

17th September 1986
Hodge Close Slate Mine

Much to the meet leaders surprise, when he + companion (Goldfinger) Ret. Lings, arrived at the appointed time (7:30pm in the rapidly gathering dusk), 12 other Society members waited to sample the joys of Hodge Close Closeheads. The almost full moon hauled itself up over Holme Fell, as the party set off down the heaps to Peat Field Quarry (open to the sky) to check on reports of recent slate removal by the new lease holders – McAlpines. Little signs of activity. The party trailed in and out of closeheads (Calf How Qy) Klondyke Qy – site of the slurry dumping operations by the Kirkstone Green Slate Co, of Skelwith Bridge. Stumbling around in the gloom, down slate tips, and through Silver Birch trees, eventually found the entrance to the Divers (Main) Level into Hodge Close Qy. Water depth in level just about up to wellies – much tip-toeing along side of level, attempting to keep feet dry. Descended to the bottom of the Quarry (water level) whilst the meet leader made apologies to those who were expecting an abseil trip, explaining that the “new discovery” alluded to by the meets secretary, was nothing more than a known chamber, that had been exposed by a recent massive rockfall on the western side of the Qy. The unusual phenomena of trout? leaping the main pool was observed, at least I think it was trout, but then again, it may have had something to do with the stone-throwing activities of late comers Messrs Mitchell and Jones C.J.

The last working visited was Bakerstone Barrow Slate Mine, one of the last workings operated in this area – finished circa 1970. Also the site of member P. Blezard’s show mine proposal of 5 yrs ago which was dismissed out of hand by the Lake District Special Planning Board. It was generally agreed that this was the most interesting of the closeheads (If closeheads can said to be interesting), containing rails, points in situ, along with pulley blocks etc. The meet broke up at approximately 9:30pm, and adjoined to the Crown Hotel, Coniston, for liquid refreshments.

Dave Blundell – meet leader 18/9/86