

This is a poorly documented mine which was probably worked for coal and ironstone, closing in 1881. The evidence suggests it was a small mine with the O.S. 25" map of 1882 showing a horse gin circle and small ancillary buildings. A mound survives in the meadow to the Northeast of the footpath, probably for the disposal of Pennystone ironstone clay, but it may be associated with the nearby Fishhouse mine. The route of this path/track past the mine changed after 1927 and now runs to the Northeast of the shaft. It would appear that the shaft is in the garden of No.43 or 45 Brandywell Road and the associated mine building shown in 1882 would also be in the gardens. There is a small mound (SJ 67820 02510) in the adjacent field with two mature conifers growing from it. This appears to be modern tipping, possibly from Syspal who occupy the site, but it may be the location of the shaft.

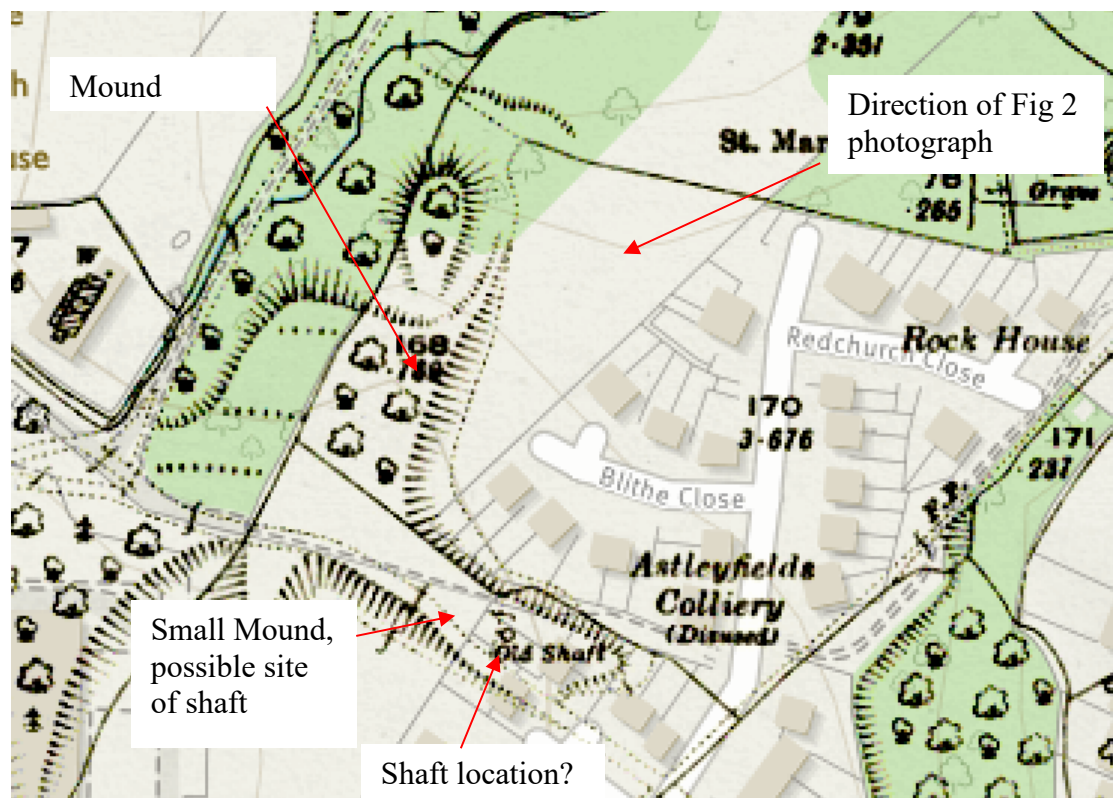


Figure 1: Modern Map from <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk> with 1927 25" overlay which shows the location of the shaft as being in the garden of number 43 or 45 Brandywell Road.



Figure 2: Looking SW with Astley Fields or Fishhouse mound in 'Middle Astley Field' (shown on Figure 1).



Figure 3: Small mound on plot at rear of garden at rear of 45 Brandywell Road. Possible site of shaft or modern tipping; part of Syspal site.

History

There is very little documentary evidence directly relating to this mine. The land was owned by the Broseley Estate.

In 1677 coal was being worked under Astley field from levels driven from near the Severn.¹ In 1803 three fields called Astley Field were mentioned, and all were meadows, and one contained 'rough', but no mention is made of pit mounds.²

The field was part of a large area of minerals Broseley leased to James Foster in 1822 who extracted ironstone for his furnaces at Barnett's Leasow and Calcutts until 1835 then exported the ore until 1881.³

The Tithe map shows it being worked by Thomas Birch who at the same time was operating the Haycop pit. This is probably the same Thomas Birch, Ironmaster who was at one time the manager at Barnett's Leasow⁴ and was declared bankrupt in 1820.⁵ In the 1841 census, he is listed as a Coal Master living on Church Street. He retired between 1861 and 1871.

In the H.M. inspectors report of 1880, there is no mention of the mine, but it may be one of the two unnamed pits operated by Hiram Hill and James Aston in 1869 in addition to the Haycop mine. In the 1871 census, Hill was shown as a Coal Merchant, and in 1861 Aston was shown as a Coal Master employing 21 men, 7 boys and 5 workmen.

The mine is said to have closed on 19th February 1881 when the ropes were cut.⁶ This coincided with the closure of Calcutts Pit, the last pit operated by Foster's successor William Orme Foster, but there is no record of him operating the Ashley Field Colliery.⁷

In 1903 the shaft at Upper Astley filed was bricked over, and William Jones of the Excelsior Tileworks enquired about re-opening the mine to extract clay, but nothing seems to have come of this.⁸

In 1913 the Broseley Estate was sold when the field was described as pasture and Shippon (cattle shed) being let to Roberts.⁹

¹ Nuffield Survey of Jackfield Fig16. "A map of those lands in Broseley through which several Insetts do pass."

² Valentine Vickers Leger volume 5, Page 234-253. Shropshire Archives 515/5

³ Lease and attached map. Shropshire Archives 6000/11420

⁴ John Randall, *Broseley and its Surroundings*, 1879.

⁵ The London Gazette, 26 August 1820, Issue: 17627 Page:1640.

⁶ Note from the late Mrs Thomas. Collection of Broseley Local History Society, deposited at Shropshire Archives.

⁷ Copies of Fosters account books in Ironbridge Gorge Museum library.

⁸ Shropshire Archives 1681/57/4.

⁹ Shropshire Archives 1681/6. This was probably William Roberts of Coneybury Farm.

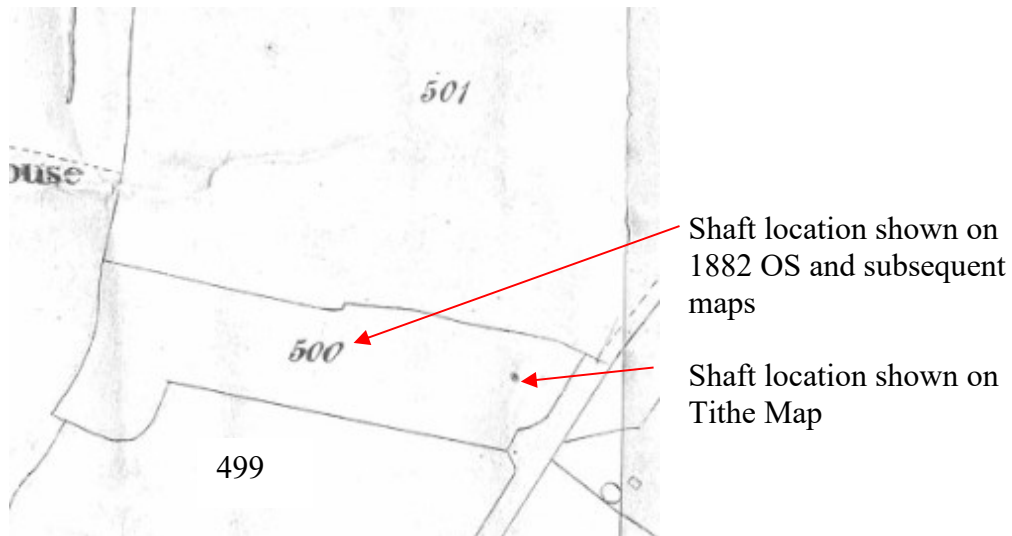


Figure 4; Broseley Tithe Map of 1838

Apportionment:

Owner	Occupier	Plot	Cultivation	Description
Francis Blythe Harries	John Walker Blaze	499	Meadow	Upper Ashley Field
Francis Blythe Harries	Thomas Birch	500		Pit-Mount
Francis Blythe Harries	Ann Clifton	501	Pasture	Middle Ashley Field & Spoilbank

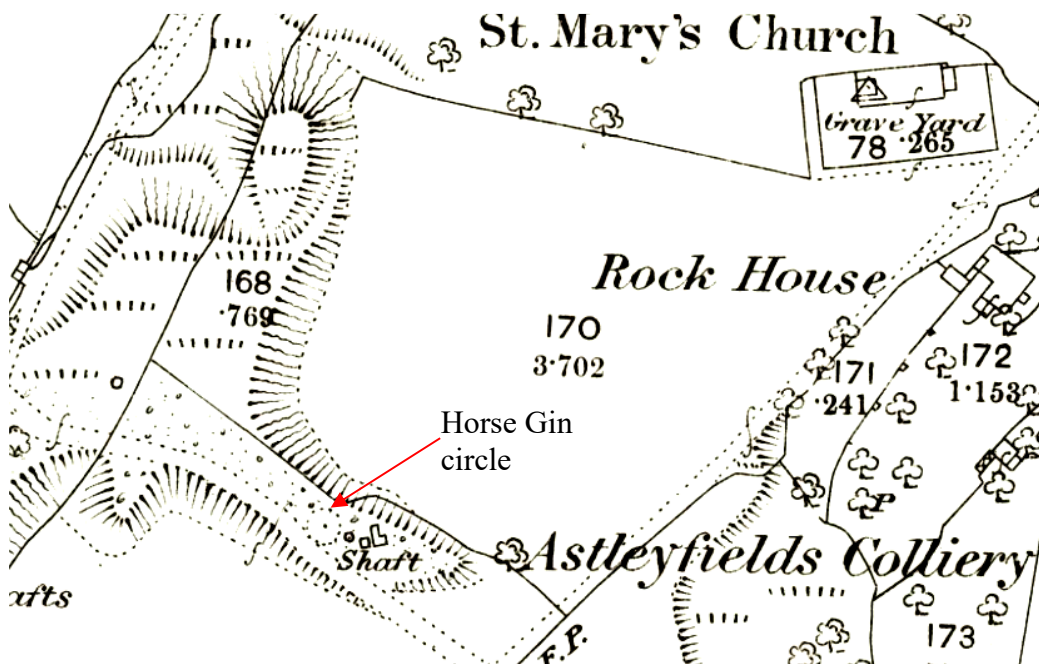


Figure 5: 25" O. S. Map, Shropshire LI.2 Published: 1882. It shows the shaft, horse gin and associated mine building. The map would have been surveyed before the mine closed.

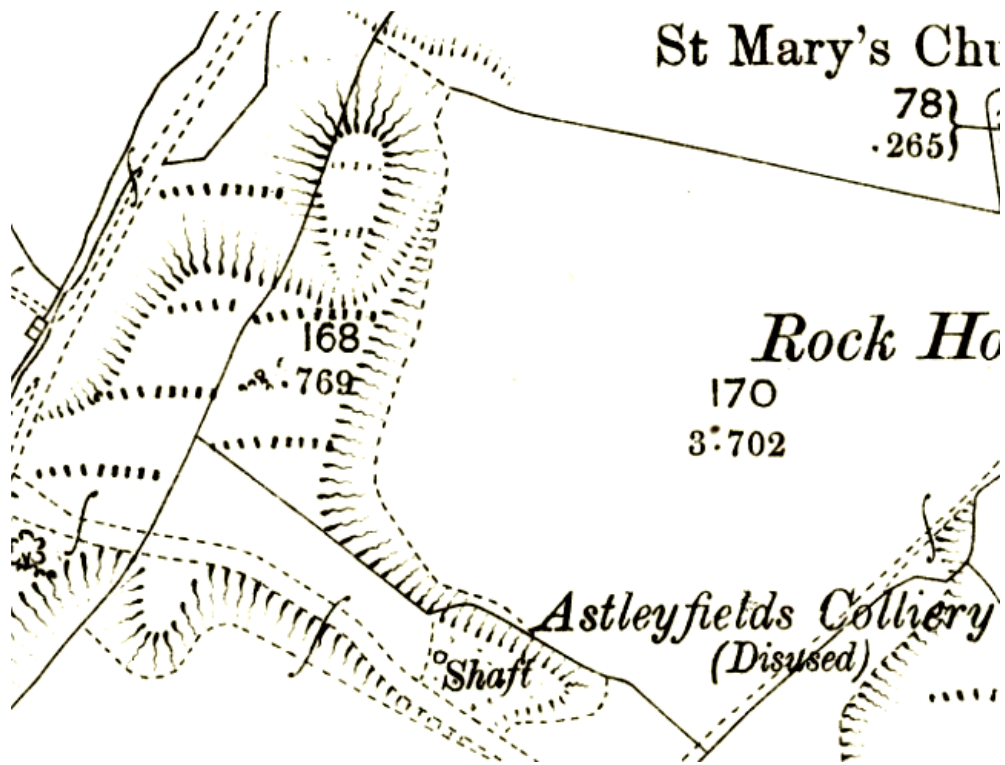
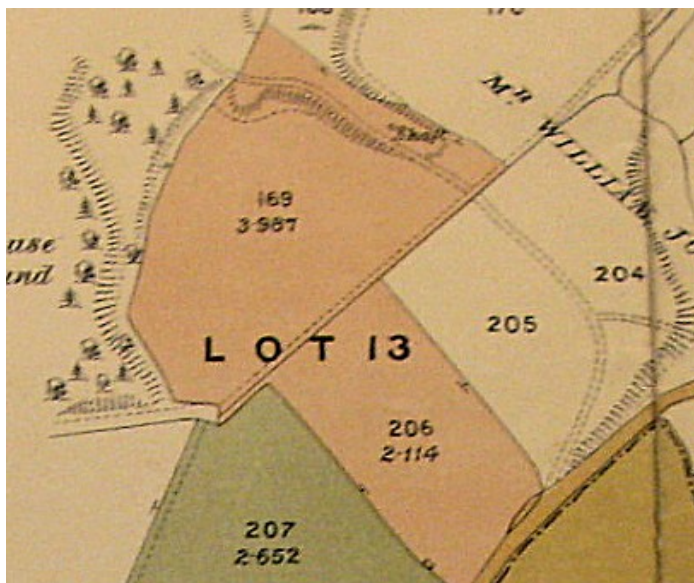


Figure 6: 25" O. S. Map, Shropshire LI.2 Published: 1902.
The horse gin and buildings have been removed.



The site of the mine was sold as Lot 13 described as 'Two Fields of Accommodation Pasture land.' The shaft is on Plot 169 which was let to Roberts and is described as pasture with no mention of the shaft or mine waste.

Figure 7: Sale of Parts of Broseley Estate 5th March 1913
Shropshire Archives 1681/61

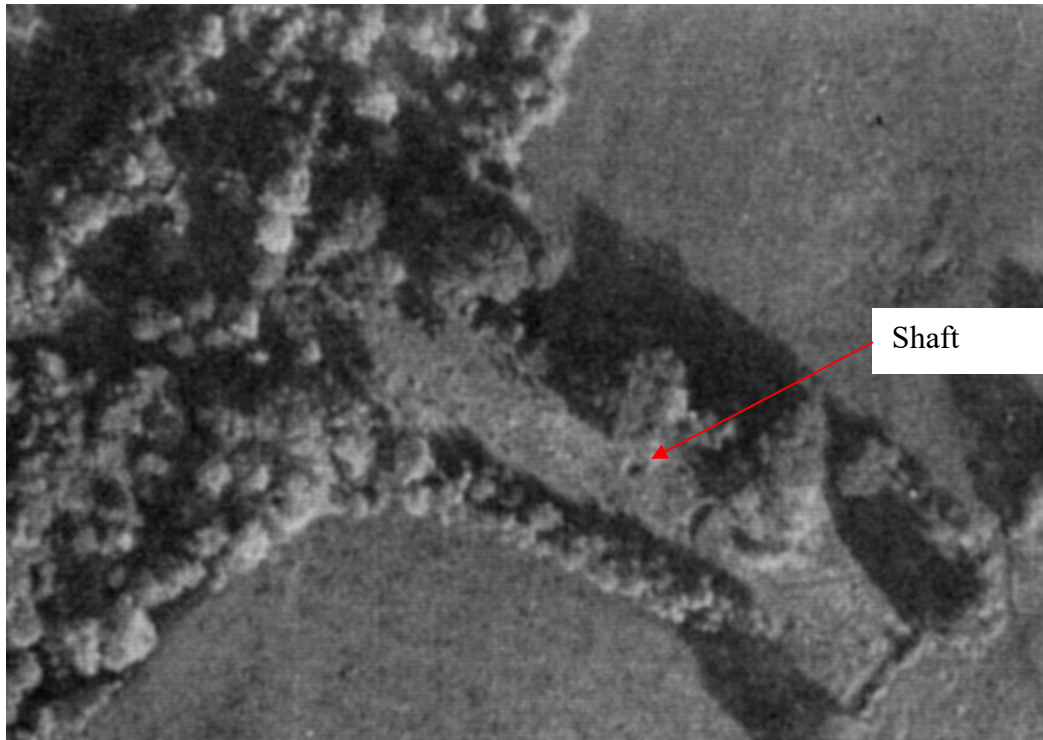


Figure 8: National Monuments Record Film No. 540/1461, Frame 26(v) 28th October 1954

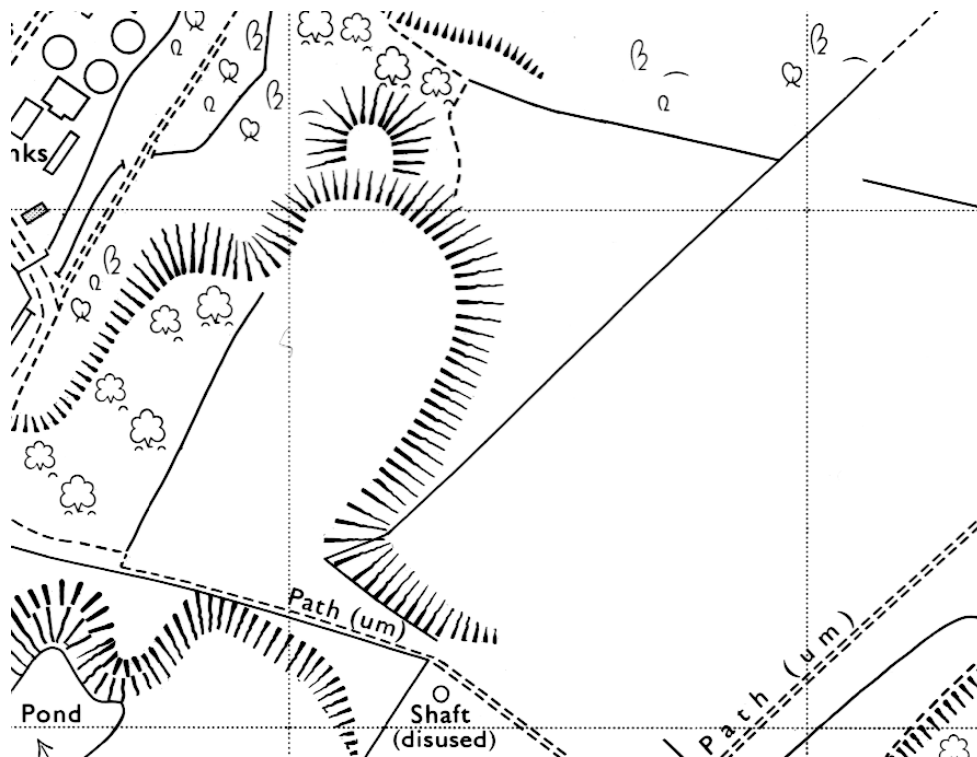


Figure 9: 25" O.S. Map SJ 6602-6702 Revised: 1972, Published: 1973. This shows that the shaft was still visible when the map was surveyed.



Figure 11: Horse Gin at Gravels Leasow, Lightmoor probably late 19th century (Shropshire Star). The Gin at Astley Fields would have been similar to this.