

Coniston Coppermines

25th February 1987

Top Level (Survey and photography session)

Peter Fleming, Mike Mitchell, Ian Matheson, Alistair Lings, Chris Jones.

I photographed the whole of the newly discovered portion of Top Level, whilst Peter Fleming surveyed it. We also rebuilt and repositioned the jackroll windlass.

Earlier we had built up entrance to the Funnel so as to bypass the crawl and brought down the deads just beyond in order to make the route safer. Chris Jones fixed a new traverse line across the false floor in Arête Chamber.

Coniston Coppermines

8th March 1987

Comru Meet

Mike Mitchell, Peter Fleming, Alistair Lings, Chris Jones, Ian Matheson.

Snow, so unable to drive up Walna Scar Road. Went to Hospital Level, and re-bolted the traverses and fixed new lines.

Coniston Coppermines

24th March 1987

Top Level (Evening Meet to preserve the Ore Tub)

Mike Mitchell, Peter Fleming, Roy Garner, Mike Withers.

I was ill in bed and did not attend. They supported the tub, and then emptied it and swung it into the level, discovering that part of the stope was a rock ledge, and not hanging deads as had previously been thought.

Coniston Coppermines

29th March 1987

Top Level (Meet to re-enact the discovery for the video)

Roy Garner, Alistair Lings, Mike Mitchell, Peter Fleming, Phil Merrin, Ian Matheson, plus brothers Dave and Andy from Burnley who were passing by at the time.

Alistair again drove all the gear up to Levers Water before parking his Landrover at the Youth Hostel and walking up himself. There were lots of batteries for the video lights, and some stemples to build supports for the ore tub. The Boxing Day dig and the discovery of the ladder way leading to Dead Dog Passage were re-enacted for the camera,

and then the discovery of the stopes leading off it was filmed.

That done, everyone continued to Ore Tub Stope where the end of the level was cleared off, two heavy stemples placed to provide support for the tramlines when they are replaced, and the pile of deads beyond was levelled.

Finally the funnel which it was believed leads down to Middle Level was investigated. Mike Mitchell descended a fine and loose 45° slope using Ian Matheson as a human deviation to keep the rope away from perched debris. About thirty feet down was a rock tunnel which was blocked about twenty feet further on. Mike was unable to clear this, but Ian, being slimmer, was able to do so, only to see the rubble floor meet the rock roof a few feet lower. It is very unlikely that this will ever be cleared as there is no place to put any spoil and there is tons of loose material perched in the chute above. There could be no escape if it collapsed, and anyone below would be buried.

Coniston Copper Mines

15th April 1987

Evening Meet (Top Level ore tub preservation)

Those present were Mike Mitchell, Peter Fleming, Ian Matheson, Chris Jones, Roy Garner, and Collin Horne.

We met at 6.30 pm. The timber and tools which Mike had brought were driven up to Levers Water Dam in the Lanehead Landrover, which Ian had borrowed for the occasion. We reached the Ore Tub Stope at about 9.00 pm. On the previous visit we had placed two stemples to support the tramlines on which the ore tub was to stand. We now cleared the ground and fastened two railway sleepers longitudinally upon these stemples, levelling up with timber and wedges before nailing the whole lot together. Next we fastened the rails, using three of the original sleepers with the chairs still attached. Finally we manhandled the tub onto the rails. This was difficult as the rails were not true, giving a variable gauge, but was accomplished by freeing off the wheel bearings so that the wheels could move to accommodate the irregularities. We took photographs, tidied up, and left, reaching the surface shortly after 11.00 pm.
