

## Nent Head Visit – June 2010

### Saturday

Well after some plans for a digging weekend fell through decided a weekend of mine exploration was in order so we packed and set off oop north.

Arrived Friday night and got set up at the campsite ready for an early start on the Saturday.

Saturday morning saw us heading into Small Cleugh on the fun trip to Barons Sump. This is situated in a remote part of Longcleugh vein and involves some rather "interesting" Crawls 😊

Bit of history -

Small Cleugh mine was begun in 1787 when the London Lead Company gained the lease for working the Smallcleugh Cross Vein. This was found to be an extremely rich vein and in 1806 the 21 year lease was renewed. The longcleugh vein was an much earlier discovery, initially being leased from the Greenwich Hospital in 1737 and the vein was found to be 1650 feet of oreshoot. The level from the London Lead Companies workings was connected through to the cross vein allowing for easy transportation out of either the Smallcleugh portal of the Middlecleugh horse level. The most lucrative period was a lease held from 1819 - 1840 producing around 1400 Bings of ore (including both lead and zinc).

Much more history can be found in R.A. Fairbairn's - The Mines of Alston Moor (British Mining No. 47

Barons Sump is a huge block lined chamber and is extremely impressive with a nice round block shaft in the middle. The chamber itself looks like it was the beginning of a hydraulic engine installation which never got completed and it may have something to do with the price drop in lead causing the London Lead Company to stop operations in 1882.

Any way on with the pics 😊

On the way through to Barons Sump we came across one of the largest flats I have ever seen.





We then moved on to the Sump itself 😊



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After a mooch about we then decided it was pub time so we headed out and got cleaned up.

## Sunday

Sunday saw us donning wet suits ready for a trip into Caplecleugh to check out some rises I saw when doing the traverse last year. The water level varies in here from a few inches to about 1.5m deep and is very cold.

The history -

Very little is known about the start of this mine as the vein was mainly worked originally by shafts up old Carr's Burn. From 1750 to 1894 there were many leases of the vein and not much was produced till the late 1890's when the Nenthead and Tynedale Lead and Zinc Company drove a level in the cross vein producing 104 bings of lead and 520 tons of Zinc. The lease then passed to the Vielle Montagne Zinc Company ( A Belgian zinc company named after the mine in La Calamine - The mines name is French for "the old mountain" ) This company worked an ore shoot in the great limestone and worked the vein for around 850ft.

On with the pics



On climbing the man way next to the ore shoot we checked out a mid level I had been told about that was very easy to miss if you're not looking. The level takes you to a filled tube and a nice ore shoot.



Looking back at the man way / ore shoot



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On climbing to the top of the Man way we started checking out the flats and found a lot of artifacts left in the upper levels

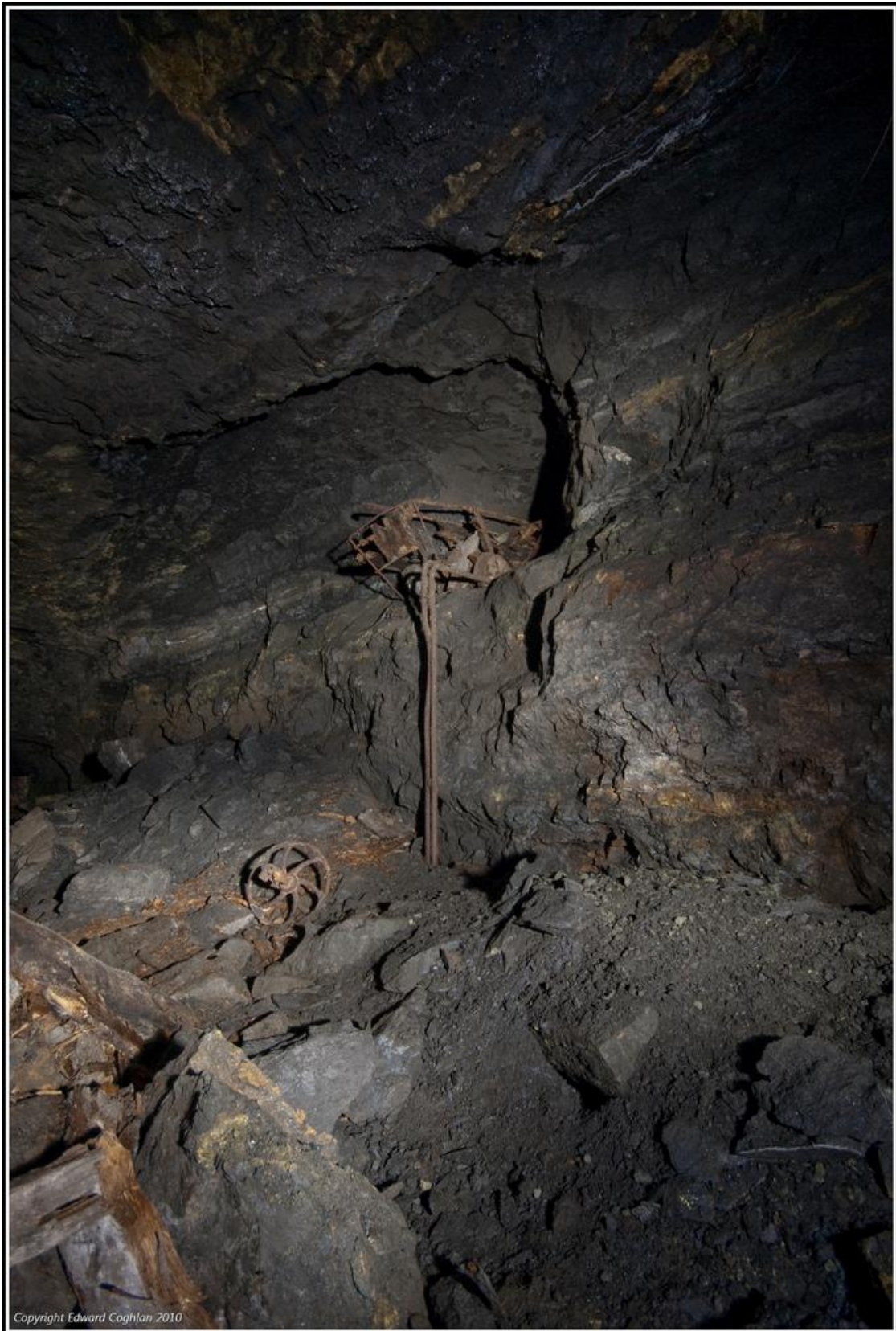
Detonator Box







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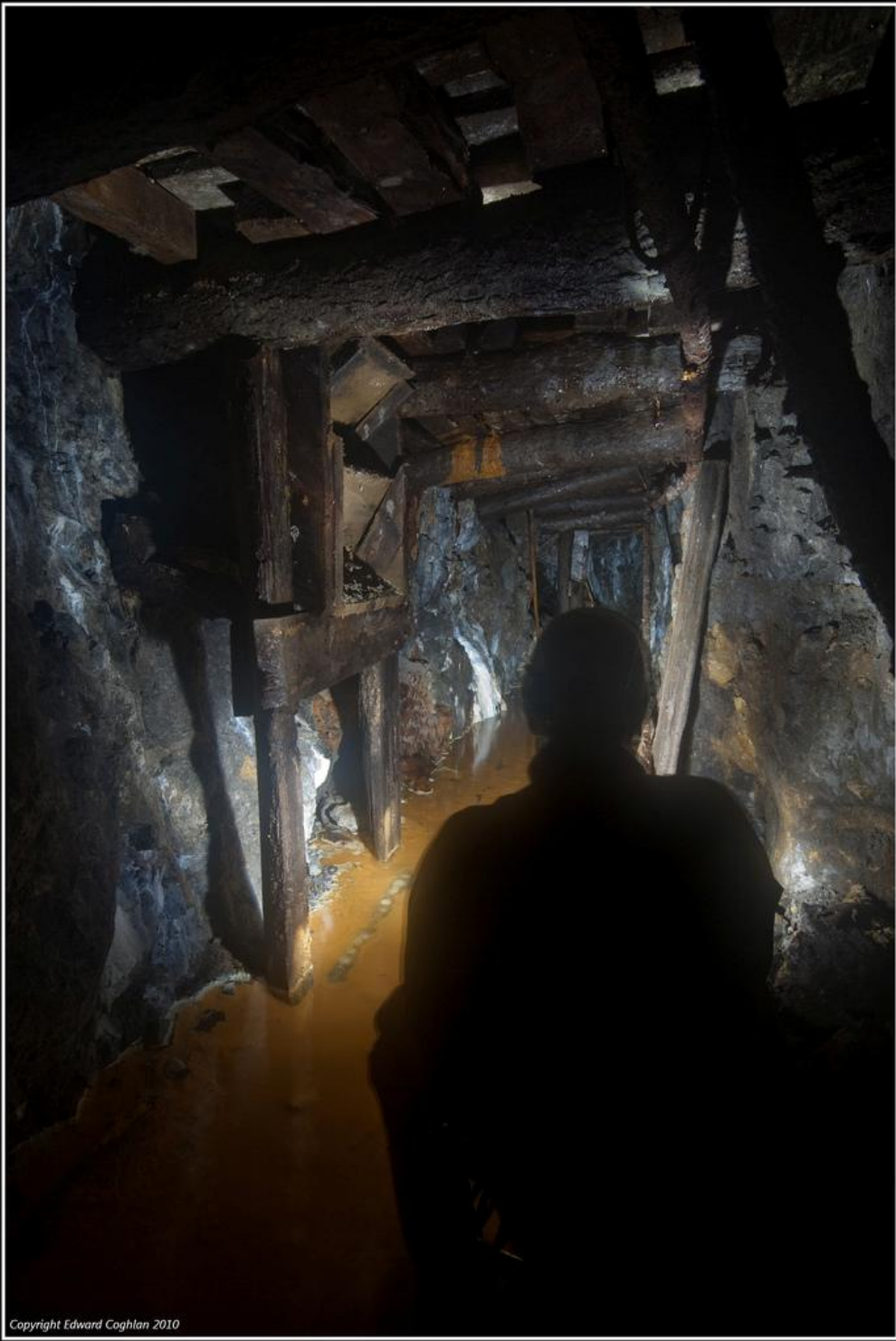




Looking at the top of the Man way and the ore shoot



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After a few hours of exploring we headed out of the horse level and got clean and dry ready for food 🍽️

## Monday

Well day 3 was planned as a through trip but as time was short after packing up tents and checking out a few surface workings we opted for a simple trip into the Hags level and off up High Raise Vein. This was complete new stuff for us as neither of us had explored these levels and it has now opened up many plans for further trips. 😊

### A Bit of History -

High Raise Vein was discovered in 1789 by the Brownleyhill Company who worked the ore from the firestone sill which when followed into the high slate sill petered out to nothing. By 1852 the Hags level reached the vein and a raise was driven into the vein which offered a 6ft thick vein of ore. The ore was found to be a bit weak but the vein was worked right to the county boundary. Witherite and barytes were also found and available in commercial quantities and this was worked by the Nentsberry Mining Company from 1895 - 1908 and then by the Lugdale Chemical Company till the lease was taken over by the Vielle Montagne Zinc Company in 1913. After 1923 all the workings were being pushed out of Cumbria and over into Northumberland. In 1925 Wellhope shaft was sunk to the vein to offer an easier way to extract the ore and an aerial rope way was installed to transport the ore to the Nenthead mill. This was soon found to be a failure and was abandoned. The mine was then worked by a few other companies up until 1952 when it eventually closed.





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As time was getting on and we still had a 3 hour drive home to face we decided to head out checking out the rope to Admiralty Flats on the way (yet another trip for another day 😊)

I got a few fleeting shots before heading out into the sun for fish and chips

