

Guidelines on Mineral Collecting at Disused Mines

These guidelines are not intended as an exhaustive set of rules to cover the collecting of minerals from mine sites. The recommendations and references are current at time of writing but up to date advice should always be sought from a relevant professional.

Many mining sites are now protected as Scheduled Monuments (SMs) and some are on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). It is illegal to remove material from protected sites and this protection extends to any workings beneath a site.

Why does mineral collecting affect others?

Disused mines are used by several other groups of people for recreational purposes, i.e. naturalists, cavers and industrial archaeologists. All have a particular interest but sometimes the activities of one group can seriously interfere with the enjoyment of others, albeit unknowingly. This can sometimes lead to friction and, in extreme cases, cause one group to gate entrances and deny access to others. If we respect the interests and needs of other users, this situation should not arise.

What should I do on the surface?

1. NEVER visit a mine site without the landowner's permission. If refused, withdraw politely so that future access negotiations are not prejudiced.
2. Follow the Countryside Code at ALL times.
3. Do NOT interfere with buildings, machinery or artefacts. These are of interest to archaeologists and what appears to be rotten wood or rusty metal can supply vital clues to the history of the mine.
4. NEVER scatter dump materials onto adjacent land. It may be toxic to farm animals.
5. NEVER hammer outcrops.
6. Watch out for unprotected shafts and open stopes. NEVER allow children or dogs to wander about unsupervised.

What should I do underground?

1. ALWAYS be properly equipped with helmet, spare lighting, warm clothing and sensible footwear.
2. ALWAYS tell someone on the surface where you are going and notify them when you come out.
3. The minimum safe number underground is four persons. In case of accident, one can stay with the casualty while the other two go for help.
4. Learn and obey the rules of safety and consider joining a mining history society or caving club. Guidelines on underground safety are available free of charge from the Association.
5. NEVER break into a mine.
6. ALWAYS securely replace any gate or cover to a mine entrance.
7. NEVER interfere with stacked rock (in the roof or walls), roof supports, pillars or other features of a

mine. If you do so, you may bring tons of rock down upon yourself and destroy features of interest to archaeologists.

8. Use hand tools only, NEVER use explosives.
9. Collect enough specimens for your own needs only and NEVER collect for commercial gain.
10. Do NOT destroy mine "scenery" by hammering at materials which will be irreparably damaged in so doing. Consider leaving such mineralisation in situ for future generations to enjoy.
11. NEVER collect from sites of special scientific or archaeological significance.
12. NEVER interfere with flora or fauna and avoid sites used by hibernating bats between November and March.
13. Take your litter home with you and do not leave graffiti on walls or wrapping paper in the mine.
14. Remember, wherever possible – TAKE only photographs. LEAVE only footprints.



Copper mineralisation *in situ*. Any attempt to sample or remove this would lead to its destruction.