

8-9th June 1985
Nenthead Weekend

Once again Cherry Tree Cottage was the venue for the ever popular Nenthead weekend. 15 Members turned out Saturday Morning. Most of the members trooped into Rampgill, under the leadership of joint meet leader Martin Maher to descend the shaft close to the Norpex door – turns out the shaft drops 50ft into a sub-level incline, which leads back to Whiskey Bottle Corner. Afterwards 4 members descended Brewery Shaft from Rampgill Level. As I had forgotten my wetsuit & socks (at least that is my excuse) I spent the day wandering the Upper Nent Valley, photographing surface features and checking out the gating situation. All levels now appear to be gated with the exception of Firestone Level & Carrs Level East of Nent (though according to P. Fleming this level is gated further in from the portal). For further details of underground trip – see Mike Maher.

Sunday – heavy rain and the members generally reluctant to don soggy wet suits. Eventually Peter Fleming let 11 Cat members into Smallcleugh to investigate another sub-level incline near the Ballroom Flats. Mike Maher, Martin Maher & self drove over to Coalcleugh to check main horse level – appeared to be totally walled up. Drove round to Allenheads, to have a look at Beaumont Mine, (ex. B.S.C Fluorspar prospect – now working under Weardale Mining & Processing (part of Minworth Group) to Redburn Mine at Rookhope. Redburn started 1964 by Weardale Lead Co (an I.C.I. subsidiary), later taken over by S.A.M. (UK) Ltd, & closed 1981. Shaft working 50fms deep, with levels off at 17, 24, 40, & 50fms. Site has been substantially cleared within last 12 months, bldg demolished, tips levelled etc. Only the headgear and winding gear within its winding house remaining. Winding gear well greased up and sheeted over, shaft securely capped with massive concrete slab. Down through Rookhope village & the scanty remains of Boltsburn Mine in the valley bottom, to Weardale. West along Weardale past Cambo Keels (working – Weardale Mine & Processing) to Burtree pasture Mine at Cowshill Weardale. Bldgs re-secured, but Horse level well & truly blocked, with a number of collapses along the line of the level. On the way back down the track from Burtree Pasture, stopped to investigate a level on the east side of the Sedling Burn a steel overhead timber lagged level era 1949, a fluorspar prospect, on the Midge Pits Vein. Unfortunately blocked, collapsed 60yds in, with water spouting out from roof level. Called round to Killhope wheel on the way back over the hill to Nenthead, to view the progress on the restoration/renovation project.

M Blundell

Compiled from notes 12/11/85