

# SURFACE REMAINS OF THE NEW VENTURE LEAD MINE BRADWELL MOOR, DERBYSHIRE. (PART TWO)

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**Abstract:** Preservation work at the mine is drawing to its conclusion. Several further features have been discovered.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout 1997 a small team of people have continued to preserve the surface remains at the mine, some of which were reported previously (Heathcote 1997). Fig. 1 shows the location of those reported in this article.

## SURFACE REMAINS

1. Shaft capped with a metal grille (preservation complete).
2. Collapse filled to the surface with rubble (preservation complete).
3. This shaft was capped with loose metal grille. A concrete lintel has now been placed across the shaft and the ginging concreted over to make a level bed for the large metal grille that was needed to cover the shaft. This grille has been replaced and is held in position by two metal plates and bolts that can be removed to enable access (preservation complete).
4. Wall partly rebuilt (preservation complete).
5. Depression in vein, totally uncovered.
6. Shaft capped with metal grille (preservation complete).
7. Wall totally uncovered.
8. Shaft capped with metal grille with an access hatch. Whilst the present work on the shaft was being done, a small wall was noticed a short distance from the shaft. This has been excavated to reveal the foundations of a large coe, built around the shaft (preservation complete).
9. This large collapse in the vein has been totally cleared of all the old coils of fencing, posts etc. This task was completed by using an ex-army hand winch supplied by a member of the group. This proved to be a very useful piece of equipment, saving a lot of time and effort. When all of the rubbish was cleared away it revealed a perfect example of a worked-out vein cavity. It is now possible to view this feature either from the surface or by entering the vein itself using the steps that have been built for easier access. These steps lead down onto a ledge of solid rock that has been left *in situ* by the miners. From this position it is possible to look down into the stope. This stope is very deep indeed, unplumbed but possibly a hundred feet or more. Also from this vantage point it is possible to see how the miners have covered parts of the vein cavity with waste material piled on to stone stemples, a typical feature of this site. The limestone 'cheeks' of the vein, above the ledge, are of very weathered rock, but lower down they appear to become more solid and stable. A fine example of a crinoid bed, can be seen in the northerly cheek of the vein, above the steps. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 2).
- 10,11. This vein cavity was also filled with old coils of fencing etc. This was removed, again using the hand winch. This feature comprises a slope of debris leading down into another very deep stope working, above which can be seen a wall of deads of dubious stability. No work has been done to this wall because of its inaccessibility. It is hoped, however, that this feature will remain as it has done for many years. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 2).
12. Bingstead partly rebuilt, floor excavated (preservation complete).
13. This area which contains the water storage pond and washing pond for the mine has not been touched at the present time. Archaeological investigation for these feature seems desirable before any work is undertaken.
14. This is a vein cavity that was covered by a single sheet of corrugated iron. This was removed, at which time a large section of ground slipped into the cavity, blocking it six feet below the surface. This has enabled the group to partly fill the cavity with small plastic barrels covered with rocks and soil to make a small viewing platform that allows people to look down into the stope that connects with Feature 10 (preservation complete). (See Fig. 2).
- 14a. On Christmas Eve 1996, the author visited the site to carry out the old tradition of leaving a lighted candle in the vein, to bring good luck and fortune to the mine. On this occasion it was noticed that a collapse had occurred in the vein in the depression adjacent to Feature 14, the collapse was covered temporarily with a sheet of corrugated iron. It was not until the summer of 1997 that the collapse was filled in to the surface. This was once again done by using small plastic barrels wedged across the vein, these were then covered with rocks and soil. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 2).
15. Shaft securely capped with a steel grille with an access hatch (preservation complete)
16. Natural pothole, no work needed.
- 17, 18. The wall of deads and adjacent collapse in the vein were one of the most tricky preservation projects on the site. The wall was very unstable so John Thorpe was lowered into the collapse to place the small plastic barrels across the vein, above a very deep stope. At the same time the back of the wall was grouted with concrete to stabilize this important feature. The collapse was

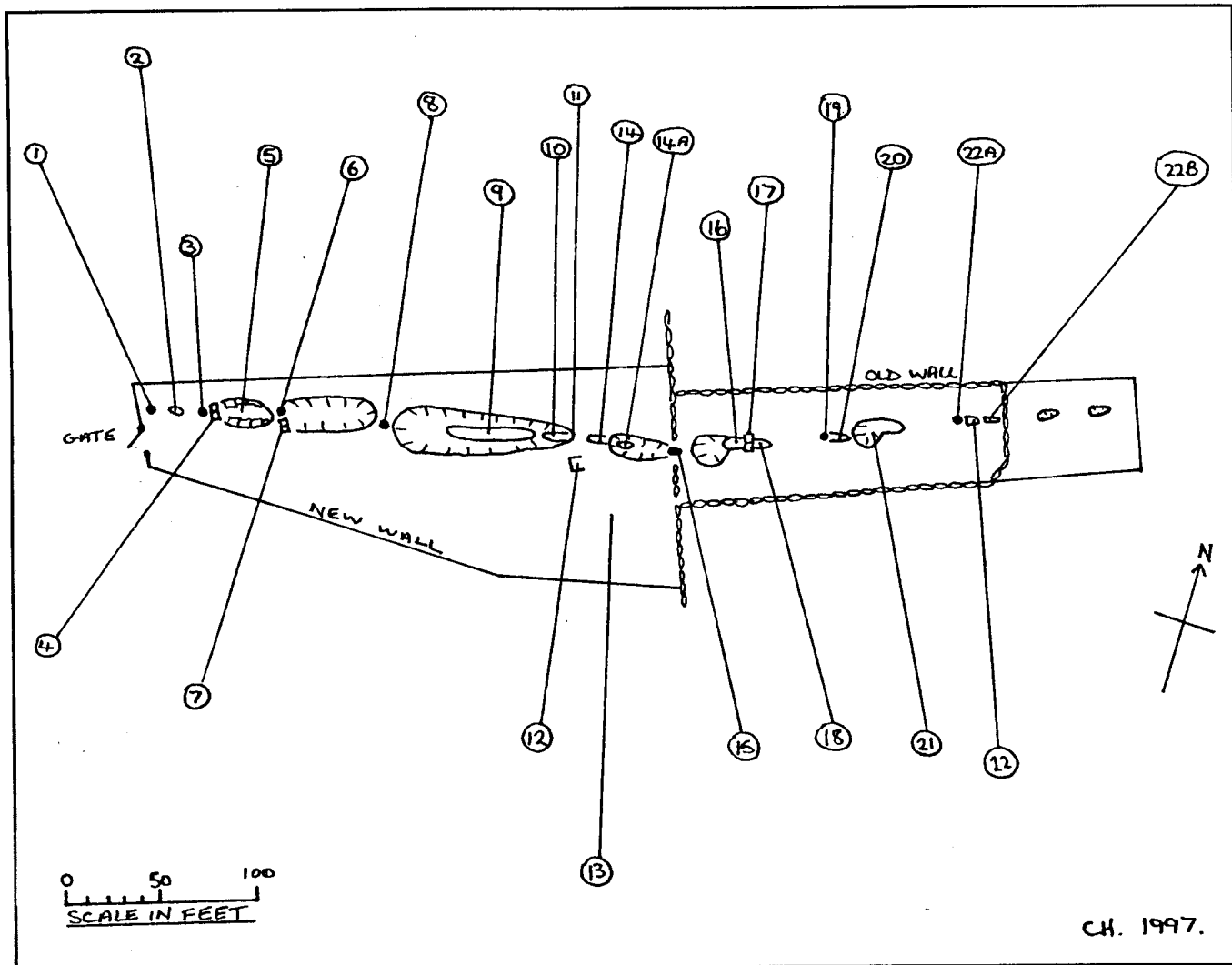
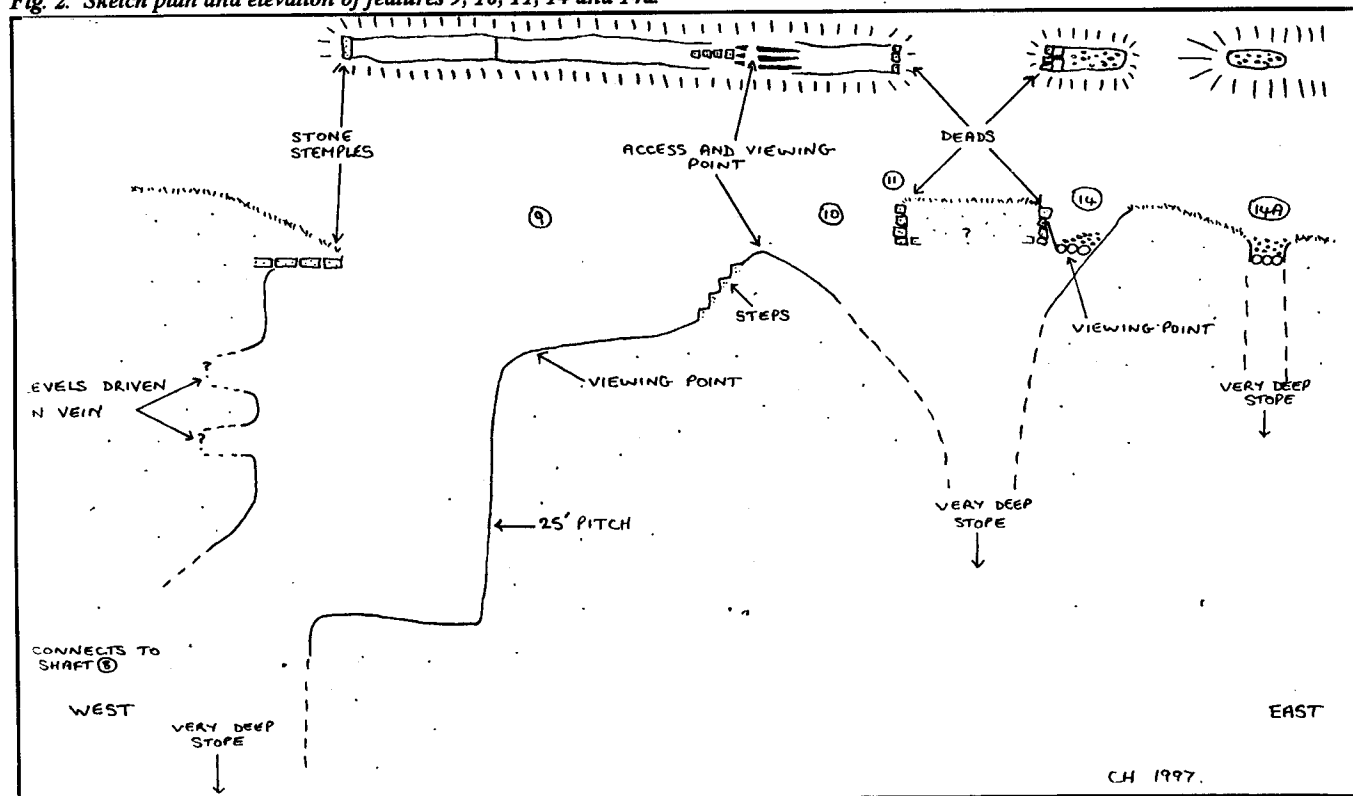


Fig. 1. Surface Plan of New Venture.

Fig. 2. Sketch plan and elevation of features 9, 10, 11, 14 and 14a.



then filled to within a few feet of the surface with the barrels which were also concreted in to place to form a very solid backing to the wall. On top of these more concrete was poured, mixed with loose rubble, forming a solid cap above the barrels. Soil and turf have been used to cover this cap, effectively hiding it. (Preservation complete).

19. The overhanging grass and moss that almost covered this shaft has been cut back revealing the shaft clearly. The shaft is similar in construction to the others on the site, having walls comprised of deads stacked on stone stemples across the vein. The ginging at the top of the shaft has been concreted to form a solid base for the grilles that have been placed across it. Part of the ginging was rebuilt to add strength to this feature. The shaft leads down into a stope of considerable depth, which connects with the natural pothole, Feature 16. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 3).

20. The collapse adjacent to the shaft (19) was also almost covered by overhanging grass and moss. This was cut back to reveal the feature more clearly, at which time it was decided not to completely re-cover this excellent example of a worked-out lead vein. In the interests of safety it was decided to use short lengths of angle iron placed at intervals across the collapse, allowing people to look down into the stope with reasonable safety. These were concreted into place and a small wall has been built around the feature to add stability and also to hold back the very loose sides which comprise washed veinstuff. While this work was being done another wall of deads was discovered filling the eastern end of the vein. The wall is standing on top of a limestone ledge that leads into the stope noted in the previous feature. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 3).

21. This natural pothole on the course of the vein is floored with loose rubble. It is possible that this feature was originally deeper and was used as a convenient site to dump waste rock by the miners, although this has not been proven.

22, 22a. The remains at this location were very overgrown. Vegetation has been cleared away revealing a partly walled exposure of the vein. It was found that this wall was in a very unstable condition and in danger of total collapse. It was necessary to dismantle the wall and rebuild it to its original position, using stone from other areas of the site. While this was being done it was discovered that a small shaft was located alongside this feature, separated from it by a single wall of deads stacked on a stone stemple. The stemple was too short to bridge the span of the vein, so the miners had wedged a small stone against the stemple to hold it in position, leaving this structure with very dubious strength. The shaft was capped over so it was necessary to dig down to locate the capstones. It was then discovered that the shaft was capped by two limestone slabs that were barely big enough to cover the shaft. Unfortunately one of

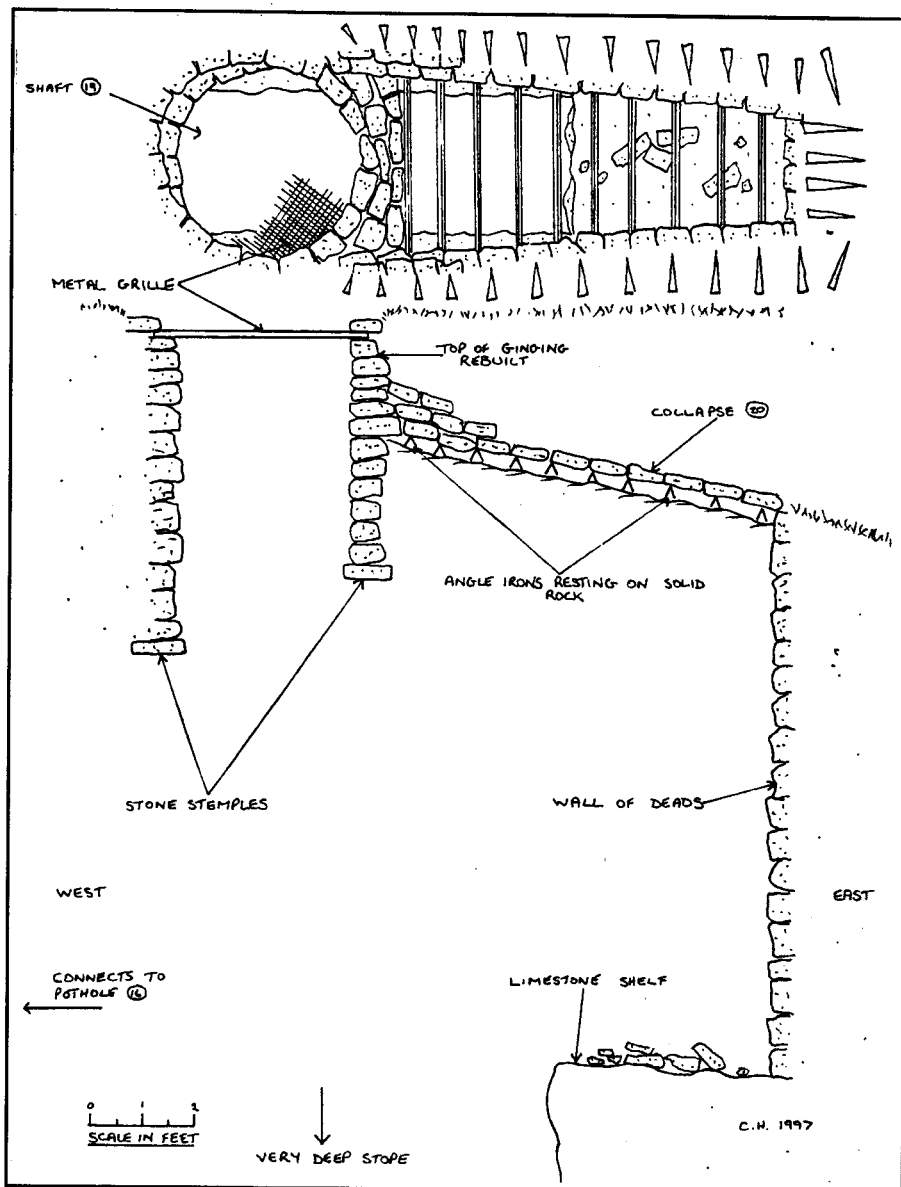


Fig. 3. Sketch plan and elevation of features 19 and 20.

the slabs cracked while it was being removed and it fell to the bottom of the shaft, but the remaining one is now to be seen alongside the shaft. It was decided that the wall of deads needed to be strengthened to prevent the collapse of this feature. This was done by placing a piece of angle iron underneath the stemple to support it and another one was placed higher up the wall. The wall was then rebuilt and grouted with concrete to stabilize it. A grille has been placed over the shaft and concreted into position. Several discussions have taken place regarding the reasons why the miners have built such a structure for what appears to be very little reward: the forefields at this location seem to be short trial workings containing hardly any galena. It has been suggested that the feature could have been originally deeper than it is today, possibly a dual winding and climbing shaft. (Preservation complete). (See Fig. 4).

22b. This was originally thought to be another collapse in the vein, but on closer inspection it was found to be a trial level with a length of approximately 25 feet to a forefield. The entrance to the level was very overgrown. The vegetation has now been cut back, so this feature can be seen more clearly. A small amount of work is still required here which will be done in the near future.

All of the rubbish that has been removed from the vein is to be removed by skip.

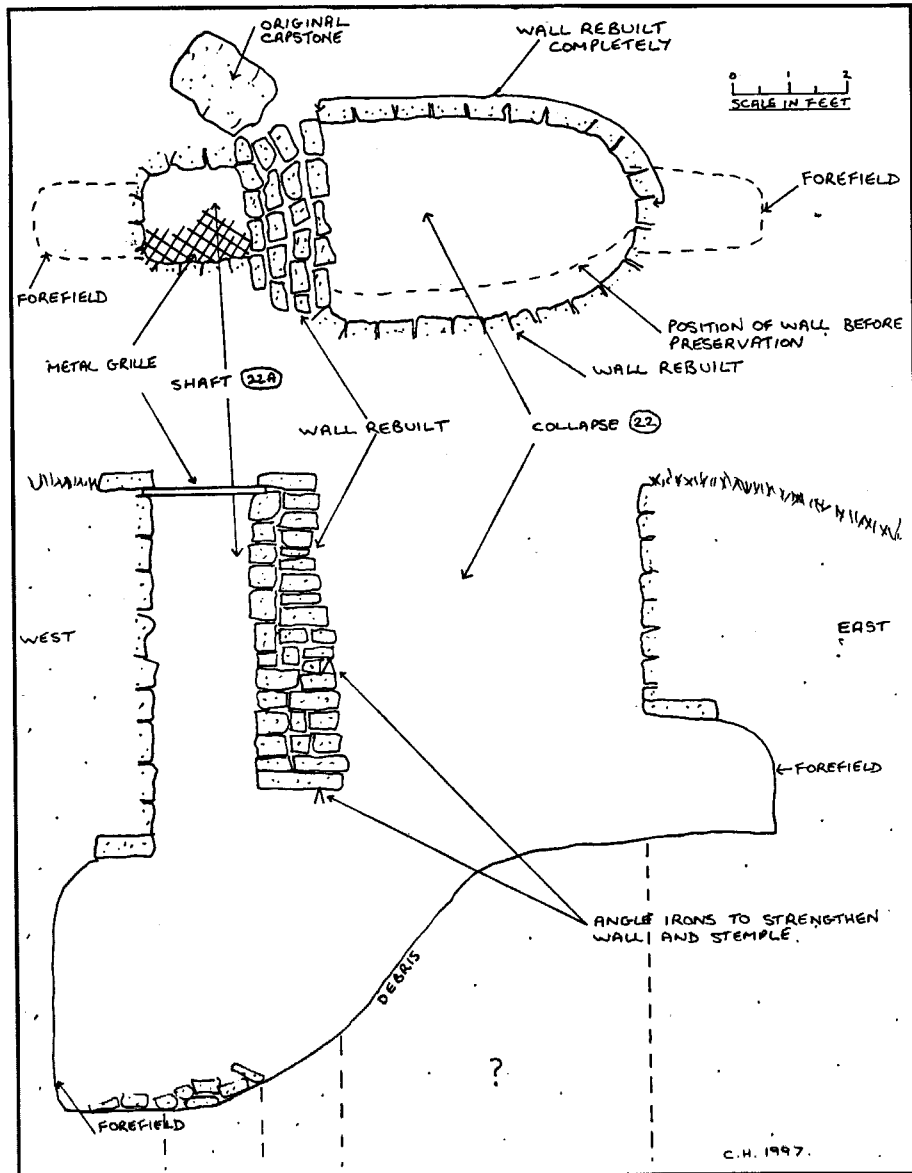


Fig. 4. Sketch plan and elevation showing features 22 and 22a.

## CONCLUSION.

Very little work has been undertaken on the extent of the underground workings of the mine. The shafts and stopes that the group have re-opened and made safe, have not, it is believed, been descended for many years. There is great potential for exploration in the mine. It is hoped that some members of the group will start to explore the workings during the summer of 1998. At the present time records of the history of the mine have not been researched, this will soon be rectified by Dr. Jim Rieuwerfs and the author.

The group have been meeting at the mine over a period of more than two years. It is hoped that the features at this site will remain to remind mine historians and explorers etc. of the skill and perseverance of the Derbyshire lead miners.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Society is grateful to Blue Circle Industries plc., for continuing to supply the materials needed to accomplish the preservation of the mine and for allowing the group to undertake this work at the relatively untouched surface features on the site. I would like to thank all of the people who have been involved with this project, both past and present, without whom the preservation would not have been possible.

## REFERENCE

Heathcote, C. 1997 Surface remains of the New Venture Lead Mine, Bradwell Moor, Derbyshire. *Mining History* (Bulletin Peak District Mines Historical Society) 13:3, pp53-56.

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