

# GOOD LUCK MINE

Nigel Dibben and Liz Taylor – 9 September 2007

## A bit of background

Good Luck Mine which is on the south side of Via Gellia in Derbyshire, is a lead mine that was last worked in the 1950s. It was blocked for a time by the landowner and then reopened in the 1970s when it was “nicked” in the old tradition of Derbyshire lead mining. The mine is now run by a club who open it to visiting groups. This year, they held their first Open Day on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

## The visit

Liz and I went to the Open Day after I had picked up a leaflet at the NAMHO conference. We arrived at about 1100 and found our way up to the entrance despite a complete lack of signs! There were four members there and another visitor. Our leader was Dave Barrie, secretary of the group, who gave a very good description of the mine.

The entrance is in the hillside and leads out onto a platform with a hut, explosive store, some old equipment and some big tips. After a short low section which had to be rebuilt after being blasted in the 50s or 60s, we were in a rock cut tunnel leading to a short incline. The



The incline took us up to a level perhaps twenty feet higher and soon we were cutting the lead veins that were the miners' target. There are several veins running parallel to the Via Gellia including Good Luck Vein itself and then a number of scrins that cut across at right angles. The most notable feature of the passage we were in was the stone-stempled roof. It makes you feel a lot safer than wooden stemples. The construction was interesting as it mimicked the way it would have been stempled in wood with a notch in one wall, a piece of stone that was almost the same width as the passage and then another small piece to wedge it in place. Some of the roofing was in the form of simple arches made of three pieces of stone jammed together.

**Above: coe and entrance. Left: ore chute in the main level. Right: carved initials from the 1830s.**

Apart from the level we were in, there is a level about 60 feet above and ladders, chains and a stempled climbing route gave access while ore chutes from the upper levels were visible in places. There is also supposed to be a lower level and a sump had been re-excavated by the modern explorers at one point. There were plenty of appropriate relics around – as well as a few odd things including some lead ore from Engine Vein!

Another survival from the mining period was a wall engraved with initials and dates going back to when the mine was first dug. Visible on the rock wall are the original miners' initials RK, NG and the date 5th December 1831.

The mine is quite extensive but we kept to one level apart from following a branch up to forefield. This gave us a chance to see a bit of the open stoping which is often out of sight.

The mine is equipped throughout with a simple railway system



based on 10 inch gauge and made of strip steel on edge, set in wooden sleepers. This operates a bit like plate rail and is probably both cheap and easy to lay.

When we came out, we were treated to a hot drink and spent some time nattering to the others around, discussing NAMHO conferences, the forthcoming Hidden Earth and other related subjects. Amongst the people there was Paul Chandler, meets arranger for PDMHS so we will probably host a visit by them next year as well as providing a venue for some trips over the 2009 NAMHO conference in Matlock. In return, we both felt that the site would be a good place to visit during one of the DCC camping weekends in Derbyshire.

On the way home, we spent an hour or so walking over Ecton Hill and visiting Dale Mine entrance in the Manifold Valley. See you there some time, Steve.



**Left: Dave Barrie at the incline.  
Right: stone stampling at a junction.  
Below: a tub near the entrance**

