

2nd December 1990
Hartsop Hall Mine

The weather was fine, but only six members turned up to explore this little visited lead mine. It is supposed to date from the 17th Century, but most of the work was done in the 1860's and the 1930's, when it was worked by Willy Shaw. It closed in 1942 when the land went to the National Trust, who placed restraints on it which made the working uneconomical.

No 4 level adit is open to day and was entered first. It is a cross cut to the vein, which it then follows in a NE direction for about 60 meters to a collapse. A dig was contemplated here, but subsequent discoveries revealed this to be unrealistic. Further up the hillside is No 3 level, but only one member ventured inside as the water was over welly depth. He reported it to go a few yards only to a collapse from the open stope above.

No 4 was re-entered at a point where it has been stoped out to the surface. A scramble of 90 feet down a rubble slope from where No 3 can be seen to be unreachable fifty feet above, leads to an abseil of about seventy feet through a boulder choke to the floor of the level, at a point beyond the blockage. The level is quite extensive, and has been stoped upwards at several places to connect with No's 3 and 2 levels, there are few artefacts, but the vein is interesting, mainly barytes with a little lead, and showing several layers of crystallisation.

No 2 is a crosscut to the vein, where the rock is much less sound and great flakes have peeled from the walls. To the south is a shaft to No 4 level, but we did not have sufficient rope to descend it. To the north the forehead was reached by climbing over a collapse and then threading a way amongst the sharp edged flakes and crossing two evil smelling black sumps.

Finally we squeezed into No 1 level, a short and sticky little hole, which is blocked a few feet in where it reaches the vein. It extends a few yards to the south where there is a hole in the floor which drops down to no 2. It would therefore be possible to complete an abseiling through trip from No 1 level down to no 4 and exit up the rubble slope to surface.

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