

1984 – 1985

Taylor's Level Extension

After the clearance work was done on Boxing Day '84 the barrel was at last put in place by quite a large team and entry was gained to the stope. This was not simply the start of another through trip but a careful examination of the stope showed what appeared to be steps cut into the side of the wall disappearing over a tantalising rock bridge into the darkness beyond. This had been noticed on previous trips down from the surface but had never been pushed. The steps were about 25' up and well out of reach. The corner of the stope was also examined but a dig was thought to be completely out of the question. The party then retired to the pub.

In the pub however, Mike Mitchell and Chris Jones decided to go back and try maypoling the pitch a few days later on the 30th. It was left to these two to turn up, carry all the necessary gear (Alen take note) and cart it up to the mine. While Mike rigged the maypole, Chris put in a bolt above the hole in the floor and rigged a knotted rope 'Tarzan Swing' to avoid kicking deads down the pitch to the barrel. The maypole in place Chris went up first up onto a narrow rock bridge, later to be joined by Mike. The two of them stared out over a large stope with a floor about 30' below them crossing the expanse but with large holes in it. The obligatory rock was tossed but failed to make contact with the floor, instead crashing on another 100' or so below. Mike put in two bolts on the bridge and lowered himself gingerly down onto the floor. He shouted back that it was the sought after continuation of Taylor's Level. Alas he dare not set out across the broken floor because of the badly smashed floor but he said he would have a dig under the bridge to get back into the original stope. Chris went back down into this stope and after a very few minutes scrabbling a hand contact was made. They both felt a bigger team was needed so Mike started to ascend. At this moment Alastair Lings appeared and was told the story. The three retired very happy.

In the next few days Alastair laboured alone and opened up the original 'hand' connection and placed the remaining barrel in it thus easing a passage into the second stope.

3rd January saw the team pout again – this time Mike Mitchell, Dennis Webb, Chris Moore and Chris Jones determined to cross the stope. Mike was equipped with his 'ghetto blaster' light all 55 watts of it to see all. It was decided to put a series of bolt belays across the hanging wall of the stope as it seemed likely that this one was going to go. The far end of the stop could be seen but it was blind – where was Taylor's Level? With Mike's insistence on safety a bolt was placed every 10' or so and 5 had been used until the stope floor ended about 15;' short of the end. From here it was possible to see a level running both ways but impossible to get at. Beneath the false floor the drop was about 60' onto what appeared to be another false floor but this has yet to be proved.

A plan to pass the hole was formulated over lunch and this went ahead. Mike Mitchell in a fit of daring decided he would try it and started to bridge his way across with some very hairy antics lifelined by Chris and Dennis on two lifelines. The whole thing was beginning to look like spaghetti. But with much grunting and sweating he did manage to get across and place a bolt. He was then followed by Chris J, but

Dennis declined mentioning something about his legs being too short. The right hand junction proved blind but the left followed the line of the dog-leg on the surface. This was about 30' before turning right at 90deg into yet another huge stope with the extension of Taylor's Level carrying on. Only one snag the floor had gone for about 20'! When a stone was tried it went for perhaps 100' down and a loud splash followed!! No daylight was visible upwards but it would be about 150' to surface. Having run out of tackle there could be no way on that day but there will be other days. The exit was made in record time. Anyone planning to repeat the trip will need about 100' of traverse line.

N.B. Before this trip was started the group spoke to two LDSPB men who were about to serve a writ on Mr. Johnson to tell him to stop building and tear everything down. When we came out he was still building his new larger residence!

