

CONISTON OLD MAN HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

High Brandy Crag

This small slate mine was worked during the 19th C but with little success. At the onset of the Great War the workings had closed. The quarry bank was brought back into use for a short time in the 1940's as a processing site because road access here was easier than up to Saddlestone. Slate clog was lowered down to High Brandy Crag by means of an aerial flight and slates were produced on the bank. There was little protection on the bank during bad weather so quarrymen cleared rubbish from the old mine, installed a fire hearth and used it to while away the time in relative comfort and warmth until the weather improved. A well-engineered and constructed access road leads from the main Old Man quarry road close to Windy Gap (SD 28424 98083). This runs a short distance to High Brandy Crag. Eventually the road up to Saddlestone from Windy Gap, known as the Nail Road, was improved and the manufacturing of slates ceased at High Brandy Crag.

The closehead is now used to supply water to the Low Brandy Crag workings below. On the end of the quarry bank the slate pillars of the base of the aerial flight still stand. The steel anchoring supports are also visible behind. Above the workings is the location of the intermediate pier of the aerial flight on a small hill-top at SD 28162 98233. The pier itself has collapsed but most of the structure remains, lying on the ground.

Below High Brandy Crag traces of the original 19thC access track running up to the site from the Paddy End access road can be followed. This was accurately surveyed as part of the Coniston Old Man Project.

