

18th November 1990

Yew Crag Slate Quarries Honister

Brief directions for descent, made following visit by Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society.

Entrance is made via the stone arched adit in the upper part of the lowest open quarry, nearest to the fence. This level, LEVEL 10, is partly walled up inside and leads into a small chamber, with way down on right. Level straight ahead leads to a blind closehead. Approx 40 feet down a rubble slope leads to:-

LEVEL 9, this is the stone-arched adit, open to day, which is visible in the lower part of the open quarry. Turning right would lead to day, descent lies straight across chamber and down through small hole in floor on R.H. side, tight squeeze through into chamber, and down to right, to 2 small holes in low side, with stone-built platform between, low slithering descent down into chamber, with LEVEL 8 being some 7 feet below floor level of chamber, in stone-walled cutting. Chain hanging from spike is marker.

On LEVEL 8, facing chain, to R leads into blind closehead, to left, towards day, leads to a 15 foot scrambling descent down into a lower chamber. On the opposite side, the level can be seen continuing towards day (blocked, but slight ventilation,) and can be reached by a scramble up from the base of the pitch. A descent is made down a slope, to the base of the chamber and LEVEL 7.

LEVEL 7 is a stone-arched level, entered through a hole in the side. Blind to Left, to right, towards day, 2 timbered sections traversed, to top of ladderway on Left hand side. Level has run outbye of this point. Two short sections of reasonably sound timber ladder give into top of another chamber, travel across to rear Left-hand corner, adjoining large pillar supporting roof, is LEVEL 6.

LEVEL 6 is a stone-arched level running outbye through the deads, to a large chamber (connection possible over top of deads to pillar). The ground is very broken in this chamber and the continuation of this level on the opposite side of the chamber is marked by a shackle hanging from a pin set in the hanging wall. A squeeze down between blocks reveals the continuation of the level, reported as open to day, by A Cameron/M Simpson. Returning along level 6 to the large pillar, a descent was made to the Right down the slope, past a hanging pulley block and cable, to the back left hand corner of the chamber to find Level 5.

LEVEL 5 A small oil drum on the floor marks the start of LEVEL 5, which runs outbye through deads, as a stone-arched level. Some 100yds along, at floor level on the Left hand side is a small hole. This is the descent route. The level continues, and exits to day on the incline, 1 floor below the steel pylon. Returning to the floor-level hole, a 6 foot scramble, and a 15 foot slither down a wet slab of slate, into a chamber (twin rail track with rollers), and down to right-hand side, to LEVEL 4.

LEVEL 4 is blind to Left beyond chamber, to Right is a collection of various artifacts. Just beyond, on Left hand side, behind rail barrier, is descent route. Continuation of level towards day is blocked by collapse. Returning to descent route, slope is descended to LEVEL 3, marked by hand winch.

LEVEL 3, Hand winch at level, rails with points, to Left is day, formerly blocked, cleared by I Matheson, to right, is stone arched level back under deads, air pipe fixed on Right hand wall of level, leads into chamber with large water tank lying on its side. A short section of timber floor (Smoke hole to lower chamber) is crossed, past cable hanging from roof of chamber, to blind forehead. Returning to smoke hole, (crossed by rails, rubber compressed air pipe tied off to rails as handline,) a short scramble down leads to a very loose rubble slope down to the floor of the chamber on LEVEL 2.

LEVEL 2, the way ahead is through a wall, into a medium-sized chamber, level off to right is blind to forehead, straight ahead, level is railed, running through a wall into a large chamber. Rails run along lip of a slope down to left, on Right hand side is a ladder and air pipe poking up out of a collapsed manway? A large hand winch lies on its side, on the far side of the chamber, where the level continues outbye, into solid. With a short branch to the Left ending in a walled "balcony" overlooking the chamber below, and a branch to the Right off this level, ending in a smokehole dropping vertically into the roof of the lower chamber. Returning to the main level, just beyond the junction, a collapse of wet clay-like material blocks the level, through which sounds of venting can be heard. Returning to the chamber, the slope is descended down to:-

LEVEL 1 A large chamber at this level, with a pair of pulley blocks in the roof, with a length of chain, and a piece of slate hanging off a length of wire, so as to form a pendulum. On outbye side of chamber is a pair of guyed uprights, with a series of linked diamond drill holes in the wall behind. Level runs to right, and is blocked after some 30yards, in increasing depth of water.

EXIT ROUTE

Return up slope to buried ladders, (Level 2) through chambers to smoke hole, up loose slope to Level 3, turn to left, and out towards day. Passing bottom of entry descent by winch, water above ankle depth, squeeze up into roof collapse, and down other side, along 40 yard of stone-arched level to partially walled-up entrance. This Level, No.3, is at the SECOND stone landing up the incline, above the ROAD from the Hause and is 1 floor below a timber 'telegraph post'.

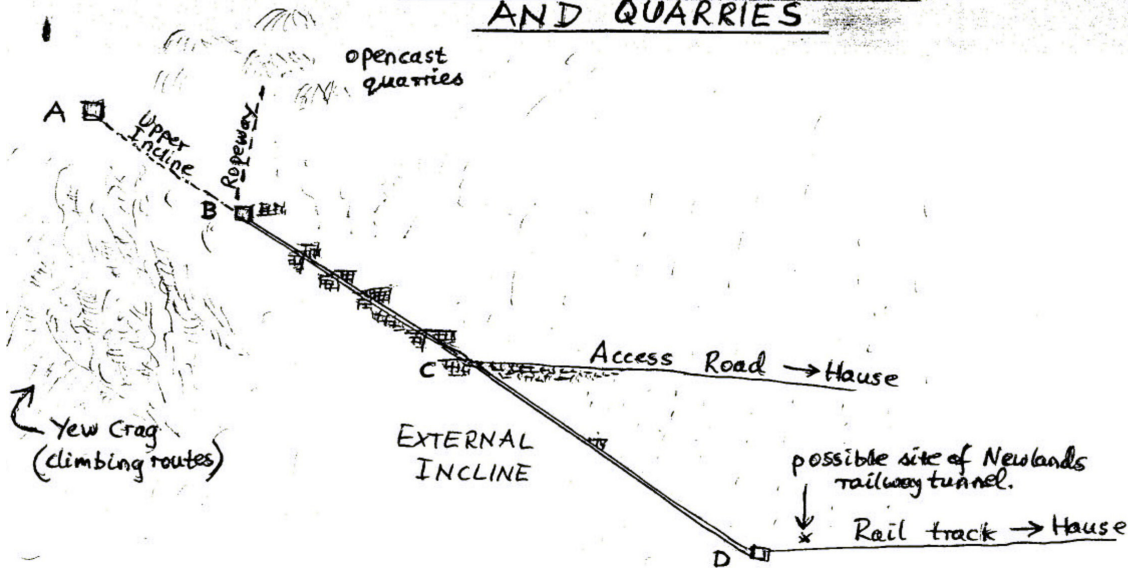
Level 2 was entered from day, and found to connect internally with Level 1, (presumably on the outbye side only of each fall.)

Times, Excluding stops a 3 hour trip from Level 10, down to Level 1. Exit, approx. ½ hour. Equipment, a 20foot length of rope would be useful for lifelining on the scramble.

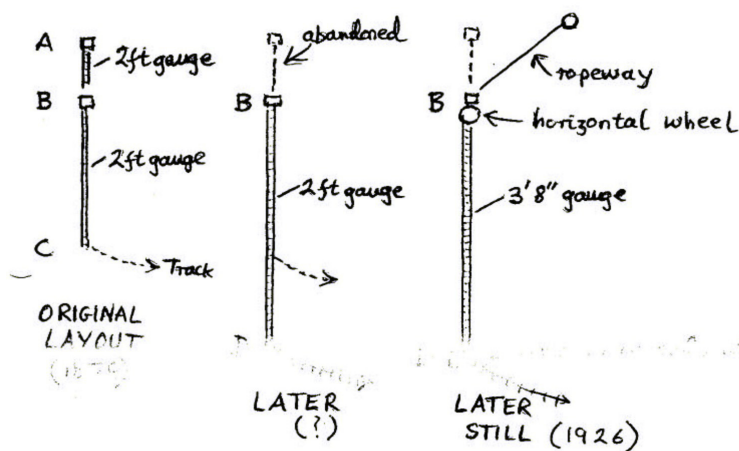
D J Blundell.

19th November 1990

YEW CRAG SLATE MINES AND QUARRIES



DESIGN OF EXTERNAL INCLINE



- pre 1879 workings well established.
- 1879 Original self-activating-tramway installed.
- ?? Rail track from Hause constructed, self activating tramway extended.
- 1926 Self activating tramway replaced by electric powered incline tramway with 3' 8" gauge.
- 1940 Open cast quarries abandoned
- 1966 Yew Crag Slate Mine closed.

