

FREE WALKING
GUIDE
DISCOVER
400
YEARS
OF CONISTON'S
COPPER-RICH
MINING HISTORY



MINERS FIRST CAME to Coniston in the 1500s AS THE COPPER veins were opened up.

Copper mining flourished in the 1800s then declined in 1897 when cheaper Chilean imports made it uneconomical.



John Barratt Coniston's Copper Captain

Born in Devon, John Barratt managed mines across Yorkshire and Scotland before coming to Coniston in the early 1800s. He modernised local copper mining and expanded production to its height in the 1870s.

Mine manager John Barratt, taken in 1865.

© Unknown

Where Did All The Ore Go?

Copper ore mined in the 1600s was taken by packhorse to Keswick to be smelted, while during the 1700s it was transported to Cheshire. During the 1800s Coniston Water was used to ship ore south to Greenodd for transfer onto canal barges heading to the coast at Ulverston. It was sold and shipped to copper smelting plants in St Helens and Swansea. Boats gave way to trains when the railway came to Coniston in 1859.

Coniston Copper Trails

Follow in the footsteps of Coniston's miners with these three linked trails. Discover copper-plated stories of miners, their feats of engineering and the myths they left behind.

Miners' memories linger in Coniston's streets and on the nearby fells. You can explore the places they lived and worked, played – and died.

The trails are of different lengths and terrain:

Miners' Lives is a short walk around Coniston village and focuses on social history, transport and how mining changed the village.

Introducing Coppermines Valley takes you to the centre of the copper industry and the Heritage Centre at the edge of the fells.

Land of Power and Ore takes you further onto the fells to come closer to the mines, engine houses and inclines.

You can mix and match different parts of any of the routes depending on where you start and how long you have.

Levers Water

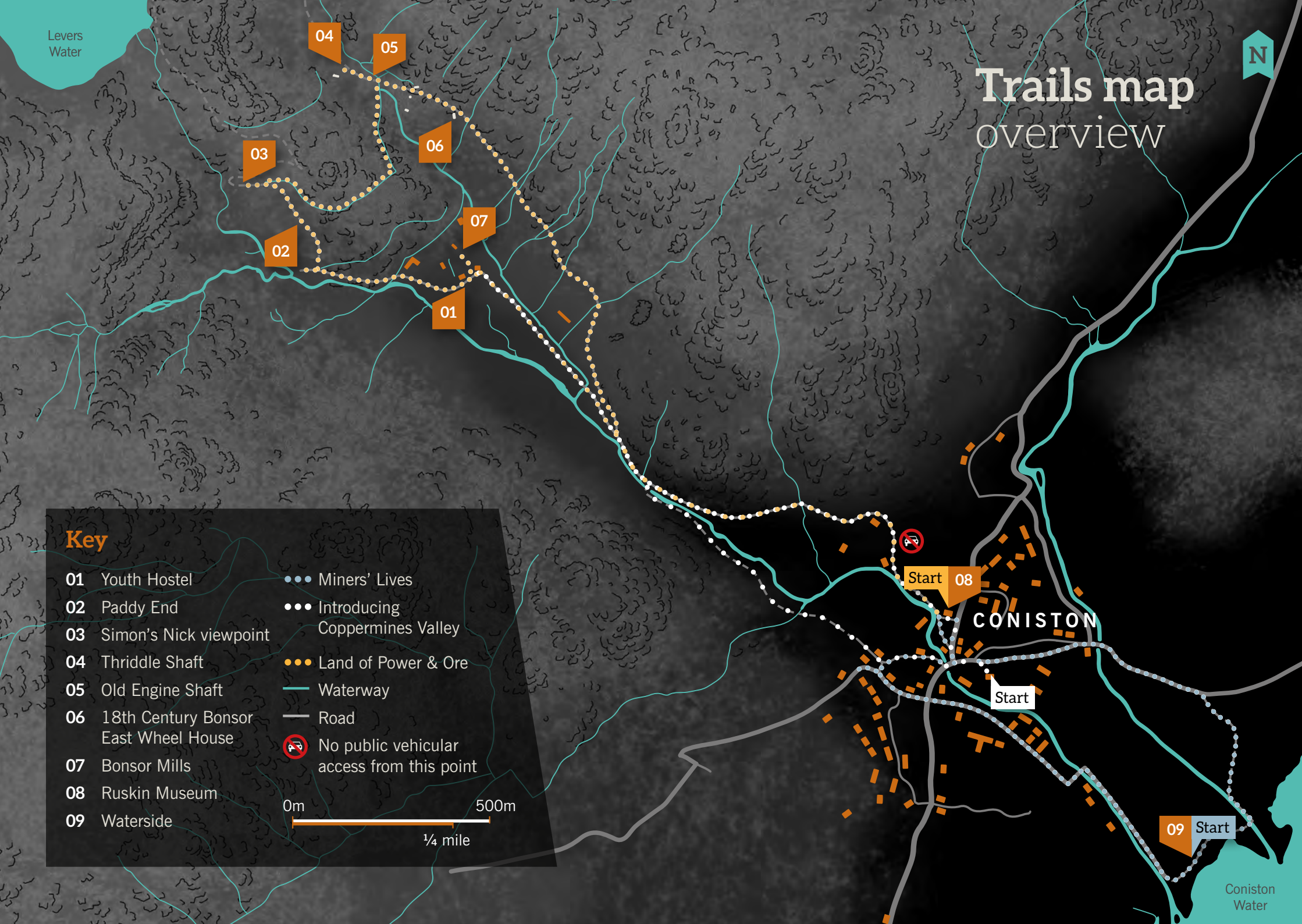


Trails map overview

Key

- 01 Youth Hostel
 - 02 Paddy End
 - 03 Simon's Nick viewpoint
 - 04 Thriddle Shaft
 - 05 Old Engine Shaft
 - 06 18th Century Bonsor East Wheel House
 - 07 Bonsor Mills
 - 08 Ruskin Museum
 - 09 Waterside
- Miners' Lives
 - Introducing Coppermines Valley
 - Land of Power & Ore
 - Waterway
 - Road
 - No public vehicular access from this point

0m 500m
 ¼ mile



CONISTON

Start 08

Start

Start 09

Coniston Water

Introducing Coppermines Valley ○○○

Start: Coniston Tourist Information Centre
Distance: 2.5 miles (4km)
Time: 2 hours
Ramblers Grade: Moderate
Disabled Rambler's Grade: Category 3 (see back page)

1 Ruskin Museum See *Miners' Lives*
Trail stop 7

2 Miners Bridge Lines of packhorses crossed this bridge to take processed copper ore from Bonsor Mills down to Coniston Station.

3 This is Coppermines Valley The valley was millions of years in the making. Ancient super volcanoes laid down this land, while earthquakes tilted and cracked it leaving fissures that slowly filled with molten copper ore. Miners found these hardened ore veins over 400 years ago and risked their lives to follow them deep underground, prising out the ore with picks, fire and gunpowder. The fast-flowing waters of the becks and gills were harnessed by waterwheels to power mine pumps, wagons and ore hammers.

4 Irish Row These terraced houses were built in the 1800s as homes for mining families. In 1861 the heads of most households were born in Ireland. The Redmonds are typical. Mark and Hannah live here with their four daughters and one son. Mark is 37, Hannah 35, and both are Irish. They've lived in Coniston for 12 years. Mark works as a copper mine lad. Their eldest daughters, Eleanor aged 13 and Elizabeth who is 11, plus their nine-year-old son Peter, are all copper dressers at Bonsor Mill.

5 Smelting Slag These lumps are waste slag from the valley's own short-lived copper furnaces. They started smelting copper ore here in 1893, rather than selling it to furnaces further away. Technical problems and a destructive gale ended the project within two years.



6 Bonsor Mills You are in the heart of one of Coniston's vast copper-processing factories. Find the information panels to learn more about the factory and see how it would have looked at its height in 1870. The Heritage Centre illustrates the valley's bygone trades.



The huge mound at the head of the valley is waste stone separated from the ore. It is just one of the impressive structures that you can visit to explore Coniston's copper-plated past.



A fragile environment

Mines are dangerous places with hidden shafts and drops, and should never be entered. Take care on the fells and please keep to the paths.

Though it has survived hundreds of years, the site can be easily damaged. The site is legally protected as a Scheduled Monument

and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Lake District is recognised as a World Heritage Site with outstanding universal value. Local industries like copper mining have contributed to its unique character. Please help preserve the Lake District's heritage by leaving the site exactly as you find it.

Need to know

These are walking trails. There is no access for vehicles. You'll need walking boots, outdoor clothing and waterproofs. The trail maps are not a substitute for an Ordnance Survey map, so it is recommended you take 'OS Explorer Map OL 6, English Lakes, South West' on to the fells.

The Miner's Lives trail is a Category 2+ Disabled Ramble, best suited to scooters and some power chairs rather than manual wheelchairs because of the short but steep climb to the old station.

The **Introducing Coppermines Valley** trail is mostly a Category 3 Disabled

Ramble, suitable for a powerful, robust off-road power chair. An alternative return route from Stop 3 is not accessible because of the nature of the track. Whilst the surface of the route is good, the long and sometimes steep climb will be beyond the battery capacity of many mobility scooters.

The Land of Power and Ore trail is not accessible because of the nature of the track.

For more information about accessible walks, visit disabledramblers.co.uk

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Estate

