

Photography Group Report 1 August 2023

Alan Kenwright

On 1 August twelve members of the photography group made their way to the Killhope Lead Mining Museum in Weardale. In keeping with tradition there were leaden skies and intermittent rain as we arrived (it's often grim up Weardale, even in what is supposed to be summer!), but once we were there the rain held off and we were able to explore and get some pictures. Additional challenges (or "opportunities" if you are a hopeless optimist) were provided by the fact that a large portion of the site was undergoing restoration and consequently was behind barriers and covered in scaffolding. But our intrepid band still managed to find interesting subjects to photograph and the serving staff in the cafeteria ensured that we had plenty of time for discussion over a (very) leisurely lunch.



After lunch, some members continued the hunt for the elusive red squirrel and some of the group moved on to explore the remains of the Groverake Mine near Rookhope. This was the last operational deep mineral mine in County Durham. The mine was originally worked for ironstone between 1819 and 1875, then later for lead, until the mine closed around 1919. In the 1930s it was reopened to mine fluorspar and remained in operation until 1999. It is a much less sanitised slice of industrial archaeology and more challenging to access, but is a striking reminder of the area's industrial heritage.

