

**A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES IN
ENGLAND**

**A Seminar held on Saturday 11th February
At Sidcot School, Winscombe, Somerset**

A SUMMARY of the MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED

[The seminar was attended by 46 delegates from a mix of professional (mostly local government and EH) and independent backgrounds, including many from the community archaeology sector in the Mendip, South Gloucester and Bristol areas. The discussions were led by Robert Croft, County Archaeological Officer for Somerset. Discussions were slightly less focussed than those at Caphouse and it was difficult to identify strong themes specific to the SW of England. However, the themes of university involvement in the sector and lack of training for curatorial professionals and independent researchers was raised on several occasions and many other useful comments were made. Some topics discussed fall outside the remit of the Framework and are not reported below].

1. It was suggested that literature should be explored as a source of background social information for the mining and quarrying industries. The works of D H Lawrence for example and other 19th century authors may contain useful testimony which would help with the general interpretation on a number of related themes.
2. Data collection should be informed by purpose and needs to be comprehensive rather than exhaustive (ie focussed as opposed to fragmented).
3. One important theme to be considered in the strategy would be the evolution of deep mined coal.
4. The issue of neglect of the sector by university archaeological departments was raised. There is a unwillingness by academics to engage with the industrial archaeological sector generally. Those in the HE sector believe mobilising universities in this matter is a problem.
5. National coordination of research effort would be beneficial. Dissemination of information on who's doing what. Researchers also need to look outside the boundaries of their own interests. Localism needs harnessing and encouragement but would be better if linked into a national network. More collaboration needed between geologists and archaeologists. All researchers should think harder about archiving their own research findings, especially drawings, photographs and documentary resources.

6. It was suggested that the bibliography resulting from the Framework exercise should be built upon and maintained for the foreseeable future on the internet.

7. The importance of underground archaeology should not be underestimated and needs much more work by comparison with other areas of the sector, just to catch up.

8. Sources of information need drawing attention to

- Archives from companies involved in extractive industries. It may be beneficial to put pressure on or seek collaboration with the industry to ensure that more material is preserved
- Geological archives and RIGS data
- Geological photo records

It would also be useful if LiDAR, where existing, could be made available to independent researchers.

9. Heritage at Risk. The public do value England's industrial heritage and this sentiment should be harnessed to raise further interest and to help justify claims on funding.

10. Training and skills need improving at all levels. Curatorial archaeologists in general have insufficient knowledge (awareness) of extractive industries and this needs addressing if we are to upgrade the standard of many HERs. Training for individual researchers and community groups in fieldwork techniques is a priority and a knowledge of how to input data into HERs would be an advantage to both parties.

11. It was suggested that HLF support could be applied for to help community projects. The South Gloucester group have already received HLF money to pay an archaeologist to help with training.

12. In view of rapid change to industrial landscapes, photographic recording, particularly of threatened buildings and landscapes, should be promoted as a future priority.