

MEMBERS' EVENING

The sixth Members' Evening was held on 21st April 2012. Once again, the instructions to the presenters were simple: *show us your interests and infect us with your enthusiasm*. It is hoped that other members, especially those who are amateur, will offer short presentations to continue the success of the Members' Evenings into future years. This year, Richard Hamblin also presented a talk on the Cretaceous Greensand, which will form a short paper in next year's *Mercian Geologist*.

BRITPITS Mines and Quarries Database

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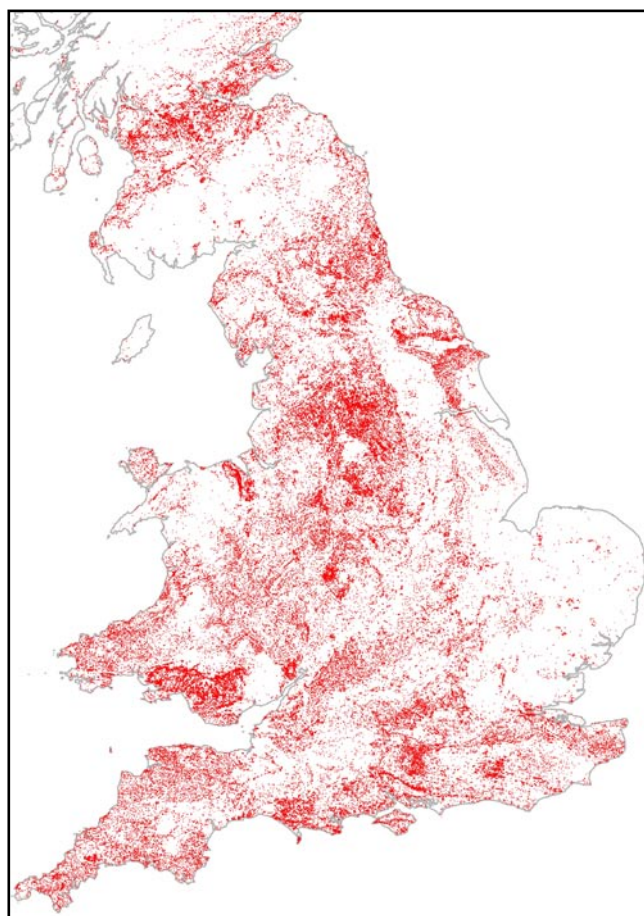
A national database of mine and quarry information has been part of the Geological Survey since its earliest days. In 1845 at the invitation of Sir Henry De la Beche, Director of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, Robert Hunt went to London and took up the post of Keeper of the Mining Records of the Survey. When the Government School of Mines was established in 1851 he was made a Lecturer in Mechanical Science and then in Physics. Part II of the *Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the Year 1858*, 'Hunt's Statistics', was produced in 1860. This attempted to be 'Embracing Clays, Bricks &c., Building and Other Stones with Sundry Earthy Minerals'. In a notice at the beginning, the then Director, Roderick Impey Murchison wrote *The present publication is the result of a first attempt on the part of Mr. Robert Hunt to collect returns of the produce of the Clay Works and Quarries of the United Kingdom. Though a large amount of useful information has been obtained, it must be admitted that this branch of our Mineral Statistics is, as yet, far from complete. Let us hope, however, that the work now issued may lead many persons who have withheld information, to render the next edition more worthy of public attention.* This was based on figures gathered in 1858 for production by each commodity, and the complaint of the Director has been echoed by compilers down the years.

As was normal in those days, the database resided in a series of books, listing active workings, published yearly, firstly by the Geological Survey and later by the Inspectors of Mines, as a List of Mines and a List of Quarries. The List of Quarries continued until 1948, although lists were produced by HSE and other bodies. The List of Mines was taken over by the Colliery Managers Journal and published as the Guide to the Coalfields, which lasted until the 1990s. In 1984, BGS decided to publish a Directory of Mines and Quarries, listing some 2500 active mineral workings and their operators, together with, for the first time, the body of rock worked at the site.

The Directory has subsequently been produced, initially bi-annually and latterly tri-annually, up until the latest edition covering 2010. At the same time steps

were taken to design a digital database (BRITPITS) to store the data. At first this was restricted to the active sites, however it was seen that holding records of ceased operations would assist the minerals planning process, especially when the database could be incorporated in a Geographic Information System. Currently, the BGS BRITPITS database holds around 152,000 records of mineral workings in the UK. The database has been used to provide baseline information for mineral resource maps for planners, and is currently used by the English Heritage Strategic Stone Study project to locate quarry sources of building stones. BGS makes some of this data available through its website, and in the future, all of these records will be visible on the web. Data collection is still continuing, and once there is baseline coverage of the country, it is hoped that revision of the data will allow early records to be brought up to the standard of those collected more recently.

The quarry data may be viewed on the BGS website as part of the GeoIndex layers at mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home and at MineralsUK.com. The latest edition of the Directory may be downloaded from www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/mines/dmq. The building stones study and database is at www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/mines/stones/EH_project.



Mineral workings in England, Wales and southern Scotland, from the BRITPITS database in July 2012. Baseline coverage is currently incomplete for parts of East Anglia, Wales and Scotland (courtesy of BGS).