

1st May 1983
Dalehead Copper Mine

Meet Leader P. Fleming

This ancient mine, situated below the summit of Dalehead, 2473ft, on its northern slopes overlooking Newlands Valley, must rank as one of the highest copper mines in the Lake District. Little documentary evidence of its history or plans seem to have survived, but from what remains on the surface it promised rewards concealed below ground, and so a total of nine members left the car park on Honister Pass and with picks and shovels, and instructions to pass themselves off as a "footpath maintenance squad" should anyone enquire about our unusual fell walking equipment. On reaching the dig we found our Carlisle member and his daughter already at work. After about one and a half hours we broke through the collapsed entrance and entered a small chamber, a tunnel led off almost due south, wooden rails were still in position along the floor, the roof carried a thin but rich vein of copper. After sixty yards a blind rise went up twenty five feet or so, on the left a built stone wall appeared to conceal further workings. Another ten yards further the tunnel was blocked by a run-in. After further digging in the confined space we cleared a way into the bottom of a shaft from which another tunnel led off some thirty feet higher, but it was not possible to climb to it without a maypole. It was obvious that the tunnel we were in would continue beyond the shaft, but time had run out, and it was left for a future meet. It is known that somewhere in these workings there is a shaft down to connect with the tunnel which disgorges water about a hundred and fifty feet further down the hillside. Dalehead has still to reveal a few secrets.