



YEAR BOOK 1965/6



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Editor, 2010 Edition: Kelvin Lake

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T H E S H R O P S H I R E M I N I N G C L U B

Y E A R B O O K

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INTRODUCTION

This is our fifth Year Book, and in it the reader will note that in this year the Club began a concentrated attack on the caving prospects of the Bragyll Gorge, west of Denbigh, following the discovery of Jock's Pot at the end of the previous Club year. Despite constant digging and almost continuous activity in this region for the greater part of the year the results were somewhat disappointing. There was also however continuing activity in other parts of N.Wales particularly in the Minera area, although access difficulties severely limited visits to Ogof Dydd Byraf.

A study of local canal tunnels proved quite interesting and different from the normal run of caving trips, as also was an investigation into some so called "secret" passages under a Denbighshire gentleman's residence.

Interest in slate mines continued, although visits to the South Shropshire Mines and to Derbyshire were much less than usual.

The Club were twice called out to assist in rescues, and also arranged their first rescue practice.

With the coming of Summer and the arrival of new members with specialist knowledge, the Club began to take a serious interest in Yorkshire, an interest which will undoubtedly be a lasting one.

Finally there are two special articles:- A collection of old mining ballads commemorating tragedies in the Coalbrookdale Coal field, by I.J.Brown, and "The Van's Nominal Family" by G.W.Hall.

Thanks are due to our contributors and to P.W.Crabtree for final editing and production.

D.R.Adams,
Chairman & Secretary 1961-1966

Copies price 7/6d can be obtained from the Secretary:-
D.R.Adams, "New Era", Princess Gardens, Newport, Salop.

Members may obtain their copies from the Member's Secretary:-
at a reduced rate.

Mrs. J.Davies, 26, Dawer Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield,
Warwickshire.

In each case 8d. should, be added for Postage.

CLUB MEMBERS

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Trevor Morris,
Richard F.Herbert,
Martin Hughes,
Peter Lloyd Harvey,
D.J.Smith,
J.Peter Davies, Chief Mining Engineer.

Part II of this work comprises:-

"Shropshire Tragedies" by I.J.Brown.

A collection of old Ballads Commemorating
Industrial Tragedies in the Coalbrookdale
Coalfield..... P.45

"Van's Nominal Family" by G.W.Hall.

A discourse on the Van Lead Mine,
Montgomeryshire..... P.54

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The Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Shropshire Mining Club. 25th.ix.1965

The meeting was held at the Barley Mow Hotel, Newport and was opened by the Leader, D.R. Adams. At the conclusion of the opening formalities the heads of departments gave their reports.

1. Ass. Members Sec. I.J. Brown

- a. 9 Newsletters had been produced during the year.
- b. He had kept in contact with associate members.
- c. Regretted the death of Mr. J.L. Hobbs (an ass. mem) who had done much to help the Club.

2. Social Sec. T.J. Davies

- a. He had collected £34.10.0 over the year from club house fee etc. Urged members to keep Club House clean.

3. Geological Dept. D. Stevenson

- a. Suggested that there may be other ways of showing off the Club's geological samples and urged members to bring back more samples from their mining trips.

4. Photographic Dept.: M. Summerfield

- a. He reported that serious photographic work had not been undertaken but he believed that G. Bamford would be willing to improve matters in the new year.

5. Tackle Master: J.M. James

- a. Urged that the production of club wire ladder be speeded up.
- b. Requested the purchase of a hydrometer.
- c. Asked for more care to be used with club tackle.

6. Library: P. Summerfield

- a. A list of club books, mine plans etc. had been made.
- b. That a number of books were missing and he appealed to members to return these books.

7. Publications Editor: D.R. Adams

- a. That a provisional drawing of Llanymynech Ogof had been completed.
- b. 40 copies of the Levant Mine by R.M. Haszard had been produced. 6 sold.
- c. 50 copies of the South Shropshire survey had been produced for the club by the P.D.M.H.S. and 27 sold.
- d. 50 Yearbooks 35 sold.

8. Treasurer: P.R. Gaut

- a. Almost twice as much as last year had passed through his hands. (£195 as to last years £105)
- b. This left a balance of £30.12.0.
- c. Subs brought in £53.10.
- d. Publications " " £26,9.1.
- e. Exped. Levies " " £16.5.0.
- f. Equipment had been expensive at £37.8.4 but £13.9 had been resold.
- g. £34.8.4. had been spent on renovating the cottage.
- h. Rates rent and electricity had cost £34.8.4 though the cottage fees had brought £35.5.

- i. Easter and Whit camps had again made a loss.
- j. That the club 'float' system needed re-organising.
- k. That the financial situation throughout the year had been adequate but could not yet see any relaxation to the various club methods of bringing in the cash.

9. Secretary's Report: D.R. Adams

- a. Usual large number of letters.
- b. more requests for information in N. Wales many of which he had been able to answer with confidence.

10. Leader's Report: D.R. Adams

- a. 8 more full and 6 more associate members, making a total of 39, had joined the club.
- b. The loss of Mr. L. Hobbs had been a loss to the Club.
- c. The N.W.C.R. fiasco had given impetus to the formation of a N.W.C.R.O. and a mine rescue practice was attended by many members. The rescue was held at the South Staffs Mine rescue station.
- d. N.W.C.R.O. call out system had eventually been completed.
- e. The discovery by members of the Ogof Mwnglawdd and Ogof Dydd Byraf system in late '64 had put N. Wales on the caving map.
- f. 22 expeditions to S.Wales, 8 to Shropshire, 9 to Derbyshire others to S.Wales and Lake District.
- g. Many efforts were made by members to preserve equipment from Rock Mine in Dawley New Town area, Drawing of pumping House at Trench and a steam/air winch from Ceriog Slate Mine.
- h. Easter Camp was at Pwll-y-Rydd, marred by weather. Whit camps were a success being held Lake District and Yorkshire.
- i. Lectures were given in the Clubhouse on Coalbrookdale by I.J. Brown, on Industrial Archaeology by Mr. R. Sherlock and Mr. A. Gaydon on the Shropshire Victoria County History.
- j. That the Club house had proved to be a good asset and as a result the social side of the clubs activities had improved considerably.

11. President: D.B. Corbyn

- a. Urged a need for a reserve of tackle at the Club House for rescue.
- b. Complimented members on their discoveries in N. Wales but regretted the wrangle over access to Ogof Dydd Byraf.

12. The meeting went on to discuss the Constitution. A proposal that the Club's name be changed to the Shropshire Mining and Caving Club was left for consideration and to be voted on at the next A.G.M. The life membership clause was dropped from the constitution. The title of Leader and Deputy Leader were changed to Chairman and Vice-Chairman resp. Assistant Geologist and Duplicating Dept. were also removed from the Constitution. The £2 purchasing rule, passed at the Dec. meeting was accepted. There were no further amendments. Election of officers then took place.

A.O.B. It was suggested that a start be made on an inventory of N. Wales Mining Records. The meeting was then closed. 14 full and 1 associate members present.

This was followed by a dinner at which 35 members and guests were present. After dinner two films were shown. Upper Wharfedale 'Cave Rescue' and the French 'Padirac'. A number of club slides were shown later in the evening.

Expedition to the Rock Mine

26 September

A second wooden windlass and a smaller iron one were removed from the coal mine air shaft and brought to the club house.

I.J. Brown, P.W. Crabtree, J. and T.J. Davies, M. Hinks, C. Lears, M. James, D.R. Adams.

7th Expedition to Brasgyll Gorge

26 September

It proved impossible to enter the sink found on the previous visit and the way in was barred by solid rock. However, the fissure was found to extend across the stream bed and it is thought that it might be possible to dig if the stream was diverted. Two sink holes were found lower down the gorge where the stream has undercut the cliff. On is a circular pothole about 4 feet deep with a bedding plane at the bottom. About 5 feet away, on the same level is a fissure wide enough for entry if the projecting rocks were removed. This is deeper than the pot and the two seem to be connected.

G. Evans, D. Stevenson, P & M. Summerfield, Guest, P. Fathers.

Meeting

1 October

- a. Letter from Walker trust suggesting that it might be able to help towards some specific club project, some discussion on what the project might be.
- b. 10 tons of red shale ordered for club car park.
- c. The treasurer requested that financial proceedings in the club house, with the exception of individual purchase of refreshments, be recorded in a notebook.
- d. There was a lot of discussion about the club overnight fee but it was decided to leave it as it was (i.e. 2/6d. per night).
- e. The rest of the meeting was spent discussing the future programme. 6 full members. D.R.Adams in the chair.

North Wales Caving Association Meeting

2 October

Held at the Borough Library, Oswestry. Various aspects of Cave Rescue were discussed as also the possibility of forming a N.Wales Cave-Mine Registry. The capping of Ogof Mwnglawdd Shaft and access to O.D.B. were also discussed. 4 members present.

Expedition to N. Wales (8th to Brasgyll)

3 October

D.R.Adams having spent the night at the very excellent club house of the S.C.C. at Minera (SJ/274.509) visited the sites of Ogof Dydd Byraf and Ogof Mwnglawdd where a very good iron trap door complete with wind break had been constructed by N. Schofield. The party then moved to the Brasgyll Gorge where they met with other members. Jock's Pot was re-examined and surveyed in its entirety by the members. P.J. Appleton, P.W. Crabtree, M.James, D.R.Adams.

Expedition to Ogof Dydd Byraf

10 October

This was in conjunction with the Westminster Speleological Group to whom the club were acting as guides. The night was again spent at the S.C.C. Club house. The whole cave was re-explored. M.James and several others, aided by blasting succeeded in penetrating approx. 40 ft. into a tight fissure in the middle series.

P.R. Gaut, J. & T.J. Davies, M.Hinks, C. Lears, M.James, D.R.Adams.
3 W.C.C., 2 S.C.C., 9 W.S.G. all led by N.Schofield.

9th Expedition to Brasgyll Gorge

12th October

The object of the trip was to enable a thorough examination of the gorge and to spend some time in the dig, already started. It was noted that the stream sank or had sunk in at least seven places between Jock's pot and the bridge. With one exception they were all on the left bank of the gorge. Some of the sinks are of large dimension but choked with clay or stones. One, measuring 6 ft. by 2 ft. is choked to the roof after about 12 feet. Two of the trial digs were started one of which would seem to be worth continuing. Picks and spades will be needed. The fissure and pot discovered on the expedition of 26 September also showed promise and some progress was made in removing the obstruction in the fissure. The rift passage in Jock's Pot was dug for another few feet and a few formations were encountered. It still appeared to 'go'.

The small gorge to the east of Brasgyll was examined and a short but well decorated cave was opened after digging away the earth at the entrances. This may well repay further digging but it is doubtful if any large passages will be found. A rift a few yards upstream proved very interesting but ends in a choke after 30 ft. or so. The floor of this cave consists of a line of raised pillars of rock and looks like a set of giant teeth. On the whole this gorge does not show as much promise as Brasgyll, mainly because the stream runs down dip and water sinking in the bed would reappear lower down but still in the stream. However, a number of fissures have been enlarged by water action quite high on the cliffs and it is possible that a short system may yet be found. Although no major discoveries were made the expedition convinced members that a cave system of some sort must exist somewhere below Jock's Pot. Some people may not believe this but the size of the sink holes should convince most members of the club.
Miss C. Evans, D. Stevenson, P & M. Summerfield.

Expedition to South Shropshire Mines

17 October

Myttons Beach, Perkins Beach, Burgham and the Black Rhadley cross-cut were all revisited during the day (S.M.C. S. & J. pp 19-21)
K. Lock, P. Summerfield, M.James, D.R.Adams, Guest: Miss A. Pugh.

Ogof Dydd Byraf Rescue

31 October

M.Hinks and T.J. Davies having stayed overnight at the SCC HQ encountered J.N.S. Schofield who invited them to inspect the lower series of O.D.B. The party began the descent of the shaft at 11.15 a.m. A member of the W.C.C. and friends had descended the shaft some hours earlier and were already in the cave. At 11.30 a.m. M.Hinks, T.J.Davies, R.Inett of S.W.C.C. and J.Wilcock of D.C.R.O. were standing at the foot of the shaft when they heard a fall of rock in a level nearby. On investigation it appeared that a pile of rubble had moved, soon afterwards a youth appeared and informed the party that an accident had occurred. M.Hinks and J.N.S. Schofield immediately ascended the shaft, the latter to set C.R.O. into operation and the former to obtain the Neil Robertson stretcher which fortunately was on loan to S.C.C. and at this club's H.Q.

A first aid kit and blankets were obtained from T.J. Davies' van. Meanwhile the remaining 3 members of the party made their way to the scene of the accident. The injured person Brian Stewart (22) a climber on his 2nd. days caving, had been attempting to climb a winze leading up from the middle series of the cave via a mine level. He was lifelined by Phillip Burnish (16) who had the lifeline around his-chest. Apparently a hand hold gave way and he fell 10 feet down the winze. Further rocks fell on his head. He was found hanging unconscious on his lifeline with his companion who was grimly hanging on to the line in a state of shock. He was lowered the remaining 30 feet to the bottom of the winze which was then laddered. At the foot he recovered consciousness and with some assistance he was able to climb out of the winze but then collapsed again. Meanwhile M.Hinks had sent out the tackle to the party and had rigged a telephone in the shaft, by this time a crowd had assembled at the shaft head. M.Hinks and J.Davies had some difficulty in controlling the onlookers.

The injured person was given as much first aid as was practicable. He mainly suffered from head injuries. He was put into the stretcher and the party, now including D.Dicker of the W.C.C. struggled to the foot of the entrance rift. At this stage the victim was unconscious for some time and mouth to mouth respiration was given. His pulse was at first 120 plus and he became cold. He was therefore wrapped in blankets. Meanwhile Dr. Watkin-James of Wrexham had descended the shaft and reached the top of the rift. He was then able to shout instructions down the rift to the party. Eventually the stretcher was hoisted up the rift, carried to the shaft and hoisted up it by members of the police force. The surface party then dispersed leaving only a few people to assist the rescue group out of the main shaft. The injured man was taken to Wrexham Hospital by ambulance and the whole operation was concluded in approx. 3½ hr.

Meeting

5 November

- a. Mr.H.Owen elected a club member (associate).
- b. It was suggested that the Club's stretcher be modified to include foot rests, helmet and goggles as per Yorkshire C.R.O. practice.
- c. Publications. S. Shropshire supplement ready for re-editing. Victoria County History papers ready to return to A.Gaydon. A start to be made on the written part of the Llanymynech Ogof survey. Surveys of the Lilleshall Quarry area, Ceriog Slate Mine and the Denbighshire mining area were proposed. R.Meesons survey of the N.Wales caves to be published.
- d. Photographic Dept. reported that 100 Xmas cards could be produced at 1/3 each. 150 were ordered at 1/6d. per card. N.W.C.A. had requested the clubs to provide 2 registrars to catalogue the caves and mines of North Wales. D.Stevenson and D.Marshall were elected to this post.

The meeting ended with a lively discussion on cave rescue and the call-out system to be adopted.

10 members, guest P.Payne. Chair: D.R.Adams.

Expedition to the Park Farm Area

14 November

This was for the purpose of capping Ogof Mwnglawdd but due to the non-arrival of the cement and the severe cold members were only able to prepare the base for concreting and re-examining the surrounding area, finding nothing new.

D.G.Marshall, P.J. Appleton, C.Evans, D.Stevenson, P. & M. Summerfield, M.James, D.R.Adams.

Expedition to the Corwen Slate Mine

13 November

These mines had often been seen from the A5 Road. At Bonwn, about a mile east of Corwen, an uphill track was taken. This leads in a southerly direction to the mine. It was found to be a large mine similar to the Cambrian Slate Mine at Glynceriog. Several hours were spent exploring it during which T.J. Davies lost his spectacles. Future explorers please note.

M.Hinks, J. & T.J. Davies, and guest: D.Basham.

2nd. Expedition to the Horseshoe Slate Mines

14 November

After staying overnight at the S.C.C. Clubhouse the party re-examined the quarries (per visit 8 Jan '65). The entrance to a level seen on that occasion was reached and a ladder was lowered down into the workings. A 40 ft. pitch gave entrance to a large chamber from which several roadways led off. Exploration revealed a large underground working with several easy routes back to the surface, making the descent of the pitch unnecessary.

Leaving the slate mine the group took the old road down the pass to World's end, stopping at the first cattle grid to examine a heading into the road. It was about 40 yd. long and full of rubbish.

J. & T.J. Davies, M.Hinks, D.Barham.

Cave Rescue Practice at Llanymynech Ogof

21 November

The disaster was organised by I. Forrest, one member of the team being supposedly injured at the end of the left hand branch passage. Leaving P. Payne with the injured. I. Forrest gave the alarm. The rescue team who were ready speedily entered the Ogof. I. Forrest leading M. James in first with the medical kit. The stretcher came next and several members attempted to clear some of the larger stones from the passage.

The patient was found with his head in a small passage. A fall of rocks had been simulated resulting in a leg injured, and possible injury to the back. The fallen rocks were removed and with the aid of the carry sheet the patient was gently withdrawn from the passage. Splints and bandages were skillfully applied to the leg, the patient's back was examined and it was decided to treat this as a bruising only. He was strapped to the stretcher and the haul to the surface began. It was quickly found that in the restricted space the side carrying handles were no great help except for manoeuvring and the main hauling therefore came from the double traces attached to the head of the stretcher. I. Forrest hauled on the ends of these while D.R. Adams hauled on them close to the stretcher so as to give maximum support to the patient's head. M. Jones and M. Summerfield handled his foot and injured leg. He was then conveyed to the hole in the floor in 5 ways chamber. Here there was a little difficulty in getting the patient through. There was further difficulty in getting him out of the passage and into the entrance passage. After that there was no problem in taking him out of the mine to the transport.

In summing up, M. James said he thought the only comments were the amount of noise made by the rescuers, such as wisecracks and singing, made the hearing of instructions between the two parties difficult. He suggested, that silence would be better. D.R. Adams stated that he thought no one person could issue instructions in such a confined space and it was up to each rescuer to issue such instructions as were necessary to get his part of the stretcher past a particular obstacle. With regard to the gaiety of the rescuers he disagreed with M. James and stated that provided that the instructions could be heard the gaiety of the party did a great deal to help the rescue along and much more to improve the morale of the patient. He was certain that in the event of a real rescue the members would appreciate the gravity of the situation and act accordingly. The patient himself agreed with this stating that nothing could be more disconcerting to a helpless injured man on the stretcher than complete silence and sullen faces. He stated that the glare of caplamps close to his face was not pleasant, also that had he been unconscious he could have received facial injuries while being extricated from the hole in the floor of five ways chamber. It would appear that a scarf loosely covering the face of an unconscious man would help in this also tinted goggles to protect the eyes from dust and caplamp glare. Finally it can be stated that the rescue from some 350 ft. of contracted rubble filled passage taking 1½ hr. was in the main, expertly done. Numbers of similar practices must now take place so that more members could take part.

While the rescue was in progress, I. Forrest announced that the previous Wednesday, a party of schoolchildren with a Master had been conducting an expedition in the Ogof and had been in the Shaft Chamber. While they were in there one of their number had dislodged a rock in a stack of deads and out had fallen a quantity of silver coins. The master handed these over to the Oswestry Antiquarian Society of which H.Jones is a member. They were subsequently handed over to the Coroner, who decided that they were "Treasure Trove".

Members of the Antiquarian Society visited the Ogof after the rescue practice and were escorted underground by members of the Club; it was stated that the coins dated from 30 B.C. to A.D. 161. The coins found a few feet away in the burial chamber were dated 149-156 A.D. The Shaft series was revisited and some members rigged a ladder in the shaft.

J.Goerner, Carole Evans, P. & M. Sumnerfield, J.M. James, D.R.Adams, I.Forrest, D.Stevenson.

Guests were P.Payne and P.Fathers. 4 members of the Antiquarian Society led by M.Bott.

Expedition to Clee Hills

27 November

On information from I.J. Brown, gained from the mining Inspectorate, reports for the period around 1920 containing references to the Krovers and Gorstley Rough Limestone Mines. These were located at SO/597.757 and 593.747 in an area covered in dense scrub. There was a strong blizzard and not a great deal was seen. No buildings or machinery were left that could be seen. An adit was found at the Krovers Mine 6 ft. high and stone lined. It has a small fall, 20 yards in, possibly worth a dig. M.Hinks, J.Davies, T.Davies.

Meeting

3 December

- a. P.Payne elected as a student member.
- b. Chairman reported that the clubhouse had been broken into but nothing stolen.
- c. That iron bar be purchased for window, whence came the intruder.
- d. P.W.C. reported that the Yearbook was almost complete.
- e. Sec. reported that the Victoria County History papers had been returned to A. Gaydon.
- f. 75 Copies of R.A.Meesons survey to be published (subsequently amended to 100 - Ed.).
- g. Library received copy of "The Virginia City Times" via R.M.Haszard, presently in the U.S.A.

- h. Future programme discussed included visit to Granville Colliery.
 - i. Cave Rescue discussed.
- 11 Full Members, 1 Associate, D.B. Corbyn in Chair.
Guest: Granville, A. Boyne.

Cambrian Cave Registry

4 December

D. Stevenson and D.G. Marshall represented the Club at a meeting of the Registry held at S.W.C.C. at Penwyllt.
Methods of carrying out the task were discussed and a further meeting arranged.

Ogof Ffynon Ddu

5 December

Having spent the night at the Clubhouse of the S.W.C.C. the party re-examined the cave. Entering via the 'escape route' and returning along the stream passage.
D.G. Marshall, C. Evans, D. Stevenson, P & M. Summerfield, M. James and a guest was R. Granville, A. Boyne.

Expedition to the South Shropshire Mines

11 December

This was in order to commence the work of drawing, measuring and recording the surviving mine buildings. Ladywell was the first to be examined in this way.
J. & T.J. Davies. C. Lears, M. Hinks.

Expedition to Park Farm

12 December

The first object of the expedition was to destroy the unexploded charges reported to M. James by the Police on the visit of 7th. November to be at the foot of Ogof Dydd Byraf Shaft. 1½ lb. of explosives were placed next to the charges and was fired from the top of the shaft. Later inspection showed that the charges had successfully been destroyed and several tons of rock had fallen from the roof of the passage which will reduce the depth of the shaft to about 87 ft. The second object was to begin the concreting of the Ogof Mwnglawdd Shaft, half of which was done during the day.
J.A. Corbyn, C. Evans, D. Stevenson, P & M. Summerfield, J.M. James, D.B. Corbyn, in conjunction with the S.C.C. and J.N.S. Schofield.

Expedition to the Lilleshall Quarry

19 December

Entry having been forced into the quarry yet again by the village children despite the Club's cement, members took the opportunity to explore the hitherto unknown waterfall section. A rubber dinghy was paddled into the unknown. The passage was expected to turn right as could be seen from the shore but was thought to end there. Instead it continued for 50 ft. to a beach. A landing was made and the dinghy hauled back on a line. All members of the party were then transferred to the landing. They found their way past a 'bunch' back to the water

and the remainder of the passage, about 50 ft. The distance was 230 ft. from the left hand wall of the original end of the quarry. There was one possible connection with the original series blocked by a huge boulder fall in unsafe condition. Moving across the lake down dip the roof hit the water 30 ft. from the shore. It is presumed that the quarry continued under water and even connects with Bots pool workings.

The system retains the same passage size of 10 ft. high and 30 ft. wide throughout. In one section there is a perfect expanse of roof completely flat and smooth sloping 100 ft. to the water. Some mud formations were found also an unmarked pipe bowl containing the remains of its last smoke.

Carole Evans, D.Stevenson, P. & M. Summerfield, J.M.James, D.R.Adams, Guest, P. Fathers.

2nd. Expedition to the Corwen Slate Mines

The long incline to the mine was climbed and the buildings re-examined. Much of the incline hoist equipment was still in place. There were large numbers of derelict workshops including long rows of what appeared to be one man 'shops' for preparing the slate served by innumerable trackways. The mine office bore the date 1896. The main entrance was 6" deep in water and not altogether safe. After about 30 ft. it turned abruptly to the left and was blocked by a fall. An onward extension to the passage was dammed and contained deep water. Towards the top of the hill was a vast opencast quarry which was examined in fading light. Due to insufficient reporting by the previous expedition, the access to the underground workings was not found. Apparently this exists in the hillside above and to the east of the entrance and also in the bottom of the open quarry.
I.J. Brown and D.R.Adams.

10th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

28 December

The stream was found to be running high and many of the swallets were either submerged or filled with debris. Jocks Pot was re-entered and upon examining a small passage to the right 20 ft. in it was found to lead after 11ft. to a six foot pot which dropped through a squeeze into a further pot about the same depth. The only exit from this was a narrow rift. Serious digging was commenced in a hole in the main passage near the entrance to the new section. After several feet the possibilities seem favourable.

J.A.Corbyn, C.Evans, P & M Summerfield, J.M.James.

11th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge **1 & 2 January**

Digging was continued in the floor of Jocks Pot which was extended for approximately 12 ft., at the end of which it was possible to stand. D.R. Adams and P. Summerfield surveyed the cave discovered in the expedition of 18 Feb. 1962 which had been proven to connect with Jocks Pot on the third visit. It was found to be 16 ft. long and 4 ft. high, rather less than stated in the previous report! This is now named Boulder Cave. The extension to Jocks Pot discovered the previous week was surveyed. M. James also carried out blasting in this section. H. Owen, C. Evans, M. Hinks, D. Stevenson, P. & M. Summerfield. M. James, D.R. Adams, P. Fathers.

Meeting **7 January 1966**

- a. A. Gaydon was elected Ass. Member.
 - b. University of Bristol proposed exchange of publication. In view of our financial state it was decided to do so for this year only.
 - c. It was decided to put a stand at the B.S.A. National Conference at Bristol; C. Lane to arrange it at the Bristol end.
 - d. The National Museum of Wales was given permission to use part of the Ogof Plan in an exhibition of finds from the Ogof.
 - e. Of the 150 Xmas Cards purchased, 122 had been sold and a profit of 30/- made for the photo department.
 - f. Some discussion on publications followed after which the meeting was closed.
- 5 full members, 1 Assoc. member, 1 guest, Chair: D.B. Corbyn.

N.W.C.A. Meeting **8 January**

5 Members attended a meeting of the N.W.C.A. in Oswestry where the Welsh Cave Registry, the capping of Parc Farm Shaft together with N.W.C.R.O. were matters discussed. Members voted in favour of a national C.R.O. committee.

Expcdition to North Wales **9 January**

Operating from the S.C.C. Club House, P.J. Appleton and D. Marshall in conjunction with the above club made a night descent of a shaft at Minera. Surprisingly it was found to contain a quantity of grenades and mortar bombs!

There being an insufficient party and a likelihood of frost, the capping of Parc Farm Shaft was not continued. The party re-examined the sinks on the Nercwys Mountain which looked promising. D. Marshall, P.J. Appleton, C. Evans, D. Stevenson, P. & M. Summerfield, J.M. James, also D. Fathers.

12th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

15-16th. January

The morning of the 15th. was spent digging out a rift upstream from Jock's Pot on the western bank of the stream from which a stream was seen to emerge. Progress was stopped by a boulder which may be moved by a larger party. Jocks Pot itself was re-examined but nothing new was found. Across the stream from Jock's Pot and about 30 yds downstream a large rift was entered. This was dug for 8 ft. and proved to be 12-15 ft. long. It had to be given up due to unstable walls.

The 16th. was spent looking for resurgences along the river. Two good digs were noted, one an active resurgence near Brasgyll on the right bank. Here a short crawl leads into a fair sized chamber, a good dig.

D.Stevenson and M.James.

On the same day, J. & T.J.Davies and C.Lears made their second visit to the south Shropshire mines in order to survey the buildings of the Wood Mine. Also D.R.Adams visited the ironworks at Eardington, Bridgnorth in order to ascertain whether the underground canal noted on that trip was worth an expedition. He decided it was.

Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge.

23 January

It was decided that the dig in Jocks Pot would require excavating directly downwards for an unknown number of feet before an open passage might be found. This in a confined space would be a long, difficult undertaking.

Digging was continued at the rift found on the previous expedition but became too dangerous to continue. A rift with excellent possibilities was examined only to find that it narrowed to about 4" and was impenetrable without blasting. It would appear that the further possibilities of the gorge are doubtful without a ridiculous amount of work. It was decided that the time had come to make a closer study of other areas in the same locality in the hope that a different system might be found.

C.Evans, D.Stevenson, P. & M.Summerfield and M.James.

On the same day, D.R.Adams, visited the Shelmoor great bank, S.J./797.219 which carries the Shropshire Union Canal round the Shelmoor Wood. Lord Anson, the owner of Norbury Park in the 1820s refused to allow the canal Co. to interrupt his pheasant shooting in the adjoining wood by constructing their canal on reasonably level ground through it. Telford who planned the canal was therefore forced to construct a great embankment around it, drawing the necessary material from the Woodseaves cutting (90' deep) to the north and the Gnosal cutting to the south. Unfortunately the material was very poor and was soon reduced to a sloppy consistency by the wet winter of 1829. The great bank spread out at the bottom and began to sink. Every expediency was tried but all failed, it still sank and shifted. The only thing was to go on tipping until by sheer mass of material it

would reach the necessary height of 60 ft . 400 men and 70 horses toiled ceaselessly for 6 years before it was completed. This was longer than it took to construct the entire canal. William Provis was the site engineer.

Today, at first sight, there is little to show of this mammoth civil engineering problem of 180 years ago, but on looking closely it can be seen that although the first few feet of its length at each end it is reasonably regular with 45° sides, in the central portion the sides are anything but regular and in places bulge out over the surrounding countryside for nearly 200 ft. There are numerous pits along the edges particularly at the ends where Provis's men frantically dug for better material to help consolidate the banks, but to no avail.

At the southern end of the eastern bank opposite the tow path are rows of mounds of dumped earth of about 30 cwt. each, some almost retaining the shape of the cart which dumped them. Moving southwards, beyond the village of Gnosal the 81 yard Cartley tunnel is encountered. This has a grand entrance in solid stone and was originally designed to extend 690 yards. After 81 yards however, the miners encountered a serious fault which can still be seen on the eastern bank at the southern end of the tunnel. Although they battled on for a further 180 yards the ground became so bad that even with a considerable amount of shoring the work became exceedingly dangerous and eventually became necessary to open it up from the fault for the remaining distance. Even now, in wet conditions as on the day of the visit, pieces of rock and dirt are continually falling from the sides.
D.R.Adams

7th. Expedition to the Glyn Ceriog Slate Mines 30 January

This was to ascertain whether the various parts of the winch were still lying where they had been left on the expedition of 25 April 1965 together with the number of transport wheels. This was found to be the case so that hauling could recommence forthwith.

D.R.Adams then moved out to examine the slate works directly above the village. These had been known to exist from the very first visit to the area but so far had not been examined. Climbing up to the top of the massive spoil heap he found the evidence of working at that level, all the spoil emanating from the haulage way which came up from the quarry floor about 100 ft. below. The spoil appears to have been moved by the water balance method noted in the previous mine on the visit of 26.4.64. It had presumably been brought up to this level to prevent it encroaching too close to the village boundary. At the bottom of the quarry pit were, as it was expected, a number of entrances to vast underground workings.

The first major one of these led down to deep water by the side of which was found to be the remains of electric motors and switch gear together with a partially dismantled water drum generator. This was supplied via a 6" dia. pipe to a nozzle directed at the piston wheel. All the parts appear to be present. Further entrances were seen including the massive opening at the further end. This last opening was found to lead after some distance to the usual crosscut passage which would merit further exploration.

By the side of the road leading up from the village and served by a further haulage way (the tower of which was still roofed) stood the vast workshop for preparing the slate. It was partially roofed and was typical 19th. century construction. The date 1890 is painted on one of the beams. A number of pieces of slate from the workshop were collected for use at the clubhouse.

D.R.Adams.

Meeting

4 February

- a. P.Fathers voted a full member. Shrewsbury County Library an associate member.
 - b. The treasurer reported the clubs bank balance stood at £15.0.0.
 - c. £1 was donated to Cambrian Cave Registry.
 - d. Easter camp to be held at Kirkby Lonsdale in Yorkshire.
 - e. A considerable amount of books and other literature had been received by the library.
 - f. Mice had now taken over the kitchen and were eating more than the members. It was decided to evict them as soon as possible.
 - g. A considerable number of mine plans had been uncovered in the Shropshire Archives and these were now in the process of being reproduced on the Rank Xerox machine in the archives.
- 10 full 1 ass. D.R.A. in the chair.

Expedition to Examine the Berwick Canal Tunnel

6 February

N.G.R. SJ/535.116

This tunnel was constructed in 1797, Lord Berwick having refused the canal company permission to construct a cutting through his game preserves. It is 3/4 mile long and in brick lined rock throughout measuring about 10 ft by 10 ft. There is no tow-path, the barges lying on the cabin top and legging their craft through manually while the horses went around by road.

Due to some surveying errors and perhaps also to the ground through which it was driven the tunnel is by no means straight having a conspicuous dog-leg in the middle where the construction tunnels were said to have met. As the tunnel was not straight it was not possible

for an approaching bargee to ascertain whether there was already a barge in the tunnel, as there was no room to pass, legend has it that there was many a fight between the bargemen as to who should retreat to allow the other to pass. Since 1948, however, the canal has been closed and has fallen into disuse, a road having been laid across the canal bed some 500 yards from the tunnels east entrance.

A boat, manned by K.Lock, P.Gaut and D.R.Adams, led the way into the tunnel, which had last been entered by the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Assoc. a few months before. C.Lears was towed behind in a dinghy. The trip was reasonably uneventful except for the passing of the 7 air shafts. These averaged about 40 ft. in depth but debris decreased the depth of water below them to less than a foot compared with an average 4 ft. in the tunnel between them, also there was a constant flow of water down the shafts falling into the canal which made the passage a wet one.

The tunnel itself was in an excellent condition despite its age and long disuse. In places there were massive calcite deposits on the walls. In other places there were massive galvanised iron sheets which had been placed in position to support possible weak sections. All were in good condition. At the west end, however, there is a severe fall, blocks having collapsed just inside the terminal arch blocking the canal completely. It was possible to change crews via a plank for the return journey which was likewise uneventful. Members wish to thank Peter Heath for the loan of his boat for this expedition.

Returning to Shrewsbury members visited the Shrewsbury Borough Council Sewage Pumping Works to examine two beam engines romantically named A and B which have been in continuous use since 1898. They are kept in superb condition and are beautifully slow and silent in their running compared with to modern diesel engines.

They are powered by two coal fired boilers which feed high and low pressure steam cylinders which activate the beam from which are hanging two pump rods, pumping 114 gallons of sewage per rev with a 2' 6" stroke. Smooth running is maintained by a large 4 section cast iron flywheel approx. 15 ft. in dia. The engines performance is 16 rpm. and is reasonably economical to run. A great expense however is necessary for a continuous watch to be kept on their performance for if sewage ceased to enter the pump the engines would increase speed until they broke with disastrous results for the surrounding area. They are looked after by a staff of five and a stoker all managed by Mr. Davies who kindly showed members around and answered the many questions. spare parts are not available of course and all parts have to be made to measure, but these are not often. A most interesting visit. K.Lock, P.R.Gaut, C.Lears, D.R.Adams, Guests P.Heath, B.Shuker & K.Newton.

14th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

6 February

The rift, 50 yds upstream from Cathedral Cave which was dug on the two previous trips was dug and blasted. It was found to be too tight but may still repay digging. On the following day (6th.) two large sinks were found in the Gorge to the east of Brasgyll. Water from these may reappear from the same resurgence as the Brasgyll system. J. Goerner, Carole Evans, P.&M. Summerfield, T.J.Davies, D.Stevenson, J.M.James.

Expedition to examine Canal Tunnel at Erdington, Nr. Bridgnorth

15 February

This was in order to navigate, if possible the half mile canal tunnel between the lower and Upper Forges which had previously been visited on 4.7.65 and 17.1.66.

The only information available on this tunnel was contained in a book 'Both Sides of the Severn' by W.Byford-Jones of the Express and Star in 1932. The tunnel was driven to connect the Upper Forge, situated on the Mor Brook and possibly in existence in the 17th Century to the Lower Forge established in the 18th. Century.

The brook is dammed at the Upper Forge the water now cascading over the top. The water held back was conveyed over a large iron pipe presumably to the waterwheel whence their power was derived. Except for the dam, sluices and a few houses, nothing now remains of the upper forge. The canal is fed at the works by a further large dia, iron pipe which still emits water into the old wharfage, the canal then heads south east into the bottom of a great sandstone mass, the sides of which are so regular as to make it appear artificial. This is the same sandstone (geologically that Bridgnorth itself stands on).

The remains at the Lower forge are quite extensive, the stack and a number of foundations still remaining, though the works were closed down in 1889. A complex, semi-circular in shape with a passage leading to the river and what appeared to be a flue going in the general direction of the chimney, seems to indicate a former furnace site. A number of rooms cut from the living rock may have been workshops or store rooms.

Water power for the works was derived from an overshot waterwheel, the water coming from a branch of the canal. The canal's main function therefore was to supply water to the lower forge though it may also have been used for the passage of materials between the Forges, in fact Byford-Jones mentions nails, iron bars and wire but gives no references as to the source of his information. As the Upper forge closed down before 1790 the date of driving the canal tunnel must antedate this by a number of years. The canal itself appears at the Lower forge behind a brick dam some 30 ft. up the cliff face. The tunnel is small, about 5 ft. or so in diameter and the water takes up more than half, leaving about 2' air space. At the east, or Lower Forge entrance, a roomy Wharfage has been cut from the rock on the north side.

Despite ominous warnings from the local pub that the passage had fallen in, in several places and was silted up, that all recent attempts had failed and it wasn't worth it, the boat was still launched. The boat was manned by K.Lock, D.R.Adams, and a Shropshire Star photographer. C Lears followed behind in the dinghy. Progress was made using hands and feet against the roof, the crew lying prone. The roof in places was little more than 18" above the water. The bottom, when tested, revealed a foot or more of thin slimy silt. About a third of the way in there was a chamber in which we could stand. After sometime, daylight was sighted but progress was arrested when silt left little more than a few inches of water below the level. C.Lears in the dinghy was forced return. The boat crew, by dint of great effort succeeded, in forcing their craft to the entrance. This passage took 50 mins. The boat was dug out turned round and with a fresh crew made the return journey in 15 mins.

At the Upper forge end was a heavy cast iron winch nine tenths buried in silt. It was tipped over but must have been close to its original position, little more than 8 ft. from the canal entrance. This winch was presumably used to haul the boats through, the tunnel. The boats must have been very small indeed therefore and would probably have carried 8 cwt. Very likely there was a similar winch at the other end. In the entrance gully were numerous beam holes cut into the sandstone though their use is not apparent. A most interesting day.

K.Lock, J. & T.J.Davies, C.Lears, D.R.Adams, Guests were B.Shuker, M.Newton, the Shropshire Star photographer and Miss P.Bowen.

15th Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

13 February

One of the two sinks found in the previous trip was found to be blocked with pebbles although the water still sinks. Both sinks are very wet and mild weather might create more enthusiasm for digging. A new sink was found in the Brasgyll Gorge also very wet. Cathedral Cave was descended and the formations photographed, also the 35 ft. pitch. Bats were noted in several caves, including Cathedral. J.Goerner, D.G.Marshall, C.Evans, D.Stevenson, M.Summerfield, M.James.

Expedition to Ogof Fynnon Ddu

19 February

This expedition, was primarily to attend the 3rd. meeting of the Cambrian Cave Registr. However, on arrival at the SWCC Club house, at Pennwylt members were annoyed to find that the meeting had been cancelled without any notification having been received. This shows a very serious lack of coordination somewhere. This spoiled caving for the day, members being left in suspense while the matter was being sorted out. The following day, the entrance passage of O.F.D. was re-examined and photographed. Some members moved further into the cave via the traverse while this was in progress. The main passage was in flood and impassable.

J.Goerner, D.G.Marshall, C.Evans, D.Stevenson, P & M.Summerfield, Jim James. Guest, R.King.

Granville Colliery

26 February

Approx. 20 members and guests met at the Granville Colliery on a trip organised by J.Cramer. Unfortunately there was a hitch, the trip had been arranged verbally by J.Cramer and J.Mason but although both had apparently done their part the news had never reached the mine manager and the underground trip was called off. However, they very kindly allowed members to visit the Methane Drainage Plant at the colliery. This supplies a very large percentage of the local gas supply, having first been pumped to Wellington Gas works and diluted with Coal Gas. All the equipment for controlling the flow and checking the volume of the gas was seen as also were the winders over the shaft.

Following this some members visited the Coalport Tar level, coalport incline and pumping shaft.

K.Lock, J.Mason, I.Brown, J.Goerner, C.Evans, T.J.Davies, M.Hinks, M.Summerfield, C.Lears, J.M.James, D.R.Adams. Guests were R.King, B.Shuker, M.Newton, Mrs E.Mason, Mr.Davies, Mr.Evans and Mr.A.E.Sykes.

8th Expedition to the Glyn Ceriog Slate mines

27 February

This was in order to examine the mine noted on the visit of 30 Jan. It was first noted that the recent heavy rains had caused the major part of the Gable End of the workshop to collapse since the previous visit. The mine was entered at both ends simultaneously. It proved to be an almost exactly according to the plan of the Cambrian Workings, a number of vast chambers, those at the eastern end worked to daylight, in the base of the quarry, spaced about 60ft. intervals and all connected by a bottom level running the length of the workings and a good way beyond to the westward, presumably as a crosscut although there were some chambers towards the further end off. Little was found of great interest. In one chamber there was an extremely deep pool

with sheer sides and with water at the same level as the floor. Some early beer bottles were found also the remains of a habitation in the upper part of one of the chambers connecting with daylight, a bed, chair and rabbit hutch. The Cambrian Mine was revisited. It was found that a drystone wall had collapsed onto the winch. There was a very fast flow of water through the drainage adit.

K.Lock, P.Payne, I.Forrest, C.Lears, D.R.Adams, Guests were M.Newton and P.Rennie.

16th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge. 27 February

Using the cottage as an headquarters, members examined the area, as the stream was flowing fast the whole of it was forced to pass through boulder cave and into Jock's Pot in the hope of clearing some of the blockages. A second entrance was made into Boulder Cave. Jocks Pot and Cathedral Cave and most of the other sinks were examined. The Brasgyll resurgence and the Pont y Trap rising were all flowing strongly. It was noticed that the Brasgyll rising was eating its way back into the hillside. Bont Newydd, Dell and Afon Merchion caves were all revisited. A dye test in Dell was considered.

J.Goerner, G.Bamford, Carole Evans, M.Hinks, M.Summerfield, J.M.James.

Expedition to the Eryrys Area 27 February

A 180 ft. shaft at Bog Mine was descended. It was found to be blocked at the bottom and all levels leading off were likewise blocked except for one which contained a fall of heavy blocks from which issued a strong draught. A miners water bottle was found and is now in the Club house.

D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton, J.M.James.

Meeting 4th. March

1. R.King, B.Shuker & M.Newton accepted as full members
 2. K.Lock was increased from associate to full membership.
 3. R.A.Meeson reverted to associate member.
 4. The photographic Dept. were asked to prepare sets of photos for the S.Shropshire supplement and also to accompany lectures given by club members.
 5. Publications. A master copy of the 64/65 Yearbook had been received from P.W.Crabtree who reported that the South Shropshire Survey was nearing completion. A suggestion that the club produce a publication on Slate Mines was put forward.
 6. It was decided to hold Easter Camp in Yorkshire.
- 12 Full, 1 assoc. members. Guests: G.Lyon, a friend of R.King.

Expedition to Examine Drainage Level at Pant Ddu **5 March**

There being insufficient members present the original intention to continue the capping of the Ogof Mwnglawdd shaft was abandoned, the party proceeding to examine the level which had been entered previously by P.J.Appleton and D.G.Marshall. Entrance is gained via a culvert about 300 ft. long, approximately 18" high and lined with dry stonework in the form of an arch. A fair amount of water was flowing out together with flowstone over gravel made the hands and knees crawl an endurance test. Eventually it was possible to stand up when the level assumed normal proportions.

A few side passages led off well adorned with formations but the main section leads on past roof falls until a section is met with which contains some of the finest cave formation so far seen. The nature of these is yet to be investigated but it would seem that timber in the mine has grown roots which have been coated with CaCO_3 giving rise to the most fantastic helictites.

Other formations are also very good and at least several hundred cave pearls were seen. Gours were also present and one particularly fine specimen was seen. A bad section of the level was passed which contained 12-18" of water in a 4'6" high passage but other sections in deeper water were not explored. P.J.Appleton stated that the water was much higher than normal. In all, a very wet arduous trip but well worth it. 3 hrs had been taken to cover $\frac{1}{4}$ mile passage. D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton, D.Stevenson, J.M.James.

17th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

The work done by the water in boulder cave was examined. The rest of the day was spent digging a shakehole at the top of the Gorge where a passage was known to enter a boulder choke attempts were made to find another passage down which the water must have gone. J.Goerner, G.Bamford, P.Summerfield.

Expedition to Derbyshire **13 March**

The Speedwell Mine/Show Cave was first examined. Here boats take parties of tourists down $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of flooded mine level to the vast Speedwell Chamber. This level was driven as a cross-cut in the hope of intersecting the lead vein in the area late 18th. Century. The limestone was very hard and the miners progressed at a rate of approx. 4 ft. a week. Despite the original hopes no vein of significance was struck even after the level was extended for a further $\frac{1}{2}$ mile beyond the cavern and the mine was an economical failure. However, after $\frac{1}{2}$ mile the miners broke into a vast natural chamber, since proved to be 400 ft. high and approx. 70 ft. down to the level of the underground lake. While, driving the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile extension to the level the miners threw 40,000 tons of rubble into the lake without raising the level of the water.

Leaving the Speedwell Mine the party went on to examine the High Tor at Matlock which is a high limestone cliff giving superb views of the town. On top is a long open fissure, Fern Cave, 40 to 50 feet deep in places and about 3 ft. wide and open to the sky for 90% of its length, probably a crack caused by the cliff falling away (it is actually a continuation of a mineral vein which may be seen on the opposite side of the valley). It connects with Roman Cave which is very similar.

The buildings of the Millclose Mine, SK/259.625, were next examined. This is one of the few mines in Derbyshire comparable to Snailbeach, whose output it exceeded at certain times in its history. It is now part of the works of Messrs H.J.Enthoven & Sons Ltd., Darley Dale, Smelters. The engine house is of Cornish pattern constructed of massive stone blocks still roofed and used as a stone house.

The shaft is boarded over and locked. The final visit of the day was to Bonsall Moor area, SN/25.59 where numerous old shafts whose depths appeared to vary from 30-80 ft. were examined.
R.King, C.Lears, D.R.Adams.

18th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

Digging continued at the shakehole at the head of the Gorge, a mud choke was found at a depth of eleven feet, not promising but very impressive to look at.
P.Summerfield, G.Bamford.

Cave Rescue Meeting

10 March

D.R.Adams and J.M.James attended a meeting with the representatives of all the Police Forces of North Wales, held at the Ruthin Constabulary H.Q. to discuss the problems of Cave Rescue. J.M.James outlined the N.W.C.R.O policies & a most interesting discussion followed. It is hoped that this meeting will help to overcome any misunderstandings and to procure full Police co-operation in this matter.

19th Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

20 March

The valleys of the Afon Merchion, the Llwy and the Bragsyll stream were all thoroughly re-examined without result. All the caves in the Brasgyll Valley were re-entered. Digging was carried out at the Brasgyll east rising, many boulders being moved and a larger one blocks the view of the passage, if any, beyond. Possibilities of future digging are poor.
J.Goerner, J.M.James, D.R.Adams.

6th. Expedition to the Blaen-y-Nant Mine

20 March

The object was to scale two natural inlets in a chamber about 200 ft. below ground. The poles were borrowed from a building site together with the clamps. The poles were quickly assembled and both avens scaled (about 55 ft.). No passages were found. One of the clamps broke while one of the members was up the pole. The whole assembly collapsed and the climber sustained injuries to his left knee, left forearm and nether region. The clamps used on the scaffolding were internally fitting alloy expanders. They are not strong enough and external steel sleeves should be used. The party assisted the injured caver out without extra help.

D.Brandon, D.Marshall, P.J.Appleton.

Meeting

1 April

A meeting was held in the clubhouse on Friday, 1st. April. The meeting took its usual course and among the items discussed were publications, tackle library and clubhouse wardenship. Two amendments to the constitution were also made, subject to the approval of the A.G.M. Half yearly subscriptions were collected.

1 Assoc. 16 Full members were present. Guests were G.Lyon and D.G. Small.

Expedition to Gratten Lodge Mine. S.Shropshire

5 April

The mine has been opencast in parts. An adit was found to run for about 10 yds. to a blind alley. To the right of the passage was another which had been framed to take a cage. Nothing of this remains although the runners were still usable in parts. It was thought to be 100 ft. in depth with the water at the bottom so it may be deeper. This is not visible from the surface as it has been concreted over. The adit itself was not very safe, the props being very rotten and supporting a lot of loose rock. The floor was likewise covered in rocks and fallen pit props. No tools or anything of interest was found. A vertical shaft was found further on past the adit entrance, about 15 ft. deep but was not descended. A few traces of malachite and stained barytes were found in the spoil heaps.

On the way back to Habberly a further adit was found but this ended in a blind heading after 85 yds. It contained a foot of water all the way which is caused by a blockage at the entrance, Not far from here another adit was seen but the entrance had collapsed. It might be worth digging as there was a large spoil heap nearby. There was also an iron bridge over the river nearby leading to it and a number of building foundations.

Expedition to Yorkshire

8-11 April

An advance party consisting of P.Payne, J.A.Corbyn, D.R.Adams, P.Rennie and P.Bowen travelled north, erected camps and made a night visit to see the torrent of water rushing down Gaping Gill, SD/751.726, a most awesome spectacle. The entrance to Bar Pot was also seen.

Sat. 9th April: D.Brandon, P.Payne, A.Corbyn, D.R.Adams and P.Rennie descended Bull Pot in Kingsdale, SD/703.787 This was formed above an escarpment to the West of Turbury Road. An active stream sinks among the rocks and a few feet downstream is the dry 40 ft. entrance pitch into a typical pothole fissure about 50 ft. long by 5 ft. wide. Moving about 30 ft. to the South of the fissure the stream is met turning abruptly into a left hand passage. This gives way to the second 20 ft. pitch after little more than 10 ft. This pitch is a wet one. From the foot of the ladder a hole is crossed by means of the tube to the head of the third pitch of 25 ft. The ladder was belayed to the tube and one slides down a crack in the floor into the gradually widening passage below. A ledge is reached from which one climbs 10 ft. to the narrow floor. After about 20 ft. the 4th. pitch of 50 ft. is met. This is wet, it being necessary to climb down with the water. At 40 ft. a ledge is reached below which it, was practically impossible to see anything for spray. This was descended by D.Brandon and 3 members of Salford CAT, who knew the cave, and A.Corbyn. However, by this time all members, of the party were extremely cold and a speedy ascent was made to the surface. This was truly a pothole and quite different from anything the club had previously explored, with the possible exception of Oxlow Mine. There was very little to see in the cave, which was more a test of endurance than anything else. What Yorkshire men call a sporting trip!

Leaving Bull Pot the party examined Yordas Cave SD/705.791 nearby. It is essentially a high chamber, 180 ft. long by 48 ft. wide with a river flowing through it. At one end is a small chamber with a waterfall known as the Chapter House. It was once a show cave. An upper entrance to the system was examined.

Sunday 10th April: A.Corbyn, D.Stevenson, M.James led by members of the Salford CAT descended Rowten Pot SD/698.780 also in Kingsdale. This is a chasm measuring 90 ft. by 33 ft. The party climbed down 85 ft. to a bridge spanning the 180 ft. deep pot. The ladder was belayed to a huge boulder doubtfully placed in the 45° slope at the edge of the pot. The party were only able to reach the ladder by precariously working their way over the boulder on a knotted rope. The 150 ft. pitch was descended clear of the waterfall but nevertheless they were drenched in spray before the bottom was reached, and deafened by the fantastic roar of fallings water. The party then moved off down a dry to the head of the second pitch of 30 ft. but the force of water was too great for further descent. The ascent to the surface was extremely tiring but the party were able to rest on a ledge 45 ft. up the big pitch.

On the same day P.Payne, D.R.Adams, P.Rennie and Miss P.Bower visited some of the smelting mills of the Yorkshire dales at Swaledale and Arkengarthdale. The party revisited Surrender Mill SD/991.000 followed by Old Gang Mill NY/975.005 This was originally one of the largest mills having 4 hearths whose separate flues joined together into the main flue some distance up the hill. The flue continued for 700 yards ending in a stack on Healaugh Crag approx 500 ft. above the hill. It was built about 1790 to smelt ore from a number of very rich mines and closed down in 1898.

Nearby is a peat store 391 ft. long and 21 ft. wide of which just the columns and gable ends remain. The entrance to Hard Level which went for several miles connecting up many mines was seen a few yards upstream from the mill. A colossal spoil heap stretching down the southern bank for several hundred yards was seen. Above is a small stoned adit which goes in a few yards to a collapse.

The party then moved on to examine the great Octagon Mill in Arkengarthdale meeting members of P.D.M.H.S. who were encamped in the area. The mill is situated with two furnaces on each side. It was built in 1700. Now however the scant remains are in a ruinous state and it has obviously been used as a stone quarry in recent years. A vast flue similar in size to the London Underground but now collapsed in many places leads up the hill to join that of B.B. Mill nearby. The mill at NY/996.035 was built a hundred years later but was much simpler in design containing 6 furnaces. The mill has been extensively demolished in recent years and is now little more than a heap of rubble. Nearby is a beautifully designed powder house dating from 1725.

Leaving Arkengarthdale the party returned via Reeth to examine two mills at Marrick, SE/079.995. These were the only mills seen which still retained their furnaces intact. Each of the mills retained 2 furnaces, two flues from the lower running up 100 ft. to a squat chimney around which was built the upper mill. Two unique packhorse saddles were found at the mill and were returned to the clubhouse. Ref: Clough, R.T., 1962, Lead Smelting Mills of the Yorkshire Dales.

Monday, 11th. April A.Corbyn, D.Stevenson, and J.M.James led by members of Salford CAT and D.Brandon descended the newly discovered Turbury Pot in Kingsdale. This has a promising dig at the bottom. Some time was spent digging and blasting to extend the dig, which seems likely to go. On the same day, P.Payne, D.R.Adams, P.Rennie and Pat Bowen visited the site of Sell Gill Holes SD/811.743 which looks a promising trip. These were found on the northern route of the Pennine Way out of Horton.

Moving back to the southern route which also heads north for a while before proceeding over the slopes of Penyghent, the most impressive chasm of Hull Pot SD/824.745 which measures 300 ft. by 60 ft by 60 ft. was seen. Here the waters of the Hull Pot Beck fall majestically into a deep pool. 600 ft. to the east of Hull Pot is High Hull pot SD/826.745 which is at the base of a rock wall in a shallow valley, water sinking between boulders. 150 ft. to the east of this is high Hull Cave SD/826.745, the entrance to which was obscured by snow. Several of these entrances had been examined by P.J.Appleton the previous day.

Broke Camp. Remarks: The exceptionally wet season together with deep snow the previous week made most pots inaccessible and some, like Rowten, severe. Thus the choice of what to examine was limited. On the industrial archaeological side the trips to smelting mills was most interesting.

Expedition to Copper Mine, Nr. Clive. Shropshire 10 April

This was found 250 yds. south west of Clive Church, Grinshill, near Wem. The mine, covered by a shed was deepened in 1902 by the Bibby family and the original cranks and pumps are still used daily, pumping water for the Hardwick estate. The 300 ft. shaft approx. 6 ft. x 9 ft. is cut in white Keuper sandstone, the pumps hang from a platform at 198 ft. and the widened sump usually contains about 60 ft. of water.

The shaft, which is very oily down to 100 ft. is descended by 20 ft. near-vertical ladders (iron). At approx. 160 ft., possibly the original depth it is possible to get off the ladders and walk across girders and wooden rod guides into an opening from which three galleries originally started. The only one not blocked by deepening soil heads due north towards several other known shafts, passing under one, and after 200 yds is blocked by a sandy run-in, at the foot of another.

It was noted that drills, explosives, rails and sleepers had been used at some time and the pickmarks showed that the miners had made their way south towards the shaft descended. No ore was seen in the mine but this may have been due to this gallery being only a tramway between the other shafts the original veins being possibly above.

(NGR: SJ/513.238)

I .J. Brown, M.Newton, B.Shuker & K.Lock.

Cave Rescue at Friog, Dolgelly

13 April

At approx. 11.30 am while at work, D.R.Adams received a message from Ruthin Police to say that a boy had fallen 120 ft, in a mine at Friog, Dolgelly and was still alive. The message was given clearly and concisely and was in every way in accordance with the instructions given in the N.W.C.R.O. call out sheet.

Half an hour was then spent phoning all available members. Having collected his personal gear and checked at the office in case of any further information he arrived at the Clubhouse at 12.15 am to assist A.Corbyn and M.Bolderstone load equipment. Having waited momentarily for further members to arrive A.Corbyn and D.R.Adams left the Clubhouse at 12.45 approx. The journey to Wellington was beset by traffic holdups. C.Lears was picked up in Dawley and the party finally left Wellington at 1.30 pm. D.R.Adams then remembered that the police had requested that he ring them back when they were on the road. J.W.Mason caught up with the party and C.Lears having transferred to his vehicle tried unsuccessfully to contact Ruthin from Welshpool Police Station.

The party reached the scene of the accident at approximately 3.30 pm only to learn from members of the S.C.C. team that the boy had been rescued and was on his way to Liverpool via R.A.F. Helicopter, The Shrewsbury team had likewise been too late to take part in the rescue. Several members of the Birkenhead team were also present. M.Summerfield and M.Hinks formed the remainder of the Club team having likewise driven at a very fast pace from Wednesfield.

It appears that the boy, Ilin Koryclo of Walsall was a member of a West Bromwich Camping expedition which had been led into the mine that morning by a master. The mine is the Blue Lake Slate Mine, previously visited by J.W.Mason and others in 59-60. It contains several deep pits, some of the adits and side passages ending in mid-air. It would seem that the boy had moved a little away from the party and had fallen down one of these or a conspicuous hole in the floor, possibly around 10.am. The N.W.C.R.O. were the first to receive the call but local ex-quarrymen were quickly on the scene. They began the rescue and were later assisted by the mountain rescue teams. The mountain rescue teams being quicker off the mark and with considerably less distance to travel were able to arrive more than an hour in front of the N.W.C.R.O. teams and complete the rescue before their arrival. The boy was flown to Walton Hospital, Liverpool where he was stated to be dangerously ill with several limbs broken and multiple head injuries.

Although the N.W.C.R.O. were unable to assist in the operations the call-out was excellent practice and members received the commendation of the Ruthin Police.

A Number of points worthy of note were raised:

1. A faster means of transport, e.g. RAF helicopters is definitely needed when rescues are situated at such great distances.
2. A means of identifying vehicles bearing to the rescue is also needed as the idea of the rescue teams being stuck in traffic jams while someone is in danger of losing his life is most disturbing. It could be by means of white boards with Cave Rescue written on them only to be used while travelling to a rescue. These would also enable the police to identify vehicles en route and assist them or turn them back if their help was no longer needed.
3. Requesting the help of Police patrol cars to clear the route.
4. The storage of equipment, particularly smaller items in readily accessible packages.
5. An improvement in the communications systems.
6. The appointment of a third non-active warden who can be contacted by the person in receipt of the call if the normal wardens are absent and can still call out members.

The remainder of the day was spent re-examining the Bontddu Gold Mines (previous, visit 3.4,65).

2nd Expedition to the Gatten Lodge Mine

16 April

The main shaft noted on the previous visit was descended 25 ft to water. No side passages, were seen.
T.J.Davies and M.Hinks.

On the same day, R.King, G.Bamford and C.Lears continued digging operations in the Brasgyll Gorge, (20th. Expedition).

Expedition to the Cilcain Area

19 April

The intention was to extend Cilcain Cave by digging. Proceeding downstream, however, a number of swallets and caves were found. One of these has a shaft just inside the entrance. The party were able to descend this for about 20 ft. and were able to see an active stream passage through a small hole, which needs blasting and appears extremely promising.

Three shafts, one in a shaft a few feet upstream from the above, the others are streamside caves 100 yards downstream. There are also a number of caves in the valley floor which have been excavated for archaeological remains. D.Marshall found a number of archaeological remains consisting of a couple of bones which he claims to be human.

The system would appear to be potentially large, borne, out by the size of the resurgence in the River Alyn. The stream in question is the Nant Gain Resurgence which issues from a rock but sumps after 10 ft. The set up is similar to Brasgyll but with some sinks a mile from the resurgence would appear to be potentially more promising.
D.Marshall, P.Appleton.

21st Expedition to the Brasgyll Area

24 April

The upper Meirchion Cave was revisited and the old dig in the Bont Newydd Cave re-started. A small Gorge in the Rhewl area was partially examined and two small cave entrances found (in the area S J/595.105).

On the same day, D.R.Adams and Miss E.Suckley visited a Druids Circle, a folly built from large limestone blocks showing signs of being split by the drill and wedge principle presumably of 19th. century date this was near the village of Western Ryn SJ/281.363. Another folly consisting of a stone arched tunnel was seen at SJ/282.367.

The Telford built aqueduct and tunnel at Chirk, SJ/287.375 was next seen. The aqueduct is an iron trough in a stone arched frame carrying the canal some 60 ft. above the Ceriog valley. The tunnel is a quarter of a mile long, brick-lined and with a towpath.

The superb wrought iron gates of Chirk Castle, SJ/282.377 were next seen. To the north again, a vast limestone quarry at Vroncysyllte, SJ/270.406 was examined. At the northern end a surprising quantity of broken natural formations were found, obviously emanating from a cave passage of large proportions. The only evidence in the quarry face was a diversion containing a clay filled hollow. The formations however, showed no signs of having been in contact with clay so that the impression existed of a large free cave passage having existed here somewhere prior to quarry operations.

D.R.Adams and Miss E.Suckley.

D.C.A. A.G.M.

30th April

On the 30th. April D.R.Adams and R.King represented the club at the AGM of the DCA. The main item of the agenda was the scrapping of the original Council system of Chairman, Sec. etc. and 6 member clubs and the substitution of Chairman, Sec, Treasurer, Congress Sec, Editor, Public Relations Officer, Gating Officer and Instructions Officer with one delegate from each member club. Although this means that the club will not be taking quite such an active part in Derbyshire affairs, in view of the relatively few visits members make to the area this is only fair.

A recommendation put forward by the Club that the term Gating Officer may cause a certain amount of dissention in some quarters was approved and the term Access Control Officer substituted. Jack Longland was elected President of the Association and it was proposed by the Club that he should take the chair at all forthcoming AGMs. This was accepted. The following were elected. Chairman: J.Garratt (Termes), Sec: J.Fisk (Pegasus), Treasurer: T.Briggs (Buxton Speleos), Congress Sec: D.Allsop (B.S.S.), Editor: J.Garratt (Termes), Public Relations Officer: H.Parker (P.D.M.H.S.), Access Controller: T.Briggs (B.S.S.), Instruction Officer: B.Parker (Pegasus).

Expedition to Gautries Hole and P8

1 May

Both of these were re-explored during the stay (pre. Vis 18.3.62 and 31.10.65). Members of a group from Nottingham and the South Cheshire Caving Club were also present. R.King, P.Fathers, M.Summerfield, D.R.Adams. Guest G.Abbot.

Also on the 30th. April the club staged a small exhibition in Denbigh Town Hall. H.Owen and J.M.James officiated.

Also on 1 May, D.Marshall, P.J.Appleton and J.M.James made a second visit to the Cilcain area and some blasting was carried out. The prospects still appear promising.

Meeting

6 May

At the meeting it was decided to provide lectures for a series entitled "The Old Mining District of West Shroshire" to be held at Pontsbury in the Autumn. Club policy was also discussed. G.K.Lyon and P.Rennie were unanimously accepted as full members, as were Mrs. R.Bamford and D.P.Small as Associate Members.

1. Ass. & 9 Full Members were present. Mr.D.B.Corbyn presided.

C.R.G. Meeting at Oswestry

14 May

On the 14th. May the club were the hosts to the northern meeting of the CRG of G.B. held in Oswestry Library. Lectures were given on "The Ancient Mines of the Lake District" by B.Chandler, a brief description of the caves and mines of N.Wales by D.R.A. and J.M.J. on behalf of the club and the exploration of the Lancaster-Easgill System by G.Cornes and J.Eyre.

On the following day 2 visits were organised. D.R.A., C.L., I.F., P.P. and K.L. escorted a large party including A.L.Butcher the C.R.G. Secretary into the Ogof, every part of which was visited. The quarry was also re-examined and a resurgence found which is presumably the water which sinks in the shaft in Ogof Valley.

A smaller party was escorted around the Glynceriog Slate Mine in the afternoon. Following the departure of the C.R.G. party a large quarry to the south of Glynceriog on the road to Llanarmon D.C. at SJ/192.346 was visited. It was chiefly remarkable for the great height of its working faces, a number of buildings giving evidence of occupation at least until the 1930s were also seen. These consisted of a large workshop of 19C. construction with 2 forges. The other buildings were offices and a warehouse. Remains of the engine mounting for the much altered plant were seen. Geological samples were collected and returned to the clubhouse. An adit was investigated at SD/200.347. It went in for approx. 150 yards to a blind heading. It still contained rails and was probably a trial. A further spoil heap was investigated at SJ/207.344 but the level had run in. A guest was Miss E.Suckley to whom thanks were rendered for her hospitality in allowing members of the CRG to camp at her father's farm.

The second visit led by J.M.James escorted party including J.Eyre, Pres. of the R.R.P.C. into the Ogof Mwnglawdd. On the same day G.Bamford, R.King, Mrs.Bamford continued excavation in the Brasgyll Gorge, the 22nd. Expedition.

8th. May. H.Owen introduced members to Mr. Bibby who had recently had a new house constructed on the site of and old ruined mansion at SH/948.670. Legend stated that there were tunnels leading from the original building. This had been confirmed during the construction of the new house by the discovery of a passage leading from inside the present greenhouse and in the opening of an old inspection chamber which gave access to 4 passages.

Mr. Bibby had himself examined those and had found a complex of passages and chambers beneath the house which had all eventually joined into a steeply inclined passage which came into a now covered mine shaft. Mr. Bibby was most anxious to find out what lay at the foot of the shaft which he had descended. This was accordingly done by the party who found it to be thirty foot deep. A mine level led off from the bottom. After about 30 yards it again entered a stone and brick arched passage similar to those at the head of the shaft. After a short distance the walls were found to have squeezed in leaving only a small gap. It was considered too dangerous at the time to attempt to pass so the party returned to the surface. The upper passages were in general 3' 6" high x 1' 8" wide and stone walled with brick arching. Many of the upper passages were flagged with large inspection chamber at the intersection.

Members have often heard of tunnels existing in old buildings but this was the first time they had been able to examine such tunnels at close quarters. The fact that they also connected with old mine workings makes them even more interesting and the party felt they could make an interesting study in a further trip. Mr. Bibby who was most generous in his hospitality towards the party suggested that the club undertake a survey of the tunnels and offered the use of his land for the clubs forthcoming Whitsun Camp.

Of further interest in the area were two blocked mine adits which had originally been worked for copper. The house was situated on a steep slope above the western bank of the Afon Aled. The 2 adits were situated to the N & S of the house and near the river bank. The northern one appeared the most promising having the remains of a small engine house and other buildings nearby. Mr. Bibby was also keen to re-open them in the hope of finding copper ore.
H.Owen, Miss C.Evans, M.Summerfield, M.James.

23rd Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

21 May

Digging continues in the shake hole found in the 17th visit and now named B.S.P. Pot.

G. & Mrs. R.Bamford, R.King.

Llansannon Expedition

28-31 May

The object was to survey the tunnels under Dyffryn Aled (Mr. Bibby's House), also if possible to gain access to one of the blocked mine levels.

Members: Miss C.Evans, T.J.Davies, M.Summerfield, C.Lears, J.M.James, D.R.Adams, guests were Miss E.Suckely and Mr. and Mrs. G.Abbot, also M.Hinks.

The expedition commenced with an accident between J.M.James' and M.Hinks vehicles which resulted in J.M.James being transported to Rhyll hospital for repairs to his head. On the 29th. the expedition continued with blasting and digging at the adit from which issued a strong flow of water which became even stronger as digging continued. It was however frequently blocked by falls of earth from above.

The tunnels were re-examined by D.R.Adams, C.Lears and Miss E.Suckley. It was decided that they were no more romantic than a large drainage system but interesting even so. The chambers noted were in fact access manholes and the floor showed evidence of a strong flow of water at sometime. Modern pipes had been poked through the roof at many places.

On the 30th. the entrance tunnels were surveyed by D.R.Adams and C.Lears with assistance from Miss E.S.Suckley and M.Hinks. It was found that the upper passages formed a rough rectangle probably marking the outline of the old house, with manholes at each corner. One exception was one situated part way along the front of the building. Passages from this and the corner manhole combined to lead in the direction of the shaft which appeared to be straight down the slope from the house in the direction of the river. Strangely enough the passage contained many unnecessary bends. The appearance of the mine workings in the system also remains unsolved. Whether the tunnels had been trenched from the surface, as seems probable, or whether they had been lain in existing mine workings or whether they had been mined for the purpose was a mystery. Their date was also difficult to define. The original hall had been built ca.1779 and one would have expected the drain to be put in with it but according to Mr. Bibby the mining probably took place about 1850, a discrepancy of 71 years. Some of the mystery may be solved when the plan is drawn up and re-measured on the surface.

On the 31st. digging continued in the adit and it was eventually decided to make an attempt to enter. Members crept through the small opening into 4' 6" of water. The adit was found to be of considerable

length. On two places deads were found stacked on the sides of the passage. Some way on there was a small passage to the left which was blind. Eventually a fork was reached, the left hand branch going into a stope of 10 yards. It eventually ended in a further stope filled with rubble after a further 7 yards. The R.H. branch widened out after a while. Here seemed to be a winze surrounded by a tubular rail with an angle iron structure inside it, possibly a cage. This rested on a piece of wood which looked suspiciously like a steam engine beam. Nearby was a tank or boiler with 2 disconnected tubes emerging from it. This could have been an air or steam receiver and may have been connected with the pumping of the winze. It was difficult to examine the items due to the depth of water. The level ultimately ended in a fall. A further level near the fork went in for about 50 yards to 2 cross cuts all of which were blind. This level was partially back filled. On the return it was noted that from the winze back to the entrance the level was heavily covered in soot. Camp was then broken and members returned.

24th. Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

28-30 May

Digging continued in B.S.P. Pot and another 15ft. was gained and the dig is still going well.

A new cave was found on the 30th. about 150-200 ft. long but not yet fully explored. D.Stevenson descended a tight rift below the bridge 8-10 ft. deep and opened into a long bedding plane 6' wide 1-1½' high. This gave access to a rift 2 ft. high, the floor covered in pebbles all very clean and well washed. This cave must flood to the roof at times as debris is seen to collect there. There are good prospects of extension. It being very tight only D.Stevenson was able to enter but having trouble in the cave the downstream extension was not explored.

Length 150-200 ft. Suggested name: Slit Sink.

J.Goerner, R. & G.Bamford, D.Stevenson, Guest: Mr. Goerner.

Expedition to Coalbrookdale Area

2nd. June

A photographic visit to the Shortaroad Colliery was made by permission of Messrs Smallshaw & Tarr, Brandlee Colliery Co. Ltd. Many photographs were taken of the miners carrying out various mining operations. Unfortunately the visit was curtailed due to a fault in the photographic flash unit, the party then moved on to the Tar Tunnel to attempt to move the fall found on the visit of 7th. May. This took 4 hours but after passing the fall a further impenetrable fall was found 20 yds further on. The roof was in bad condition and the attempt was abandoned.

I.J.Brown, C.Lears.

Meeting

3rd June

1. Request for exchange of publications from Westminster S.S. agreed to for 1 year only.
2. The club had been asked to attend a Cambrian Caving Conference at the S.C.C. HQ at Minera. A lengthy discussion followed around whether this constituted a threat to the N.W.C.A. D.R.Adams said that N.Wales was a caving area in its own right and its ties with S.Wales were none existent. He felt there was a need for a N.Wales organisation e.g. for negotiations with local landowners. It was agreed to bring the matter up at the next N.W.C.A. Meeting.
3. Certain members had removed cappings from shafts in the Esclusham Mountain without authority of the landowner. The Secretary was to communicate with those members and voice the severe disapproval of their fellow members for this action.
4. T.Mavis was unanimously accepted as an Associate Member. P.Rennie of Oswestry and A.T.Lyon of Chester had accepted full membership.
5. The tacklemaster was reminded that ladders could do with cleaning and oiling.
6. It was stated that work on publications was proceeding satisfactorily. The question of royalties was discussed.
7. The future programme was discussed.
8. The treasurer stated that despite income of subscriptions there was only £5 in the bank. Levies were then collected.
9. Proposed exhibition at Newport Show was discussed.
- 2 Associate and 11 full members were present. Mr.D.B.Corbyn presided.

25th Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge

4-5th June

The cave discovered on the previous expedition was reexamined. M.James discovered a small chamber to one side of the passage, access to which was gained by digging. A small passage led out but unfortunately contained a suspended stal floor with flake suspended from the roof which almost met the suspended floor. A strong draught entered this passage and blasting would be needed to gain access.

The following day the upstream resurgence was dug but ended in a boulder choke. The dig at the downstream resurgence was therefore continued and it was eventually possible to enter about 5 ft. to where the passage turned abruptly around a corner to the right but too tight to negotiate. It was, however, possible to see that the passage continued for approximately 8 ft. before turning left into the hillside. Again, blasting would be necessary to gain access.

A new sink was found at the head of the gorge where the water sank through fissures into what appeared to be a passage beneath. Several blocks were lifted, out but blasting would be necessary to gain access, though the possibility of success is low.

Returning to Brasgyll, B.S.P. Pot was re-examined and surprisingly found to contain pieces of ancient pottery, one of which appeared to be Roman Samian ware. According to H.Owen, other Romano-British fragments have been found in the gorge so the existence of this one is perhaps not so surprising.

R. & G. Bamford, C.Evans, D.Stevenson, M.Summerfield and J.M.James.

17th. Expedition to Coed Nant

5th. June

Despite the number of visits, no large cave has been revealed. However, prospects in the Cilcain district still appear good. A small cave, 80 ft. long was opened and explored a few feet from the Siamber Wen resurgence, N. of Cilcain at SJ/1752.6649 at 500 ft. O.D., a low bedding type dry stream passage. This was incompletely explored. On this occasion G.K.Lyon and D.Brandon filled in two of the digs, Nos 2 and 4. They opened up No.6 in the hope that the water might clear out of the bedding plane at the bottom of the rift found on 15 May.

P.J.Appleton made various short sorties around Ogof Dydd Byraf to see what the Wrexham Caving Club were doing. They are now digging a shaft in solid rock above the dry valley in the hope of making an easier entrance to O.D.B.

D.Brandon, G.K.Lyon, P.J.Appleton.

Expedition to examine caving possibilities of Central Denbighshire

19 June

The first call was at the Graig Fechan, SJ/147.544 where the 1" O.S. Map showed two streams to disappear upon reaching a small limestone outcrop. Investigations showed that they emerged, turned south and flowed through the village to a dam. The water appeared out of a cave entrance 100 yds down the valley. Halfway one could see a streamway down a swallet. The cave, though passable was not explored.

The party then examined a gorge at SJ/125.550. This was most impressive but no caves were seen. A mine level was entered and had walls covered in flowstone with a floor of cave pearls. Continuing to Llanidloes 2 cave entrances were seen at SJ/124.572. These should go with digging.

G.Evans, M.Summerfield, J.M.James, guest was Miss R.Davies.

6th. Expedition to O.D.B.

19 June

The lower series of the cave was re-examined and found to be littered with notices, warnings and directions written on scraps of paper, and rather spoiling the appearance of the cave and formations.

Examination of the boulder choked passage at the far end of the stalactite passage indicated by broken formations that a way through had been attempted but no boulders had been moved so it does not seem that the W.C.C. were successful. Neither had any work been done at the terminal choke. Returning to the Upper Series an attempt was made to find the boulder chamber. A crawl to the left was taken which led to a boulder choked rift. A crawl was taken straight on up the main slope into the bottom of steeply sloping chamber.

D.Marshall, P.J.Appleton, guests were A.Hawkins and H.Moirs.

2nd Expedition to Craig Fechan

26 June

The cave at SJ/147.544 was entered but found to be blocked with rubbish.

C.Evans, D.Stevenson, M.J.Summerfield.

Meeting

1 July

The secretary complained that the amount of mail received was now colossal and almost beyond his capacity to deal with it. The main business of the meeting was the disapproval of the previous meeting to the removal of shaft cappings in the Minera area without the owners consent. Both members concerned had replied expressing disapproval with the previous meetings decision and club activities generally. The secretary had written explaining the situation and the two members now appeared are satisfied with the situation.

L.Abbott of Birmingham was unanimously elected a Full Member.

I.F.Herbert of Swansea, M.Hughes of Shrewsbury and P.L.Harvey of Leicester were all accepted as Associate Member's.

D.Brandon agreed to purchase the necessary material for the manufacture of Club Ladders.

M.Summerfield presented the club with a battery charger.

The photographic Dept. were presented with a list of suggested slides which would make up a lecture series.

Regarding Publications, the secretary reported that work on the written section of the Llanymynech Survey was well in hand.

The future programme was discussed and it was tentatively suggested that there should be a member in charge of programme planning.

It was ascertained that the club's finances stood at about £4.7.6d.

It was decided that it would not be possible for the club to stage an exhibition at Newport Show.

2 Associate, 13 Full Members present. D.B.Corbyn Presided.

3rd Expedition to Llanelidan

3 July

The 2 promising entrances at Llanelidan were examined and digs commenced.

C.Evans, M.Summerfield, J.M.James.

Cambrian Cave Registry

9 July

Five members attended the 2nd Cambrian Caving Conference, held at the S.C.C. H.Q. at Minera. It was stated that while the south were still not favourably inclined towards the formations of a national caving administration they were nevertheless willing to support the latest suggestion from the north that delegates from the regional councils should meet at the B.S.A. Conference to be held at Bristol in September. The Conference decided that delegates from the Welsh Clubs should be in attendance at this meeting.

The question of access was also discussed and it was stated that S.W.C.C. may be able to permit entry into Dan-yr-Ogof New system in a month or so. Rescue and special techniques were also discussed. With regard to the latter it was stated that Courlene ropes were distinctly dangerous and should not be used where human life was concerned. D.R.Adams was Chairman at the meeting.

Expeditions to Ogof Dydd Byraf and Llanelidan

10 July

Ogof Dydd Byraf was examined and further photography taken. M.Summerfield and D.R.Adams succeeded in penetrating a further 20 ft. into the 1st. cave at Llanelidan and were able to see round a bend. It will be necessary to dig at least as far again but the results are favourable.

P.Evans, D.Stevenson, M.Summerfield, J.M.James and D.R.Adams. Guests were members of the Severn Valley Caving Club and members from the Cave and Crag Club.

Expedition to Ogof Dydd Byraf

17 July

P.J.Appleton succeeded in making a further extension but became trapped for a short while in a constricted space. Further blasting was done in other sections.

Expedition to Copper Mine near Ludlow

13 July

Here there were reputed to be 2 adits and a shaft in a small coppice. However, these could not be found in dense undergrowth. The mine was first worked by monks from Wenlock Friary at a very early date. A further visit would seem worthwhile in the winter when the undergrowth had died off.

J. & T.J.Davies.

Expedition to mines in the Elan Valley

23 July

The first visit was made to a mine on the banks of the Afon Methan. The approach involved a long walk through innumerable bogs laden down with ladders etc. The object of the visit, a small 30 ft. shaft was laddered first and proved to be a dead end. An adit higher up the hill was entered for 10 yards but was found to be blind and to have been entered previously by G.W.Hall in 1959. A further adit was found to be a dead end after only 20 yards. No further entrances could be found. A mine at Tylach between Llanidloes and Rhader was also visited. An enthusiastic farmer showed the party some prospect holes some distance over the hills. Three of these were entered but were not extensive.

Later it was learnt that the main workings were reached from an adit driven underneath the farm buildings which had been missed. These must have been extensive as the spoil heaps were very large.
J. & T.J.Davies

Scottish Expedition

13-15 July

13. July: Smoo Cave was visited (prev. vis. D.R.A. 1959).

14. July: Two swallets visited by G.Bamford a year earlier were found to be more accessible and with the removal of a few boulders could be a good dig. Nearby a small cave was found, ending in a boulder choke after 60 ft, and decorated with good formations. A small passage near the entrance also ended in a choke. This cave had good possibilities with a little work. Several other sinks and a large shakehole were examined.

15. July: The Traligill Caves were examined. Some small caves were examined above the Traligill River and also the main Traligill Cave. Near Elphin three members of the Grampian Speleological Group were encountered, engaged in work on two resurgences. It also seemed that the British Speleological Association had been at work in the area. The area is worthy of further attention and the G.S.G. has a club hut at Elphin. There is vast potential in swallets, shakeholes etc.
R. & G.Bamford, J.Goerner

Expedition to Grange Rigg Pot

16 July

The entrance is situated in a shallow sink hole. The entrance is a crawl followed by stooping for 50 ft. The pitches are 50 ft., 10 ft., 15 ft., 35 ft., 15 ft., 20 ft., A full description appears in D.Heap: Potholing beneath the Northern Pennines.
D.Brandon, D.Marshall and 3 members of R.C.A.T.S.

Expedition to Lancaster Hole, Yorkshire. SD/664.807

23 July

The entrance pitch is 110 ft. The party visited the master cave and returned via Stake pot and Montagu Cavern. A full description of the system is given in Gemmell and Myers; Underground Adventure (Dalesman).

Expedition to Kingsdale, Yorkshire

24 July

Digging on Scales moor, the entrance to Remembrance Pot discovered 2 years previously, was made safe by blasting a large boulder. A shakehole near Spectacle Pot, SD/712.778 was dug and looked promising.
G.K.Lyon, A.K.Lyon, D.Marshall.

Expedition to the Van Mine, Llandiloes, SN/943.879

31 July

This was one of the biggest lead producers in the central Welsh area, yielding 96,739 tons of galena, 28,424 tons of zinc ore and 771,557 ounces of silver during it's working life. The main vein ran from NNE to SSW, five shafts being sunk along its length. The spoil from the processing plant stretches across a vast area and has been made to

appear much worse by the dumping of tons of silver paper. The buildings of the plant are in ruins and it was difficult to envisage what they contain.

Above the spoil in the valley is the mine reservoir on the southern bank of which stands a substantial rectangular powder house with a locked door. Above the spoil to the north is the site of the main shaft, which has run in. The Engine House has completely disintegrated but its high back chimney stands complete. The second chimney stands on a further engine mounting but has lost its top. The balance bob box still stands in the shaft pit. Across the valley to the SSW 1½ miles distant a further engine House and spoil heap could be seen but was found to be within the Clywedog Dam site and could not be examined.
D.R.Adams, Miss M.Preston.

Meeting

5 August

1. Log read and letters discussed.
2. A lecture series had now been organised.
3. The 'Shropshire Star' had proposed that the club put on an exhibition in Shrewsbury in September. After some discussion it was agreed to do this.
4. D.J. Smith was accepted as an Associate Member.
5. The tacklemaster was looking into Horlicks Emergency Rations.
6. M.James would be bringing wet suits to the next meeting for inspection.
7. The Llanymynech Survey and South Shropshire Supplement were each half way towards publication.
8. The Treasurer would be asked to produce an audited balance sheet for the AGM.
9. The AGM would be held at the Royal Victoria Hotel.

Expedition to Swinsto Hole

6 August

This system at SD/695.775 was found to be in flood on arrival and became more wet further in the system.

The first pitch of 20 ft. is followed by a long crawl (1050ft.) ending at another pitch of 20 ft. Further pitches: 40 ft., 15 ft., 100 ft. follow but the last of these was not descended due to the water.
D.G.Marshall, J.Norton, D.Stevenson, J.M.James.

Expedition to White Scar and Skirwith Caves

7 August

Visits to these two popular Yorkshire Show Caves were made. Neither were really interesting.
P.J.Appleton.

Expedition to Callow Hill Lead Mines, Minsterely

7 August

Although partly quarried away for roadmaking, one shaft was found, also a level revealed in a quarry face. The latter was entered after a 15 ft. rope scramble down the quarry face. It went 38 paces to a timbered stope or shaft containing rotten ladders with ore shutes at one side. This was found to break surface above the main quarry face but was too dangerous for a descent.
M.Newton, B.Shuker, K.Lock.

2nd Expedition to Cefn-y-Gist

12 August

The shakehole noted on the previous visit was again dug and a depth of 10 ft. reached. Further digging is necessary.

P.J.Appleton.

Expedition to the S.Shropshire Mines

13 August

A geological party from Nottingham University was escorted around Callow Hill, The Roman Gravels and Shelve Village. A hole was noted in a dressing floor below the Mine office at Snailbeach.

R.M.Haszard, D.R.Adams, Miss M.Preston, 2 members of Nottingham University Staff.

Expedition to Brasgyll Area

Digging was commenced at Pont-y-Trap rising which was found to be issuing strongly. Some blasting was done but further work is necessary before entry can be made.

D.Marshall, J.Norton, P.J.Appleton, D.Stevenson, M.James, M & R.Beatty of W.C.C and M.Williams.

Expedition to Pool Park & Aber Sychnant Area, Minera 16 August

Shakeholes at SJ/248.505 were examined but were not promising due to chokes. G.A.S. Pot in the valley, of the Aber Sychnant was revisited (pre. vis 19.5.63) but there was no evidence of the former 20 ft. shaft. All the fissures in the Limestone Gorge SJ/247.511 were re-examined and several promising places were found. 12 holes were examined but most were choked or too tight though some would repay digging. The area is however promising hydrologically and should penetrate the active Minera system. Water from the area reappears at Park Day Level at 680 ft OD, 520 feet below the swallets with a presumed master cave horizon at 850 ft. OD.

P.J.Appleton.

2nd Expedition to the Pont-y-Trap Rising

20 September

Some digging, with little progress.

D.Marshall, J.Norton, D.Stevenson, J.M.James.

2nd Expedition to Aber Sychnant Gorge

21 August

Due to rain, the stream was found to be a roaring torrent. It was decided to dig in the 3rd. rift, encouraged by a draught. After some digging the rift was found to be 5 ft. wide and about 20 ft. deep, being choked by boulders. Blasting destroyed some of the boulders. The dig is promising and will be tackled with better equipment.

D.G.Marshall, J.Norton, P.J.Appleton, D.Stevenson, M.James, a guest was with the party.

Expedition to Rhydynwyn Area, Flintshire

23 August

A lead mine shaft at SJ/1979.6624 was descended for 80 ft. to a rubble floor. A crawl from here for 30 ft. led to a 10ft high chamber. A passage from here had a natural roof with solution features. The passage ended in a crawl which requires digging but appears to become

larger further on. The point is promising with a little digging and does not appear to have been passed by the miner.

A working spar mine near Glan-yr-Afon at SJ/1860.6755 was visited. A drift was driven through the spar at a slope of about 1 in 2 for 100 yards where it levels out. Water was pumped to the surface from this point. A number of large stopes were followed to their terminations from the bottom and the spar vein was 30 ft. in width. An emergency route up ladders was followed to the surface. P.J.Appleton, a guest was D.Dicker.

3rd. Expedition to the Aber Sychnant Gorge 25 August

Much material blasted on the previous visit was removed with a bucket and after removing a few more boulders the tight descent led to the bottom of the rift. 2 small holes, apparently inlets were found, also a choked shaft continuing for a further estimated 15 ft. This will be re-examined and is most promising. D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton.

Expedition to Trecastle Mine, Conwy SH/761.746 28 August

The extensive heaps can be seen above the hamlet of Henryd. The first feature of interest is the large wood and cast iron waterwheel. This was an overshot wheel but the leat is no longer in evidence. The wheel was last worked in 1912. The mine was probably worked till 1955 according to papers found in the mine office. A flue led up the hillside to a short chimney and to the south of the flue were two adits. The southernmost of these forked after a short distance but both forks were blind. The second level was also blind but had a winze some 30 ft. deep.

Access to the main drive appeared to be via a shaft fitted with wood ladders and topped by a wire cage. The area would seem well worth a visit, if only to measure and photograph the wheel.

I.J.Brown, D.R.Adams. Guests were P.Heath, T.L.Handley and Miss M.Preston.

Expedition to Yorkshire 27-28 August

A number of shakeholes near Braida Garth were visited and found to be promising.

Yordas Cave was visited, also some active resurgences in Chapel-le-Dale at SD/718.750.

A number of other caves in the area were noted, and Dale Barn Cave visited.

D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton. A guest was with the party.

4th Expedition to the Aber Sychnant Gorge 29 August

Digging was continued in the choked rift and a further 3ft. of progress made, a few tight holes were noted.

D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton.

Expedition to Mine/Cavern at Nant Alyn, Rhydymwyn 31 August

The low section at the end of the cavern was extended about 6 ft. by digging. A winze was found at the end of the rift, descending for 40 ft. The rift was climbed but became choked with boulders after 30 ft.

G.K.Lyon, D.Brandon, P.J.Appleton. A guest was A.Hawkins.

27th Expedition to the Brasgyll Gorge 6 August

The mineshaft was uncapped ready for exploration and an ironstone mine in the pass near Ruthin was visited.

G.Bamford, T.J.Davies, M.Hinks.

Expedition to Brendon Hill Mine, Somerset 1 September

This mid-nineteenth century ironstone mine is entered from high up on the hill. Several lower drainage adits are blocked. The ore was dropped down a 1 in 4 gradient on the surface and then by tubs and canal barges to Blue Anchor. A 20 ft. rope was used to gain entry to the entrance stope and the workings could be followed for 50 yards, with a good bed of haematite.

C.Lane, T.J. and J.Bloggs and Davies Jun.

Meeting 2 September

1. The club had received its first request for Associate membership from overseas (J.Davies of Texada Mines).
 2. M.J.Beattie of Wrexham was accepted as full member. 3. M.James had collected a dry suit for examination.
 4. Photographic Dept. were reminded of exhibits required for the B.S.A. Conference, A.G.M. and Shropshire Star Exhibitions.
 5. Publications in hand included the Yearbook, 'North Wales Caves', South Shropshire Supplement and Llanymynech Survey.
- 16 members present. D.R.Adams in the Chair

Expedition to Ogof Dydd Byraf 10 September

All tackle necessary for scaling the aven in the lower series was taken to that point. The aven was climbed to a point 8 ft. above the W.C.C.'s 30 ft section. From here a climb was made into a low passage. From here a tight squeeze led into a small chamber where two ways on were blocked by a boulder choke.

M.Beatty, P.J.Appleton, Guests were A.Hawkins and three members of W.C.C.

Expedition to Llanymynech Ogof and Mine near Llanrhaeddr-ym-Mochnant 4 September

After photography at Llanymynech the party moved on to the second venue where a magnificent waterfall at Pistyll Rhaeddr was seen. A nearby mine was not explored: SJ/075.285

R.King, C.Lears, J.M.Davies.

5th Expedition to Aber Sychnant Gorge 5 September

About 1 ft of progress was made but blasting will be necessary before further progress is made.

P.J.Appleton with H.Edwards

Expedition to the Mines in the Marazion-Porthleven and Camborne Area, Cornwall **8 September**

The first mine to be visited was the Great Work where the engine house still remained together with an open shaft containing sufficient room for the cages and ladder way. Signs of working in the 1930s were evident.

The second mine was Godolphin, one of the earliest Cornish mines. Nearby an unidentified engine house was seen which would need a little work and time to preserve it.

The substantial engine house of Prosper United Mines was seen and the magnificent engine house of Tregurtha Downs Mine visited.

Holmans Museum of engineering relics was seen at Camborne, also the C.E.P.S. preserved 90 inch pumping engine at Wheal Agar. This last worked in 1955. Nearby the East Pool winding engine was also preserved. It's beam operated two large winding drums.

The South Crofty Mine was next visited. This still employs 400 men. A pumping engine was preserved there, but not inspected. Dolcoath Mine was seen on the return.

R.M.Haszard and D.R.Adams.

Expedition to Botallack and Levant Mines, St.Just, Cornwall **4th. September**

Botallack Mine is one of the most impressive mine sites in the country, being perched on and over the edge of the precipitous cliffs dropping sheer to the sea. An extensive plant and large shaft is first seen, but 2 engine houses are lower down the cliff. The first powered an inclined (32°) haulage shaft, the second a pumping engine. Levant Mine is similarly perched on a cliff edge and the workings extend for 1½ miles beneath the sea. A firm is currently attempting to breach a hole in one of the workings 30 ft. below the sea bed in order to re-open the mine. Flourescein is used to detect the point of breach. See R.M.Haszard, "Levant Mine". See also "A guide to the Mines of West Cornwall by D.B.Barton).

D.R.Adams.

Expedition to Mines at Rhydymwyn, N.Wales **4th September**

A deep shaft at SJ/2029.6410 was examined and found to be 500 ft. deep. There is much old staging and pump rods. It was not descended. A shaft at Pant-y-Mym Vein was examined (SJ/2082.6514). Reconstructed during the last war, the shaft was intended for use in winding or in preference to the Penybryn Shaft at Halkyn. The depth was about 450 ft. Olywn Goch Shaft was finally visited and the headgear examined. In addition to mining limestone About 20 tons of lead ore per week is gained. G.K.Lyon, P.J.Appleton.

2nd. Expedition to mines and Rhydymwyn and 6th to Aber Sychnant Gorge **11th September**

Taylor's Shaft at SJ/2043.6780 was examined and the pump rods were intact. The shaft was probably used for pumping from the deepest parts of Hendre Mines into the Old Halkyn Deep Level. At Aber Sychnant Gorge a 60 ft. Mine shaft was descended at SJ/2464.5091. The shaft is 40 ft. through limestone blocks then fissured limestone. A cave passage is intersected, one branch of which was backfilled and the other ending after 40 ft. The shaft foot was littered with dead sheep.

The 5th. fissure in the gorge was dug out and entry made into a small chamber with no exit.

Some progress was made in the Rift Cave dig and a hole was opened allowing a view down to a 10 ft. drop. A large boulder was blasted and the dig now looks promising.

G.K.Lyon, D.Brandon, D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton, P.Summerfield, D.Stevenson, and a guest.

B.S.A. Conference **9 - 12. September**

Three members represented the Club at the B.S.A. Conference at Bristol. D.Adams gave a lecture on Llanymynech Ogof and C.Lears won a second prize in the Photo-Salon and the Conference, itself was well attended and extremely successful.

On the 11th. September, D.R.Adams represented the N.W.C.A. at a meeting of regional Councils held at Bristol. Items discussed included the problem of access, a C.N.C.C. booklet on access instructions grant aid, cooperation with other sporting bodies, international relations etc. The meeting was significant in that it may be the first step towards the formation of a United front in British caving.

Expedition to Penyghent Long Churn **17 September**

This was found to be a high rift cave comprising an 80ft. entrance pitch followed shortly by a second pitch of 25ft. and a final pitch of 40ft. The pitches were wet and the cave was not of the most interesting type.

D.Brandon, P.J.Appleton, 5 S.C.A.T. Members.

Expedition to Aber Sychnant, Minera **22nd. September**

In an evening trip a successful blasting operation was carried out in the 40 ft. deep rift removing a rock bench constricting the dig. Debris left to be cleared at a later date.

D.Brandon, G.K.Lyon, D.G.Marshall, P.J.Appleton.

PART TWO

SHROPSHIRE TRAGEDIES

A collection of old Ballads Commemorating Industrial Tragedies in the Coalbrookdale Coalfield

By I. J. Brown

At the turn of the present century, ballads were popular in the local public houses, especially if they commemorated some sad event. Life was hard for the working class but, like today, there seem to have been a core of persons who rejoiced in their misery. One gratifying feature of these 'misorics' is that they were said to be sold on card "for the benefit of the bereaved" at 1d. or 2d. each. Whether this money ever actually got to this worthy cause is not known but at this time, one would say, unlikely.

Most of the Ballads were written by the Morgan family of the St. Georges area. Nothing is known of the Morgans except that, from their writings, they appear to have had some education but from their knowledge of industry they must have been working men. Advertisements in local newspapers in 1954 failed to bring in a single scrap of information.

Six ballads are known. Two deal with local murders in the early 19th. Century. One describes the murder of a bible class teacher by one of his students in furtherance of theft, the other, the 'Stirchley Tragedy' describes the murder of "a poor Russian pole, Barnatt Zusman by name", an itinerant who was robbed and murdered for his wares in Stirchley about 1815. The rest of the ballads are given in this paper.

The earliest mining ballad is inscribed "A copy of three poor colliers who were killed at a pit near Ketley, December 6th. 1851 by Jeremiah Morgan, price 1d". The tragedy seems to have been the result of foul play or sabotage as someone partly cut the ropes before the miners descended.

By a strange coincidence just 51 years and 13 days later a similar accident (this time accidental) occurred at the Rock Mine. Ketley, killing three men, brothers' Elias and Samuel Churn, and Henry Attwood, aged 16. The next ballad concerns a Dawley mine "The Springwell Pit Accident", which occurred at Little Dawley, Shropshire. The Mines Inspectors Report on this mishap is headed "The Appalling Pit Accident at Dawley" and the Wellington Journal gave it a whole page.

The third ballad is of a tragedy in the present century at the Kemberton pit, near Madeley, a mine which is currently being salvaged before final closure. The fourth and final ballad does not deal with an accident but with a 26 week strike. To those concerned the results of a long strike were similar to those of a fatality, for this was before the welfare state. As will be seen, this ballad is not signed except by a pen name. The mines of the area have produced many poets but somehow, the writer cannot help thinking that this one is by a Morgan, The style is very similar and indeed, almost exactly the same as the ballad on the Ketley Mine.

A copy of verses written on the
SUDDEN DEATH OF THREE POOR COLLIERS
who were killed at a pit near Ketley
December 6th. 1851

By Jeremiah Morgan -Price 1d.

Come, all you people far and near,
Unto these mournful lines give oar,
Which are most shocking to relate,
Of three poor colliers and their fate.

They came unto their work quite soon,
Not knowing of their sudden doom,
As now the pit they did descend,
How soon their mortal life did end.

Pritchard, and Hayward, and Rigby,
Two of them men, and one a boy,
The rope it broke and down they fell,
That shrieks and cries, no one can tell.

It strikes our hearts with terrors height,
In the dead hour of the night,
Some evil person cut the rope,
and two were killed at a stroke.

The men killed dead and boy alive,
But for twelve hours he did survive,
For death to him, as we do know,
Had given a sure and fatal blow.

The news soon reached the widows ears,
And filled them with sad cries and tears,
As to the spot they did repair,
Their cries did ring along the air.

Now to the widows I would say,
 "Cast all your mournful grief's away,
And on the Lord cast all your care,
 Who always hears the widows prayer".

And to the parents of the boy,
 (I do not wish to pass them by)
"I hope you'll cast your grief's away,
 and to the Lord begin and pray"

You colliers lift your hearts on high,
 To God, who rules the earth and sky,
He only can defend your head,
 While toiling for your daily bread.

Some early to the work do come,
 Perhaps before night are carried home,
With broken bones or mangled flesh,
 But these were seized with sudden death.

To God each morning bend the knee,
 And ask his Grace, your guide to be,
He only from danger can free,
 From sudden death deliver thee.

To any person that can tell,
 How the sad Accident befell,
They may receive one hundred pound
 If out the mischief can be found.

And if they don't confess it soon,
 They will meet at th'day of doom,
And then the sentence will be given,
 No murderer shall enter heaven.

May all dear friends now ready stand,
 Ready for deaths cold icy hand,
That when the signal shall be given,
 "We all may meet with them in heaven"

THE SPRINGWELL PIT ACCIDENT Little Dawley, Shropshire

On the 6th of December, 1872, at a few minutes past 4 pm as eight unfortunate colliers were ascending the pit, the chain suddenly broke precipitating them 50 yd. down the pit and hurrying them, into eternity.

Names

William Bailey 21, married	Allan Wyke 20, single
John Parker 22, single	John Davies 19, single
John Yale 21, single	Robert Smith 18, single
Edward Jones 21, single	Isiah Skelton 15, single

They were all interred in one vault, at the Parish Church, Dawley on Tuesday, December 10th.

That world of care and trouble,
Daily, nightly, we bewail;
The loss of father, brother, cousin,
Or relative, - sads the tale,
Pelsall calamity scarcely o'er,
When awful news comes to our ears,
That eight poor colliers have departed
Out of this mournful vale of tears.

'Twas on the sixth day of December,
At Springfield Pit, sad to relate,
In Dawley field, in brave old Shropshire,
Eight healthy men met their sad fate.
Their work being done, for home preparing,
And to the bottom they had come,
Little thinking, their days were numbered,
And that they'd never see their home.

The hand had started, eight ascending,
Cheerful as the noonday sun,
When little thinking, for a moment,
Every man, his race had run.
When, lo! a whirl that colliers call it,
Took its awful course, we're told,
And dashed the eight men to the bottom,
Smashed to atoms. But their souls -

Were wafted, quick as lightning,
To their maker, up on high;
Who gives us colliers daily warning,
That our end is very nigh.
We, who toil and bravely labour,
Hard to earn our daily bread;
We cannot tell the day, nor hour,
But what we may be brought home dead.

A fearful night was at the bottom,
men cut and bruised from hood to toe;
with tons of chain and iron upon them,
Which filled the colliers hearts with woe.
But fear and danger at such a moment,
Never enters a collier's heart;
So they toiled with anxious labour,
In hope that some hurt may have a spark,

Of life within their mangled bodies,
To cheer them toiling down below;
But strength and hope had nearly vanished,
Only two could breathe, but lo,
Their prayers to God the only giver,
of life and health, were quickly raised;
That he had spared those few below,
To repent of sin and mend their ways.

So that at every moment,
They may stand for ever blest;
And always ready to meet danger,
To be sure of eternal rest.
So may Christ the loved redeemer,
Fit each collier for above;
And unite each one as brother,
And turn all hatred into love.

So that all at the latest trumpet,
Will be called to our Saviour's side,
Where all dangers and troubles ended,
For ever there with Christ to abide.
Where songs to God through eternity,
Mingle with the blest above,
May each collier feel the blessing,
With all strife turned into love.

May He bless the widowed mother,
And the offspring by her side;
May He crown the sorrowing mothers, -
Fathers, sisters and brothers guide.
And each day give them grace and glory,
To guide their feet in paths of right;
That when their journey here is ended,
He'll take them to eternal light.

Composed by W.R. Morgan, Artist, 3, King St , Dawley.

IN MEMORIAM

A poem in Memory of the Seven Men and Youths who lost their lives by the snapping of the Wire Rope at Kemberton Pits, Madeley Salop, on Sunday evening, 10 o'clock, December 4th, 1910.

They who bear the front of battle,
Shirk not in life's daily fray.
Take their part amidst the dangers
Which beset toil's Rugged way,
Heroes in the World's great struggle,
More than Kingdoms are the stake,
Life and home and dearest kindred
Are the risks those colliers take.

Cheerfully they leave their homesteads
Ere the morning sky is bright,
To the toil down the deep mines,
Out of hearing, out of sight.
We o'erlook them, we forget them,
Till some agonising cry
Bursts upon us, calls attention,
Bids us see how colliers die.

Go to Kemberton, near Madeley,
Death has hushed election strife,
He has raided swift and sudden,
Full upon the blush of life.
Politics to Him are shadows,
Time, or place, or people naught,
Count or collier, calls unbidden,
Comes unwelcome and unsought.

Look with me a moment picture,
Scene last Sabbath evening calm,
A miner's cottage, tea things set out,
Little ones on lap or arm,
Peace enjoyment, life and beauty,
'Home Sweet Home', loves bliss is there,
But alas!, what swift transition,
From the full to vacant chair.

"Good-night, daddy", from the prattlers,
Good-night Jack, or good-night Tom,
Wives or husbands never dreaming
Of the long, long night to come,
And the separation drawing,
every moment, deadly near,
What a long good-night was spoken
By those toilers hold so dear.

Duty called, these men were ready,
Though they'll ne'er descend again.
Ready, their last Sabbath evening.
To go down the mine at ten.
Miles and Glinnistor, Stanley, Wilton,
Gough and Rogers, Jones, brave lot.
Death at last divided not.

In the cage they step together,
Tinkles now the engine bell,
Signalling that they are ready
For descending, all is well.
Davies moves the control lever
Starts the cage upon its way,
Barely forty yards a going.
Suddenly it breaks away.

Snaps the wire rope, grinding, crashing,
To the sump the cage has sped,
Carrying with it these poor fellows,
To be numbered with the dead,
Providential that those others,
Missed their comrades hapless fate,
So it seems on some occasions
It is well to be some late.

Sympathise with all bereaved ones,
Christ will surely give his grace,
Pray for those, this sad disaster,
In such sorrow keen has placed,
Here with Christmas close upon them,
Doubly sharp their loss they'll feel,
Christians pray that Heavens great comfort
May the broken hearted heal.

Original by S.T. Morgan, Ketley, Wellington, Salop

December, 5th, 1910

Please note that part of the proceeds from the sale of this poem will be given by the Author for any fund for the relief of the bereaved ones.

LINES ON THE SHROPSHIRE STRIKE

Commenced Feb 13, ended by arbitration, Aug 12, 1886. The men worked about three weeks pending the decision. The strike thus lasting 26 weeks, about 400 men being affected.

Two and twenty weeks the chimneys,
Failed to issue any smoke;
Hammers that were once so noisy,
Never then the stillness broke.

Tools that were bright and glossy,
Now with rust are cankered in,
All around is sad and dreary,
Showing the effect of sin.

Men with hopeless, cheerless faces,
Wander listlessly about;
Children's garments worn to tatters,
Fail to keep the cold wind out,

Suffering for the good of others,
On the principle of right;
Knowing that the Lord will help them,
In the fight against the might.

Hark what breaks the solemn silence?
Have we dreamt the time away;
Is it true we see the hammers,
sending forth their fiery spray?

What has caused the smiling faces,
Which were once so sad and thin?
Smoking chimneys, sounding hammers,
Makes them feel a joy within.

As this is the greatest struggle,
Mill or forgerman ever knew;
Let it teach us all the lesson,
Unity has brought us through.

Now to all who have assisted
Us, in this our fight, so long;
Do not yet relax your efforts,
Until our position's strong.

All who work in mills and forges,
 Foundry, fitting shop or mine;
Look through our subscription papers,
 You'll know where to spend your coin.

Patronise the open hearted,
 Those who once our children fed;
Show contempt to those who slighted
 Us, when we were wanting bread.

"NIL DESPERANDUM"

Printed at the office of the 'Labour
 Tribune', West Bromwich.

VAN'S NOMINAL FAMILY

By G.W. Hall

In 1869, after several years of persevering search, the great lead ore deposit of the Van Mine, in Montgomeryshire, was revealed to the mining world. This event, the sensational rise in the shares of the New Company formed to take over and the virtually simultaneous discoveries at Roman Gravels and Tankerville, were instrumental in bringing to an end the mining stock depression of the 1860s. Together, they set on foot a great mining boom, of which the greatest effects were felt in Wales and Shropshire but whose echoes extended throughout British mining.

Excitements of one sort or another were, of course, part and parcel of British Mining in the last century and the life blood of many mining stockbrokers. There were generally two or three going at once, for example J.Y. Watson's "Rage of the Roses" the Dolgellau Gold Rush, East Caradon's at £55, silver at Ludcott, cobalt at Keswick, Lovells, Rosewarnes, Tavistock, even copper at Renfrewshire.

A common feature of this sort of business was to borrow the name of some prosperous (or at least popular) mine, add to it some distinguishing prefix or suffix and apply the compound to a neighbouring (or not neighbouring) property in the hope that the latter would benefit by reflected glory. Some magnificent and confusing examples of this practice might be quoted from Cornwall, and elsewhere as well as cases where the derivative proved a greater success than the original but the aim of these notes is to trace the phenomenon as manifested after the rise of the Van Mine.

I have so far found seventeen instances of usage of the Van name, relating to sixteen different properties, namely; Central Van, East Van, Lower Van, Llanidloes Wheal Van, North Van, (New) North Van, North Van Mines, two West Vans, Van Consols, Gaifron Wheal Van, Van United, two New Vans, Great West Van, South Van, and Little Van. Some account of each follows.

Central Van, formed in 1873 with a capital of £50,000, of which £38,000 was given for the property of but 60 acres, was nearest to Van itself, as its shaft is only 160 yards east by North of Seaham's Shaft. Central Van's Shaft was sunk vertically to a depth of 72 fathoms but since the fields belonging to the company was very tiny nothing could be done from it and subsequent operation were confined to the Llwynllys crosscut, which had been started at the same time. This adit is at NGR 945.878 and was eventually extended for more than 270 yards. At least two lodes were intersected and in one, near the adit mouth, some lead was got, and a winze sunk to the 15 fathom level, but no production resulted and the company ceased operations in 1879.

At the head of Cwm Dylluan, on the line of the main lode is East Van, scene of a determined trial by substantially the same proprietors as Van. These workings are largely described by O.I.T. Jones in his Memoir on the district, (1921), but in all this exploration, which lasted from 1871 to 1882, no success was achieved, although one freak crosscut was entirely in ore, and sent the hopes of the adventurers, and the share price, soaring.

East north east, and lower down the Cwm, are the two shafts of Glangwdon mine, one, 50 fathoms deep. Originally carried on under that name, in 1878 an attempt was made by Mr. Lefeaux to obtain additional capital for his concern as Lower Van and Nantiago Mines, but subscribers did not come forward and in the following year it was offered for sale by the liquidator.

Mr. Lefeaux appears to have been an unfortunate man. Twice the proprietor of Pen y Clun, on neither of which occasions the mine was productive, he is believed to have refused £60,000 for it in the early 1870s and a few years afterwards, it was valueless. He started, but gave up, the crosscut in which Captain Williams later found the Van mine and it is said that in the end he was found dead in Nantiago Mine Office without a penny in his pocket.

Not surprisingly in view of its great strength, it was supposed that the Van lode might be found yet further east, and one of the attempts to prove it was by the Llanidloes Wheal Van Company, between 1870 and 1873. Their property was beyond the alluvium of the Afon Cerist, at NGR/974.893 where a dump marks the site of the shaft, once 60 fathoms deep. Some lead was seen here and considerable quantities of gas issued from the lode, as happened at Van, but the mine never approached success.

The first user of North Van appears to have been Sampson Trevethan, for the estate of Neuadd Llwyd, in the Trannon valley, of which he was lessee, and where some small trials were carried out. In 1871, however, the name was pre-empted by the Van people, who registered a Company to explore the lodes of the farm Geseilfa, adjoining Neuadd Llwyd to the east. Subsequently this Company's name was changed to New North Van and a shallow adit was driven west for 50 yards and a deeper one east for more than 100 yards with winzes in the upper one. These were on different lodes but it was supposed that they would intersect and it was intended to connect the two levels. However, although the lodes were large and some lead frequently seen, overall appearances were so unpromising that work was stopped at the end of 1873 and £7,850 or slightly over half the nominal capital, was returned to the Shareholders.

The prefix evidently had attractions, for no sooner was this Company wound up, then the prospectus of North Van Mines Ltd. appeared. The new Company had a nominal capital of £60,000 of which two-thirds was to go to the vendors of the properties, namely West Nanty (subsequently Wye Valley) and North Van. This latter was not one of the mines already mentioned but, apparently Severn Water, which is some way due west of Van. It does not appear that the Company ever started work.

Immediately west of Van is Pen y Clun, an older mine and once very rich at shallow levels, the working of which persuaded Mr. Edward Morris and Captain Williams to embark on the search to the east which was so richly rewarded. Surprisingly no attempt was made to float this mine as a public company on the high water of the great mining excitement, when, perhaps it might have been called West Van, or even Old Van. However, when in 1869 Mr. J.P. Endean, the stockbroker began to put out comment on the property he called West Van, Mr. John Lean called, his attention to the proper place for that name. Endean's trials seem to have been those at NGR/898.864, between Aberdaunant and Gwestyn mines.

Between Pen y Clun mine and the Afon Clywedog are the workings of Glyn and Bryntail mines, the latter very old, perhaps the oldest in the district. It was restarted in 1835 by Mr. Jones of Pwll Melyn, Flint and carried on after him by Dick y Minwr Bach, and so worked more or less continuously but with indifferent success until the discovery of Van. This, of course, put new life into the concern which was reformed as Van Consols, and which became the speculative leader of the district. The story of this company, from then until its final collapse in 1884, though most interesting and amusing, is far too long to relate here, but all facets of shaky 19th century mining were displayed, from fictitious shares, muddled books, wild reports, Directors making off with plant, to the bottom of Murrays Shaft falling into an incautiously expanded stope.

At one time, in 1879, two firms of solicitors, two or three firms of public accountants and three liquidators, with their solicitors, were engaged in trying to sort out the company's affairs. Through all those vicissitudes, for over 30 years, Captain James Roach clung to the management, but ever optimistic, he never achieved success. The extensive workings of these mines were carried out from a deep adit by the Clywedog NGR/912.870 and Western Shaft 30 fathoms deep nearby.

Gundry's Shaft, 100 yards south west of Bryn Tail farm is 50 fathoms below deep adit, and Murray's Shaft, 100 yards east of the farm, is 70 fathoms below. Some very wide stopes were worked between those shafts particularly in the deeper levels. Glyn Mine, 650 yards ENE of Bryn Tail Farm worked from 1874 to 1879 as a separate company was at other times incorporated in Van Consols, but though the shaft was sunk to about the level of the deep adit the mines were never connected underground.

In passing it should be mentioned that O.T. Jones is in error in stating that Pen y Clun was once part of Van Consols, they were always separate.

In 1869 a prospectus appeared for Gaifron Wheal Van, with a capital of £12,500 of which £5,000 was for the property, accompanied by a favourable report by a Captain John Reynolds. Unfortunately for the promoters, Captain Reynolds soon pointed out that the report was on the old Gaifron Mine, while the new company had only a few fields on the opposite side of the river, where no mining work had ever been done.

Van United, whose prospectus also appeared in 1869, with an encouraging report from Captain J.H. Hitchins, consulting engineer to Devon Great Consols, was an attempt to restart the old Hafod Foddgur mine. Little fresh was done but the company managed to excite unfavourable comments for its heavy London expenses.

New Van was another disputed cognomen. In 1872 a prospectus appeared under this name, of a company with a capital of £30,000 to work the mine later known as West Wye Valley, for which two thirds of the capital was to be given. The title was at once disputed by Mr. Edean (again) who claimed it was already in use for his trials between Aberdaunant and Gwestyn, but although litigation was mentioned, nothing came of the matter for in spite of a favourable report by Captain Williams himself, the shares of the new company were insufficiently subscribed for.

Remote from these properties was the great West Van of which rather unkind contemporary comment was that the only thing Great about it was its distance West of Van. It is, in fact in Cardiganshire and comprised those workings about the big bend in the road 3/4 mile from the summit of the Plynlimon pass. The Old Engine Shaft is at NGR 794.829 and Eliza's shaft is 215 yards west. This mine was at one time known as West Esgairlle which is confusing since a Company of this name held the Castell mine, and Hamilton's shaft workings, a mile to the south west. The jibe on the name was, in fact, rather unfair, since the mine was at that time a promising one and some very good ore ground was found but it failed to hold from level to level. This company, and the next, were both instigated by the same principals as Van Consols.

South Van was close to the bank of the Severn at NGR 907.846 where between 1870 and 1873 a shaft was sunk to a 40 fathoms level but although some good lead was found it was not sufficient to take a mine.

Last and least is Little Van, said to be adjacent to Van Consols and Pen y Clun. I have been unable to find either prospectus or sign of workings.

It will be seen that of those fifteen concerns or promotions, none became successful mines under those names, although Great West Van did pay a dividend, and only two achieved any significant production. Only eight received serious trial and five appear to have been got up solely in the hope of selling shares, while two were worked privately. Similar figures might be prepared for many of the 19th century 'rushes' but if we criticise our predecessors' methods, at least they had a go, whether it was to do some mining, or just to make some money selling shares.

Finally I ought to point out that this article is not a review of the Van District, of which many mines are in fact not here mentioned, but only of the use of the Van name. Excellent details are to be found in O.T.Jones' Geological Survey Memoir of which my notes may be considered a slight supplement.