

7th July 1991
Knockmurton

Dave Bridge

The meet was well attended for an outlier (10 members). Those who had recently experienced deep water on the Nenthead through trip were (understandably) content to explore the open levels and surface features. Also, Richard Hewer returned to the mine with his son for a trip into the upper stopes of No 9 vein and the far reaches of No 8. Meanwhile five members descended to the Cogra Moss Adit Level from No 9 level on No 9 vein to explore the adjacent No 2 vein. Some weeks previously the 200ft air shaft had been stemmed with two deviations and a rebelay - largely due to Anton with the help of the Furness contingent of CAT - and it was now a quick rope descent. The water was chest deep (lower than on previous visits) and shallower at the collapse about 120yds south of the T-junction on No 2 vein which had halted us previously. Tim, Dave and Mark dug through the collapse and found level beyond to be dry. Water was escaping through boulder filled stopes below the level which confirmed that this part of No 2 vein connects with a lower drainage level, probably via No 13 vein and one of the long cross-cuts to Kelton mine. We may have increased the flow a little but it would take a lot of work to drain the Cogra Moss Adit Level completely. A second collapse was by-passed by climbing into the stopes above and we then dug through a third collapse of loose stuff finding clog prints in the mud beyond. We eventually got into a very shattered region, which is possibly the point where No 4 vein forks off about 80yds short of the Knockmurton No 1 Shaft. Unfortunately further progress in that direction proved impossible and we failed to reach the shaft, which was disappointing. Also, the air was bad and we were glad to leave the area.

On the way back a rise or ore shoot at the second collapse was climbed for perhaps 80 or 90ft to a tramway level. This was hardly high enough for Low Bottom Level which emerges somewhere behind the mine buildings, particularly when the hade of the vein is allowed for, but it had been an important working level although now impossible to follow due to collapses in both directions. An offset rise or stope continued on upwards but was too unstable to climb with safety. A second rise from Cogra Moss Adit Level - a stemmed manway close to the No ½ vein fork - appeared to be free from blockages. This was climbed by Ian for a short distance until he found the timbers too rotten for comfort. A third rise or ore shoot was climbed by Mike and Ian from the T-junction almost to a blockage at about 70ft. Near the top was a short blind level or trial to the south containing daubs of clay with miner's finger prints. It seems that the stopes on No 1 / 2 vein north of this point have been back-filled thus hampering access to the continuation of the workings to the north. From the bottom of the 200ft air shaft the previously sumped up level driven south along No 9 Vein was found to be clear for 55yds and continues further beyond a partial blockage. Another level (not shown on the plans) running SW from the main intersection near the shaft bottom turned out to be a short trial.

Most of that part of the system which can be gained from a descent of the air shaft has

now been explored, but a determined effort to trace the drainage path through the collapsed stopes of No 2 vein could be rewarding.