

CONISTON OLD MAN HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Smithy Bank

Named because of the fact that it was sited above the Smithy (the blacksmiths shop and power station for the Old Man Quarries), Smithy Bank, and Saddlestone Bank below, were developed during the 1880's when two long tunnels were driven into the shoulder of the Old Man to intersect the silver-grey slate band deep underground. The Smithy Bank working was eventually opened out into a further large cave working above, known by the quarrymen as 'Light Hole'. The roof of the Light Hole collapsed during the 1950's creating an extremely large open pit and the resulting debris cascaded down into the Smithy Bank chamber below, almost completely filling it. During latter years of operation slate 'clog' from Smithy Bank and Light Hole was carried down by a short aerial flight to the Saddlestone Bank.

