Perkins Level

The entrance to Perkins Level is reached by walking up the main track at the side of the reservoir. The entrance has a locked gate and it is also reinforced to prevent the tunnel from collapsing.

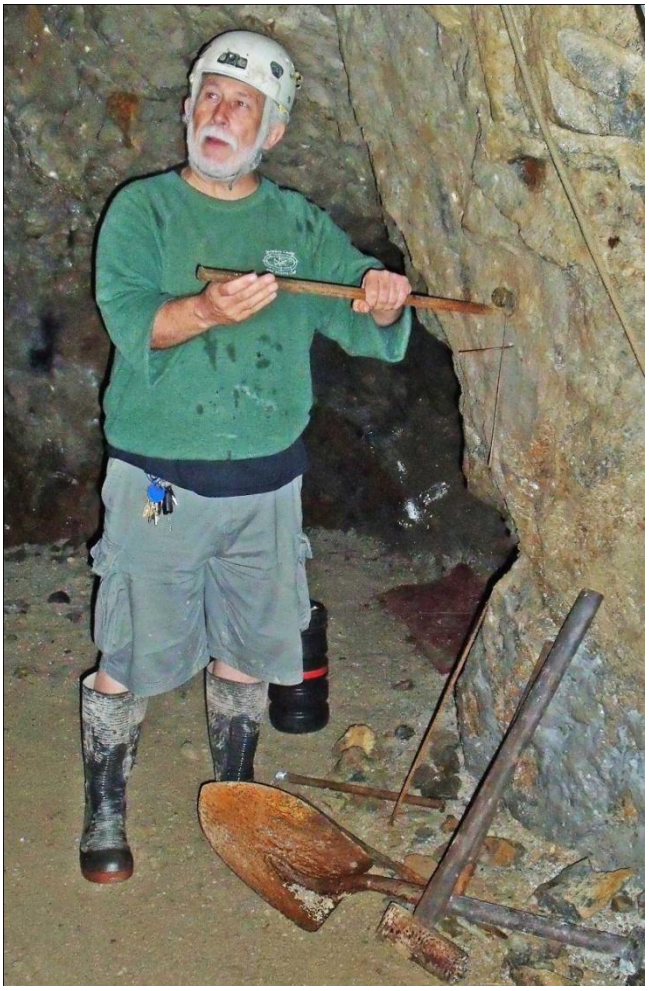
Often a draught can be felt at the entrance because there is a shaft which has deliberately been left open so that bats roost in the old mine working. The entrance has been lined with steel to make access safe for visitors. At one time mine working had opened up a wide STOPE to the surface. This had to be filled by the County Council when the site was being made safe.

The mine can be visited, but there is no disabled access. Wellingtons need to be worn, as there will be water underfoot. The guide will have checked that it is safe to enter the mine before the visit takes place to check that there have been no dangerous rock falls and no flooding.

Inside the Mine

The part of Perkins Level which can be visited includes this horizontal passage to the mineral vein. The level then follows the vein and part of a STOPE, the old mine working, can be seen. The steeply dipping white mineral vein is clearly visible, making a clear contrast with the dark grey of the country rock, the Mytton Flags. Not all the mineral vein can be removed. Some has to be left in place to support the roof of the mine

Demonstration of Mine Working



Some miners' tools are here to illustrate the equipment used underground. Steve is holding a drill rod, which was held in place by one man whilst another hit it with a sledge hammer. The rod was turned in the hole to ensure that it didn't become wedged. The hole would be almost half a metre deep and 25 mm in diameter.

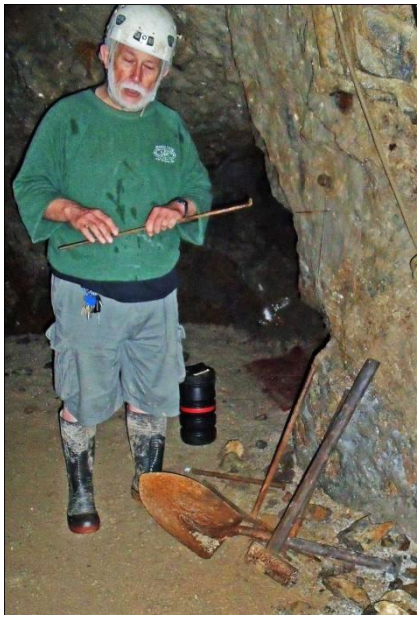
The lower picture shows the thin rod with a hooked piece on the end which was used to rake dust out of the hole before the explosive charge was put in place.

A stick of gunpowder was then packed into the hole, and the charge was held in place with clay to make sure the explosion broke the rock and didn't simply burst out of the hole.

Then a hole for the fuse was made. The miners retreated to safety and the fuse was lit. This was the most dangerous moment. The fuse had to burn for long enough to allow the man who lit it to reach safety before the explosion occurred.

Blasting was usually carried out at the end of a shift so that there was time for the dust to settle before anyone returned to continue working.

When it was safe to return, the miners would come with picks and shovels to remove the loosened material.



Upper Works

Hidden be vegetation higher up the valley from the reservoir is the Upper Works which was used in association with Perkins Level in the last days of mining. There are trucks full of crushed material. The large metal buckets used from hauling material up a shaft are called KIBBLES. On the right the pulley wheels show that machinery was belt driven and the pipe in the foreground was probably for compressed air.

The contrast between the large scale of the buildings by George's Shaft and on Resting Hill indicates how small this mining operation was in comparison with the great productivity in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Black Tom Shaft

The shaft has been sealed and the only indication of where it was is a concrete marker post. The buildings have disappeared, but the stone foundation of one of the mine engines remains here.

Part of the track of the Snailbeach and District Railway can be found nearby.

Lordshill Chapel

The Free Church Chapel was established on the Earl of Tankerville's land towards the head of the Snailbeach valley.

A house was built on to the chapel, and they are surrounded by a graveyard.

Worshippers now meet in Snailbeach, as the former Ore House of the mine has been renovated to provide a place of worship.