though a lower price may be recommended after three months. The Museum will retain the right to refuse or return any book and invoices will not be

accepted until after sale.

A third of the sale price will go to assist in the running of the Museum, which is non-profit making and run by PDMHS members.

Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3NR (Telephone 01629-583834) is open every day for sales from 11 to 4 at least.

A telephone call before arrival with books for sale would be appreciated, to avoid times when staff are especially busy.

*Lyn Willies*



## 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
- C.32: SCMC in Ireland, £14.10

### Latest releases:

- C.35: Old Glengowla Lead Mine, Ireland  
An underground trip down to water level in this recently drained mine, full of amazing minerals and curious artefacts. £9.87
- C.37: Dudley Tunnel - Wrens Nest East Mine. Local historians have often talked about 'Step Pit' an access shaft to the East Mine underground canal basin and caverns that was reputed to have a spiral staircase, recent stabilisation work has uncovered fragments of the staircase, plus allowed an interesting insight to the canal and mines in this area. £9.87

e-mail: [info@iarecord.demon.co.uk](mailto:info@iarecord.demon.co.uk) or visit them on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.iarecord.demon.co.uk/>



Hello Found your web pages quite interesting. Came upon them while trying to obtain info on some family members who worked in the nantyglo and blaina areas.

My father and Grandfather worked in the colliery at Markham. Could you provide location where I maybe able to get a listing of miners who worked at these various sites.

I am especially interested in a great uncle who was killed in a mining accident in the nantyglo/blaina area in 1917.

Are there any sites where this kind of info would be available

*Tony Werrett*

*e-mail:*

*twerrett@sk.sympatico.ca*

## West Country

For those members interested in mining in the South-West of England the List of Mines in North Devon and West Somerset is now in place on the University of Exeter web server. you can access it via -

[http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/nd\\_list/nd\\_intro.htm](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/nd_list/nd_intro.htm)

or via my Mining History Information Pages:

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/~pfclaugh/mhinf/>

Hard copy of the list is available from Tony Oldham

*Peter Cloughton*

E-mail: P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk  
Co-owner - mining-history e-mail discussion list.

## AIA Web site

The Association for Industrial Archaeology now has a web site, hosted by Twelveheads Press. You can check-out their site at:

<http://www.twelveheads.demon.co.uk/aia.htm>

## Knowbury Update

I visited the site of the Knowbury shaft recently. It has now been cleared and levelled, except for the shaft, which it looks as though they are still filling. (Good job we recorded the site when we did). I did find a piece of roof tile marked Askey, Ludlow, made by the Askey who owned the brickyard a 100yds away, and who was a promoter of the mine.

*David Poyner*

## Drakelow - Help

Greetings. I am currently involved in a small group of enthusiasts whose aim is to preserve and hopefully eventually restore the former Regional Government H.Q. at Drakelow. So far we have undertaken quite a bit of clearing up and restored the power supply using one of the original generators, we now have lighting in most areas and power to some of the sockets. Recently the ventilation system has been resurrected although the dehumidification plant is probably beyond saving but at least the fans are working. We are able to offer guided tours to pre booked parties and have already had a lot of interest this year.

Our next step is to try to replace some of the original furniture and equipment (we do already have some of the original chairs and tables which were left in the canteen area still in their original packing). Can any one out there help us to locate such equipment? in particular communications gear such as MSX and it's terminals. At the moment we are concentrating on 1980's home office equipment but eventually hope to create displays from the 60's and 70's also.

If anyone can help with locating equipment I will be delighted to hear from you. We are not yet formed into a proper society as such but I hope this will be happening soon.

Info on tours can be obtained from 'Travellers Joy' on 01384 877680. Or Larger parties (20 or more) contact me directly by E mail to:

[paul@airmovement.co.uk](mailto:paul@airmovement.co.uk)

*Paul Stokes*

(author 'Drakelow Unearthed')

## Greater Horseshoe Bats

The National Trust reports that plans have been made to prevent the collapse of the 7 entrance tunnels to mines near Langton Matravers, Dorset. The mines are an important roost for the remaining 180 Greater Horseshoe bats in Dorset.

Estimated costs for the project are £10,000 per entrance.

## NCA Web Site

The site:

<http://www.nca.org.uk>

Is constantly changing, with National Caving Diary dates, meeting details, reports etc.. so keep an eye on it.

## NCA Vacancy:

The Association urgently needs a Treasurer. If you are interested in this position, or know anyone who might be willing to take it on, please get in contact. Further details can be obtained from the NCA Chairman, Mick Day at:  
[mickday@eurobell.co.uk](mailto:mickday@eurobell.co.uk)

## Irish Help Wanted

I wonder if you could help my father. He is writing a booklet for the village of Avoca (Ballykissangel) in Co. Wicklow and is looking for information on the Copper Mines there.

You see he is originally from West Cork, and grew up near the Alihies mines and knows all about the Cornish influence on the mines. But he is looking for any information on the pumping houses/engine houses of the Avoca mines. He mentioned to me a man called John Williams from the 1780s and he was from Cornwall, and he was involved with the Copper Mining in the area.

If you have any information I would be grateful if you could send it to me at my e-mail address:

[graphica@indigo.ie](mailto:graphica@indigo.ie)

*Colm Lowney*



# The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 4

## The Lloyds area (eastern part) by Ivor Brown

Several of the pits in this area had steam engines at a very early date, probably some of the earliest in Shropshire. Those built before about 1790 were almost all used for pumping, but from this time engines for winding were also built.

According to Trinder in "Industrial Revolution in Shropshire" the first steam engine in Shropshire was probably erected in the Madeley Glebe coalworks about the middle of 1719. Another early engine was probably also erected here, at Smiths Gin Pit in the Lloyds in 1726. By 1790 there were also three engines at Union, Wharf and Cape pits and, and by the end of 1794, a fourth had been built at Brickkiln Leasows.

Nine more were then constructed for the Madeley Field of which one was to become a second at Brickkiln Leasows, and others at the Pennystone Pits, New Dingle Pit and Lane Pit. The other four were for pits outside this immediate area.

Except for some old photos and engravings, and some, possibly much altered brickwork structures at the Lloyds and Blists Hill nothing can be seen of any of these, but the sites of some possibly later engines are discernible.

The boiler fires were also used for aiding ventilation as can be seen from the

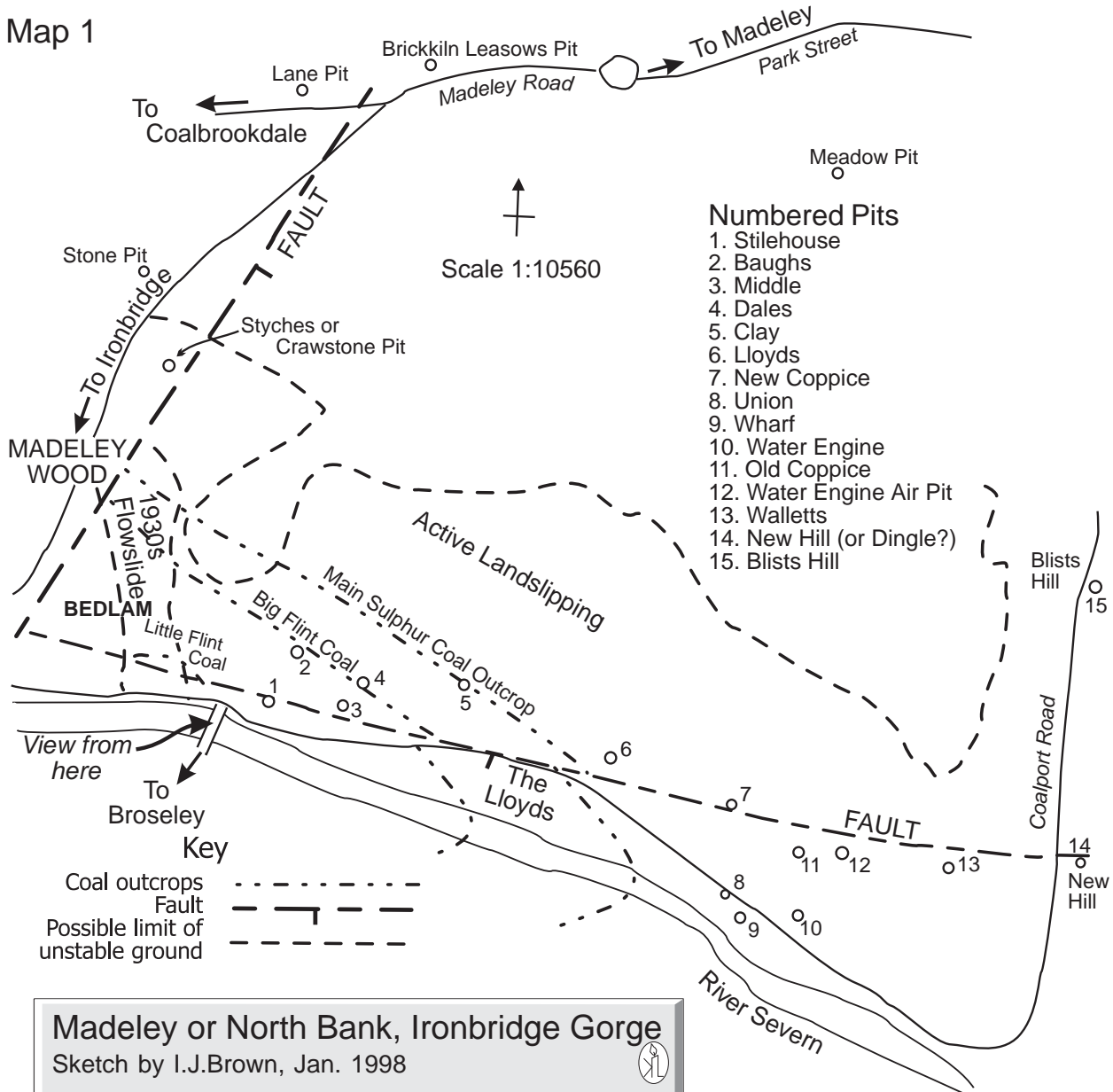
following description by the Swedish diarist, Suedenatierna in 1802:

" at a coalmine above Mr. Reynolds furnace (Bedlam?) a small steam engine of 3 hp ..... drew coal from a depth of several fathoms. The boiler of this small engine was built into a chimney, which served as a ventilator of the mine, so that a separate firing for the last mentioned purpose was obviated."

*(from Journal of West Midlands Studies III 1970)*

The location of some of these early mines is indicated on the map below:

Map 1



# The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 4 continued ....

**1. Stilehouse Pit**, shown as Lloyds Stile House Pit on an 1840 lease, and in an area known as Lloyds Stile. The origin of the name 'Lloyd' is still in dispute but there are many persons of this name in the area, even back in the 18th C. The name of this pit could well have been that of the Chartermaster. Stilehouse along with many of the following pits probably closed in the 1830's/40's when the ironworks were being moved to Blists Hill and the mines were exhausting.

**2. Baughs Pit** in Upper Lloyds, shown as John Baugh's Penny Pit on the 1840 lease. Its name is self-explanatory, it may also have been the 'Pennystone Pit', which had an engine as it stands on a prominent mound of waste. (The 'upper' pits tended to work Pennystone, the 'lower' pits Crawstone ironstone). A William Baugh was Chartermaster in Madeley in 1791 (VCH p120) and Baugh's occupied 7 plots on the 1847 Tithe Map and schedule. This shaft was probably closed in the 1840's and until recently was covered with a brick 'bee-hive' covering.

**3. Middle Pit** is shown as a single shaft in Upper Lloyds on the 1840 lease. Very little is known but it probably worked Pennystone. The name 'Middle' is a local family name, so this may be the name of the Chartermaster. The pit probably closed in the 1840's.

**4. Dales Pit**, similar description and history to Middle Pit, again Dale is a local family name.

**5. Lloyds Clay Pit** is shown on the Tithe Map of 1847 and was still working in the 1880's, but had closed by 1890. On the 1882 OS Map it is shown to be a single shaft, and connected by tramway to the Bedlam brickworks. It is believed that there was also a brickworks near here to make the bricks for the shaft walls and local housing in the Lloyds.

The mine had at least one building but may have been quite shallow since W. Yates of Madeley (who began work as a clay miner in 1892) told the writer that the mine worked 'red clay' ie: Hadley Formation deposits. He also said that

Ben Maddox, mayor of Wenlock at the time the recently replaced Free Bridge was built, was 'blowed; here in the 1880's (to be 'blowed' meant, locally, having been in a mine gas explosion).

**6. Lloyds Ironstone & Coal Pit or Lloyds Crawstone Pit** was a substantial pit in the 1880's (see Map 2). It adjoined the now, nearly deserted, community around New Buildings and was probably developed about the same time 1780-90's. The colliery had some early steam engines, one may have been drawn by Smyth in the 1840's (see Below 97.1). It closed about 1890, but may have reopened for a short period about 1900.

**7. New Coppice Pit**, shown as a single shaft on the 1840 lease, but the area was badly affected by landslip before 1880.

**8 & 9. Union and Wharf Pits** had an engine house almost midway between them (See Fig. 1). There were two engines in 1790's, but only one in the 1840's. Unusually, the 1840 lease appears to show the single engine house connected by winding chain from an outside drum, but supported by at least 2 rolley posts - as in the drawings by Smyth, and Tancred (see page 11). The pits had closed by 1880. Further along the riverside road (to the south) there is an isolated shaft on a promontory (at 16). This may have been **Cape Pit** which also had an early steam engine (the pits numbered 10 onwards on Map 1, will be covered in Part 5).

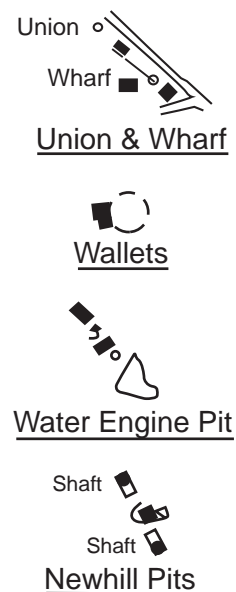
Other mines known to have had early steam engines such as **Paddock Hill, Bedlam** and **Cumberland** cannot now be located, but they were probably near Baugh's Penny Pit.

## Housing

In 1851 there were 32 houses (4 plots occupied by Browns) in the area of New Buildings, now only about 5 remain and these are scattered within the Coppice.

There are two squatter-type cottages on the Penny Pit mound, it is believed one (which slept 11 persons at the turn of the century) was built by the Browns in the late 1780's under the usual system - landowner needed workers, worker

Figure 1:



Lloyds area pits (eastern), as shown in the 1840's  
Sketch: I.J.Brown Scale 1:2500

needed home, so built it on wasteland, landowner let him use it on condition cottage reverted to landowner when squatters left. The landowner got a tied worker and a development without outlay!

Another surviving cottage stands back from the road (called Lloyds Cottage and was recently for sale at £115,000). This clearly shows the result of subsidence, the walls are 5° off vertical in places (not quite as bad as Tancred's illustration - see page 11).

The former Company-built school also survives as a dwelling, prior to its opening about 1852, the school was run in a mine building by Jane Brown (schoolmistress) and her 16 year old niece (Mary Brown, assistant teacher). The 'new' school closed in 1926.

In the 32 houses in 1851 there were 185 inhabitants of whom 44 were adult men on employment. Of these, all but 3 (boat builder, basket maker and maltmaker) worked in mining or ironworking. There were also three female ironstone pickers, two female brickmakers and two ironworkers. Only 11 of the 185 were over 50 years of age, but 63 were between

continued on page 16...



# The Mines and Tunnels of the Ironbridge Gorge, Part 4 continued ....

3 years and 18 years, consisting of 40 girls and 23 boys. Why so few boys? Possibly because the pits and furnaces were closing and the movement was eastwards to Madeley and Donnington

## Map 2:

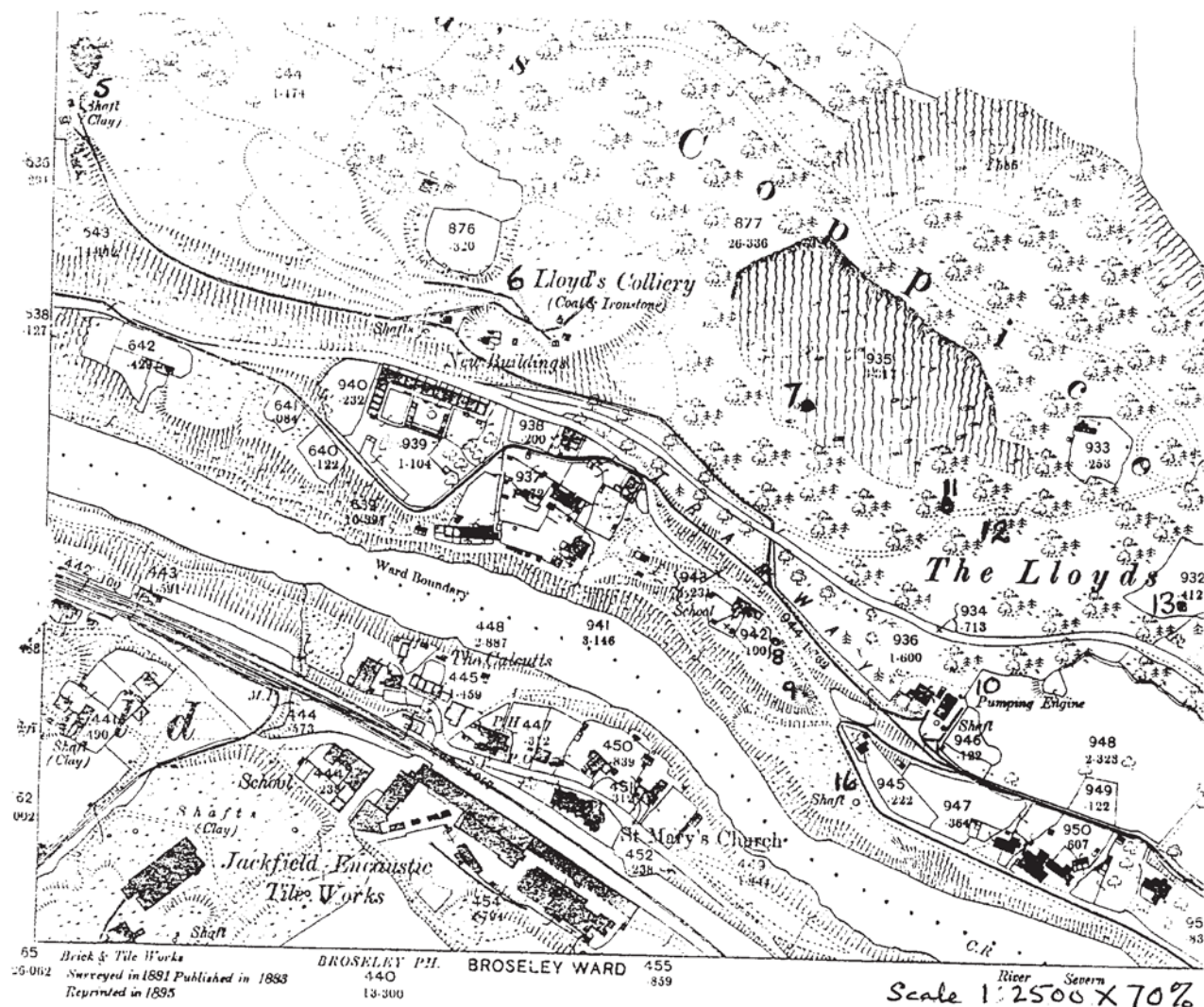
1895, OS Map showing the Lloyds area and the locations of mines:

### Reference:

'The Lloyds', by I.J.Brown, Ind. Arch. Review Vol. XIV No. 1 (1991).

(The story of the western area mines will be continued in Part 5)

- |               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 5 Clay Pit    | 10 Water Engine         |
| 6 Lloyds      | 11 Old Coppice          |
| 7 New Coppice | 12 Water Engine Air Pit |
| 8 Union       | 13 Walleys              |
| 9 Wharf       |                         |



## Foreign News

### Russia

At least 59 Russian coal miners were killed by an explosion of methane, followed by a huge coal dust explosion at Zyryanovskaya Colliery in the Kusbass Region of southern Siberia.

*Mining Journal*

## Two Survive 42 days

Two Chinese teenage girls who got lost in a cave when their candle went out survived for 42 days until they were rescued, but two other students in their group died.

Four other young people exploring the area near Jinzitian village in the hilly Guizhou province discovered the survivors and called for help.

Local farmers pulled the girls out of the narrow cave and medical teams took them to hospital.

The girls had entered the cave at the beginning of May while on an outing near Guiyang, capital of the province in southwest China. The Xinhua News Agency said they had some water to drink while trapped but no food.





## Copper Miners at Alderley Edge

On the mining history discussion list, there has been a number of requests for information about copper miners at Alderley Edge -initially in response to a request for details about such miners who may have come from Cornwall. However some of these miners may also have moved to Clive or the Wixhill/Hawkstone mines in later years. Alan Scragg has compiled two lists:

### List 1 - West Country

Many of the miners listed were lodgers in various houses of the area at the time of the census. Therefore they probably moved on when the mines closed.

### List 2 - Alderley Edge

This is a list of miners from the Alderley Edge Census Returns, where the majority of them listed their place of birth as Cheshire.

Due to the links between Clive and Alderley Edge it is quite possible that some of the miners may have moved to the Clive/Wem area at some time, it may even be possible that their descendants still live in the area!

### List of Miners From SW England Resident in Alderley Edge, from the 1861 & 1871 Census

Name:	Age	Occupation	Place of Birth
<b>1861</b>			
John Richards	23	Copper Miner	Cornwall
Solomon Richards	54	Copper Miner	Cornwall
William Richards	18	Copper Miner	Cornwall
William bate	27	Copper Miner	Devonshire
John Pascoe	55	Agent	Crorran
John Andrew	43	Copper Miner	Cornwall
John Wainmouth	36	Copper Miner	Callington
Samson Jermain	27	Copper Miner	Calstock
George Leamon	28	Copper Miner	Thrawleigh, Devon
Charles Burnett	24	Copper Miner	Landrake
Robert Jackson	21	Copper Miner	Marytavy
<b>1871</b>			
Wm. Stonehewer	21	Copper Miner	Devonshire
Burgess J Chynoweth	34	Copper Miner	Tavistock
James Ridgeway	43	Copper Miner	Cornwall
William Davies	31	Copper Miner	kea Parish
George Layman	?	Agent	Devonshire
Joseph Piscumbe		Copper Miner	Calstock
Henry Birch	31	Copper Miner	St. Erith
John Buckingham	38	Copper Miner	St. Erith
Evan Buckingham	15	Copper Miner	Devonshire
John Buckingham	10		Devonshire
Solomon Blaney	43	Copper Miner	Gwinia
Thomas Maxwell	55	Copper Miner	St. Austell

### List of Miners resident in Alderley Edge, from the 1861 Census

Name:	Age	Place of Birth	Name:	Age	Place of Birth
Daniel Summerville	41	Chorley, Cheshire	John Baston	24	Kermington
Thomas Norbury	35	Gt. Warford, Cheshire	Henry Turkington	27	Ireland
William Dale	36	Chorley, Cheshire	Aaron Jackson	33	Prestbury
Thomas Hague	50	Henbury, Cheshire	Samual Leigh	14	Henbury
William Burgess	22	Chorley Cheshire	Thomas Upton	36	Mottram St. Andrew
John Hatton	29	Chorley, Cheshire	William Serpell	18	Stockport 1871
William Davenport	50	Chorley Cheshire	William Oldham	41	Chorley, Cheshire
William Barton		Mottram, Cheshire	James Oldham	28	Chorley, Cheshire
Thomas Phillips	35	Chorley, Cheshire	James Booth	54	Chorley, Cheshire
Joseph Massey	26	Chorley, Cheshire	Issac Powell	30	Chorley, Cheshire
Peter Bowers	22	Prestbury, Cheshire	Robert Jarman	10	Over Aldeley, Cheshire
James Bowers	18	Butley	James Summerfield	46	Over Alderley, Cheshire
Joseph Bowers	16	Butley	John Wright	28	Prestbury, Cheshire
Samual Bowers	10	Butley	Daniel Summerfield	50	Alderley
Thomas Bowers	44	Prestbury	James Wood	37	Mottram St. Andrew
Joeseph Spear	35	Gloucester	John Bracegirdle	39	Mottram St, Andrew
Thomas Milner	21	Checkley, Staffs.	William Cann	24	Durham
William Swindells	49	Butley	Joseph Pearson	31	Mottram St, Andrew
Hugh Woodall	11	Mottram St Andrew	James Grange	50	Alderley
William Yarwood	40	Morley	John Pearson	26	Mottram St. Andrew
William Woodall	43	Hough, Cheshire	Henry Haworth	13	Nether Alderley
James Grange	38	Alderley			

Any information which you have on these miners or other possible family members would be very useful, you can pass it on to me for forwarding to Alan Scragg if you wish.

*Kelvin*



## Club Officers

**President: Alan Taylor**

**Chairman: Neal Rushton**

**Vice Chair: Tom West**

**Secretary: John Priest**

*scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk*

**Treasurer: Bob Taylor**

**Tackle Officer & NAMHO:  
Steve Holding**

**Training Officer:**

**Alan Moseley**

**Conservation Officer:**

**Nick Southwick**

**Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold**

**Assistant Secretary: Vacant**

**Rescue Officer:**

*Role undertaken by the Rescue  
Wardens: Neal Rushton, Steve Holding,  
Alan Robinson, Andy Yapp*

**'Below' Editor: Kelvin Lake**

*e-mail: scmc@factree.org.uk*

## Diary Dates '98

For organised Club trips please refer to the Monthly Meets lists.

**2nd Oct.** Club AGM, at British Sugar Social Club, Telford, 8pm

**10th Oct.** Annual Dinner, Tern Hill Hall Hotel. 7.30pm

**17 Oct.** 1998 Subterranea Britannica AGM and Annual Conference. 10am, Lucy Cavendish College "New Building", Lady Margaret Road, Cambridge.

**24-25th Oct.** Cave Radio & Electronics Group field meet, Yorkshire Dales.

**15-28th Nov.** A Brush With Darkness, ISSA cave art exhibition, Wells Museum.

**21st Nov.** BCRA Regional Meeting, Priddy Village Hall, Mendip.

**Something different:**

**Nov.(?):** Ancient & Traditional Technologies. A series of 'practice-based' courses. Includes iron smelting, tool making, ancient metallurgy, old glass, etc. Leaflet (SAE) from AMTeC Co-op Ltd, The Foundry, Tinker's Alley, The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, ME4 4TZ. Tel: 01634-832627

**1999:** NAMHO Conference, will be held in the Forest of Dean

