



Newsletter

Autumn 2004

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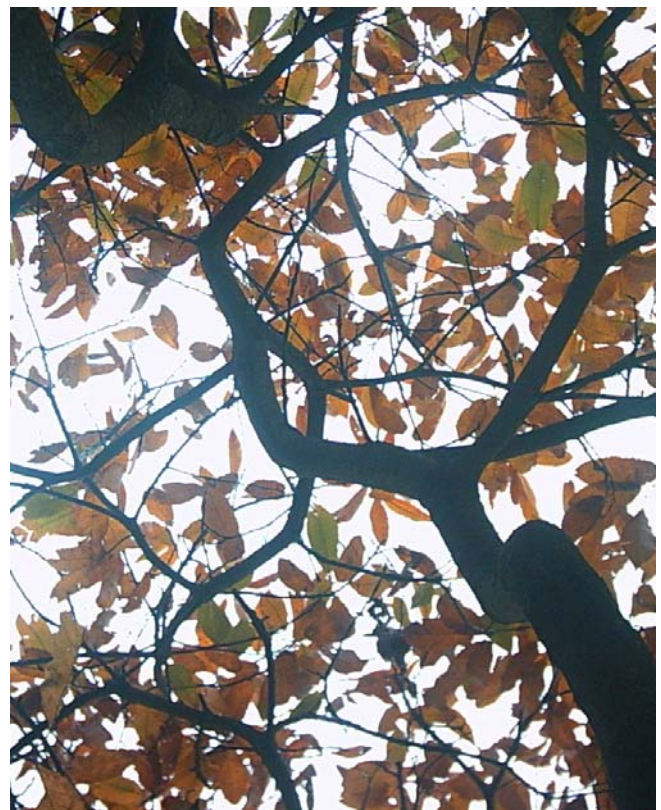
0800 074 3771

Every Leaf's a Flower

As the nights draw in, what better way to spend an evening than with the latest Search Direct Newsletter?

We have a wide range of topics for you this autumn. The second in our Focus On... series examines why and when you should order a Coal Mining Search. We tell you about our community links with our rugby sponsorship. Plus, we are once again pleased to announce an expansion to our range of services.

As always, we request and value your feedback. Please let us know what you think of our Newsletter. Is there any way it can be improved? Is there anything you would like to see included? Of course, we also appreciate comments on our services in general – our contact details are at the foot of this page!



***Search Direct South Wales launches Transco Pipeline Search
See page 3 for details***

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Coal Mining

This issue, we continue the series spotlighting our services with a look at coal mining reports.

Deep trouble?

Coal played a crucial role in British history. It fuelled the industrial revolution, built an empire and formed the core of communities and local economies around the country. Perhaps the greatest legacy, though, is the collection of abandoned mines and shafts that remain beneath our land.

The onset of the industrial revolution in the 1700s caused coal production to soar, rising to over 10 million tonnes annually by the early 1800s and peaking at over 250 million tonnes in the early 1900s. Even today, nearly 30 million tonnes of coal is mined annually in the UK.

As the above figures suggest, there are many old mine workings, widespread around the country. Often, they are invisible at the surface and are only revealed by inspecting records. Mining activity – past and present – can have an effect on today's properties. The most obvious effect is subsidence, though there may also be the presence of gas, minewater or other adverse environmental factors.

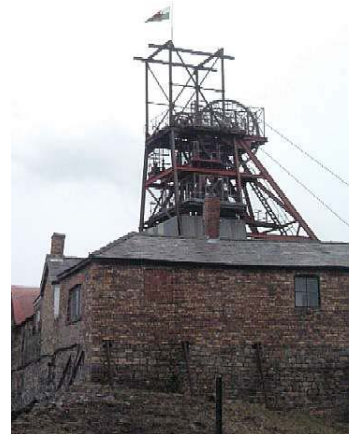


Clearly once a mining area, but what lies beneath?

It is not surprising that coal workings are of concern to homebuyers and homeowners. Property values can be depressed in mining areas; lenders and insurers may attach additional terms. The Law Society therefore advises "a coal mining enquiry should be made by solicitors when acting on the occasion of any dealing with land in coal mining areas".

Coal Mining Reports are based on information held by the Coal Authority, the body responsible for the coal

industry since privatisation in 1994. The Authority maintains a collection of approximately 100,000 mine plans and other documents. Many of these date back to the nineteenth century or earlier, prepared at the time of mining. Search Direct's reports are prepared by a consultant surveyor specialising in mining, direct from the Coal Authority records.



Coal Mining Reports contain information about past, present and potential future mining. Specifically, reports refer to:

- Underground and opencast coal mining
- Surface geology
- Mine entries (shafts and adits)
- Working Rights
- Subsidence

An evaluation of mining risk is provided as a conclusion to the report.

Affected Areas

Although abandoned coal mine workings are widespread, they obviously do not affect the entire country. Some parts of the country are free of mining, whilst elsewhere other mineral searches should be undertaken (such as tin mining searches in Cornwall). Some coal mining areas are obvious, such as South Wales or Tyne and Wear. Other affected areas are less obvious, even surprising, such as parts of Devon and Kent. It is always advisable to check whether a property is within an affected area.

It is now possible to check for affected areas on the Search Direct website. Our online database lists the towns falling within coal mining counties, allowing you to check if a property is in an affected area. To consult the database, or for further mining information, visit www.sds.co.uk/mining.htm.

There are around 168,000 recorded coal mine entries in Great Britain.

SDSW Launches New Search

We are pleased to announce the latest addition to our range of services: Transco Pipeline Search.

Search Direct has recently negotiated full access to Transco's gas pipeline location software. Transco's records contain detailed information of its assets, including the locations of its low, intermediate and high pressure gas pipelines. Our Transco Pipeline



Search grants our customers access to these records, with a report that includes a full colour Ordnance Survey plan of the property and the various gas pipelines in its vicinity. This is a far more detailed report than the simple text replies provided in a local authority pipelines search and more useful in your conveyancing transactions.



The Transco Pipeline Search is available for properties throughout the country at a cost of £25+VAT.

We still offer the basic Part II Additional Enquiry 9 Pipelines as an option with the local authority search. Most local authorities, however, are now directing applicants to Transco, so ordering the Transco Pipeline Search from Search Direct in the first instance will save time for both you and your client.

Promap Update

Readers of our spring issue will recall mention of the unique online map production service we have in development in conjunction with Promap. As is often the case with new technology, there have been unforeseen delays and we have had to postpone implementation. However, work is continuing and the service will be available in the not-too-distant future.

The service will allow you to download detailed Ordnance Survey plans, which can be fully customised online to meet your needs.

Severn Trent Con29DW Price Change

We have revised our price for the Con29DW Drainage and Water Search in line with the water company's own price changes (effective 11th October).

	Ex VAT	Inc VAT
Residential Con29DW	£36.40	£42.77
Commercial Con29DW	£84.80	£99.64

These prices are the same as those charged by Severn Trent. Unlike other search companies, we maintain a policy of not charging a fee in addition to water company fees.

Read All About It!

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a "one stop shop" for property professionals, we have recently launched a free industry news section on our website.

Provided in conjunction with leading property website, TheMoveChannel.com, Property and Finance News is updated daily with articles centred on property and related industries. Topics range from interest rate movements to mortgages and DIY.

Visit www.sds.co.uk/news.htm to access our new service.

Some of the articles published since the launch in August include:

Results of a survey revealing that house-buying can be damaging to relationships, particularly for first time buyers.

Findings by the Alliance & Leicester that suggest people are turning away from moving home and towards home improvement.

Exploration of government flood defence strategy.

A review of the 2004 Housing Design Awards.

Did You Know...?

The centre of mainland Great Britain is 5.5km south west of Clitheroe, Lancashire.

Swansea Law Society Annual Dinner

We are pleased to have sponsored the Swansea Law Society Dinner for the third successive year.

The event at Swansea's historic Brangwyn Hall was enjoyed by those in attendance, including our Directors, Derek Davies and Ceri John. Derek and Ceri enjoyed socialising with our clients at the event, particularly those they were meeting for the first time.

We would like to thank Swansea Law Society for its hospitality.

Helping Hands

In each issue, we provide you with tips to ensure you get the most out of our services.

Recent Developments

If the property being searched lies within a new or recent development, in addition to the address, be sure to provide us with the previous Site Name and Phase as well as the specific plot number and the name of the developer. Local Authorities often hold information for plots which is not recorded against the postal address. Water companies need development details to determine if there are agreements in place.

It is always best to send us plans of a new site, as Local Authorities do not grant access to filed plans.

Lords Reject Mandatory Home Information Packs

The government's intended 2007 start date for home information packs may be under threat due to a recent House of Lords decision.

The Upper House voted early in November to accept an Opposition amendment which will make home information packs voluntary rather than compulsory. Lord Hanningfield, Conservative spokesman in the Lords, said "we are leaving it to the discretion of home owners to judge the merits of the packs and to decide whether [a pack] will assist them in the property market...This is a proper championing of consumer rights rather than forcing them into such a scheme unwillingly."

According to Keith Hill, Minister for Housing, "home information packs are a key to... improving housing market efficiency... Voluntary packs simply will not work."

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors is disappointed about the decision. The organisation believes the system cannot work as a voluntary, two-tier system.

Search Direct Sponsors Youth Rugby



Kenfig Hill Junior RFC pose in their new team kit, courtesy of Search Direct.

Search Direct South Wales is proud to be the sponsor of Kenfig Hill Junior RFC Under 14s Section.

Since the start of the season, the team has been playing in a new kit provided by Search Direct. The Mules, as the team is known, were badly in need of a new kit and the boys are said to be thrilled with their jerseys. Squad members personally thanked our directors at the official presentation in October.

If you know anybody who would like to play for the Mules, or you would like to get involved off the pitch, contact Hilary Howell on 01656 744523. Matches are held on Sunday mornings, with training on Wednesdays.

We wish the team every success for this and every season and will keep you informed of their progress in future issues of the newsletter.

Envirosearch Insurance

Since the acquisition of Sitescope by Landmark Information Group, there have been different insurance policies available for purchase across the company's range of environmental reports. In order to create a more consistent product offering, Landmark recently made the decision to instead offer a single insurance product to complement its residential reports.

As a part of the revised offering, the insurance ordering option has been removed from the Envirosearch Residential report. Please be assured that insurance is still available, but is now offered as a separate product via Search Direct.

Land Insurance information, together with a sample policy, is available at www.sdsd.co.uk/downloads, or, contact us directly.

Stop Press!

Landmark is preparing to re-launch its innovative and successful Plansearch report. As well as being redesigned, there are several major improvements including aerial photography, footpath information and detailed neighbourhood data. We will be providing further details in the next Newsletter, but if you would like to discuss the new Plansearch in the meantime, then please contact us.