

Nenthead Mines OREsome Summary Report

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Background

The Nenthead mining complex is situated at the head of the Nent Burn to the south west of the village of Nenthead, near Alston in Cumbria. Cumbria County Council (CCC) own the 700 hectare site. Access is via the main Nenthead car park, drive up the track to the Assay House at NY 78639 4331.

Nenthead Leadmines, Ore Works & Smeltmill were made a scheduled ancient monument in 1987 with amendments in 1997. List entry number - 1015858. Their description starts by stating: *“The Nenthead mining complex is regarded as the most intact mining landscape within the North Pennines. The main importance of the site lies in the unusually high level of preservation not only of the obvious features such as the buildings and dams, but also the network of roadways built by the London Lead Company. The wide range of mining features provide an important resource for the study of the developments in mining technology in the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly the development of deep mining based on long adits (levels)”*.

Part of the site is also a geological SSSI, Smallcleugh SSSI at NY 787 429.

Conservation of the site was started in the late 1980's by Cumbria County Council (CCC) & shortly afterwards taken over by the North Pennines Heritage Trust (NPHT). Several archaeological surveys were carried out over the years culminating in the work of the North Pennine Archaeology Ltd. (2000 to 2011). 418 components of the site were mapped at this time. NPHT carried out extensive conservation work on the site. After NPHT went into administration in 2012 the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society (NMCS) was formed, a verbal agreement with CCC gave them management responsibilities, which continues to this day.

In 2013 CCC commissioned the Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) to carry out a further survey of 9 selected areas of the site for conservation work under the auspices of the High-Level Stewardship scheme (see report NAA 1157_13.130). They mapped 900 components in these 9 areas.

Copies of all the above reports are available in the NMCS archive along with various geological and biological reports done over the years.

Survey approach

The OREsome archaeological survey was undertaken by dividing the site in to the following 4 areas:

Area 1 - Middlecleugh mine shop area, compressor house building, south powder store, leat on west side and all the associated scheduled area up to but not including Smallcleugh or Hodgsons mine entrances. Consider sheep fold that is outside of scheduled area. Recording sheet numbering 101 onwards.

Area 2 - Smallcleugh mine area, Hodgsons, north powder store, Smallcleugh dressing floor, Smallcleugh (Hansome Mea) reservoir and all the associated scheduled area up to Carrs level. Recording sheet numbering 201 onwards.

Area 3- Carrs mine, Smelt Mill, Assay House, Barracks, workshop, Stagg condenser, firestone area, flue and all the associated scheduled area. Recording sheet numbering 301 onwards.

Area 4 - Brewery Shaft, Stamps building, workshop and wood yard, Rampgill, Caplecleugh low level, Dowgang hush and all associated scheduled area. Recording sheet numbering 401 onwards.

The survey work was completed during 2017 and 2018 resulting in a total of 102 ONP2s being completed across the four areas.

Taking into consideration the large amount of research carried out in the past and the extensive information available in the NMCS archive the following 9 components, detailed in the table below, have been identified as the most at risk. The table identifies specific parts/areas of each of the 9 components and gives details of the relevant ONP2s and the photograph file names.

Component	Description of areas at risk within component	ONP2 forms	Photos File name
1) Smelt Mill	<p>a) Eight engine beds (concrete & timber) in the Nenthead Smelt Mill compressor house were dug out of the rubble in 2002 and were in good condition. More survey work was done in 2005. Since then they have slowly deteriorated. Last March (2017) after a very hard frost a large section of one corner of the 2nd bed fell off and we are worried what will happen in future winters.</p> <p>b) Circular stonework adjacent (north side) to wheelpit is collapsing</p> <p>c) Spine wall is deteriorating on all sides, has bulges, collapses, cracks & crumbling loose mortar.</p> <p>d) Damage done by frost and vandalism to brick Lancaster boiler beds, chimney flue & base & other brick work.</p>	<p>NH 3.314</p> <p>NH3.319 NH3.310 & NH3.316 & NH3.317</p> <p>NH3.311</p>	<p>101.9985, 101.9986</p> <p>102.0041 101.9960, 101.9969,102.0003, 102.0004 101.9961-9968</p>
2) River Nent at Caplecleugh	The drystone wall protecting one of the drains in the river bank in front of Caplecleugh level is collapsing.	NH4.401	NI – 401, 402
3) Main track	<p>a) Water overflowing from the Rampgill leat (into Smallcleugh Dam) in storm conditions, drains onto the mine track, washing the track surface into the Smelt Mill.</p> <p>b) A leaking outlet pipe from Smallcleugh Dam flows under wooden launder across the main track causing damage & flooding.</p> <p>c) Collapsing trackside walls</p> <p>d) Smallcleugh Burn culvert</p> <p>e) River Nent revetment wall in Smallcleugh dump area</p>	<p>NH3.305</p> <p>NH3.305 NH3.305 NH2.210</p>	<p>121.9608</p> <p>121404388</p>
4) South Dynamite Store	Timber floor is being damaged	NH1.117	DS970

5) Compressor House	a) Exterior concrete wall blocks are deteriorating b) Holes in corrugated iron roof	NH1.109 NH1.109	101.0142 – 101.0147
6) Middlecleugh mine shop Middlecleugh bridge	a) Bulging rear wall of shop b) Bulging side wall of bridge	NH1.105 NH1.108	103.0047, 103.0050 101.0139
7) Hodgson's Shop	Store between lower door & mine portal is collapsing	NH2.202	105859325
8) Stagg Condenser Wheel pit	a) Timber structures to the west of the wheelpit are rotting b) Large stones knocked of top of the rocker beam support wall, need replacing c) Crack in rocker beam support wall	NH3.321 NH3.321 NH3.321	107.0200 - 107.0204
9) Condenser area to west of Stagg wheelpit	a) Brick & timber structure damaged by exposure to elements b) Retaining wall collapsing, possible culvert or launder c) Support wall collapsing onto main track	NH3.320 NH3.320 NH3.320	107.0192, 107.0194, 107.0196, 107.0197,