

## Library Additions

**Subterranea: Newsletter of the Subterranea Britannica, Issue 12, December 2006.** Contains items on WWII sites on the Wirral; Greys Court Ice House; underground stone mines around Bath - Swan mine, Hayes Wood; How to spot traces of ROC Post Bunkers; and Scotland Street Tunnel.

Probably the most interesting item is the article on the detailed maps of Britain (and other countries) which include widths of roads, heights of bridges etc.. not drawn by the Ordnance Survey but by Russian 'Officials'! Dating from the 1930s to the 1990s the maps may not even be copyright!

**Stone Chat: Newsletter of the Norfolk Mineral & Lapidary Society, Vo.27 No2, Winter 2006-7** - has part 3 of a report of a trip to the USA and Canada; plans for the smelt mill site in the Allen Valley; and part 2 of a field trip to Scotland and the Isle of Man.

**MCG News: Newsletter of the Mendip Caving Group.** Newsletters 333, May 2006; 334, June 2006; 335, August 2006; 336, September 2006; 337, November 2006. The last two issues contain interesting reports on breakthroughs and route finding in Upper Flood Swallet.

**North Wales Caving Club: Newsletter 297, July-December 2006.** Trip reports to St. Tudwal's Penninsular mines, and the Vercors (May 2006), plus a report on Mineralisation and Mining at Minera, and other news items.

## NAMHO 2007

The booking forms for NAMHO 2007 are now available for downloading from the NAMHO web site. There are three forms - delegate form, trip form and food form, make sure you complete all three!

There are also pdf files available with details of surface and underground trips, but nothing about the lectures yet (although hopefully by the time you read this something will have appeared!).

Website:

[www.namhoconference.org.uk/](http://www.namhoconference.org.uk/)

## Iron-smelting Demo

In a Local Heritage Initiative (LHI)-funded project, the Four Parishes Heritage Group are investigating the medieval iron industry in the Stottesdon and Highley - the project has investigated two late-medieval iron workings sites (bloomeries) in woodland in Chorley and Billingsley. Over the weekend 21st/22nd July, at the Severn Valley Country Park, Alveley, we (will attempting to smelt and work local iron using the bloomery technology. All are welcome.

*David Poyner*

## BCA Membership Drive

British Caving Association (BCA) is acutely aware that there has been a drop in recent years in younger people taking part in caving and underground exploration. While some of this is attributed to the withdrawal of funding to University Clubs by Student Unions (because it's a non-competitive, non-medal winning sport!) and insurance, it is not clear why people are not attracted to caving.

To try to reverse the trend the BCA have launched a broad membership drive entitled "Try Caving". This has seen the creation of a new website [www.trycaving.co.uk](http://www.trycaving.co.uk) where information and facts about caving can be found along with details of Clubs. We have signed up for this campaign, but because they have organised the website around 'Caving' areas we are listed in the "Other" category - actually the

largest category on the site! Hopefully it will attract a few visitors to the Club website.

In addition the BCA intend to have a presence at this years National Outdoor Show in March, at previous shows the only 'caving' taking place was a demo by Nigel Atkins showing-off his high-speed SRT - it's very impressive if you haven't seen it before! Last year the YHA did have an artificial cave which proved popular, but there were over 3 Halls at the NEC of climbing, canoeing, trekking, paragliding, and cycling activities and stands.

The BCA are planning to use the YHA's 'cave' this year for their recruitment drive - anybody expressing interest in joining a caving club will be directed to those clubs signed up to the 'trycaving' web site.



# News Round-Up 1

by Ivor Brown

## Planning Application

A planning application is being made to convert some buildings at the old Pontesford Lead Smelter (Snailbeach Co.) to office buildings. Concerned local members are pressing for careful consideration by the Authority and for an archaeological watching brief. Neither of the old smelters are "listed". A photograph has been located showing the demolition of the Snailbeach Co. Smelter Chimney.

## New Opencast

UK Coal is seeking permission to opencast nearly 1 million tonnes of coal from a site at Huntington Lane, Telford. Working is expected to take nearly 3 years.

## 'Archer' family

A Mrs. Harold of Bury St. Edmunds is trying to obtain information on the 'Archer' family and mining at Ketley. Her father (age 94) had two brothers in the mines in 1901 (James and Enoch) their father and two brothers were coal and stone miners there in the 1800s. Their father James, born 1777, was also a miner. Information to IJB please for passing on.

## Maltby and Monkton

Maltby Colliery is about to be sold by UK Coal to Hargreaves UK Ltd. Hargreaves have already bought the Monkton Coking Plant (last open battery type coke works, 125 years old) for £12 million. The Coking plant uses about one third of Maltby's production each year.

## Facts about Coal

Drax Power Station has, over the past year, made a profit of over £60 per tonne of coal used, this is about twice the amount they paid UK Coal for the coal! UK Coal have been held to their 2003 contract price, but now Drax has agreed to give a bit more, other power stations have not as yet.

Imported coal is now costing about £8.40 per tonne above the price being paid to UK Coal!

*from UK Newscene Magazine,  
Dec. 2006*

## Cadmans

The last issue of Below (p13) mentioned a Charles Cadman, a J.O. Cadman and a J.C.B. Cadman with a request for further information. Blogg (Terry Davies) has provided more information on the Cadmans.

While a student at Birmingham University Mining Department in 1958 Blogg spent 3 months with a Company "Charbonnages Monceau Fontaine" who operated eleven collieries in the Charleroi area of Belgium. He spent his time mostly as a faceworker/surveying linesman at Siege No.4 Pit.

Afterwards he wrote up a long report which was entered in a University Competition. He won, and the prize was The Sir John Cadman Medal and the sum of £20 (a lot of money in 1958 - more than a deputy's weekly wage). Blogg thought this Cadman might be a relation to the others.

IJB's early research shows that he was.

It now seems that in 1903 the Madeley Wood Company brought in

James Cope Cadman as a mining consultant. In 1905, a J.C. Cadman was manager and in 1906 the mine agent.

James Cope Cadman had 6 sons, three were John, James and Charles. John eventually became Sir John Cadman, Professor of Mining at Birmingham University and more. The medal was in his honour.

James was a businessman who took over financial control and was managing director at Madeley Wood from the 1920s to 1940s.

Charles died young in the First World War - he was a mining surveyor in 1912 and he could have been gaining mining experience at Madeley at the time the Rescue man died in 1913. Charles was killed in action in 1917.

Two of young James' sons were also Directors of Madeley Wood Company in the 1940s. (See photo on p51 in "East Shropshire Coalfield", Tempus).

The two faces of the Sir John Cadman medal, won by Blogg in 1958.



# Caving without Limestone

by John Heathcote

I was invited by some friends to share a villa with them on Tenerife for a week last November. Tenerife, like the rest of the Canary Islands, is well known as a winter sun holiday resort. It has some beaches and the highest mountain in Spain in the middle. I thought we would be doing some walking, with the advantage of cheap wine too. "You'll need to bring some caving gear" my friend warned.

Tenerife is a dormant volcano, a pile of lava sticking 3,717 metres out of the Atlantic, with no limestone at all. Tenerife is the home of Cueva del Viento (Cave of the Wind), the second longest lava tube system in the world. It's up the hill (most places on Tenerife are up or down the hill) from Icod de los Vinos, whose other claim to fame is a couple of very large dragon trees. The other place famous for lava tubes is Hawai'i - which is rather more expensive to get to.

Lava tubes form when flowing basalt lava freezes on the outside and the lava keeps flowing in the middle. 'Freezes' is a technical term - the freezing point is something over 1,000°C. The lava can flow a long way - there is ~17 km of passage in Cueva del Viento. Lava from the modern volcano Kilauea on Hawai'i makes its way in lava tubes all the way from the summit crater to the sea. The tube insulates the lava from the cold air, allowing it to flow much further.

In some ways, the mode of formation of lava tubes is not so different from that of limestone caves. The hot lava is capable of melting and thus cutting down through old lava, in just the same way as water erodes limestone. As the lava cools, it sticks to the floor and piles up, potentially blocking the tube, just as stal precipitates from water and blocks limestone caves. The result is to produce an architecture similar to water-worn vadose canyons, sometimes with multiple super-imposed oxbows. I'm reminded of parts of Polnagollum in Co. Clare.

There are even lavicles on the ceiling, a little bit like stalactites, but there is nothing that resembles stalagmites, apart from real ones. There are boulder ruckles too, where the roof has collapsed, and which form the usual way in.

Flash floods are unlikely without at least some warning, but when the flood is at 1200°C the word 'flash' is appropriate!

Caving in a Tenerife lava tube is a bit different from caving in a British cave. For a start, most of Tenerife is warmer than Britain, which is of course why people go there on holiday. Normal British gear is far too hot, even for the caves 2000 m up Teide. Lava is hard, rough and sharp, in a way that limestone never is. Chance encounters with the ceiling, covered in lavicles like a nutmeg grater, produce bruising and bleeding, even with a boiler suit and something underneath. Although



Dragon trees point the way to Cueva del Viento

it's quite warm enough for a pair of shorts and no T-shirt, you really do need some mechanical protection.

Unfortunately, despite the name, there is almost no draught through the cave. The floor is rough too. No chance of slipping, but it's easy to trip over your own feet because the grip is so strong. The places where the floor and ceiling get close are for the serious masochist - ever-present lavicles and a spiky floor too. Miner's kneelers or the cool equivalent sold by skate-boarding shops are almost essential - bare knees are just not feasible. Squeezes are interesting too - like the walls are covered with Velcro. The lava is a



Entrance to Cueva del Viento



# Caving without Limestone

by John Heathcote, continued...

very dark black - makes even Top Entrance of OFD seem pale.

Particularly with the sort of lighting that you can take on a plane, it's not easy to see where you are going. Lastly, lava tubes can only form on quite steep slopes and they follow the ground surface. The tubes, like most of the rest of Tenerife, slope steeply. It's hard on the knees going down, and hard on the way up too. The easiest entrance to the cave is at Las Brevitas - follow your nose a long way up the hill from the dragon tree, past the Cueva del Viento bar, and it's in the fork in the road in a little bit of waste ground. The taxi drivers know where it is.

Upstream from the entrance it forks - one way ends in a collapse and the other is gated. We had sorted out the man with the key. Downstream it heads under the town. The cave is not far below the surface so roots dangle through the ceiling. As it goes under the town it gets rather shitty - literally - it's handy for drainage. There's no bottom exit.

There is a separate cave at the bottom of the hill at San Marcos - finding the entrance is a challenge. See [www.educa.rcanaria.es/usr/nicolas/paginas/cueva.htm](http://www.educa.rcanaria.es/usr/nicolas/paginas/cueva.htm)

There are various lava caves elsewhere too, including well up the mountain in the national park. Our anagram SMCC has published a guide to these.

If you want to find out more, *tubo volcanico* produces rather more relevant hits than *lava tube*, which mainly gives American ones.

However, [www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtual\\_tube/virtube.html](http://www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtual_tube/virtube.html) is informative.

We get rather used to caves being in limestone, since all of those in England and Wales are - the vast majority of them in limestones of Carboniferous age, although there are some in Devonian limestones in Devon, and even some in the Chalk (sea caves excluded). A little further afield, we have caves in dolomite in Assynt (now my local caves) and caves in marble elsewhere in Scotland. The marbles caves have little quartz flakes in them, making them as painful and destructive as the lava tubes. But both of these are carbonates, not really different from the familiar limestone. Marble is merely metamorphosed limestone or dolomite.

In Austria I came across a cave in

gypsum, in the Vorarlberg. Unfortunately lack of a lamp prevented significant exploration, and it was a long walk up a toll road so we didn't re-visit. Gypsum is much more soluble in water than limestone and solution caves can develop. Ask anyone from Ripon. I didn't get anything from Google on this, but having been forced to resort to the translator because my German is not very good, I did have a few chuckles.

Even more soluble is halite - sodium chloride. I have explored a short solution cave in this in the Atacama Desert, Chile. There is extensive karst - the clints are razor sharp and wicked - but there's not much to get into.

Totally unrelated and not a solution cave as such, but of mining interest and quite amazing is [giantcrystals.strahlen.org/europe/merkers.htm](http://giantcrystals.strahlen.org/europe/merkers.htm)

At the other end, quartz is only about a tenth as soluble in water as limestone. But central Venezuela has been in the tropics for 60 million years and it has been raining for much of that time. So here there are some solution caves in quartzite. There's one close to the summit of Roraima Tepui, the setting for Conan Doyle's Lost World. It's a bit like a mini Gaping Ghyll, but apparently this is just a little one. Google was more helpful here:

[charlesbrewercarias.orientese.com/cuevas/cuevacharlesbrewer/cuevacharlesbrewering.htm](http://charlesbrewercarias.orientese.com/cuevas/cuevacharlesbrewer/cuevacharlesbrewering.htm)

I'm impressed - remember this doesn't dissolve as easily as limestone!

The Roraima quartzite is the oldest rock I've caved in, at over 2,000 million years, and on Borneo I've been underground in limestone only 4 million years old.

There's more to caves than Carboniferous limestone!



Inside a lava tube



## 'Map Kernow' Statue Vandalised

On the 1st June last year in Australia, the 8 metre high metal and fibre glass statue 'Map Kernow' ("Son of Cornwall" in the Cornish language) was badly damaged following an attack by arsonists.

The statue was unveiled in June 1988 to commemorate the profound role and contribution of the Cornish miner in the Kapunda Mine and other mines in South Australia.



Kapunda is about 77 km north of Adelaide. The mine was established in 1844 and was the first commercially successful copper mine, and Kapunda Australia's first mining town. It played a major part in the economic development of South Australia. Up to its closure in 1878 over 14,000 tonnes of copper ore, worth over £1 million was produced and up to 340 men and boys, mainly from Cornwall were employed there.

Kapunda boasts several other firsts in Australian mining; the first Cornish Beam Engine in Australia was erected here in 1848. Later one of only two 'Bull' engines in Australia was installed here.

From 1867, the site had Australia's first large-scale open cut in conjunction with its first hydrometallurgical plant which worked on the Scottish Henderson Process - this involves leaching jig-concentrated copper carbonate ore with hydrochloric acid, followed by precipitation onto scrap iron. The hydrochloric acid was manufactured on site with salt from Port Adelaide and sulphuric acid made by burning pyrite from the mine.

Quite a lot of buildings have survived from the early days of the



**Above & left:** 'Map Kernow' in 2004  
Pictures: Dr. Sharron P.Schwartz

settlement and are protected as national monuments, including the school, the courthouse and a number of miners' houses. The area is proud of its mining heritage and has created the Kapunda Heritage Trail which leads you on a 10 kilometre tour through the history and development of Kapunda, including the old mine area, past tunnels, open cuts, and miners' cottages.

*Text based on Kapunda Report, by  
Dr. Sharron P.Schwartz*

## Accident at Bath Stone Mine

On Wednesday 20th September 2006, a miner (Steven Cosh) was killed when a large stone weighing about 1 tonne fell from the roof of Stoke Hill stone mine at Limpley Stoke. He was operating an electrically powered stone saw at this underground Bath stone quarry.

The mine has an exemplary safety record and although it closed for a couple of days after the accident as a mark of respect for the miner and his family, it has been authorised to continue working by the Health and Safety Executive.

The dropping of blocks from the roof of stone mines is a major problem in the Bath area. When the older mines were working small wooden spraggs would be set at an angle near the top

of the pillars against the roof. Although not strong enough to support the roof, it is thought they slightly tilted the roof blocks off their vertical axis, wedging them against the neighbouring block, preventing them from dropping.

A major in-filling operation at Combe Down stone mines has been underway for several years to safeguard houses in the Combe Down area from 'void migration' as roof blocks collapse into old workings. Centred around the North Road area some sections of this huge labyrinth of stone workings (parts are believed to date back to the 17th Century) are only a metre or so from the surface.

*Bath Chronicle  
<http://thisisbath.com>*

## Cornish Mine

### Contamination Check

During January-February a three week investigation took place at the Wheal Maid tailings lagoon, Gwennap, Redruth to determine whether heavy metal contamination at the site could pose a risk.

Boreholes were drilled to monitor ground water and take soil samples for analysis.

The Wheal Maid site was used during the 1970s and 80s and has two lagoons and three dams. Material from Wheal Jane and Mount Wellington was tipped there.

*Based on News Reports,  
Jan. 2007*



# Mining Incidents in Shropshire No. 4 - Gas problems at Granville Colliery (1) - Methane Drainage

While dust was the particular scourge of the Madeley Wood pits, explosive gas or methane was the scourge of the Lilleshall Company pits, although both groups of pits did have a share of each.

All the six multi-fatal gas explosions underground since 1865 have been in Lilleshall Company pits and the worst - and last in 1887, involving three lives was at Grange Pit, the sister pit to Granville. Even in more recent times both Granville and Grange had a problem "with gas" which led to several incidents (the two in 1960 and 1968 are described later). During the 1950s it was found necessary to take drastic steps to remove the problem.

In the mines inspector's report on the 1887 incident at nearby Grange Pit mentioned above (see SCMC Account No.24 for full details) the gas was found to have been given off "in the higher workings against the fault" and this situation is found quite frequently. During 1956 the gas problems on "H's face" at Granville were considered to be extremely serious and NCB senior officials produced a report on them.

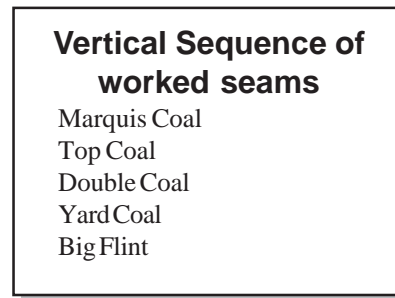
H's face was 80 yards long and had a further 1,400 yards to travel but the seam was undulating with a tendency to rise to the return end. It was expected that the face would encounter several faults so that, based on the above experience, conditions were likely to worsen.

In 1956 the legal limit at which electrical equipment could be used was 1.25% in the general body of the air, with withdrawal of all men at 2%. In order to not exceed these limits the airflow could be increased, but there were 'comfort' and practical limits to this. The Paper on Granville Pits 'H' face continues:

"At present concentrations in H's Top Coal return vary between 0.8% and 1.10%. The intake air is also polluted to the extent that the limits set by the Coal Mines Act are likely

to be exceeded. Air quantities at the face were increased by 7,000 to 25,000 cubic feet per minute in August 1956 and are now at the limits of working comfort for the men. It is evident that most of the gas leaving the district via the return (estimated to be some 200 CFM) is coming up through the floor into the wastes and onto the face from the seams below". (Fig.1)

**Figure 1**



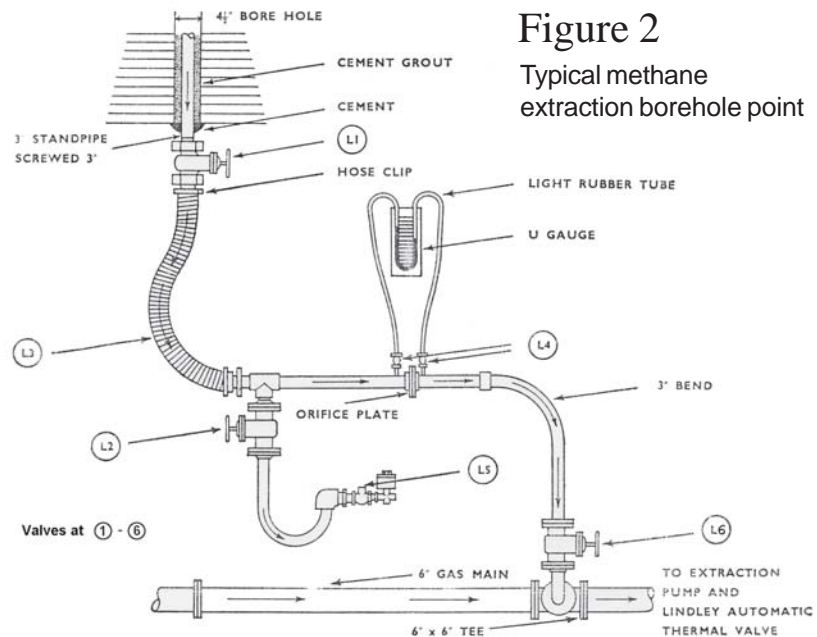
There were in fact several workable seams of coal within the range of 100ft. below the Top Coal face and two seams within the 100ft. range above. The Paper then proposed that active methane drainage of the coal seam and workings should commence as soon as possible. A drill rig would have to be erected in the return airway from the face and holes would be drilled into the floor inclined under the goaf or waste to

about 100ft. Trial holes should also be drilled into the roof above.

The holes should have a pipe cemented in so that any gas coming out can be collected and discharged at some safe distance further down the main return road. At first it was hoped gas would come out under its own pressure, but if not an exhaust fan could be used. (Fig.2)

It was agreed that the scheme should be applied and in April 1957 exhaustion of gas commenced and this was discharged into the return airway. This was the first such scheme in the NCB's South Staffordshire and Shropshire Area. The system produced so much gas however, that it became a problem in the return airway and so the pipes had to be extended to the surface at the nearby Grange Pit. Here plans had been made to construct a methane drainage plant - and a pipeline some six miles long to Wellington Gas Works. At Wellington the gas was purchased by the Gas Board and then treated for resale.

For much of its distance the gas main (of 8 inches diameter) ran alongside the main London to Birkenhead railway line. The cooperation, for construction, of British Railways was



**Figure 2**  
Typical methane extraction borehole point



## Mining Incidents in Shropshire No. 4 - Gas problems at Granville Colliery (1) - Methane Drainage, continued ...

needed, and a special goods train with the necessary length of pipe was shunted along the line and the pipes rolled directly from the trucks and into position.

The supply of gas from the pit was connected up in October 1960 and gas sold at the rate of about 1,750,000 cu. ft. per week. The only treatment needed at the Grange Pit end of the system was the removal of moisture and the addition of a "smell".

At the Gas Works end the methane was diluted with blue water gas to reduce it to a calorific value of 450 Btu/cu. ft/ which was the value required for town gas. Blue water

gas, enriched with methane was further refined with coal gas from the carbonising plant before passing through the purification system from which the mixed gases emerged as refined town gas.

On May 11th 1961 the writer went underground to study the Methane Drainage system in use at Granville prior to taking his manager's examination on May 18th - he had had a premonition that this would be the basis of one of the questions in the exam - but unfortunately this proved incorrect! The system was much as described above but concentration was now on using boreholes into the roof of the coal

seam and extraction of gas with Nash-Hytor Vacuum pumps.

In 1964 the NCB reported that gas was still being drained from the mine and sold but the drained gas was now directly mixed with coke oven gas and water gas for industrial and domestic uses.

By 1973 the gas was no longer being sold but discharged directly to atmosphere at Grange Pit. The gas was being drawn from boreholes driven upwards towards the Marquis Seam from workings in the Double Coal (which lay below the Top Coal). Between 5.7 and 11.4 cu. metres per minute of 'pure methane' was being produced but could no longer be utilised since the introduction of Natural Gas to replace Town Gas.

The system ceased to be used at the Colliery before the pit closed in 1979, but there is no doubt a considerable amount of gas still underground.



**Figure 3** Methane extraction plant alongside main fan buildings at Grange Pit, 1960s

### References

1. Based on papers given to the writer during his study visit and personal observation.
2. Paper- Anon - Methane Drainage in the West Midlands in "Iron and Coal Trades Review", Dec. 16th 1960 and local newspaper reports.

*Ivor Brown*

## Collapse at Priest Weston - Cliffdale Mine

As this issue of 'Below' goes to press there are reports of a 'shaft' collapse at the site of Cliffdale Barytes Mine. It is thought that the cap or fill in Weston shaft has given way following the recent heavy rain and snow melt creating a hole about 6m (20ft.) deep and 16m (50ft.) diameter. The shaft is beside the unclassified road between White Grit and Priest Weston.

A family who live in a nearby chalet have had to move out for safety reasons while Council Officials investigate the area. The added complication is that nobody is sure if the shaft is in Shropshire or in Powys!

### Cliffdale Mine facts

NGR: SO 302 977. The mine was worked from 1859 to the 1927 for Barytes and Calcite. Between 1860 and 1913 it produced 35,816 tonnes of barytes.

Weston shaft was about 75m (230ft.) deep. The Club survey of 1979 notes that Weston shaft was completely blocked and it's location over the road from the reservoir was unclear. Powis Shaft by the reservoir was open (Neal rescued a dog from it a few years ago) but blocked a short way down with rubbish (this shaft is in Wales). Bowers shaft (near the sharp bend in the road) was 'open' but blocked by a car. The concrete

engine foundations by Bowers Shaft still survived. East of here is Sump Shaft, which has been filled and ploughed over. To the West was a blocked adit below the road with a collapsed adit and shaft above the road. These are believed to be associated with the main workings.

To the north-west, at Cwm Dingle Farm, is the entrance to Cliffdale Level. This was the drainage level for the mine but it had been dammed and used as a domestic water supply. The landowners which have Calcot Mine on their land (a few hundred metres from Cliffdale) have extended an invitation to the Club to visit the site over the next few weeks.



# Callow Hill Shaft Investigation

## 28th January 2007

**Members presents:** Andy Harris, Andy Wood, Neal Rushton, Steve Holding, Pete Eggleston, Kelvin Lake.

Following reports from Nick Southwick of an open shaft on the possible line of a drainage adit running from Minsterley towards Callow Hill quarry - and possibly on towards Snailbeach, a small group of Club members decided to investigate the shaft with the MineCam.

The landowner Mr. Jones was keen to know what was down there, and remembers his father (many years ago) climbing down the shaft on ladders which were fixed in place, and entering the adit. So was it still open?

Luckily the rain had eased off for a couple of days, allowing the fields to dry out slightly, so we were able to load all the MineCam and Blondin kit into 2 landrovers and drive across the fields.

The shaft was on a raised bank close to the North-west side of Callow Hill quarry. A few hundred metres down hill and West of the shaft was another shaft (filled with rubble to within a couple of feet of the top) - also presumed to lie along the line of the adit, beyond that the adit is believed to have once come to surface in Little Minsterley near the Creamery.

There are old reports of an adit being driven from the Little Minsterley area towards Snailbeach Mine with a view to draining the upper workings, however it never actually reached Snailbeach. If this shaft was actually on the adit it could have been a construction shaft which was kept open for ventilation and inspection purposes.

Arriving at the shaft we were faced with a very over-grown area. Luckily Andy Harris was on hand with his tree surgery tools and managed to clear away several small trees and large rose bushes! Due to the undergrowth, we couldn't get close

**Right:** Andy Harris clearing undergrowth from the shaft top.



**Right:** Andy's landrover is positioned as a belay - with some of the rigging kit nearby.



**Right:** Steve Holding rigging one end of the Blondin on the nearby oak tree.



Pictures on this page: Andy Wood





# Callow Hill Shaft Investigation

## 28th January 2007, continued ....

to the edge of shaft, so made use of a nearby oak tree and Andy's Landrover to rig a blondin across the hole for the Minecam, this took longer than expected for a number of reasons, not helped by the biting cold wind blowing up the hill.

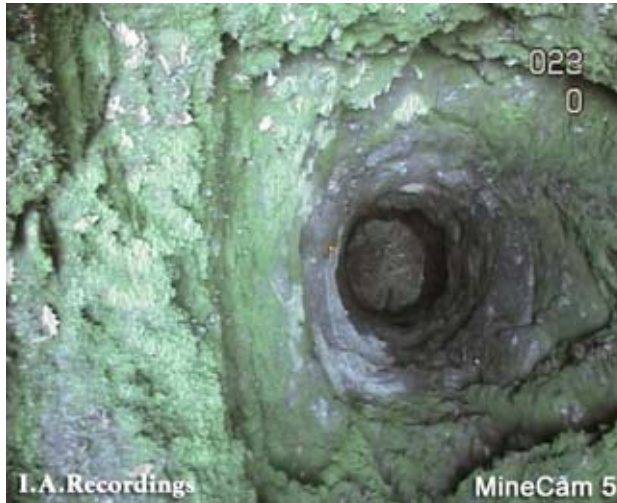
Once rigged, the MineCam revealed a nice, unlined shaft cut through rock, about 2m diameter. However, at 19m the shaft was found to be blocked with a layer of branches and twigs. We estimated at this point that we were still some distance from the actual adit level. There was no sign of any timbering or ladders on the walls of the shaft, so these must have disappeared some years ago.

### An Oddity

The recorder was left running as we pulled the MineCam out, and it was only when the footage was examined later that a small 70cm diameter circular hole cut through rock was spotted near the surface heading approximately 20° East of Magnetic North. A return visit may be made in the future to investigate this, if Mr. Jones approves.

### Thanks

To Mr. Jones for allowing us onto his land to investigate the shaft, and Andy Wood for arranging things.



View down the shaft from the surface to the blockage 19m below.



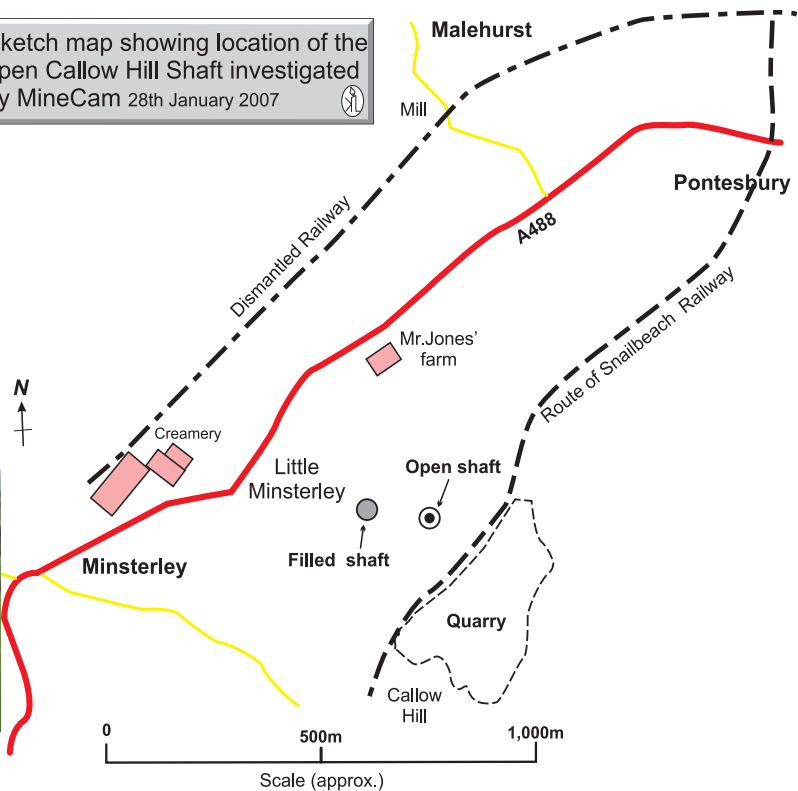
The mystery hole, just a couple of metres from the surface, caught on camera as the MineCam was being hauled up.

Pictures on this page from:  
I.A.Recordings,  
Minecam 5

**Below:** View from the open shaft, in a Westerly direction to the filled shaft (marked by trees in the middle of picture) and the Minsterley Creamery behind.



Sketch map showing location of the open Callow Hill Shaft investigated by MineCam 28th January 2007



## News Round-Up 2

### Lagoon Floods Village

In the early hours of Monday 22nd January a lagoon at Glebe Mines, Stoney Middleton, North Derbyshire, burst its banks causing a 3ft high tidal wave of water and slurry to flood the village of Stoney Middleton.

About 30 homes were damaged and the A623 was closed due to the flooding.

*BBC News, 22nd January 2007*

### Brazilian Dam Bursts

Heavy rains on Wednesday 10th January caused a dam at a bauxite mine near the town of Mirai in south-eastern Brazil to burst creating a mudslide which forced over 5,000 people from their homes.

Authorities said initial tests on the slick, some two million cubic metres in size, indicated that the mud was not toxic as vast quantities of bauxite residue flowed into the nearby river.

Torrential rain had left dozens dead and many homeless in south-eastern Brazil in the weeks prior to the accident.

The government of the state of Minas Gerais says it will close the mine, which experienced a similar accident last year.

*BBC News, 10th January 2007*

### Hunt for Scottish Gold

A exploration company, Alba Mineral Resources, has been given the go-ahead to search for gold and silver in several parts of Scotland.

The company plans to examine the extent of deposits at four locations in Perth and Kinross, Argyll and Aberdeenshire, after being awarded exploration licences by the Crown Estate Commissioners.

Access negotiations with land owners are still taking place.

Explorations are expected to get underway later in 2007, although the project is at an early stage.

The four locations are south of Aberfeldy and around Glendevon, both in Perth and Kinross, at Kilmelford in Argyll and at Arthrath in Aberdeenshire.

*BBC News 4th January 2007*

### Chinese Explosions

Explosions in two coal mines at opposite sides of China killed at least 53 workers and injured many more.

A gas explosion on Saturday 25th November in Jixi, Heilongjiang Province in the North-east, killed 21 miners. A few hours later, a similar explosion killed 32 miners in Fuyuan, Yunnan Province in China's South-west.

*BBC News, 26th Nov. 2006*

### Daw Mill Safety Fears

A section of mine where a worker died when a tunnel wall collapsed on him was being repaired because of safety fears.

Anthony Carrigan, 42, from Thorne near Doncaster in South Yorkshire, died when he was trapped under coal at Daw Mill Colliery in Arley, north Warwickshire. He had only been at Daw Mill for one week but was an experienced miner who worked for a specialist contracting firm.

Until June last year the mine had an exemplary safety record, but Mr. Carrigan is the third worker to die at the Daw Mill in the past 8 months.

This latest accident follows the death of a worker who was overcome by methane in an unused part of the mine in June 2006 and the death of another worker in August who fell from a vehicle he was riding on in the mine.

*BBC News, 18th January 2007*

### Merthyr Opencast

Planning permission has been given to remove remaining coal deposits from land at Ffos-y-Frân, east of Merthyr Tydfil. The developers estimate they can remove 20,000 tonnes of coal per week over the site's life of 15 years (10m tonnes of coal in total) and provide 200 jobs.

*Descent 194, Feb/Mar. 2007*

## Woman Traps South African Cave Group

An overweight woman who got stuck in a South African cave trapped 22 fellow tourists for more than 10 hours and had to be eventually prised free with liquid paraffin.

The woman became trapped in the 'Tunnel of Love' section in the Cango Caves near Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape, South Africa on New Year's Day.

This section of the cave has a narrow base where she lost her footing and went down in a splits position and

was unable to lift her body weight.

The woman had been warned on several occasions that she might not be suitable for the tour, but she was extremely 'offended' and insisted on continuing on the trip.

The other tourists in the group, which included two asthmatic children, were given blankets, water, chocolate bars and buckets for use, as the rescue proceeded. One rescuer was able to climb over the woman to deliver insulin to a diabetic in the trapped group.

The "expensive" rescue operation involved several ambulance teams and a helicopter and could cost 40,000 Rand (about £3,000).

The cave management stated that people regularly got stuck for an hour or so, but never on this scale.

However, he said the caves would consider more stringent measures for those entering

*from assorted News Reports  
January 2007*



# The Club - 40 Years Ago (1967)

by Ivor Brown

The year started with the Club in excellent form, over 60 members and associates, and about 20 of these had nominated tasks from President to Geologist to Programme Organiser. The members were 'mobile' and interest spread all over the country. In the first 8 months of the year there appear to have been only about six "official" trips to South Shropshire mines, 2 to Llanymynech and 10 to the mines in the vicinity of the Newport Clubhouse. Many more took place to mines in the vicinity of the newly acquired barn at Cilcain and in Wales generally. Several were however to places as far as Yorkshire and even Scotland. The Club Year Book for 1966/7 was now in A4 size (rather than Quarto, but the newsletter was mainly in Foolscap!), but the Publication Department got into difficulties and no further Yearbook Reports were published after September 1967.

Gleanings from the Newsletters Sept. 1967 (No.34) to Dec. 1967 (No.38) show that the same pattern of visits continued to the end of the year.

Most of the weekly trips seem to have been for gaining experience and general sightseeing underground except for 2 or 3 Club members who were becoming engrossed in the

Lilleshall Limestone Mines, North Wales mines and caves and, towards the end of the year, Bog Mine and the Boat Level. Field meetings were generally poorly attended (this was the time of Foot and Mouth Disease and most 'activity' organisations suffered very badly).

An exception to the poor attendances was the Rescue Practice in January. This attracted 21 members (plus guests) to the Llanymynech Mine and a general trip to the South Shropshire Mines in August which attracted 11 members.

The Annual Camps were held as usual, the Easter Camp was split into two, at Ingleton (Yorks.) and Cwmystywth (Cardigan). The Summer Camp seems to have been in Sutherland (Scotland) but poorly attended.

The monthly meetings began well in January with the publication of two Accounts Nos. 5 & 6, North Wales Caves by R.A.Meeson and History of Limestone Mining in Shropshire by I.J.Brown. There was much discussion about rescue work, but the Easter camp(s) had been a "flop" due to poor organisation. By May the 1966/7 Yearbook had been published and copies of I.J.Brown's

"Mineral Wealth of Coalbrookdale" had been purchased as reprints from PDMHS for resale. The meeting in June was recorded as being "haphazardly run" although there does seem to have been a "reading of reports".

The 6th AGM and Dinner was held at the Barley Mow in Newport on Sept. 30th, the President, Chairman and Vice Chairman were re-elected but most other positions were either reshuffled or abolished. The 'Secretary' came in for some heavy criticism and Dave Adams took over again. Although the 1966/7 Yearbook was well under way the Publication Dept. was "in a very difficult position" and all discussion was left to the next General Meeting.

It was reported that the Club now had 38 members and 28 Associates, Associate membership was 10 shillings per year, the Annual Dinner cost 31 shillings. Subs. had brought in £64 and "levys" (payment for attendance) brought in £22, the turnover during the year had been £114 but there were some bills still to pay. £23 remained in the bank. Some money might be coming to the Club from Lecture Fees as members were giving a course of lectures for Shropshire Education Committee

The December Meeting heard that all publications produced had been sold out and that unless more were completed and sold "the Club would be broke in two months".

1967 had not finished as a good year overall.

## Note

See next years episode:

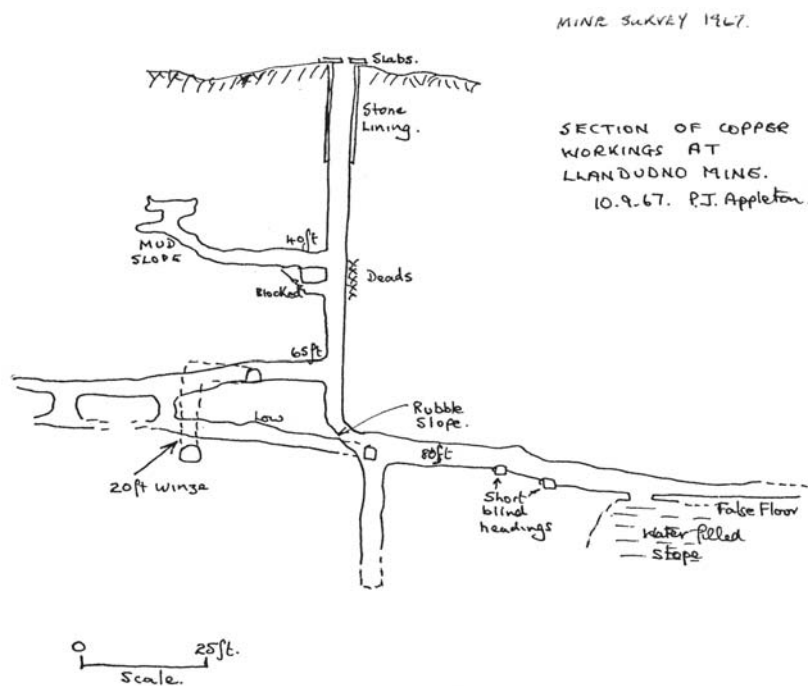
What happened to the Welsh enthusiasts?

Could interest in Shropshire Mines be rekindled?

Did Dave Adams sort out the admin?

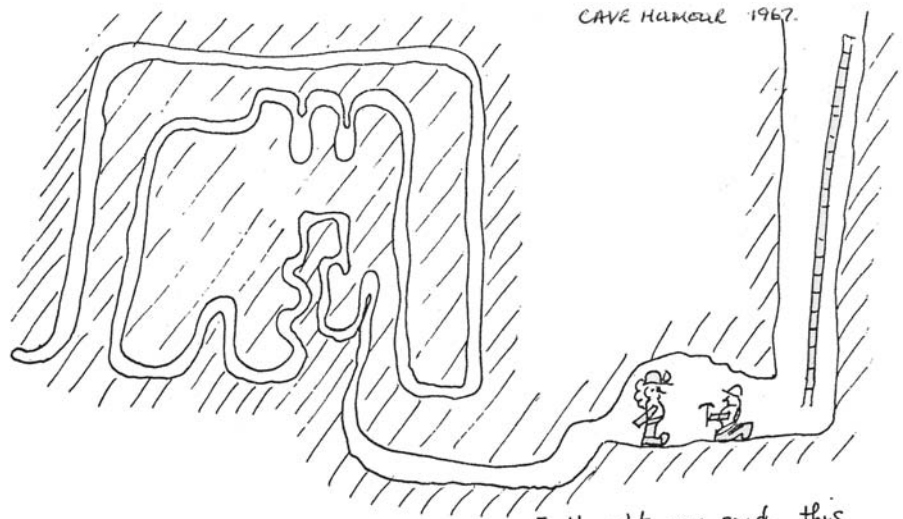
Could the new treasurer save the Club from going broke?

Did the Publications Dept. get re-established?



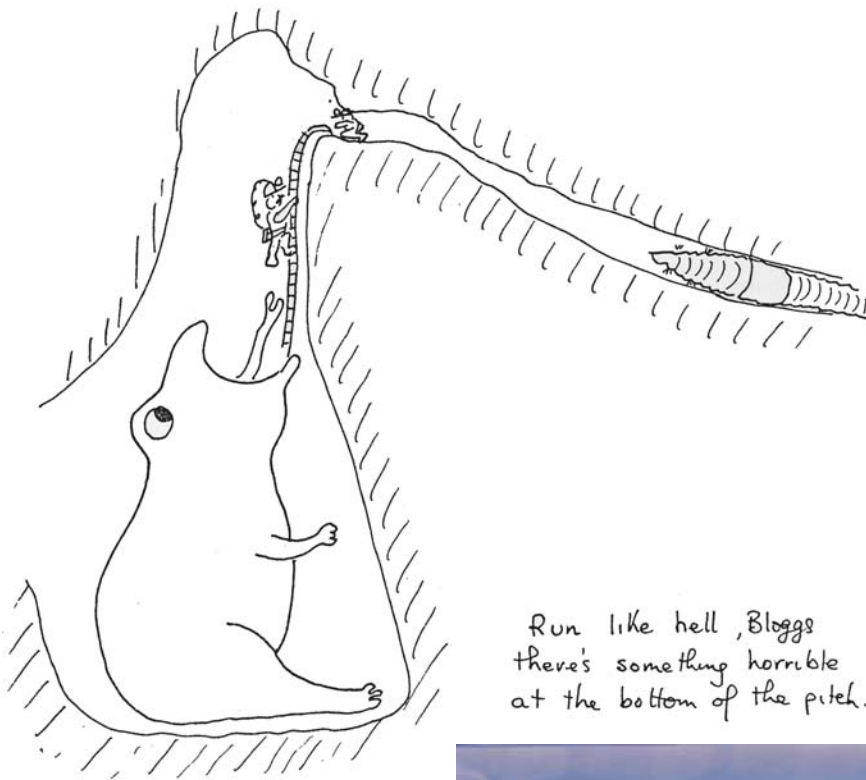
# Cave Humour - 1967

From the Club Archives



CAVE HUMOUR 1967.

I thought you said this place was 'super severe'. It's been pretty easy so far.



Run like hell, Bloggs there's something horrible at the bottom of the pitch.

Granville Colliery, Donnington.  
Visited by 6 members on 8th  
June 1967

Picture: Ivor Brown



## News Round-Up 3

### Countdown at Madeley Wood Colliery

Forty years ago as reported in local newspapers:

1964: Trepan-shearer coal getting and loading machine, and hydraulic props installed.

1965 Jan. 12: in 'Shropshire Star' NCB describes pit life as "long-term".

Nov: in 'Shropshire Star' NCB classify pit as "short-life", still employs 515.

1966 Mid.: 166 men transferred to Granville and other groups (about 20 men) End of year: 228 men remain (others have retired or resigned).

1967 July: 174 men transferred to Granville Colliery.

July 29th: about 60 remain, 10 of whom refused to move - to be made redundant, many retirements leave about 24 for salvage work.

1968: All gone - probably the last one was IJB's father, he sold off the colliery furniture, then moved to Highley Colliery, where he retired in Feb. 1969

**Note:** According to the Colliery Guardian Yearbook, Granville Colliery's manpower increased from 553 in 1965/66 to 882 in 1968/69, which is in line with over 300 persons having been transferred from Madeley Wood but numbers employed then fell annually.

*Ivor Brown*

### Huge Fossil Haul in Australian Caverns

An astonishing collection of fossil animals from southern Australia have been found in limestone caves under Nullarbor Plain and date from about 400,000-800,000 years ago.

The finds include 23 kangaroo species, eight of which are entirely new to science, and a complete specimen of *Thylacoleo carnifex*, an extinct marsupial lion.

It appears the unsuspecting creatures fell to their deaths through pipes in the dusty plain surface that periodically opened and closed over time.

Most of the animals were killed instantly but others initially survived the 20m drop only to crawl off into rock piles to die from their injuries or from thirst and starvation.

In total, 69 vertebrate species have been identified in three chambers the scientists now call the *Thylacoleo* Caves.

These include mammals, birds and reptiles. The kangaroos range from rat-sized animals to 3m (nearly 10ft) giants. There was even an unusual wallaby with large brow ridges.

The Nullarbor environment was very similar to that of today - an arid landscape that received little more than 200mm of rainfall a year.

What has changed significantly is the vegetation. Whereas the *Thylacoleo* Caves' animals would have seen trees on the plain, the modern landscape is covered in a fire-resistant chenopod shrub.

The Australian continent was once home to a remarkable and distinctive collection of giant beasts. But all - including the marsupial lion - had disappeared by the end of the Pleistocene Epoch (11,500 years ago).

Some scientists think the cause of these extinctions was climate change - large shifts in temperature and precipitation. But the animals were already living in an extremely testing environment.

The other favoured extinction theory is extermination by humans, either directly by hunting or indirectly by changing the landscape through burning.

*from BBC News Reports  
25th January 2007*

### Ramsar Status for Caves

Sark's Agriculture Committee want to submit the Gouliot Caves and headland as a designated Ramsar Site (International environmental status for the coastline in Sark). The caves contain marine life rare to Western Europe and sea anemones in a variety of colours.

The UN's Ramsar Convention aims to promote the conservation of wetland habitats around the world.

*News Reports, Dec. 2006*

### Hobbit dig to restart

Archaeologists who found the remains of human "Hobbits" have permission to restart excavations at the cave where they were found. Indonesian officials have blocked access to the cave since 2005, following a dispute over the bones. The skeletal remains were discovered by an Australian-Indonesian research team in 2003, in Liang Bua, a limestone cave deep in the Flores jungle, Indonesia.

It's claimed that the remains belong to a novel species of human. However, some researchers reject this, claiming instead that the remains could belong to a modern human with a combination of small stature and a brain disorder.

Finding other specimens in the cave, particularly one with an intact skull, is crucial to resolving the debate over whether the Hobbit's classification as a separate species - *Homo floresiensis* - is valid.

One near-complete skeleton was found - an adult female who lived 18,000 years ago who stood just 1m (3ft) tall and possessed a brain size of around 400 cubic centimetres (24 cubic inches) - about the same as that of a chimp. The remains of at least 8 others were also found.

The implication is that humanlike creatures - hominids, or hominins - reached island South-East Asia much earlier than had been thought.

*BBC News, 25th January 2007*



# Shropshire Mines 100 Years Ago (1907)

by Ivor Brown

Hugh Johnstone, the Mines Inspector reported:

In 1907 the coal trade has been good, employment plentiful and the miners had had three pay increases, each of 5%. He had himself inspected 246 mines (117 underground) and 228 quarries in Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. He had also attended 33 inquests. Other inspections and attendances at inquests had been made by assistants Makepeace, Cadman and Wynne.

Five Shropshire coal mines had closed due to exhaustion and abandonment, but the overall number of miners had increased by 96.

(a) 2,899 men employed underground in 'coal' mines (including 14 age 13) and 647 on the surface (none below age 14), 62 females on the surface (4 aged 14-16). Total **3,608** persons employed in 58 pits.

The workers produced 862,178 tons coal, 24,067 tons fireclay, 15,834 tons ironstone plus some iron pyrites and red clay (separate figures not given for business reasons).

(b) There were no coal cutting machines in Shropshire mines, but productivity of mines had increased from 253 to 262 tons per man, much lower than the figure of 312 tons for the rest of the District (Staffs and Worcs.).

(c) There were 5 fatal accidents in coal mines, they were a stallman at Woodhouse killed by a fall of rock on the coalface, a miner at Kinlet killed in a similar manner, a dataller at Kinlet suffocated when a quantity of soft roof shale fell on him, a road repairer at Granville when a rock fell on him, finally a fireman at Hanwood when a charge of explosives went off unexpectedly. In a non-fatal accident at Highley a miner was burned when his candle ignited firedamp. There were two underground fires in Shropshire during the year.

(d) As previously the Inspector carried out a survey of explosives used and of types of lamps employed. There were 217 "misfired shots" in Shropshire. The Inspector was happy to report the number of "screw-locked" lamps has fallen to 15% compared to 47% the previous year.

(e) One mine (Rose & Crown) was granted an exemption to General Rule 27 which required a 'cover' over workers (presumably in a shaft), but for one year only. No mineowners were prosecuted by the Inspector during the year, but one worker was prosecuted by the mineowners (there were 50 in Staffs. and Worcs.). The one Shropshireman, a horse driver was prosecuted by Madeley Wood Co. for "disobeying fireman's orders". The Magistrates dismissed the case saying that they considered the "three days suspension" from work he had been given "sufficient punishment".

(f) There were 11 non-coal mines at work in Shropshire (a reduction of one), employing 259 (256 in 1906), 177 males (all over 16 years) were at work underground and 81 on the surface. There was also one female aged above 16 at work on the surface.

The mines produced 7,015 tons barytes (9,5976 in 1906), 564 tons limestone (1,232), 612 tons lead ore (680), 104 tons zinc ore (170) and 600 tons calcite.

All mineral production was trending downwards - except calcite. There were no fatal accidents and no prosecutions during the year.

(g) There were 73 quarries at work (same as 1906) employing 1,438 persons (1,854 in 1906). No one was below 14 years of age and there was only one female.

The quarries produced 46,682 tons brick clay, 338,095 tons igneous rock, 16,453 tons gravel and sand, 177,805 tons limestone and 48,334 tons sandstone, total 627,369 tons. All trends were upwards.

There was one fatal accident, a loader aged 76 at Clee Hill Dhu Stone quarry was struck by a moving wagon being pushed by a loco. All eight reportable non-fatal accidents due to falls of ground in Shropshire occurred at the Clee Hill quarry, but one accident due to blasting occurred at Haughmond Hill Quarry (two men were severely injured when un-ramming a shot which exploded).

## IPods for Trapped Miners

It has been revealed that the two Tasmanian miners rescued from an Australian gold mine after being trapped for 14 days 3,000 feet underground (see report of the rescue in 'Below' 2006.2, p3) were given iPods (along with vanilla-flavoured protein drinks, biscuits and vitamin tablets) to sustain them through their ordeal !

The iPods, programmed with country and western music for one man and hip-hop for the other, were passed through a 4 inch wide plastic tube that had been poked through the rock fall that had trapped them

following the earthquake last May.

iPods aside, a major factor in the men's survival was that they were able to shelter in a specially built 4 ft. high steel cage.

Refuges are being built in a number of mines world-wide - including Boulby Potash mine (although their refuges is a bit bigger! see 'Below' 2006.4 for a picture of Alan Robinson in one of the Boulby refuges).

*Based on news reports  
submitted by Ivor Brown*



## What the Journals Were Saying

WELLINGTON JOURNAL & SHREWSBURY NEWS, 1881

### **A SEVERN VALLEY COALFIELD**

People of the Midlands should of all others be interested in any enterprise which tends towards the improvement of the supply and the reduction of the price of coal.

Especially warm should be their concern in such a project when the field of operation is almost in their midst, and when its promoters are gentlemen of unquestioned commercial position. The mineral property at **Billingsley**, Salop, for the working of which a company known as the Severn Valley Minerals Company Limited was some time ago formed with a capital of £160,000, in £5 shares, is one of the most important mining estates in the Severn Valley district.

The Wyre Forest coalfield, of which this property forms a portion, occupies, according to Professor Moloneux, an area of about eighteen miles in length, which has not hitherto been developed from the want of railway communication. This has now been obviated, as a branch line has recently been completed between the colliery and the Great Western line.

On the Billingsley estate two shafts or pits have been sunk, and the coal obtained has proved suitable for every purpose. The brooch seam yields a first-class quality for household purposes, and commands the best prices in the market. The heathen seam coal generates in burning an extraordinary amount of heat, which makes it especially valuable for blast furnaces, lime works, &c. The beds of fire-clay, which are said to be inexhaustible, are in themselves a valuable property.

The seams of ironstone are likewise very rich. It will be readily understood that the natural advantages possessed by this colliery enable the coal to be raised at a minimum cost, while its nearness to the large towns of Kidderminster, Worcester, and Shrewsbury, permits of coal being sold there at "very low rate indeed. We thus prominently direct attention to this company, because we learn that there are a few shares for sale. Particulars will, we doubt not, be given on application to the secretary of the colliery, near Bridgnorth.

*14th May*

### **ST. GEORGES**

**ACCIDENT:-** On Monday morning an accident occurred at the Wood House Pits to a man named **Henry Hoof**, living at the Old Park, who is engaged as a miner at the above pits. From some cause the unfortunate man got crushed between the tub and the wall of the pit. He was immediately conveyed home, and **Dr MacCarthy** and his assistant were speedily in attendance. It was found that the injury consisted of a severe fracture of the thigh and the man is in a dangerous state.

*21st May*

### **MADELEY.**

**PIT ACCIDENT:-** A man named **Henry Wilson** residing at Ironbridge, received severe injuries at the Meadow Pit on Tuesday by fall of roof. The injured man was conveyed home in a cart and lies under the care of **Dr. T.L. Webb**, the field surgeon

*28th May*

### **COALBROOKDALE.**

**ACCIDENT TO A MINER:-** On Monday last **Thomas Ellis**, a miner, living at Dawley, and working for the Coalbrookdale Company, met with a serious accident in one of the Company's pits. A shot of gunpowder had been placed for the purpose of getting coal, and a fuse had been employed. Ellis seeing that the charge had hung fire, went towards it, when it exploded in his face, seriously injuring his eyes and head, and also his hand. He was conveyed by train to Salop Infirmary, where his injuries were attended to, and found to be such as to necessitate his remaining an in-patient.

*20th August*

### **BROSELEY**

**PIT ACCIDENT:-** On Tuesday morning last a young man named **James Hall** (Benbow) met with a severe accident at a gin pit worked by his father, near the Stocking. The unfortunate young man was injured by a fall of roof, which injured his back most severely. He was taken home and attended by **E. Glover Bartlam**, Esq, but the injuries to his back are of so serious a nature that he lies in a precarious state.

*27th August*



# In and Around Snailbeach

On Saturday 30th December, new members Andy & Emma Coyle, Natsha Bridges and Jason Molineux made their first descent to the 40 yard level at Snailbeach to put into practice all their newly learnt SRT skills. Everything went smoothly and a fairly quick descent was made, once on the 40 yard level everyone was able to spend sometime exploring the level and examining the artefacts.

What is noticeable is that many of the items have deteriorated quite quickly over the past 10 years. Wooden objects are now like 'sponges' and metal items that were in quite good condition have become very corroded - the bottom of the powder tin has now rotted through, so if you pick it up the powder stays put! Since changes were made in the upper sections of the mine and Perkins level a lot more water now cascades down the stopes, and the air is generally much damper, which obviously doesn't help things.

As Steve Holding started pining for the comfort of the Stiperstones Inn, we started back out after an hour - we couldn't let him die of thirst!

## Perkins Beach Walk

On Sunday 14th January, while members of the BCA committee and Dudley Caving Club were underground, a few Members (with bad backs etc..) took the opportunity of a nice sunny day to amble along the route of the old railway to Perkins Beach, up the valley, past Blakemore Gate and back to Snailbeach.

En-route several potato stores were examined - which have been mistaken for adit entrances in the past. A highlight of the walk was a wooden hut which contained a small winch. This had been moved here from Snailbeach mine, possibly in the 1960s, and used to haul equipment and supplies up the hillside on a home-made trolley. The winch is in good condition, and the owner has fitted a chain-cog on one side so that it can be driven by a small engine rather than being turned by hand.

*Kelvin*

Andy and Emma examining the blue enamel flask and other miners tools.



Jason and Natasha by the tubs outside the workshop.



Three views of the small winch or windlass reputed to have come from Snailbeach Mine.



The remains of the home-made trolley used on the 'incline'.

Pictures: Kelvin Lake - I.A.Recordings





# News, Requests & Events

## Down the Shaft

Documents recently released by the National Archives reveal that millions of obsolete items, bombs and incendiary devices were disposed of by 'throwing' them down mine shafts in various parts of Britain.

After World War II the Ministry of Supply was tasked with disposing of a million incendiary bombs, 20,000 obsolete wireless sets, 256 tons of old aircraft wheels, 8 million radio valves, 60 tons of "irritant powder" tins, amongst other items. Their solution was to chuck it all down 28 mine shafts between 1946 and 1948 and cap them with concrete.

480 tons of "scrap rubber boots" purchased from the Dunlop company and never used were dumped down a shaft in Nottinghamshire.

Over 100,000 gas mask face pieces were dropped down a mine in Dowlais, South Wales along with 240 tons of asbestos compound. The irritant powder, used in tear gas, went down a shaft at Alfreton, Derbyshire.

There were so many radio condensers that they filled two large holes in Nottinghamshire, one at Ruddington and the other at

Kimberley.

All the shafts used were at former collieries, which had not been worked for over 100 years, and the newly formed National Coal Board deemed them of no "further use". However, things didn't quite work out as planned.

The "Wonder shaft" at Cheadle, Staffordshire was re-opened by the land owner and a quantity of radio sets removed. The Ministry later admitted that all 10,000 radio sets were gone.

The incendiary devices caused the most trouble. The first 550 tons of bombs 'dropped' down Woodhead shaft, Cheadle exploded, "firing and blowing the head of the shaft to pieces".

The half-million, small 4lb incendiary devices disposed of in 4 other shafts in Staffordshire attracted the attention of thieves.

In 1953, the dumped goods removed from the mines were worth about £1.3 million at today's prices.

*Daily Telegraph, 11th Sept. 2006  
submitted by Ivor Brown.*

## Bickfest

### 'The Lode of History'

In celebration of the late David Bick's life the Welsh Mines Society is arranging a two-day meeting on September 29th and 30th, 2007.

On the Saturday there will be a one-day indoor conference at the Mellington Hall Hotel, Church Stoke, Powys, on the border of South Shropshire and Montgomeryshire (Powys). On the Sunday there will be a walk, led by members of the Society, to the Bryntail and Pen-y-clun mines, near Llanidloes.

The fee for the weekend is expected to be £25. There will be a dinner at Mellington Hall on the Saturday evening, costing £17.50. For more details visit the WMS website:

[www.welshmines.org](http://www.welshmines.org)

## 7th International Mining History Congress, India

13th to 16th December 2007, to be held in Bhubaneswar, Orissa Province, India (to the south-west of Calcutta). The venue is the Mayfair Lagoon Hotel - which is reputed to be a magnificent location!

A full and exciting cultural programme around the conference proceedings is promised by the organisers.

If you are interested in attending or presenting papers you need to contact Dr. S.K.Sarangi who heads the Indian Committee.

The web site for the conference is:  
[www.imhc2007.com](http://www.imhc2007.com)

## Token Search

During the 1950s IJB was shown two trade tokens (metal discs) as distributed in the East Shropshire Coalfield. He is trying to find out where they are now, can anyone help?

### Token 1

Inscribed on face: "Madeley Market, Edward Lewis of Madeley in Shropshire, His Half Penny 1669".

On reverse - around a colliers pickaxe: "Abby Wood and Fields Cole that's Good".

### Token 2

Inscribed on face: "G. Bulger, Gate Inn, St Georges, Chartermaster"

On reverse: "Pay 2 Pints"

It is known that George Bulger was also an original member of Oakengates Urban District Council in 1894. A W.Bulger (his son?) was a chartermaster in St. Georges in 1881 - age 25.

*Ivor Brown*

## Call for Papers

*Bergbau und Metallurgie in Europa Wissenschaftliche Konferenz*

(Mining and Metallurgy in Europe - a Scientific Conference)

To be held in Annaberg-Buchholz from 21st to 23rd June 2007 celebrating the 450th Anniversary of the publication by Georgius Agricola of "De re metallica libri XII" and marking the end of the EU 2006-07 Project.

If you are interested in this conference Peter Claughton has a pdf file available (in German) providing the details as to location and costs. Alternatively, you can contact the organisers through Dr. Gabriele Lorenz:

agricolakolloquium@agricolaeurope.com or visit their web site at:

[www.agricolaeurope.com/agricola\\_kolloquium\\_deutsch.html](http://www.agricolaeurope.com/agricola_kolloquium_deutsch.html)

*Dr Peter Claughton*

E-mail: [P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:P.F.Claughton@exeter.ac.uk)



## Books & Events

### East Surrey Underground

By Peter Burgess, 2006, 121 pages, many photos, maps, surveys etc. Softback.

East Surrey is about 30 miles south of London and was once a heavily mined area. In the towns of Dorking, Reigate, and Godstone, there are numerous caverns, dug in order to extract the sand.

These have been excavated over the centuries and the sand was used both in the glass industries and as a cleaning agent. It can be spread on the floor and then swept up without leaving a stain. Many a Victorian skivvy was probably very familiar with this sand!

Undoubtedly, the most famous cave in the area is the Barons' Cave at Reigate. This cave has been a local attraction since the late 18th century. Stories have grown around the cave and legend has it that the English barons in AD 1215 met in the cave to draw up the terms of the Magna Carta. A more likely explanation is that the cave was an impressive wine cellar for the Earl of Surrey, Earl de Warenne.

Other mines include those in the Firestone and Hearthstone Quarries. Firestone has been used extensively from the Norman period to the present day as a building stone. Its

excavation in this locality has left a vast network of mined passages with a surveyed length of 17 km.

There has been much confusion between hearthstone and firestone. This is not surprising since both materials were dug from the Upper Greensand beds. The hearthstone was used for whitening stone door steps, hearths and window sills. When rubbed on it dries to a chalky white colour.

At the end of the 19th century the firestone mines at Godstone were given a new lease of life. The disused galleries were used as mushroom farms.

However, this practice eventually died out in the 1930s as there were difficulties in maintaining the right conditions of temperature, humidity and air flow, plus the risk of infestation from pests.

Other man-made sub-surface voids in the area include Fullers Earth mines and Dene Holes. Fullers earth was originally used to degrease woollen fleeces. Today it is used extensively in the chemical and petrochemical industries.

Dene Holes are simply chalk mines, the chalk being used for agricultural purposes.

Cave explorers will no doubt be interested in the River Mole. A fitting name for a river that flows underground for a comparatively short distance between Dorking and Leatherhead. Although there are numerous sink holes in the river bed no cave passages have yet been entered. This is unusual considering the extensive chalk caves both in Beachy Head and Normandy.

To sum up, this is an excellent account of the great variety of underground feature in a small area of south east England. Wartime tunnels, cellars and underground follies add to the variety. It provides a very readable account of these fascinating sites. Peter Burgess is obviously an expert on this area and I found this book a pleasure to read. Informative, amusing and difficult to put down. Highly recommended.

*Tony Oldham*

Price: £9.50, available from Mike Moore.

[www.moorebooks.co.uk](http://www.moorebooks.co.uk)

### Along the Esk

By Denis Goldring, Softback, 168 pages, 83 illustrations.

Companion volume to *Along the Scar*, "Along the Esk" is fully-illustrated with maps and diagrams. A comprehensive and detailed account of the geology and its exploitation in the Esk valley. This is an area of outstanding natural beauty, with an almost hidden abundance of industrial relics. Much of what was discovered in the Esk valley had significance further afield. At Commondale, read about the brickworks and lime kilns, see the enormous gashes left by whinstone workings and marvel at how men fought over the coals near Danby. Denis's professional expertise in geology is reflected in the high quality of the contents. Any one who is interested in industrial history and mineral exploitation will find this book irresistibly good value.

Price: £9.99 from Mike Moore.

### Cambrian Caving Council Vertical Skills Workshop

The Cambrian Caving Council will be holding a vertical skills workshop dealing with:

- \* ladder and lifeline,
- \* intro to SRT,
- \* intro to SRT rigging and
- \* SRT rescue practice.

Workshops will be surface based at Llangorse or Trewern OEC depending on the weather and held on Saturday 26th May and Sunday 27th May with possibilities of underground sessions on the

Sunday depending on numbers etc.

The workshops will be run by CIC's or aspirant CIC's. Cost will be £10 per head to cover expenses.

To book places, or for further information contact:

The CCC Training Officer,  
Richard Hill,

Tel: 07876193745  
email: [rickahill@yahoo.com](mailto:rickahill@yahoo.com)



## Books & Videos

### Combe Martin

*Combe Martin Silver Mines  
Research & Preservation Society,  
A5, 32 pages, full colour photos.*

This signed Special Edition book contains an excellent selection of full colour photos with supportive text which make it a very informative pictorial study of the Silver Mines in Combe Martin, North Devon.

The Combe Martin site incorporates Williams Pumping shaft and Harris's working shaft. The book contains over 45 full colour photographs of work carried out by the Society during the last 16 years.

The purpose of the book is to pictorially place on record the work done at Mine Tenement and Harris's Mine by the Society, the two properties now held in perpetuity by the trustees, this allowing future generations of archaeological and historical investigators to add more information to Combe Martin's illustrious mining past.

This book is limited to 500 copies and most have already gone. Price: £6.00 + £1.00 P&P Available from either the Society or Mike Moore.

### Cornish Explosives, 2nd Edition

*393 pages; hard cover with  
coloured dust jacket.*

Having been absent from the bookshelves for several years Bryan Earl has produced a fully revised, updated and extended edition of his authoritative work on the history of the Cornish Explosives Industry. Included in this edition are many photographs that have not been previously published, some in colour. For all with an interest in hard rock mining and the history of Cornish Mining this is an essential publication.

Price: £35.00 - much cheaper first editions are also available.

*Available from Mike Moore*

[www.moorebooks.co.uk](http://www.moorebooks.co.uk)

### 'Mongst Mines - and mine explorers!

#### EXPLORATION OF CORNISH MINES ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND

Replacing the popular compilation "The SCMC in Cornwall"  
digitally re-mastered and with a *full commentary*.

This massive DVD production follows the members of the Shropshire Caving and Mining Club as they explore the incomparable mining remains still to be found in Cornwall, both above and below ground.

Mainly recorded in 1993, it also features footage from 1983 and 1987 of sites that have since changed considerably, and material shot during the InterNAMHO 2000 mining history conference.

Most of the underground tours were recorded with revolutionary new video equipment developed by IAR, which gives the viewer the feeling that they are exploring the mine themselves.

#### *Featuring:*

A tour of **South Crofty** tin mine at work 730 metres below adit level.

Levant whim in steam, Goonvean beam engine, Mitchell's shaft preserved beam winder in operation.

A tour of the dressing plant of **Geevor** tin mine while it was still working. Taylor's shaft beam pumping engine & outbuildings, **Cligga Head** mine underground. Tolgus tin streaming plant, stamps & calciner, Tywarnhale surface remains.

An underground tour of South Condurrow, the Camborne School of Mines training mine.

An underground tour of the Holman Brothers test mine, Wheal Basset surface remains.

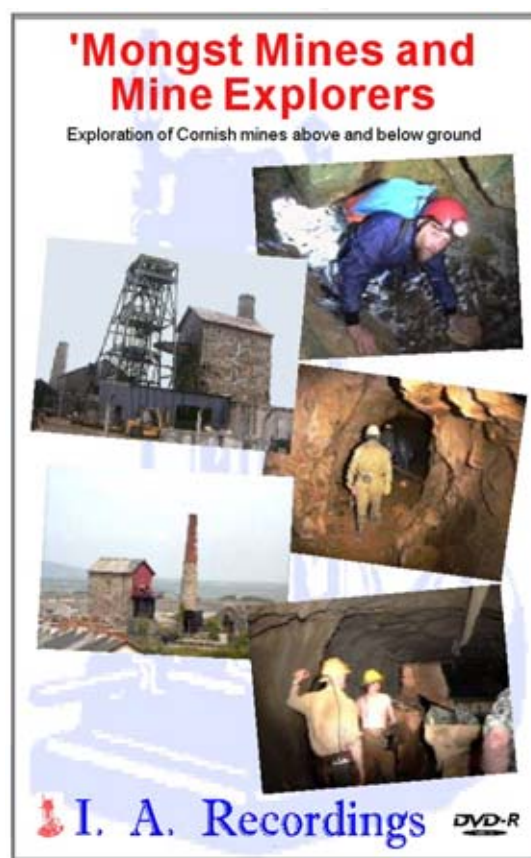
Mines of the Trevaunance area with Ken Brown, **Wheal Jane Mill** and Kennal Vale gunpowder works all during InterNAMHO 2000.

*...and much more!*

#### *Plus:*

An unique visual exploration of J.C.Burrow's 1893 '**Mongst Mines and Miners**', using very high quality prints recently taken from the original negatives!

£14.95 - VHS or dual DVD-R  
(£10 to Club Members at meetings)



Recorded in 1983, 1987, 1993, 1994 & 2000

for details of availability visit: [www.iarecordings.org](http://www.iarecordings.org)



## Club Officers (will change after the AGM)

**President: Alan Taylor**

**Membership, Insurance &  
BCA Rep: Mike Davies**

**Chair: Neal Rushton**

**Tackle: Ian Cooper**

**Vice-Chair: Steve Holding**

**First Aid Officer:  
Alan Moseley**

**Secretary: Andrew Wood**

*scmc.secretary@factree.org.uk*

**Librarian: Alan Robinson**

**Treasurer: Eileen Bowen**

**Bat Officer: Mike Worsfold**

**Training Officer: Ian Davies**

**Rescue Officer:  
Neal Rushton**

**Conservation & NAMHO  
Rep: Steve Holding**

**'Below' Editor, Publications:  
Kelvin Lake**

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

## Diary Dates

**24th March:** BCA AGM 10.30am.  
Baptist Hall, Alvechurch.

**8th April:** OFD Columns Open Day

**6th May:** OFD Columns Open Day

**15th-18th May:** International Cave  
Rescue Conference, Aggtelek,  
Hungary.

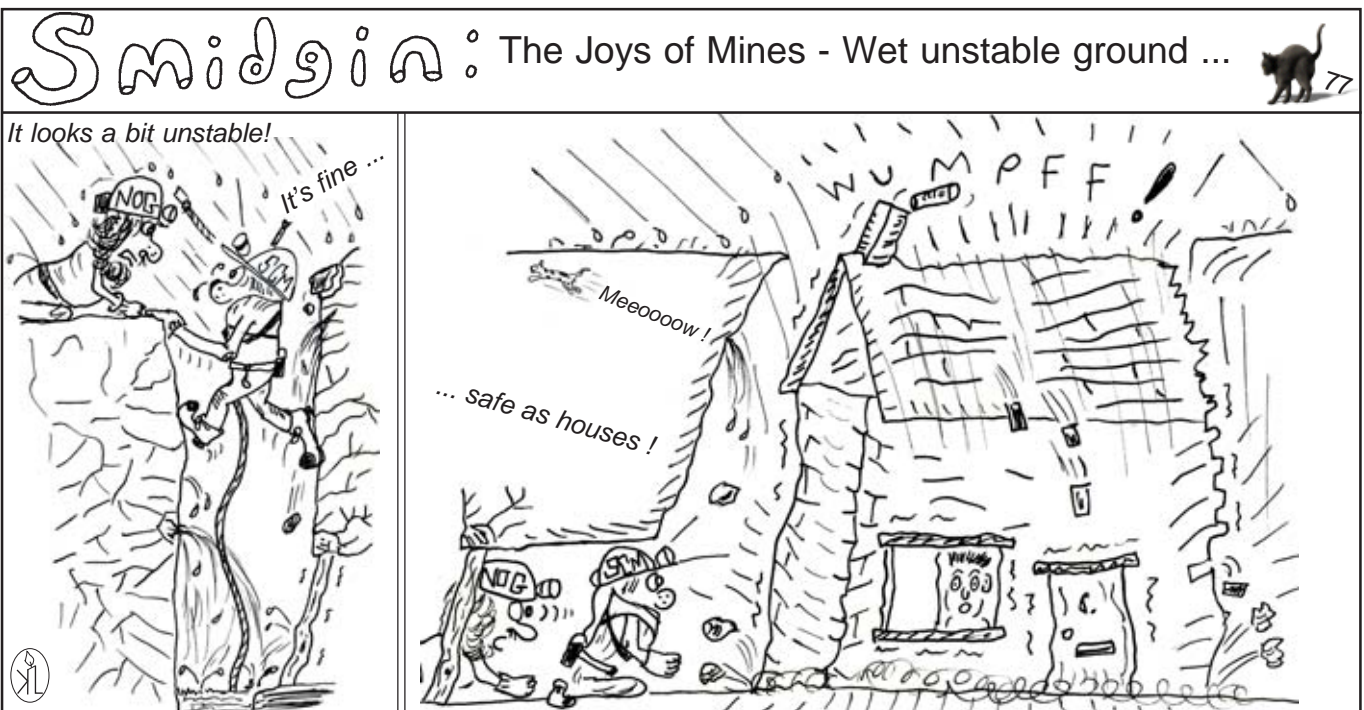
**15th-17th June:** NAMHO 2007  
"Pennies to Pesticides - Mineral  
exploration in the Tamar Valley".  
[www.namhoconference.org.uk](http://www.namhoconference.org.uk)

**13th-15th August:** Baltic  
Speleological Congress (2nd  
EuroSpeleo Forum), Visby, Gotland,  
Sweden.

**21st-23rd Sept.:** Hidden Earth 2007 -  
National Caving Conference, at  
Tewkesbury School, Gloucestershire.  
Visit their website for the latest  
details: [www.hidden-earth.org.uk](http://www.hidden-earth.org.uk)

**29th-30th Sept.:** Bickfest - 'The Lode  
of History' organised by the Welsh  
Mines Society. More details from  
George Hall and the WMS website:  
[www.welshmines.org](http://www.welshmines.org)

**13th-16th Dec.:** 7th International  
Mining History Congress,  
Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India.  
[www.imhc2007.com](http://www.imhc2007.com)



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

