

A REPORT ON THE CRICH MINING DISPLAY
at the Tramway Society Museum, Crich, Derbyshire.
by
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Almost two years ago the Tramway Society made an approach to the Peak District Mines Historical Society to see if they were interested in constructing some form of display depicting the Derbyshire lead mining industry of former times.

Within the Society there had for some time been considerable anxiety regarding the fast disappearing relics of former ore crushing and treatment sites, yet for large items the problem of storage was considerable. Now, at last the offer of a site, though small, could be the means of putting on display such things as crushing circles, buddles etc. from various sites.

The two Societies held a meeting to discuss the problem and work out some plan acceptable to both and the result was the offer of a site near to the projected tramway terminus. In due course this was pegged out and sketches of proposals were presented to the Tramway Society. These were accepted and in return they supplied a plan of the area that they could make available for our use, showing exactly where the immediate and future tram-track would be laid.

P.D.M.H.S. appointed the then deputy chairman to plan and work out what could be done with the area available and eventually the Council received an outline proposition for a small surface display depicting two types of mine in operation during the 17th and early 18th centuries.

On the 24th of May 1969, work began in earnest; the site had to be roughly levelled and several trees transplanted whilst others were trimmed to give headroom. The site was pegged out to the plan of action and work began on the sinking of a small climbing shaft, with footholes in the ginging. Tree roots made this heavy work and one felt rather as though "he wished he's never started". The second shaft, larger and slightly oval in shape, was sunk nearby to represent a winding shaft capable of admitting a small kibble. Both these shafts were approximately six feet deep to give the layman some idea and indication of the methods used and the dangers of early mining, whilst not being deep enough to endanger the life of a visitor.

Around these shafts material has been tipped and more is required to form a hillock which will make them slightly deeper and prevent storm

water from rushing in as is related in a story of early mining, when miners were drowned in holes in the ground because the shaft opening was level with the surrounding area.

The material is being excavated from where a nearby bank is being cut to the size of an average living room; this will in time be enclosed by a wall of dry limestone, and a roof of turf. This 'Coe' will provide shelter for members who undertake duty there during the season, as well as a useful store for tools etc.; but its main purpose is to represent a 'Coe' in the true sense, and within, extending from the back wall, a small adit will be constructed so as to appear 'run in'. Rails will be laid from the adit to the 'Crushing Circle' outside and an ancient wooden waggon will be set upon the rails loaded with ore. The crushing circle could be one of our major problems for whilst we know of several crushing stones all are without their iron tyre. The slabs forming the base or floor of the circle will have to be transported from the Peak and although we know of several in fair condition, again some parts are missing and the iron rings have long since been taken for scrap.

Nearby, a buddle will be built, where a depression should form a natural catchment for water, to depict this ancient method of washing and grading the fine materials and the separation of ore from the gangue.

This completes the setting of the first display at Crich, an impression is portrayed by the accompanying sketch. It is so far the largest display attempted by the Society and the first of its kind in Britain. Having already had a mention on the BBC, it should arouse considerable interest when completed, but this will take time. However, it is hoped that this year (1970) will see the project nearing its final stages, when the area will be encouraged to grass over and paths will be made for viewing access.

It is unlikely that this display will bring any direct financial benefit to the Society, being constructed for the education of those who are interested in the subject and as an attraction for the general public, who, having had a ride on a tram will get out at the terminus to "see what that is over there"! Nevertheless, to satisfy their curiosity we hope to sell some publications and perhaps recruit a few new members.

To speed this work we need help from anyone who can spare a little time, therefore, please contact the Secretary or Chairman if you can lend a hand. Also if members should come across any of the ironwork (e.g. tyre) for a crushing stone, or lengths of rail, rail dogs, timber for narrow gauge track sleepers, a length of squared timber or a pole roughly 12 feet long with a diameter of around nine inches, upon which the Crushing wheel will rotate whilst anchored to the centre boss,

please make a note; we need donations of this type. The Society will arrange transport.

There are more ambitious plans for the future and no doubt we shall learn a good deal the hard way, but we are making progress.

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PLAN of P.D.M.H.S.
DISPLAY

AT CRICH

