

Allenheads (Beaumont) Mine

The Allenheads mine, historically the most productive mine in Allendale, worked a series of interconnected veins at the head of the East Allen River Valley. The earliest workings in the area probably date to the sixteenth century and were located west of the village of Allenheads. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the mine was operated by the Beaumont Company, which produced an estimated 260,000 tons of lead concentrates (Dunham 1990). Early work focused on the Old vein, which was largely mined out by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Toward the end of the eighteenth century the Diana vein was discovered at the western end of the Old vein and yielded ore from a productive section of flats. In 1822 a crosscut driven south from the Diana vein encountered the Coronation vein, which contained extensive flats spanning both the Middle and High Flats' horizons of the Great Limestone. These deposits were worked until 1840.

Mining began on Henry's vein in 1825 and during the latter part of the nineteenth century accounted for most of the ore production from the mine. The vein was accessed by an underground shaft, and more than 2.5 kilometres of vein were worked, largely in the Great Limestone. The mine was closed by Beaumont in 1896 because of depressed lead prices on the world market.

With the rise in demand for fluorspar, the dumps were reworked in the 1940s. In 1969 British Steel Corporation reopened the mine as the Beaumont mine, hoping to find fluorite that had been left behind either in place or as backfill by previous lead-mining operations. Several new declines and levels were driven to access both the Diana and Henry's veins, but the hoped-for quantities of fluorspar were never found. The mine was closed in 1981 and is now completely flooded.