

1st November 1986
Gunnerside - Sir Francis Mine

Meet at Gunnerside (Dyke Heads) to visit the underground headgear and hydraulic engine at Sir Francis Mine.

Present were : C.Jones (M.L)

A.Danson

A.Sibbald

I.Matheson

A.C-P-Thomas

A.Lings

Appalling weather meant a reluctant, late start after fortifications of hot coffee from I.M's dormobile and hot coffee stand. Driving rain & high winds made the walk in very unpleasant. Sun came out as soon as we reached the level. The level mouth had been cleared and it is no longer necessary to use the manhole some 50yds up the level. It does however necessitate a pretty nasty squeeze just before the manhole. The water is much deeper than it used to be – neck deep for quite long sections and it is littered with 100s of plastic gallon containers – obviously used as a raft by some entertaining party. If only they had taken their rubbish out with them when they left.

The long haul through the water was pretty tedious and full marks to Alistair and Anton who did it without wet-suits. The headgear etc. is in as good a condition as ever and thankfully has suffered no deterioration since our last visit almost 4 years ago. We pushed on past the wheel pit along the main level but were eventually turned back by a large roof-fall coupled with the difficulty in digging in v deep water but the dig is possible for the future. Many photographs taken by almost everyone. Outwards the cold weather & fatigue began to take effect. On exit everyone went home except C.J. and I.M. walked up the gill to see other workings.

They eventually walked up to the Bunton Level dressing floors & level. They looked for the top of the 43fm hydraulic engine shaft but due to poor route – finding by C.J. they didn't go quite far enough. (Its near the Priscilla Level mouth). They walked back down the track to get changed.

Met up with the rest of the gang in Gunnerside village – taking afternoon tea in the local Ye Olde Tea Shoppe.

Excellent days entertainment.

C.J.