

July 16th 1988
Nenthead

Saturday 16th July

Mike Mitchell Barbara Mitchell Peter Fleming Dave Bridge Dennis Webb Don Borthwick

This became the Prouds Flats, Carr's level meet that had been pencilled in for the June 12th. New ground for three members and something old and something new for the others of us who had been involved in last year's exploration. The first trip into Prouds had resulted in a through trip with a wet-ish exit by the Hanginshaws branch of Rampgill, having two climbers in the party allowed us a through trip with the exit via Carr's level. The trip started by the descent of Prouds sump (off Smallcleugh horse level), a short horizontal section and a second abseil to a Junction between to levels. A few interesting artifacts have been laid out here including a double skinned container, its use raising some interesting speculation. The 'new' workings which were either missed or closed? on the first two visits here had been discovered later by Angela, Dave & Gordon. These were explored first & are quite extensive terminating with drives on three horizons. Another double skinned container resides in the level leading to the stopes, this one containing some white-ish material, stemming?? The 'old men' were not always as careful as they could have been with the less benign part of what fills a shot hole, finds such as this should be (& were) treated with some respect.

The rest of Prouds Flats were then visited to see the ore trucks, profile gauges, explosive boxes and the wooden floored chamber etc. This completed the party prussicked back to the intermediate section and re-rigged for the short abseil into Carr's level. The squeeze past the big boulder looked no less dangerous than it did last year so the party proceeded outward from here. (The boulder has been crawled past, but fifty yards beyond is a collapse which would require quite a big dig. Difficulty of access and, securing the boulder brought last year's direct exploration on this horizon to an end. Further exploration on Carr's is likely only if alternative access can be found from above.) Otherwise the level did not seem to have deteriorated since our last visit, the timbering put in place still securing one of the short crawls. Some-way along the level there is a major collapse but a shaft leads up to the extensive workings above Carr's level reported by DGG in newsletter number 18. The valiant Mike climbed this shaft and secured a rope for the rest of the party to prussick up. Time did not allow much exploration on this horizon, a couple of the party having a look at the cave pearls and the hangingshaw's engine shaft though. So it was on past the white wall to another shaft taking us down again to Carr's level, this now has ladders in its upper section (provided by persons unknown) simplifying what had previously been a short free climb.

The previously rather wet weather was to cause us a problem on our way back along the level. One of the roof falls that have to be crawled over had run in again, requiring a dig and a tight very dirty slither to return to a grey misty day. An important meet tying together several separate explorations into an interesting and varied through trip. A new classic Nenthead route?

P.S. A thanks to Dave and Mike for volunteering to go back to Smallcleugh to de-tackle and recover the ropes.