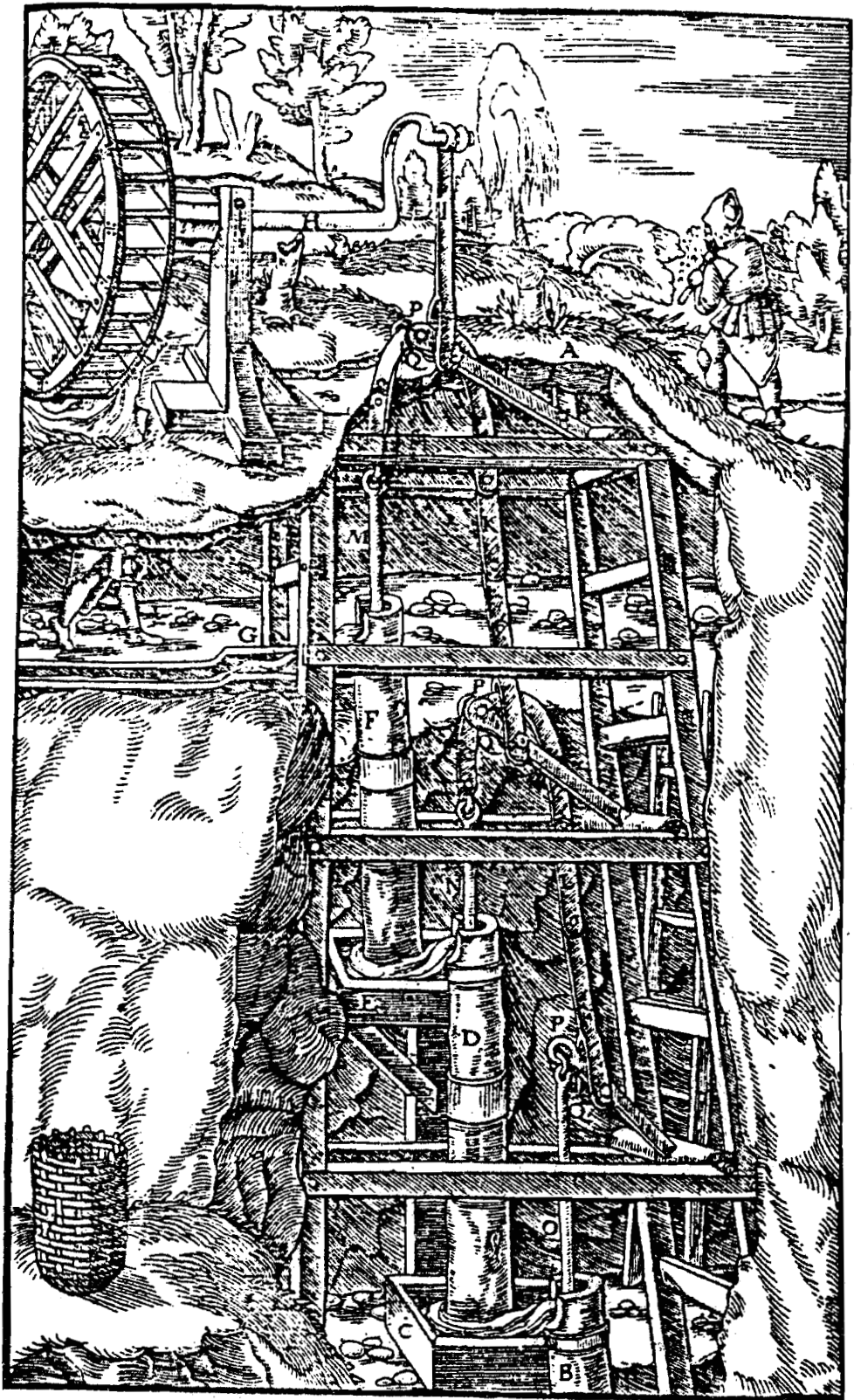


CAT NEWSLETTER 6



A—SHAFT. B—BOTTOM PUMP. C—FIRST TANK. D—SECOND PUMP. E—SECOND TANK. F—THIRD PUMP. G—TROUGH. H—THE IRON SET IN THE AXLE. I—FIRST PUMP ROD. K—SECOND PUMP ROD. L—THIRD PUMP ROD. M—FIRST PISTON ROD. N—SECOND PISTON ROD. O—THIRD PISTON ROD. P—LITTLE AXLES. Q—“CLAWS.”

An illustration from *De Re Metallica*, a 1556 Treatise on the art of mining by Georgius Agricola. This remained the miners 'bible' for 200 years.

d

THE FUNNEL

by McF

Last night we sat in the bar of the Crown clutching pints of bitter and sketching diagrams of stopes and levels. After a deal of deliberation, and no small amount of head-scratching, we decided that the day's 300ft + descent into an unexplored region of Paddy End mine, at Coniston, was a qualified success. The day's plan had been to descend the Funnel (I'll tell you what that is in a minute) and establish its associations with various unexplored, and explored, stopes on Top and Middle levels. Well, we achieved a few of the things we set out to do, and established that - there is no connection with Lake Stope; Green Ginnel is probably Middle Level masquerading as a green ginnel; the Windy Stope is much larger than anyone ever imagined; Lake Stope is a mystery unto itself; the Windy Stope is probably the same stope as the other Windy Stope near the top of Paddy End Shaft; Orange Box Corner is directly below, and a little to the right of, the place that looked as though it might have been a tunnel; the Windy Stope probably connects with Deep Level through Pudding Stone Level; Windy Stope is a very hairy place; Green Ginnel, which almost certainly is Middle Level in disguise, could possibly connect with Grey Crag Level; the place that looked as though it might have been a tunnel is definitely a tunnel; there should be a connection somewhere between Green Ginnel and Lake Stope; Windy Stope and Lake Stope are incredibly close together; the tunnel that runs into the side of Windy Stope and has railway lines jutting out of it is probably Green Ginnel, or there again it could be Middle Level, but it doesn't matter because we'll never be able to climb up to it; the ore-pass which drops onto the northern extremity of the Windy Stope should originate on Top level; the unexplored tunnel in the top of Windy Stope is too high for Top Level and is therefore Arete Chamber Level; Orange Box Corner, which is above Green Ginnel and below Arete Chamber Level, is a very lonely place when viewed from the end of a rope; Woodend's Level does not connect with the Windy Stope, which is just as well for the adit lies beneath the surface of Levers Water; the Lake Stope is the last chance of winning into the Top Level Extension; Green Ginnel will have to be examined more closely; Orange Box Corner, which lies adjacent to Lake Stope, at the edge of the Windy Stope, on the Top Level cross-cut about a hundred feet from the Through Trip Stope, will also have to be examined more closely; Windy Stope and the Through Trip Stope had in opposite directions; Top Level Extension is a mythical labyrinth of endless passages unattainable except through eternal celibacy or hypnotic regression.

Now I hope you have absorbed all that for you'll be asked questions on it at the Christmas dinner, and if you get more than three correct than you will have done rather better than us chaps sitting round this table in the Crown scribbling diagrams on wedding invitation envelopes and racking our minds trying to piece together the monstrous three-dimensional maze that is Paddy End. The only thing that everyone agrees on, and which is slowly becoming a sort of folk-maxim uttered after every Coniston meet, is that for every mystery unravelled another two take its place; it's like those equations we learnt by rote at school: the sum of the problems solved is half the total sum of the problems yet to be encountered, or: for every headache there is an unequal and opposite headache. The more we explore, the deeper we descend, the more clouded and congested becomes the picture; confusion is too simple a word for it, it does not convey the sense of frustration and bewilderment which is experienced after every visit.

There was once a time when things were so much simpler. In the good old days we would saunter through Paddy End, maybe explore a new tunnel or two, bottom a shaft or a stope, then wander off to the pub; sand boys were never happier; ignorance, to use a hackneyed expression, was bliss. Those were the good old days, the wire-ladder and piton days, the wet overalls and waders days, when people who owned sit-harnesses were regarded with mixed feelings of awe and suspicion. The good old days were rudely terminated in 1982 when an old mine plan became available on the black market. Now, the original plan belonged to Eric Holland; we had all perused it on the odd occasion when it had been unravelled ceremoniously beneath the ancient rafters of Stainton Hall; then out of the blue Chris Jones suddenly began producing

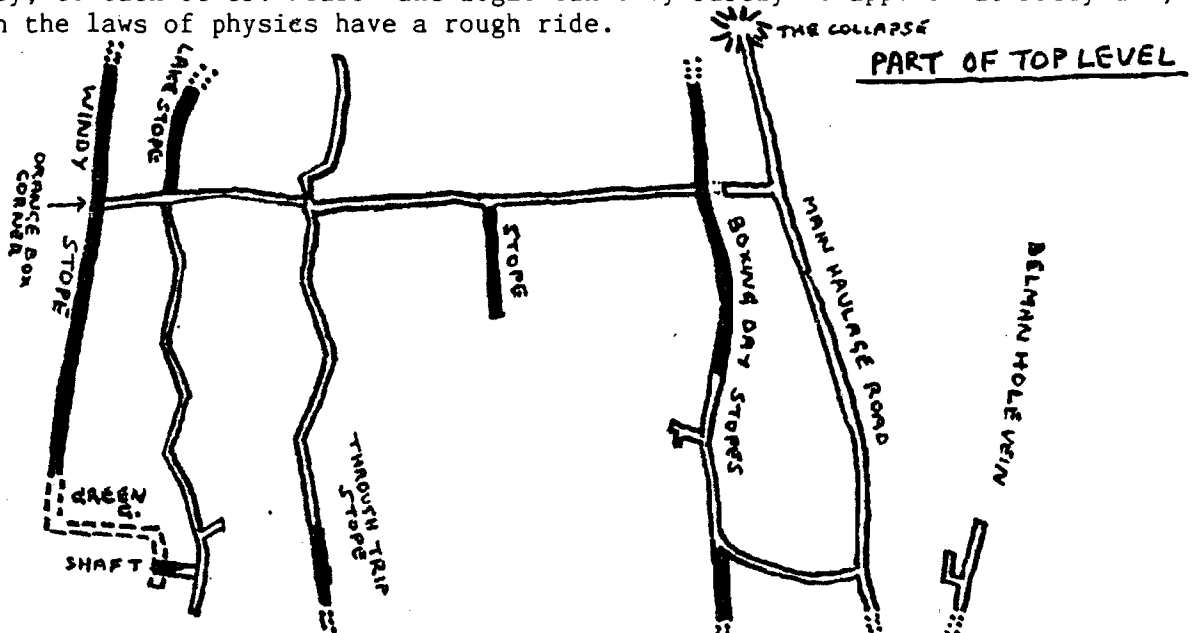
excellent copies and selling them on street corners. How Chris acquired the original is another mystery of the Coniston copper mines for Eric has a reputation for being 'careful' with his mine plans - we mortals are allowed glimpses only on special occasions.

You would think it would be safe to assume that armed with mine plans, compasses, and tape measures, anyone of average intelligence could, in the space of two-and-a-half years, lay bare the secrets of the Coniston copper mines, or at least form an accurate mental picture of the workings. This would indeed have been the case if the plans had been worth their salt, but it soon became apparent, when comparing our own rough surveys and jottings with the bona fide plan, that this hallowed document bore only the vaguest of similarities to the actual mine. There seems to be several reasons for this, the most important being that the survey was carried out before the mine ceased production, there being workings accessible now that were not driven at that time; another factor which causes a deal of consternation is that stopes are not shown, presumably for clarity - only the main levels and a few select branches are depicted - the plan is not exhaustive by a long shot. Another reason, and one that was highlighted by yesterday's descent, was the denudation of the main haulage levels both by natural forces and the hand of man.

Let us consider this last point. There are five haulage horizons at Paddy End and several intermediary levels. Starting at the top we have Arete Chamber Level, then Top Level, Middle Level, Grey Crag or Hospital Level, and Deep Level. Until very recently Arete Chamber Level was thought to have been just a local intermediary level but evidence of it has been found in the open stope on the brow above Levers Water, now called Brow Stope for convenience, and also in the Funnel (Ah, the Funnel, I'll tell you what that is in a couple of secs). Neither Arete Chamber Level, which is very ancient, nor the Elizabethan workings around and above it, are depicted on the plan. Top Level is extremely extensive, many thousands of feet of passages which are shown on the plan have so far evaded discovery; it's not that we don't know where to look, we do; the Top Level Extension lies behind a devastating collapse on the main haulage road and our energies of late have been concentrated on trying to by-pass this collapse via the stopes. We found no sign of Top Level down Brow Stope, just a couple of timber platforms and some false floors; we assumed that roof falls had swept the level away. In the Windy Stope there was no evidence either, not even a splinter of wood never mind a false floor, but according to the plan Top Level ran through it. Roof falls again perhaps? ...but no, the stope was clean and the roof, in places, quite solid; Top Level has been stripped, removed by the miners, timbers and rails spirited away to secret places. Middle Level, which was quite extensive, has been severely butchered. Huge blocks, tens of feet across, have collapsed in on it, smashed through it, fallen out of it, flattened it, and dangle over it. Grey Crag Level, by comparison, is in reasonable repair and can be traversed for almost its entire length. There are several badly shattered regions, some quite hairy, these being confined to areas of stoped ground. Deep Level is badly crushed at Paddy End and no route along it has been found.

So things are not quite as straightforward as they first appear. Now let us consider the first and the second points together. Several hundred feet north of the collapsed entrance of Top Level (Top Level is entered not through the adit but from above, down the stopes) is a cross-cut running west. This cross-cut is, according to the plan, itself intersected by two veins along which Top Level has been driven. So much for the plan. In reality the cross-cut has been intersected by no less than FIVE veins, all of which have been stoped away. It is practically impossible to relate these five stopes, and their levels, to anything depicted on the plan; the Through Trip Stope bears a vague resemblance to the most northerly level, and the other, drawn as a straight line, is either Windy Stope or Lake Stope. Things could be spiced up now if the names of the veins were to be introduced; this is even more confusing than the stopes and levels. According to the plan the most likely name for the vein which runs through the Windy Stope is New South Vein, but the other Windy Stope, the one that abuts onto the Pudding Stone Level is on the South Vein. This would suggest that the two are not contiguous but our evidence suggests otherwise. Perhaps South Vein splits as it runs north, the left hand branch, New South Vein, running through both of the Windy Stopes, the other to Lake Stope. That is just a theory. I don't think I'll bother with the other veins.

By now you may have an idea of what we're up against (those of you still reading this article, that is). Things that should not exist down Paddy End are present in their dozens, complete levels have disappeared without trace, stopes and tunnels have collapsed, huge piles of deads, and there must be thousands of tons, have subsided and added to the confusion (deads - waste rock stacked underground to save being carted out). All this havoc is spread over a vertical distance of 750ft and on half a dozen identical veins which run parallel, and in close proximity, to each other. Reason and logic can only rarely be applied at Paddy End, even the laws of physics have a rough ride.



For the past two years we have been besotted with the notion of winning into the Top Level Extension, the elusive lost tunnel which winds through the ramifications of Paddy End and veers off under Brim Fell. Enthusiasm was roused when on Boxing Day 1982 a CAT work party dug through a collapse on the Top Level cross-cut and discovered 633ft of passages and several more stopes. One of these stopes was driven on the Belman Hole Vein, easily identifiable because of its distinct angle in relation to the other veins, but the remaining stopes, and quite a decent length of the 633ft of tunnels, do not exist on the plan. The route on into Brim Fell is blocked by a tremendous collapse, the nature of which renders it exceedingly dangerous to dig.

And so, this summer, things remained much the same on Top Level as they did after that Boxing Day meet. If we were to win into the Extension then the bull would have to be taken by the horns. We had three chances of success, the first was to find a connection down the Brow Stope which would by-pass the collapse; the second was to dig through the collapse, but this was a last resort, the third was to find a connection down the Funnel (Ah, the Funnel, just bear with me for a while longer) but this, as it happens, was also a last resort. Mitchell, Wickenden, Webb, and myself, descended the Brow Stope on August the 19th 1984 but drew a blank. There was a false floor, just out of reach, which might have been a branch of Top Level, but it was heading in the wrong direction. However, we did find a branch of (wait for it) the Middle Level Extension, but it was very short and terminated in a blind heading. So much for Brow Stope. Now only two avenues were open to us: the dig and the Funnel. We plumped for the Funnel.

Those of you who have been walking in the Coniston fells and have visited Levers Water, even if you have only been once or twice, will be acquainted with the Funnel. It is an evil black hole that lurks above the southern banks of the tarn, a steep-sided crater of boulder-clay which plunges into the depths of the mountain and from which emanate draughts of chill, damp air. Grown men shudder when they behold the Funnel, mothers clutch their children to their bosoms, parties of school boys lob rocks down and listen in silence as the sound of crashing stones gets fainter.....and fainter.....and fainter. No one has ever explored the Funnel, they have never had any desire to, any need to. There is nothing enticing about the Funnel, it is an horrendous and a mortifying wound in the fell side; and that is the top and the bottom of it.

So yesterday morning, in the wind and the drizzle, we carried our gear up the rocky road from the B.M.S.C. hut to Levers Water and surveyed the hole with dire misgivings. Mike Mitchell rigged up the first pitch, belaying the rope to the 'danger' sign someone had thoughtfully planted on the rim of the crater. On the way down the crater we examined a tiny hole in the boulder-clay, which we had observed some months previously. We pulled the clay away and, behold, there was a level running off towards the tarn and draughting nicely. There was no time to dig into it properly so we left it for another day and proceeded carefully towards the mouth of the Funnel. Now at the bottom of the crater the clay gives way to bedrock and plummets over a knife-edge into a stope. We had anticipated that this edge of rock might damage our S.R.T. rope so we had brought along the ultimate in rope protectors - a length of Mike Mitchell's bedroom carpet (deep crimson) which he had removed from under the wardrobe early one morning when Barbara was out shooting rabbits. The carpet worked a treat, and we all remembered to wipe our feet before scuttling over it.

About forty feet down we alighted on a huge chock stone which had dropped out of the hanging wall, so Fleming informed us, during last winter's storms. We hammered in a bolt and set off down the next pitch, which was 163ft deep. 60ft down this pitch we positioned a hanging belay to give us more protection; 100ft down we ran out of rope and Fleming had to lash another one on while straddling the stope (it was mutually agreed by all those who were obliged to negotiate this knot that Peter Fleming could do worse than to invest in an S.R.T. instruction manual. The knot resembled one of those woven rope fenders that are placed over the bows of tug boats). We landed on the floor of the stope, which was piled with debris from above, and explored in a north-westerly direction down a boulder pile and into a chamber where, 25ft above us, we observed a tunnel entering from the hanging wall. There were railway lines protruding from the tunnel. We are of the understanding, after having discussed the matter at some length, that what we looked up at was a branch of Middle Level.











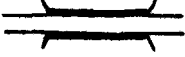
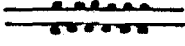






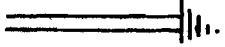

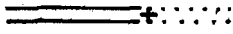
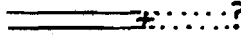
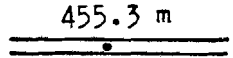
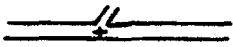
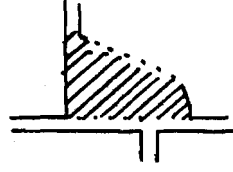
Travelling south-east from the foot of the pitch we found a 65ft shaft dropping into another stope, actually it was a continuation of the entrance stope, just another step down. We descended this and found ourselves in an area of badly shattered ground. We were picking our way between massive chock stones when Fleming proclaimed that he had been here before: this was the Windy Stope he had explored from the Top Level cross-cut two summers ago, and sure enough, 40ft above us, we spotted the Green Ginnel with its fine malachite waterfall. We were dumbfounded; this was the last place we had expected to find ourselves. Then everything began to fall into place - the Windy Stope was so windy because it connected directly with the surface; there was a terrific through-draught from the Funnel down to Middle Level and beyond, yes beyond, for we discovered another shaft which we think drops down to Grey Crag Level, but we left that for another day.

We set off back up the 65ft pitch, our minds mulling over our discoveries, and disappointed at not winning into the Top Level Extension. On the way up the 163ft pitch there was a moment of excitement when a member noticed a tunnel, on the Top Level horizon, entering the stope about 30ft to his right. Could this be the Extension? No, it was Orange Box Corner; approaching it from this obscure angle it had looked wildly enticing. Level with the hanging belay Wickenden observed another tunnel running into the side of the stope. We think this was Arete Chamber Level. This was also just out of reach.....so we left it for another day.

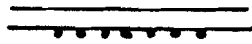
We climbed to grass at 8:30pm after about nine-and-a-half hours underground. It had stopped raining, night was falling fast, we finished Dennis Webb's lemonade and made for the Crown.

So the Funnel has been bottomed, thank God. Now we can forget about it for a while. The elusive Top Level Extension seems to be further away than ever, perhaps we'll never break into it, but it gives us something to strive for; one day, who knows, we might stumble across it when we're least expecting to, that seems to be the way of things at Coniston. And what's the next step?.....Lake Stope for we have never been to the bottom of it. There won't be anything there, not on the Top Level horizon anyway. No, the only sure way of winning into the Extension is to dig through the collapse on the main haulage road, of that I am quite sure. But I could be proved wrong..... it wouldn't be the first time.

Symbols for use with plans for abandoned metal mines in CAT publications, as suggested by N.A.M.H.O. Use Ordnance Survey symbols for surface features. Please use these if you intend sending plans in to the Journal.

<u>FEATURE</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
Shaft (at surface).	    Shape	Depth and name if known and information on its use.
Shaft Fillet.	   	W-winding, P-pumping, M-manway, V-ventilation Sh. If dual-role then use group of symbols.
Adit Mouth	 (Open)  (Filled/Blocked) Directional	
Tunnel Lining	 Stone/Concrete Show extent of lining.	
	 Timber Sets	
Sub-Shaft		Winze (Wz) or Sump (S)- plus depth and name if known.
Raise		Rise - plus height and name if known.
Fault		Fault indicated by solid line. Direction and vertical displacement, in metres on Downthrow.
Boundary of Mine		
Backfilled Level	 Part.... 	
Roof fall - Complete		
Roof fall - Partial	 WATER	Black area depicts water.
Continues Unsurveyed		
Continues Unexplored	 Gas/Flooded etc.	
Spot Height	 455.3 m	Level shown in metres
Survey Station		
<u>SECTIONS</u>		
Limit of Stope		Proven in solid Unproven in broken

Underpinning



Floor supported on stemples.

Overpinning



Roof supported on stemples.

Crosscut



Running from far side of section away from viewer.

Crosscut



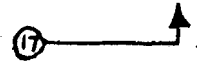
Running from near side of section towards viewer.

Crosscut



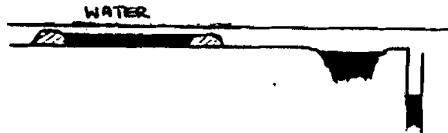
Driven both ways.

Section marker on plan

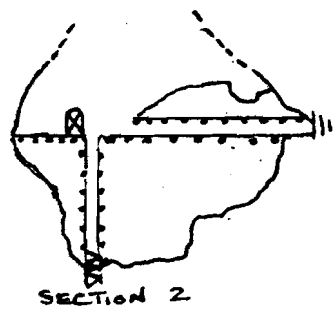
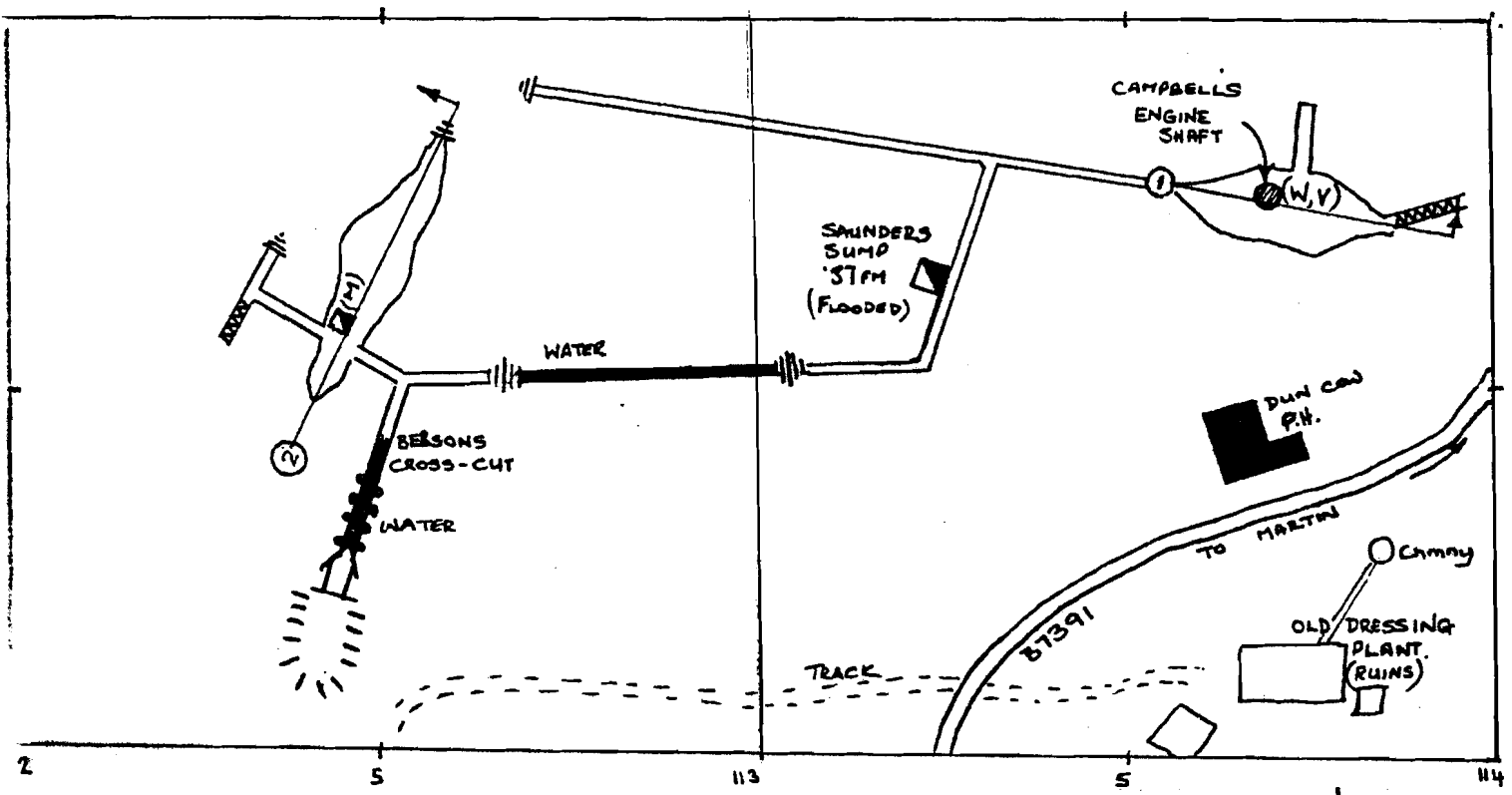


Used to depict section (see example)

Water



Shown as black infill in level, hole and shaft (mark as water)



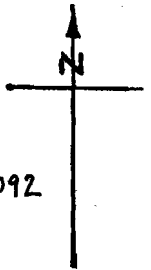
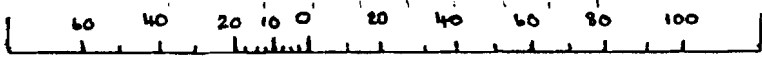
BERSON MINE

NGR XS 11240092

SURVEYED BY G. CAMPBELL 8-12-84

GRADE II

SCALE: - HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL 1 cm = 10 m



Notes on Drawing Surveys.

Grading.

Grade I. A rough sketch of low accuracy drawn from memory.

Grade II. A rough magnetic survey with distances to within 50 cm. (horizontal and vertical) and to within $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. A clinometer must be used in passages with an appreciable slope.

Grade III. An accurate magnetic survey to 10 cm. and 1° .

Grade IV. A survey based on the use of a theodolite instead of a compass.

Scale.

This can be any convenient scale, preferably metric. Horizontal and vertical can be different.

Bats Again!

Some weeks ago Mike Mitchell and myself (Chris Jones) obtained a permit to visit the Scordale Mines near Appleby on a mission for the N.C.C. to survey for bats. The valley has been badly knocked around and it is very difficult to find anything on the surface. Underground the story is little better, they are in a sorry state due to mineral collectors who have left rubbish everywhere but worse than this have pulled down pack walls and stored deads to leave a picture of destruction. This has left many of the mines in a dangerous state. However it appears that our furry friends had been resident in one of the mines, probably hibernating there judging by the droppings. In another area we found a living specimen and on a later trip I identified this as a rare Daubentons bat. The military have agreed to put bat gates on both of these locations which hopefully will prevent disturbance and also stop future destruction. Last time I was up there I found a couple of collectors at work just with torches and no protective headgear!

Later on we visited some barytes mines right up on the Escarpment which again have been badly knocked about, this time from the military, who seem to have pounded the area with blank 80 mm shells which are scattered in profusion everywhere. Not only that but there were all sorts of strange metal objects around but I couldn't persuade Mike to pick them up. The mines themselves consist of several deep shafts, some with the twisted metal remains of headframes which pierce three parallel veins and also a few adits. I hope to have a fuller account in the next journal.

Only one word of advice if you fancy visiting these mines - don't. Firstly you do need a pass from the range officer to avoid getting carried away by the military police and secondly you need to pick a day when there is no firing in progress. The area is not only used for heavy artillery practice but also for small-arms training and troop manoeuvres often with live ammunition.

BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK LIST BLACK

Members who have led meets since January 1983 and have not submitted an account to the Meets Secretary for inclusion in the Log Book are:

Eric Holland
 Alan Westall
 Peter Fleming
 Mike Mitchell
 Chris Jones
 Geof Cram
 Dave Blundell
 Mark Wickenden
 Martin Maher
 Ewan Cameron

"A meet leader should complete a full, but not necessarily long report of the activities and achievements at the conclusion of the meet. The report should be headed by the location/mine site, date, and leader's name. The information should contain details of any new areas entered by "forced exploration" i.e. digging, climbing, or descending; whether any surveying or photography was done and by whom. A record should be made of any artifacts and if removed record who did so. An indication of the number of members and guests attending should also be given."

The Log Book is available for reference to all members.

ALPINE SLIDE EVENING

Peter Fleming will be showing his collection of Alpine slides, taken over many years on his numerous climbing holidays in the Alps, at the Red Lion, Dalton-in-Furness, on Wednesday the 14th of November at 8pm. There will be a small charge; all proceeds will go to club funds.

The invitation is open to non-members.

A.G.M. and DINNER

The Annual General Meeting and Christmas Dinner will be held at the Farmers' Arms, Lowick, on Saturday the 8th of December. This year's guest speaker will be John Wyatt, Chief National Park Ranger, and author.

The Dinner is, without fail, a good do. New members - please don't be put off, this event is friendly, informal, and a good chance to meet other members and officers.

All members will receive menus and booking slips from Maureen Stone nearer the event.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - The elections will be held at the A.G.M. immediately prior to the dinner. Proposals and nominations to the Chairman, at the A.G.M.

Posts include: Chairman
 Secretary
 Treasurer and Membership Secretary
 Meets Secretary
 Tackle Master
 Journal Editor
 Newsletter Editors
 5 Committee Members

C.O.M.R.U. is go!

Mike Mitchells baby has been sucessfully delivered after a long and difficult confinement. It is to be called C.O.M.R.U. (Cumbrian Ore Mines Rescue Unit). Despite his incredibly advanced years the father is said to be doing well.

The first rescue practice of this season took place recently in one of the numerous disused slate quarries that abound in the Kentmere valley. Five members of the team were present, Mike, Gordon, Chris, Alen and Mike (Maher). This was combined with a practice of the Kendal Mountain Rescue Team and the first half of the day was spent with them searching for, and recovering a casualty from the ridge above Rainsborrow Cove. Their efforts were partly hampered by the poor radio communications which they possessed and down at the base the search procedure was punctuated by several feeble cries on the radio for the other half of the team to talk to them. Despite this the recovery was accomplished in good time.

In the afternoon Mike (Mitchell) had devised a particularly fiendish rescue for us to perform. The scenario is that a foolish fell-walker (makes a change from virgins I suppose) has come down off the mountain in the clag and has fallen over the edge of the quarry and down a shaft, a fall of about 80 ft. onto a pile of waste rock, and has miraculously failed to kill himself. The idea is to lower a stretcher down from the top and haul him out. Sounds simple, eh? Well it probably would be but for the lack of suitable belays, but they finally settled for twelve ground anchors and a very rotten rowan tree. To these extremely dubious belays were joined the ropes, suffice to say these were used with the usual Mike Mitchell eye for safety and needed an H.N.C. in advanced crochet work to sort out.

First man down was Chris who located the casualty and called for a stretcher. This was duly delivered by Alen who Mike had wisely decided to remove from the head of the pitch for reasons which I dare not repeat. The stretcher was a 'Bell', excellent for mountain rescue but as was later found not so good underground. The casualty was Pete, a member of the Northumbrian M.R.T. who viewed with great suspicion his two yellow-clad rescuers who were busy strapping him into a stretcher which neither had used before and who were making 'useful' comments like "if he slips out it'll be just like a burial at sea". Despite Pete attempting several breaks for freedom the two rescuers soon had him strapped down. The plan was that Alen would prussik up a rope running over a pulley at the top to provide a counterweight whilst Chris would act as 'Barrow Boy' and guide the stretcher up the pitch. The hauling team at the top had been augmented by several Kendal team members. And so the stretcher and Chris set off up the face. Unfortunately Alen was unable to keep up with the brisk rate of ascent of the stretcher and the air became punctuated with grunts, shouts, curses and groans from below, all a ruse no doubt to impress his son who had arrived above. The slightly staccato progress of the stretcher had by this time got its contents sweating and blubbering about urgent appointments elsewhere and Chris's attempts to allay his fears with tales of unsuccessful

rescues he had seen seemed to have no effect. So the lifting continued apace and the stretcher slowly ascended to the pitch head. Thankfully by this time Alens gibberings had died away. With a mighty final heave the stretcher was pulled over the top and this was closely followed by Chris whose voice had risen several octaves due to his fingers being trapped between the rope and the rock face. When the team attempted to get Pete out of the stretcher they discovered that Alen and Chris had found a new way to strap him in and they were unable to release him without a great deal of cursing and struggling.

Despite the seeming humorous aspects of the practice it brought home the enormity of having to rescue someone from a difficult mine. This was a good open mine with lots of room to work in but imagine trying to bring someone up the 740 feet of very shaky constricted passageway in Greenside or through the tight squeezes and ducks in Tilbertwaite Mine. This might be an almost impossible task but it may be the unfortunate victims only hope. With the increased use of disused mines as a leisure facility it is highly likely that the unthinkable might happen and it is then that C.O.M.R.U. may be an invaluable lifeline.

C.A.T. Journal No. 2.

Articles are still required for inclusion in the next journal and also I would be pleased to see any prints or transparencies of suitable quality for the front cover, so hunt through your collection. CDJ.

Still on the subject of the journal, CAT's fame is spreading. I have recently had word from the colonies that the University of Saskatchewan wishes to subscribe. How did they get to know?

Three Legged Rope Technique ?

The Maher cousins have recently returned from a 'fact-finding tour' of the mines and pubs of the Isle of Man with wondrous tales of bottomless chasms, machinery beyond the bounds of imagination...well anyway, it must be good because they're planning a return trip. Could this be the start of another CAT overseas tour sometime in the future? Apparently the local S.R.T. methods leave something to be desired.

Help.

I am looking for a copy of The Geological Surveys "Special Reports on the Mineral Resources of G.B. Vol. 17. The Lead, Zinc, Copper and Nickel Ores of Scotland. by G.V.Wilson. (1921) to complete some work. If anyone has a copy could they give me a bell. Chris Jones(0229)63892.

Newsletter.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the next copy of this newsletter with any short articles, bits of information, gossip, etc. should get them to either Alen McFadzean or Chris Jones. The next issue will probably be a Christmas Special so anything festive would be welcome.

MEETS REVIEW

by McF

By gum, it's good to get home again. Two late nights up at Ashfell Farm, long treks beneath the grouse moors of Swaledale, and Anne Danson's farmhouse recipe vindaloo curry have knocked the stuffing out of me.....not to mention tree-levelling gales blowing one's flat cap into the next valley, Chris Jones' death-wish driving, and constant efforts to repel the amorous advances of Ken Battersby's dog while locked in the back of a Ford Fiesta with the filthy beast (the dog, not Ken). It will be a relief to get back to the quarry in the morning and smash some rocks. Still, can't complain, one has to suffer hardship when one is a senior journalist on a crusading news-sheet, got to be up the front braving the elements with pen and waterproof paper.

It seems a long time since May, which is where I left off in the last review. So many things have happened since then, what with holidays and one thing and another, that the mental stimulus required to summon memories of those summer meets is sadly lacking. But I'll endeavour to do my best.

On with the show.

* * * * *

27th of May....."Who is that funny man with the red face?" said CAT members to each other as they floundered about in Warton Crag Mine. "A funny man," said I, "With a red face?". "Yes," they replied, "A red face, a Tyrolean hat, a rather lumpy herdwick sweater, brown moleskin trousers, and a white foreign-looking van that could do with a wash.". "Dunno," said I, "Perhaps he's the land-owner.". "Don't think so," said they, "...think he's one of us.". "Can't be," said I, "there's no one in the club who fits that description, not a man with a red face and a Tyrolean hat and a lumpy herdwick sweater. Mind you, there used to be.". "There used to be?" said they, "Pray tell us more.". "A long time ago," said I, "when the world was young and Britanniaruled the waves, there was indeed a man in this venerable society who had a red face, a tyrolean hat, and a lumpy herdwick sweater. His name was Eric Holland. But many years ago he disappeared without trace, never to be seen again.". "Then who is that funny man over there?" said they, curiosity aroused. "Ah," said I, "that is just a man who looks remarkably like Eric Holland. But it can't be the real Eric Holland for he hasn't been on a CAT meet since 1904."

And so, on May the 27th, a whole army of members was shown through the hematite mines of Warton Crag by a man who looked remarkably like Eric Holland. This imposter took them into two levels, one of which had an iron gate on the entrance, the other which was entered through a nasty crawl. There were no pitches, everything was easy and horizontal, and compared to the hematite mines of Furness, things were relatively clean. The meet leader said his name was Eric Holland, the lying toad. I just hope the real Eric doesn't get hold of him 'cause blood will fly then!

Towards the end of June we had a weekend up at Nenthead. On the Saturday Peter Fleming led a party into Smallcleugh Mine to look for some new workings in the vicinity of the Ballroom flats. No new ground was covered. This is the second time Fleming has led a party into this area of the mine in search of new territory. Let's hope that next time he gets it right.

On Sunday members were treated to the delightful Smallcleugh-to-Rampgill through trip, another of Fleming's fetishes. Mike Maher and Clare Dobie nearly came to grief while abseiling down the connecting shaft. There was so much mud clagging to the rope that their figure-8 descenders were virtually ineffectual. Sunday wasn't Clare's day; on the way out of Rampgill she tripped and knocked the wooden gate off its hinges. Her husband, Max, said it reminded him of one of those safari films where you see rhinos crashing into the sides of Land Rovers.

As usual we spent the weekend at Cherrytree Cottage with the indstruct-ible Helen Sherlock, hostess, cook, chambermaid, and chief chucker-outer. She banished Wickenden to the veranda where he couldn't do any damage (or so she thought). Poor old Mark bedded down with the fushias and geraniums.

Now then, I was scratching my head and wondering what I could write about the Helvellyn Mine meet when I suddenly remembered that my foreign correspondent had already done the job for me. Foreign correspondent? I hear you all gasp incredulously. Yes, foreign correspondent - Ronnie Calvin from Cleator Moor. Poor old Ronnie's been made redundant after a lifetime down the pit, so now that he's got a bit of time on his hands he's been keeping me up to date with goings on at Haig Colliery, and now he's come up with this meet review. Mind you, I suppose you have to do something constructive to take your mind off things when you live in Cleator Moor. Anyway, Helvellyn Mine - we split into two groups; the 'A' team went into No.1 Level and abbed down to No.2 Level, the entrance of which is collapsed. The 'B' team attempted to dig through the collapse from the outside and establish contact with the 'A' team. Got that? Take it away, Ronnie.

Members of the C.A.T. thought they had found the (Mole)

belonging to Norpek, but the thing in a McFadzean Wellington turned out to be a dead mouse accompanied by a horde of

maggots. The rare old miners dance he performed on finding these, was thoroughly enjoyed by the members present. It was the first time they had seen the 'Welly Dance'. This is a grand way for future meet leaders to start the meet off.

So, off up the fell to the Dig. Digger Danson was first to start digging on getting the location from McFadzean. She was joined by farmer Blezzard and that old collier, Calvin, along with Ian Tyler and his buddy Dave Blundell. Ann was like a human mole and good progress was made. Timber and old rails were scrounged from the tips, and soon the hole had the look of a Nuclear fallout shelter. Backs bent, bums up and heads right in the hole. Shouts of "Are you in There", "Are you cloth lugged" - but alas, no answer.

So up the fell to the top level. Blundell and Calvin were huffing and puffing. Way back, as usual, Calvin says "its all that coal dust", which he finds hard to understand as he has only been underground for thirty three years. On reaching the top level - "Shall we follow the water that is

coming out?". "Yes" shouted farmer Blezzard, "but I will have to go easy because its my back." He had been told before not to carry such a heavy wallet and his pockets full of rocks. So, we followed the water. "This looks good" cried Ian Tyler. "I have found Bed Rock" - so it was dig, dig, dig, but no level was found. While Peter Blezzard was getting the sun on his bad back, or so he said, he shouted an order "Dig to your left, it will be there". But after a lot of muck was shifted and knees getting sore, we were joined by Mike Mitchell and a Captain Oats who, on looking at the flow water, said "Dig to your Right". This gave us fresh hope and with Captain Oats rushing into the Dig, he cried out "I have found timber to the right."

This was like a miracle cure to farmer Blezzard. So, forgetting about his bad back, he got into the Dig. Shortly after, a piece of timber was brought out. This was ten inches long, 1½ inches wide by quarter of a half inch deep. It was by then that the well known Meet Leader and slate splitter came on the job. "What are your digging here for, when the level is twenty yards to your Right". He got no thanks for these remarks, only hints of how would he like to pick his teeth up with broken fingers, and did he like hospital food.

In August we had a meet at the Back Strings, Coniston copper mines, to explore some of the deep stopes near Levers Water. 'Back Strings' is the name applied to the mineralised veins which run along the top of the crag at Paddy End Mine, also known as Simon's Nick after an Elizabethan miner who blew himself to pieces down in the workings. Two different attempts to explore new ground took place, members splitting into two groups. The first group tackled Brow Stope (I have dealt with this in the article entitled The Funnel) while the other, under the

guidance of Peter Fleming, carried out some important work in the Through Trip Stopes. The meet was very well attended and most folk went underground, though some took advantage of the weather and went for a dip in the tarn.

On the grassy ridge above Simon's Nick there is a tiny shaft which drops into the Through Trip Stopes. It had never been descended but we knew that it dropped into Arete Chamber because daylight can be glimpsed from the top of the 90ft pitch which gives access to Top Level. There was a slight chance that between the top of the shaft and Arete Chamber there were ancient workings, dating back to Elizabethan times, which had not been explored. Dennis Webb abseiled down the shaft. He didn't discover any new ground but was very impressed with the sight of the lights of his comrades (who had descended the stopes by the normal route) some incalculable distance below him. Dennis didn't have enough rope to join them so he was obliged to return the way he came. This, of course, was an exercise in team work. Other members who took part were: C.D. and C.H. Jones, Andy Carter, Ian Tyler, Dave Blundell, the Dobies, Alan Westall, and Fleming. If I have omitted anyone, please accept my apologies.

Unperturbed by his retreat from the Through Trip Stopes, Dennis later joined Mitchell, Wickenden, and McF down Brow Stope. For a little bloke he has a lot of energy.

And that brings us to last weekend, the 8th and 9th of September, when the ale and the curry flowed free and the flag floors of Ashfell Farm echoed to the sounds of merriment. Things got off to a good start on Friday night with Phil Murphy, from Leeds, accusing the humble editors of this diabolical rag about writing slanderous remarks about him in a previous Meets Review. It seems I hinted that he was over-careful with his money, and that he had never actually been seen to spend any. Well just to put the record straight, that night in the Fat Lamb (a pub on the moors somewhere between Whitehaven and Whitby), he put his hand in his pocket and bought a round. A noble jesture. Next time though, Phil, I'll have a pint. I didn't realise they still sold beer in gills.

On Saturday about a dozen people turned up in Gunnerside Gill, Swaledale, for the Sir Francis Level trip. Sir Francis Level was driven to drain water from workings on the Friarfold Vein and is the best part of a mile in length. There is a bad roof fall just within the entrance, and beyond this the water is 4ft deep, maintaining this depth for many hundreds of feet until it gradually drops to knee-depth. Everyone had a wetsuit, everyone, that is, except Ken Battersby who wore tweed climbing breeches and a wolly pully. After emerging from the water at the end of the level I asked him how he felt. "Cold as a witch's tit," said the Bat through clenched teeth as he squelched off into the darkness.

At the end of the level there is a large chamber which accomodates the winding equipment of an underground shaft. This really is a spectacular place: photos of it can be seen in various mining books. There is a winding drum, head-frame, sheave wheels, hydraulic winding and pumping engines, and a pit cage - all in situ. This shaft was sunk to test the vein at depth, but the whole operation proved to be uneconomical and was abandoned after a few short years.

The last time we visited this place the main level was blocked beyond the shaft, but we noticed someone had dug a way through. The level continued for a few feet to another blockage; this one had not been dug, so we had a go. After an hour's digging (valiant efforts here by Fleming, Hewer, Webb, and Moore), the team won into unexplored ground and followed the level, through chest-deep water, to a partial collapse about 500ft beyond the shaft. On the other side of this collapse the water had backed-up to ten inches from the arched masonry roof. There was a general lack of enthusiasm to explore any further; but eventually a bold strapping lad stepped forward (Chris Moore, from Millom), crawled over the collapse, and slid head first into the water like an otter. Ten minutes elapsed before he returned to inform us that the level was completely blocked several hundred feet down the passage. While all this was taking place Mike Mitchell was doing a bit of exploring on his own. Having dug through some shaly material in another masonry-lined passage he discovered nothing less than two spare sheave wheels for the shaft winding gear and a massive cog wheel. Hats off to Mike.....he gets the CAT award for the person most likely to succeed in life; Chris Moore gets the award for Dunkirk Spirit.

Saturday night shall be emblazoned in CAT history as the Famous Curry Night. Fifteen people sat down in the front room of Ashfell Farm to a superb candle-lit dinner created by hostess Anne Danson. The dinner was candle-lit because some idiot, claiming to be an electrician, tampered with the consumer unit and blew the ends off his wire cutters. After the meal everyone repaired to the Fat Lamb to be treated to a round of cashew nuts by millionaire and philanthropist Phil Murphy.

Now whether it was the beer in the Fat Lamb, or the after-effects of the curry, or perhaps even the full moon, I don't know, but strange things happened in the wee small hours when all sensible folk were in bed. Who was that passionate woman wandering in the dew-soaked grass, and that frantic lover pursuing her across the benighted moors? The ghosts of Cathy and Heathcliffe, voicing their plaintive cries as the wind howled through the trees of Ravenstonedale? No, it was Clare and Max Dobie up to mischief in the carpark. "Bloody noisy sods," said Mike Mitchell, early Sunday morning, "That's the last time I pitch my tent next to theirs. Us old folk need our sleep."

On Sunday morning we drove over to Arkengarthdale and had a walk around the site of Shawside Mine (?). We were sitting in the sun, dressed, let it be known, in our Sunday best and not our mining gear, outside the mouth of an open adit when Mitchell spotted this rather smart-looking chap striding manfully through the bracken in our direction, sending grouse and pheasants clattering into the air as he forged towards us. We fell into an uneasy silence as he approached, eying him warily as his green wellies trampled heather and ling.

"I say, you fellows," he bellowed, "Who are you? What do you want? And what are you doing?"

We sat in silence.

"Do I have to repeat myself? Who are you? What do you want? And what are you doing? You there, the fellow with the spectacles and the full set. What are you doing on my land, damn you?"

"We're taking the morning air. Right?" answered Westall, removing a black notebook from his jacket pocket.

And so, on the grouse moors of Arkengarthdale, on a bright and breezy day in September, we came face to face with one of the 3%, a blue-blooded specimen of the aristocracy. This was no game-keeper standing before us in his cavalry-twill trousers, Barbour jacket, and school tie, no lowly grouse beater, this was the laird himself, and looking for all the world as if he had just stepped off the film set of *Brideshead Revisited*. The situation was getting grim: Westall, whose politics are a little to the left of Karl Marx's, was about to launch into a dialogue which would have been no doubt unprintable; had Mitchell not risen to the occasion, tugging his forelock (which is not easy when you're bald - joke courtesy of Chris Jones) and eased the tense atmosphere with wise counsel, we would have been clapped in irons and thrown in the Tower. This encounter with the nobility concluded with back-slapping on both sides, lots of "what-ho"s and "carry-on-chaps", and both parties returned to their pursuits in the best of spirits. (The laird was careful to point out that we could visit his mines anytime except in the nesting season for he didn't want us disturbing his little baby grouse. He also informed us that the mines on his land were dull and uninteresting, and directed us to some on the opposite side of the valley which, incidently, belonged to the Duke of Norfolk).

We took tiffin on the opposite moor then got changed into our gear. We searched high and low for the Duke of Norfolk but had no luck. The remainder of the afternoon was spent exploring Mould's Level, which led into an extensive system of lead workings. There was nothing interesting underground, infact Murphy described the place as an elongated sewer pipe (he's not tight with his remarks).

The day ended with a walk around the mines of the Kisdon Gorge, near Keld, and sausage and chips in the Cross Keys at Tebay.