

Experts calm mine fears of villagers

LEADING geology and mining experts this week reassured Rimington residents: "You are very unlikely to see a zinc or any other kind of mine in your village!"

The Clitheroe Advertiser and Times rang round seeking explanations why an Australian company should go to all the trouble of drilling for zinc in a place like Rimington.

A spokesman for the British Geological Survey explained that zinc sulphide, known as sphalerite, contains up to 60% zinc. The metal's principal value is in the galvanisation of steel, particularly in the car industry. The present price is up to £700 a tonne and drilling for the metal is going on all over the world.

The spokesman said he was "not surprised" by the targeting of the disused mine at Rimington for possible zinc extraction, as investigations carried out in the '70s and '80s by the survey revealed high levels

of sphalerite in the Craven Basin, a tract of rock which incorporates limestone beds near Slaidburn.

But mining exploration could be a long drawn-out process and the most likely outcome was that nothing would come of it at Rimington.

No zinc mines are currently in existence in England, but there are two operating in Ireland and one is being developed.

The mines in Ireland have a very good track record for running safely and being environmentally friendly operations – but that is unlikely to be a consolation for Rimington people if there is ever a bid to mine there.

● Parish council sets up fighting fund – full story page 3.