Coal Mining

There are records of extensive underground mining having been carried out beneath the site towards the end of the 19th century. The main seams worked were referred to as:

- Upper Foot mine
- Lower Mountain mine
- Lower Mountain mine
- Bassy mine

Records indicate that there were 28 old mine entries within the site area and a further 9 adjacent to the site boundary. From the 1820 Poor Rate Valuation book for Crompton, it is recorded that John and James Mills had two pits at Crow Knowl. The recorded mine entries are made up of 18 vertical shafts or pits and 19 adits or ‘day eyes’. Adits are inclined roadways or tunnels driven into the hillside generally at an angle to the outcrop of the seam. These features vary in diameter from as little as 1m up to 3m and varying in depth from 5m to 100m. The writer Daniel Defoe, on a visit to Oldham, described it as a place of ‘...Coals...upon the top of the highest hills’ in reference to the accessibility of coal seams lying so near to the surface that little, if any, digging was necessary. (Manchester UK website).

During the latter half of the 19th Century a band of desperadoes called the ‘Shore Edge Thieves’ had their hide on Crompton Moor. They were feared by the surrounding community (Oldham Chronicle - 8/1/1866).

Quarrying

Early quarrying activity was largely on a ‘one man’ basis for limited extraction to airshafts, shore edge cira 1910. Adits or ‘day eyes’ were inclined roadways or tunnels driven into the hillside generally at an angle to the outcrop of the seam. These features vary in diameter from as little as 1m up to 3m and varying in depth from 5m to 100m. The writer Daniel Defoe, on a visit to Oldham, described it as a place of ‘...Coals...upon the top of the highest hills’ in reference to the accessibility of coal seams lying so near to the surface that little, if any, digging was necessary. (Manchester UK website). During the latter half of the 19th Century a band of desperadoes called the ‘Shore Edge Thieves’ had their hide on Crompton Moor. They were feared by the surrounding community (Oldham Chronicle - 8/1/1866).
All the shafts and associated mineral working were abandoned before 1938, the greater part of the working took place between 1800-1900. The following information has been taken from Title maps, and maps from 1844, 1895 and 1930.

10 Crow Knoll Colliery

Although the Colliery is called Crow Knoll the area is actually detailed on maps as ‘Crow Knowl’. There were 3 shafts 440 yards apart. Two were worked by horse power and the third by water power. In 1861 a young boy aged 9 fell down one of the shafts and was killed. The owners were either breaking the law or the pit was too small for the law to apply. Two of the shafts at Crow Knoll mine were abandoned in 1890 and the colliery is not mentioned again until 1938 when it was worked for steam coal. The colliery was not nationalised in 1947 as most other mines were as it was too small, and it continued to be mined until 1959.

Please be aware that the weather can change very quickly on top of the hills; even in summer it is cooler at the top of the moor than in the valley below. Ensure that you have suitable warm clothing and wear appropriate footwear as the terrain is hilly.