

Chairman	Edwin Thorpe		clockwork@waitrose.com
Secretary	Steve Holding	07850 492036	steve holding@blueyonder.co.uk
Treasurer	Peter Sheldrake	01743 790613	petersheldrake@tiscali.co.uk
Membership	Nick Southwick	01743 792476	southwick666@btinternet.com
Editor	Eileen Bowen	01691 831450	eileen.bowen@tiscali.co.uk

Website <http://shropshiremines.org.uk>

From the Chair

Merry Christmas, to all our Members. (*We are a bit late getting this out - Ed*) I hope its a relaxing and happy time for you all. Its not to early to look forward to the New Year or to reflect on the one that's nearly over. We have achieved a lot as a Trust when you think back to the last Christmas. Not only where our Sunday opening sessions carried out but we successfully conducted School parties and visits as well as The very busy Heritage Days, and the visit by Father Christmas. All of which have demanded dedication and hard work from all of the volunteers. And who can forget the openings of the re- furbished mess room? Now at the Years end the head frame at Black Tom is almost complete and plans to move the jigs and classifier over to the site are to go ahead, giving our next years visitor even more value for there donation. Looking forward to the next year It would be nice to get as many people as possible to help out on our open days and assisting in any way they can in order to keep up the work and the fun that is to be had being a member of the Trust. I thank you all and wish you all a Happy New Year. From your Chairman Edwin Thorpe.



Photo Eileen Bowen

Edwin Thorpe
Chairman

Edwin & Nick taking a rest on Heritage Day .
(Ed)

SNAILBEACH UPDATE

The Mine Reservoir (Big Pool) had completely dried up over the summer months and many theories had been put forward. The main one being that water had been escaping from one of the old drain valves. The other theory was that water is being lost by evaporation and a prolonged lack of rain fall. Many people in authority came to have a look but at this moment in time have not come up with a definite conclusion. It was unfortunate that all the fish had to be removed. A recent visit showed that the reservoir was again holding a small amount of water.



Carp being removed from reservoir



Margaret Price standing in the dry reservoir.

Photos Nick Southwick

Excavation has been carried out at the far end of the Ore House Tunnel. The remains of an ore chute assembly for the movement of buddled Galena, presumably to the Ore House, was found. A full excavation was postponed and site re-filled until a full archaeological survey can take place.



Continued on next page



Black Tom winding head frame and sheaves are being re-erected and hopefully should be finished shortly.

Photos Nick Southwick

Black Tom Head Gear under construction.

Over the past year vital repair work has been carried out on the Snailbeach Smelt House (Reverberatory Furnace). Further work is to continue.

Please remember that this is on private land and permission must be sought to view.



Snailbeach Smelt House (Reverberatory Furnace).

Explosive Magazine lightning conductor.

A copper lightning conductor from the Explosive Magazine has been donated to the Trust by Margaret Price and Doris Hewitt. This had been removed many years ago for safe keeping by the late Joe Roberts.

Consolidation work has been carried out to the 1872 Winding Engine House, 1790 Pumping Engine House and Mine Managers Office



Nick Southwick

SANTA'S GROTTTO

The Trust's Santa's Grotto event this year was held at the Snailbeach Village Hall in conjunction with the Father Christmas Party for The Snailbeach Toddlers Group, The Snailbeach Pre-School and The Stiperstones School Children. Santa (Edwin Thorpe) as usual carried out this task with much energy and enthusiasm with help from Pam and John Davies, Mary Haines, Phil, Lara, and parents. Special thanks must go to Jill Knill for wrapping the many presents.

Nick Southwick

**Edwin in the Grotto
awaiting the onslaught.**



New Treasurer needed.

After many years of faithful service, Peter needs a rest and will retire as treasurer at the AGM. As we go to press, we need a new treasurer!

The treasurer does not need to be a Director – in some similar organisations the roles of treasurer and secretary might be undertaken by a part-time employee and this is something that we might need to consider. The only restriction is that nobody can be a Director and receive remuneration.

If you wish to volunteer or can persuade someone else to do so, please contact any director.

Snailbeach Group

(To be reviewed at next meeting)

Mike Moore
Peter Sheldrake

Tankerville Group

Eileen Bowen
Andy Browning
Steve Holding

The Bog Mine

As a result of Ivor Brown mentioning the Bog Mine in his talk at the Trust Dinner, I thought it might be an idea to provide an account of the recent history, as I know it, and my involvement in the reclamation work.

Sometime in the 1960's or 1970's Mr Fletcher, a well known builder in Shrewsbury, bought the Bog Estate. I do not know the previous owner or the extent of the estate. My understanding is that the land was in poor condition mainly due to lack of drainage and the various cottages were also in a state of dereliction so that I suspect the cost of acquisition was somewhat low. At that time there were very favourable grants for agricultural improvements and Mr Fletcher took full advantage and improved the quality and value of the land. The various cottages were also renovated. Since he was in the building industry he needed stone and hardcore so proceeded to "mine" the Bog Mine for stone which involved the demolition of several buildings that were probably by then in a parlous state. Any rubbish was tipped down the open shafts. The only buildings remaining were the Cow House, Explosives Store and the Mine Institute.

Mr Fletcher then sold off the estate and the only bit that was unsalable was the site of the mine. Apart from the three buildings the area can be best described as a mess and its only use was for indiscriminate car parking. Mr Fletcher may have got wind of the SCC's adoption of the newly introduced Derelict Land Grant Scheme and generously? gave the site to SCC in the mid 1980's.

SCC recognised that there were serious safety problems and commissioned Wardell Armstrong to carry out a survey to determine what the problems were and come up with a solution. A record search and survey located the shafts and these were properly capped. The Somme Tunnel was inspected and deemed to be safe and not in need of treatment except for the insertion of a gate. Much of the site was poorly vegetated and the University of Liverpool were commissioned to determine the best way of "greening" over the bare patches. They established trial plots with various species with the aim of finding out what species to plant. It was also found out that the site was extremely acid as opposed to Snailbeach which is highly alkaline. These trial plots can probably still be found.

It was decided that the Cow house and the Explosives Store should remain. The Mine Institute was in a fairly reasonable condition, although open to the elements, and we tried to come up with an alternative use. It is worth noting, that in the early 1980's, the school had closed and was being used as a sort of field centre by SCC Education Dept. To that end there were a series of "arks" in the playground that accommodated the children overnight. I cannot recollect that this facility was used to any great extent. There was no demand for the Institute to be used for a sort of club room since the school building could be used to that end. We looked into setting up the Institute as accommodation as a bunk room – ie basic accommodation for visitors. There did not appear to any real demand and once again the school was far more suitable. It was therefore decided to remove the upper floor and leave the lower stone structure. When demolition took place it was found that the roof timbers had been badly burnt from a fire that had occurred in the past.

After the engineering work was completed it was decided to landscape the site. All foundations etc were left in situ and the very minimum of regrading or excavation was carried out – mainly drainage. Two areas were set out for car parking. Areas bare of vegetation were dosed with lime, to reduce the acidity, and sown with Red Fescue grass which was found, from the trials, to be most suited to the site. Some trees were planted – most of them failed.

SCC now had a safe reclaimed site and decided that it be used as an informal Public Open Space and to make it more user friendly, installed several interpretation boards on the walls of the Mine Institute and at the top of the site. These boards were replaced in 2009. A pathway was cut along the dam wall of the long reservoir and several seats were placed on the site. Lastly there was an official opening ceremony to which Mr Fletcher was invited.

Apart from the replacement of the interpretation boards, the Bog Mine has changed little over the past twenty five years.

Peter Sheldrake

The slip for the 28th February 1939 shows that they were working in a very good place, for they raised 145 tons of coal and nearly 9 tons of slack, for which they got 1/10 per ton. To keep their stall safe and easy to work, they needed to build 7 roof supports (chocks), for which they were paid 1/3d each. The “yards” probably is the work they had to do drive and maintain the access roads to the face; they were made to different widths and the payments reflected this. During the week it looks like they drove 10 yards of new road, as the face advanced. This gave the basic payment which was then multiplied by various percentages which reflected past pay rises agreed since 1912; the most recent was a 1/- a day rise won in 1936. Against this, the stallsmen was charged for all explosives and detonators used in blasting the coal down, the cost of sharpening tools, a payment towards the cost of the Welfare ground, a sum for medical insurance and also unemployment insurance. There was also a deduction of ½d for every ton of coal to pay the checkweighman; this was a person nominated by the miners to work alongside the company clerk, to ensure that all the coal was weighed fairly

The pay slip shows that Messrs Link and Waldron were paid £29-4-7½d. This was shared between themselves and 9 other men who worked in their stall. This was an exceptional week; normally they employed only 4 others. It looks like not every man worked all the theoretical maximum of 5¾ shifts in the week as only 50½ shifts were worked in total. On average each member of the team would earn just over £3; although if the stallsmen had done their calculations correctly they would hope to see nearer £4 as their profit. To get this money, each man had moved 3¾ tons of coal a shift. They would have done this on their knees, working in a height of 3’9”;

David Poyner

Snailbeach Group

The Snailbeach Group held an emergency meeting on 29 October primarily to apportion duties as a result of Adrian’s resignation.

Colin Armfield has agreed to be a member of the Group and will be responsible for duty rota and organising work parties.

Mike Moore will liaise with SC, manage grass cutting contracts and be responsible for Sundays trips into Perkins Level

Andy Wood will look after publicity and the production of the Sunday Opening and Heritage Weekend leaflets.

Nick Southwick will look after the day to day management of the site and liaison with Parish Council and Village hall.

I will be Chairman and Scribe, Mine Manager, Guided Tour Bookings and liaison with English Heritage and Natural England.

The next meeting will be 25 January when we will be finalising the 2012 programme. Also by which time it is to be hoped that SC major reorganisation of the Leisure Department will have been completed and we will know the budget available and who will be looking after the site. As a result of cut backs Lynne Deane has taken early retirement.

Meanwhile SC has managed to obtain grants from EH and is in the process of erecting the headgear over Black Tom shaft and it is understood that there will be programme of building repairs in 2012.

Peter Sheldrake

Tankerville Update

As anyone who has visited the site will know, the long retaining wall between the dressing-floor level and the middle level is in a very bad state, and has been so ever since the Mines Trust took ownership. This has been the main reason why we have had to discourage visitors from exploring the site in that area.

There is now a possibility of funding by English Heritage to stabilise and repair this wall. They agreed to fund a preliminary study by architects and engineers, and the requisite supervision and advice by an archaeologist. It was necessary first to do substantial clearance of the debris on the lower level and of the vegetation, including shrubs and trees, growing on and around the existing structure. The site work for this first stage has now been largely completed. The site looks quite different now.

We now have to consider the best and most cost-effective way of proceeding, both in relation to the engineering solutions and the means of funding. The choices are not straightforward, but there is a will to get the job done and we have hopes that a workable way forward will emerge in the next few months.

The site is still open to the public for most of the year, but please keep away from that wall, both from below and from above. It is very unstable and dangerous.



Mike Worsfold



Photos Mike Worsfold



Some Unimportant Scraps from The Younger Member

The nearest cave to where we live was once owned (briefly) by King Caractacus, or so they say. It's on the side of Caer Caradoc and is invisible until you are within a few feet, so an experienced guide, such as myself, is required (fee on application). Wetsuits etc. are optional since the cave extends at most for twelve feet. The impermeable volcanic rock suggests that the cave is manmade; there is even a rudimentary seat at the back where you can eat your sandwiches if you can stand the smell of sheepsxxt and worse.

Unlike the more popular peaks such as Cnicht and the Moelwyns, the lesser hills to the east of Llan Festiniog were unknown to me. Cwm Cynfal, ESE from the village, is a delightful valley with waterfalls and leads to a rather bleak plateau. Of course the odd quarry is not unknown in this area, but if one turns up in the course of a walk 'en plein air' it's a bonus. Such is the Foel-gron quarry OL18: 745428. I passed it but then saw an inviting track back along and found an adit which after 100 feet erupted into a large chamber. Since the whole business paralleled the track it was lit at both ends. The expedition is of course fraught with great danger but is still suitable for anyone over the age of five. Wear a helmet if you wish to show off. A modest discovery – you may know it – but I found it BY MY OWN, as our son when small used to say..

With its beaches of white shellsand, rare flowers, and startling peaks like Suilven and Stac Pollaidh, Assynt in northwest Scotland is a wonderful place. It also has rain and midges; never mind, these keep the tourist numbers down. Less well known are the caves. The Allt nam Uamh basin has some of the biggest caves in the region – up to 2 kilometres in length. Most of them are for Real Cavers who like to risk drowning but the Bone Caves (OS 442: 268171) are fine for wimps like myself. After a delightful walk along the banks of the Allt nam Uamh and ascent of 700 feet one arrives at Creag nam Uamh. Surprisingly the rock is limestone and the formation of the cave system is similar to our local ones with crawls, slides and small chambers. The site is of important geological significance, has evidence of human occupation and adaptation, and is protected because of the bone fragments of lynx, reindeer and polar bear which are to be found there. It so happened that a party was being taken round by a guide so we tacked on the end – most informative. The whole area is one of the most beautiful in Scotland so we're going back there in 2012!

As they say: Onwards and upwards – also inwards, downwards, backwards.....

Richard Silk

Onslow Steam Fair

The mining display was rearranged for our now-traditional appearance at the Steam Rally at Onslow on August Bank Holiday weekend .

The display is centred on Stuart Tomlins' low-loader, with railway lines radiating from it communicating with an Eimco rocker-shovel at one end. The shovel (spectacularly noisy) picks up coarsely broken rock and dumps it in a tipping mine truck which is winched onto the low-loader. The Eimco and the winch are powered by compressed air. The rock is then shovelled by hand onto a crusher and the crushed rock used to be shovelled into a mine truck on another rail line which was towed away by our battery-powered electric loco (the Red Dwarf) to be tipped at the far end of the line. The crusher is nowadays driven by a belt from a friendly steam loco. Stuart re-arranged this part in time for this year's event by moving the crusher onto the neck of the low-loader and cutting a hole in the floor so that the crushed rock could fall straight into the waiting truck. It means shovelling higher in the first place, but cuts out one shovelling operation. The old diesel engine, which had at one time driven the crusher, was removed. It all worked a treat, especially as it gave me an excuse to do very little shovelling.

The event, which includes our marquee with several internal displays and stalls, is still labour-intensive. The Trust was again helped by other volunteers, especially from the Caving and Mining Club, without whom we could not put on the show. This year we had just about enough people, but it is always a close-run thing, and we will always be glad of extra help. So if you are free for one or two days on the last weekend in August, bear it in mind for



next year. We do have a lot of fun, and we get to see the Steam Rally and all its attractions for free. You will probably get to drive the Red Dwarf and/or the winch if you want to, but Stuart is very possessive (Elfin safety) about the Eimco. Quite right, you could easily hurt yourself quite badly. Same applies to the air-powered rock drill, although the braver ones of us can get a go with that after a little instruction, with the right safety gear.

Mike Worsfold



Photos Eileen Bowen

Snailbeach Heritage Weekend Snailbeach

Volunteers from the Trust and Shropshire Caving & Mining Club put on our annual open weekend on 17th & 18th September, this year the weekend after the national Heritage Weekend. We showed you a story and pictures of a fascinating donation made to the Trust on that occasion, but there was neither space nor time to show any more. So here are a few pictures of the goings-on.

Mike Worsfold



Some of the stalls in the Village Hall

The Snailbeach District Railway waggon, restored by Barry Ellis, outside the Loco Shed being propped up by one of our new passive volunteers



Demonstrations in the Blacksmith's Shop. We did have some real visitors besides Stuart & co.

Photos Eileen Bowen

One more word out of you and you find your own way around the site!



Once Upon a Hill

In September 2009 the Never On a Sunday team reconvened at the request of Natural England to ascertain if we had enough information concerning the lost settlements of the Stiperstones to produce a sequel to Never On A Sunday. We knew it would be a hard act to follow but we also were very much aware that we did still have the tremendous store of information to draw upon. So we agreed to set sail and see where the wind took us.

Two years later it was done but our research had taken us on an enlightening journey across the hillside - very bleak and not just in the winter to say the least. The descriptions of life in the squatter settlements where the itinerant miners lived was not very picturesque and there were certainly no roses around the doors., Poverty, squalor, typhoid, scarlet fever, mining accidents, are all detailed in the Poor Relief records held at the Shropshire Archives. As we talked to people about the past we uncovered memories of hard work, true grit and sheer determination. The inaccessibility of the settlements was to eventually be the cause of their demise, many people described the tortuous walk up and down the steep hillside carrying shopping across their shoulders while the succession of postmen and women remembered the weight of the batteries, bird feed and reams of paper that filled their post bags on what was a walking round.

Today we take a journey to and from work for granted - so how would we cope with a brisk walk from Pennerley to Huglith Mine through the biting wind that stings across the Stiperstones? Then spend eight hours underground in wet, cramped conditions working hard to move tons of rock into the trucks and then the return journey on foot back across the rocks to feed the animals, fetch water and fuel for the household fires.

Jane Price

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of Shropshire Mines Trust Limited will be held at 4.30 pm on Saturday 14th January 2012 at 'The Barracks' (the new building) at Snailbeach Mine Site.

The main purpose of the AGM will be to elect Directors for the forthcoming year. If anybody is interested in standing as a Director but would like to know more about what it involves, more information can be obtained from the Secretary – Steve Holding (steve_holding@blueyonder.co.uk)

All members are entitled to vote at the AGM.

The AGM will be followed by an ordinary Directors meeting – members are welcome to attend the Directors meeting but cannot vote at it.

SAUSAGE SUPPER

As a token of thanks from Shropshire Mines Trust Limited, will cover the cost of a 'Sausage Supper' (Sausage, chips and bread and butter) arranged for all volunteers who have helped with activities during 2011 (normal Sunday or Bank Holiday open days at Snailbeach Mine, work parties at Tankerville Mine, looking after visitors at the main Open Days or helping with the Trust Display at the Onslow Steam Rally).

The Sausage Supper will be held at the Stiperstones Inn at 7.00 pm on Saturday 14th January 2012. Please let the secretary – Steve Holding (steve_holding@blueyonder.co.uk) if you are going to attend – this will allow us to make the catering arrangements.

MINE WALK

If the weather is not too bad, there will be a walk around a Shropshire Mine site organised for late morning/early afternoon on Saturday 14th January 2012. Details to follow at a later date but let the secretary know if you are interested.

Forthcoming Events

Date	Event	Location	Contact
14th January 2012 4.30pm	AGM	Snailbeach Barracks	Steve Holding
14th January, frolloving AGM	Directors Meeting	Snailbeach Barracks	Steve Holding
14th January, 7.00pm	Sausage Supper	Stiperstones Inn	Steve Holding
TBC (4 dates)	Lime mortaring	Tankerville Mine	Andy Browning or Mike Worsfold
June 9th & 10th	Open weekend	Grange Colliery (Naturist Site)	Andy Wood or Telford Naturist Club
29th June -1st July	NAMHO national meeting	Alderley Edge	SH or NAMHO website
26-27th August	Onslow Steam Rally	Onslow Park	Stuart Tomlins
15-16 th September?	Heritage Weekend	Snailbeach Mine	

Next Newsletter

Is scheduled for the end of March, so please let me have your contributions well before then.

SMT Library

New Additions

Field Guide to Stiperstones Mines

All queries about accessing the library to Jane Price price175@btinternet.com

NEWSLETTERS BY E-MAIL

It will save the Trust money and delivery will be quicker if you are prepared to receive future copies of the Trust Newsletter by e-mail as a pdf file. If you are happy for us to use this approach, please confirm by e-mail southwick666@btinternet.com

Or you can access it on the Trust website. Click the newsletter icon on the front page or the direct link is <http://shropshiremines.org.uk/smt/News.pdf>