

S. Dewhirst

Analysis

The mound is a mixture of grey Pennystone clay from an initial working and small coal waste from later workings up to 1896. It is bounded by two tracks forming a 'V'. On the opposite side of the southern track is a small mound of Pennystone clay which probably dates from the original ironstone working, there being no evidence of a shaft on this mound. Also adjacent to the track is a pool, shown as two pools on historic maps. The shape suggests these were man-made and although one was probably used as a water supply for the pit engine this does not explain there being two rectilinear pools.

Two shafts are shown on the 1822 and 1839 maps, but the westerly one is not marked on subsequent maps so presumably, this was filled in. The air shaft marked on the OS map is not shown on the abandonment plan or any other maps so it may have been for a ventilation furnace and connected to the main shaft. Neither shaft is visible today.

Other than clearing the buildings and some woodland management there is no evidence of further activity on the site. The site is covered by scrubby woodland with no visible features except the intact concrete bed of the upright winding engine which is still in situ (SJ 68460 01895) and helps to locate the buildings shown on the OS map. The exact type of engine is not known as it was extremely rare for a small upright engine to be used for winding.

On the track to the south side, opposite the field, are the remains of an iron fence and a length of chain attached to a mature tree, which would have been used as fencing (SJ 68465 01865). The chain is from a flat winding chain, as listed in the two sale documents. It was common for this to be used as fencing when it became worn out and this is now a rare survivor on the Coalbrookdale coalfield.

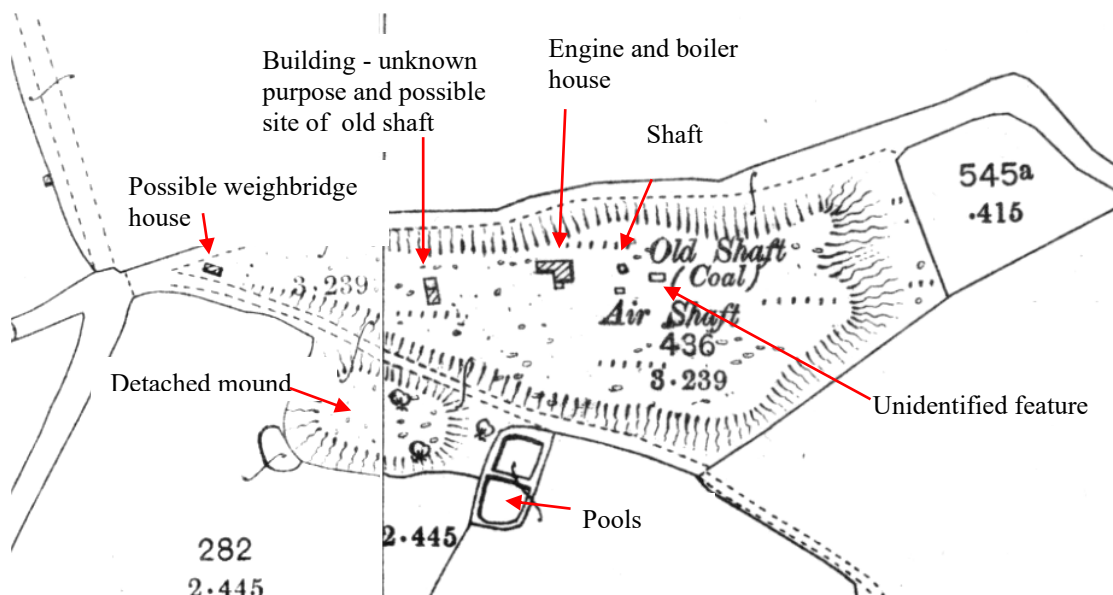


Figure 1. Features of the site. 25" O. S. Map Shropshire LI.2

Coneybury Mine, Broseley

History

The first reference to the pit is in 1828 at which time there were two shafts some distance apart, probably for two mines. They had probably been worked by John Onions in conjunction with the nearby Coneybury Furnace.¹ James Foster took over the mines and would have worked them for Pennystone ironstone as confirmed by the substantial clay mound which remains. The tithe map apportionment of 1839 lists the plot as a 'spoil bank' which was in the hands of the landowner Francis Blythe Harries (Broseley Estate) suggesting that the mine had been abandoned.



Figure 2/. Mineral rights leased to James Foster by William Yelverton Davenport (Broseley Estate) which were previously leased to John Onions. 15th March 1822. Plots 36 and 37 are Slang Marsh and the shafts shown on plots 36 and 37 correspond to those shown on the tithe map. From Shropshire Archives 6000/11420.

In 1851 John Raspass was working the mine and was described as a Coal Master employing 10 labourers who were probably the entire workforce at the Coneybury pit.² He was summonsed for not having an adequate brake on his steam engine at the Coneybury pit in 1857.³ In 1862 he was in trouble again when he did not have a proper means of communication from the top to the bottom of the shaft.⁴ Raspass died in 1865 leaving under £300 in his Will. It seems likely that this is the time that Thomas Plimley, Raspass's son-in-law and executor, took over the mine; certainly, he was operating it by 1869.⁵ In 1871 Plimley described himself as a Coal Master⁶ but by

¹ Indenture William Yelverton Davenport (Broseley Estate) and James Foster for mines previously leased to John Onions. Shropshire Archives 6000/11420

² 1851 Census. In 1841 he was described as a miner and in 1861 as a Coal Master. On all three censuses he was living in Birch Row.

³ 7th January 1857

⁴ Wellington Journal 25th January 1862

⁵ Annual return for mines 1869

⁶ Casey's directory

Coneybury Mine, Broseley

1881 he was listed as a grocer. In 1877 Plimley decided to give up the mine and put the plant, which was clearly out of date, up for sale:

Sale Notice 1881:

PLANT at the above Colliery, consisting of an Atmospheric (12 horsepower) Engine, Steam Gauge, Pit Head, Flat Chain (upwards of 200 yards long), Rollers and Pulley, Baskets and Squares, Wrought and Cast Iron Rails, Patent Weighing Machine (new, by Brownhill and Sons), all kind of Pit Tools, Blacksmiths' Tools, Bellows, Anvil and Block, Bench and Vice, Wheelbarrows, Iron Piping, new and old Iron, Timber Chaff Cutter (new), flat and parting Iron Plates in lots, and a miscellaneous lot of other articles.⁷

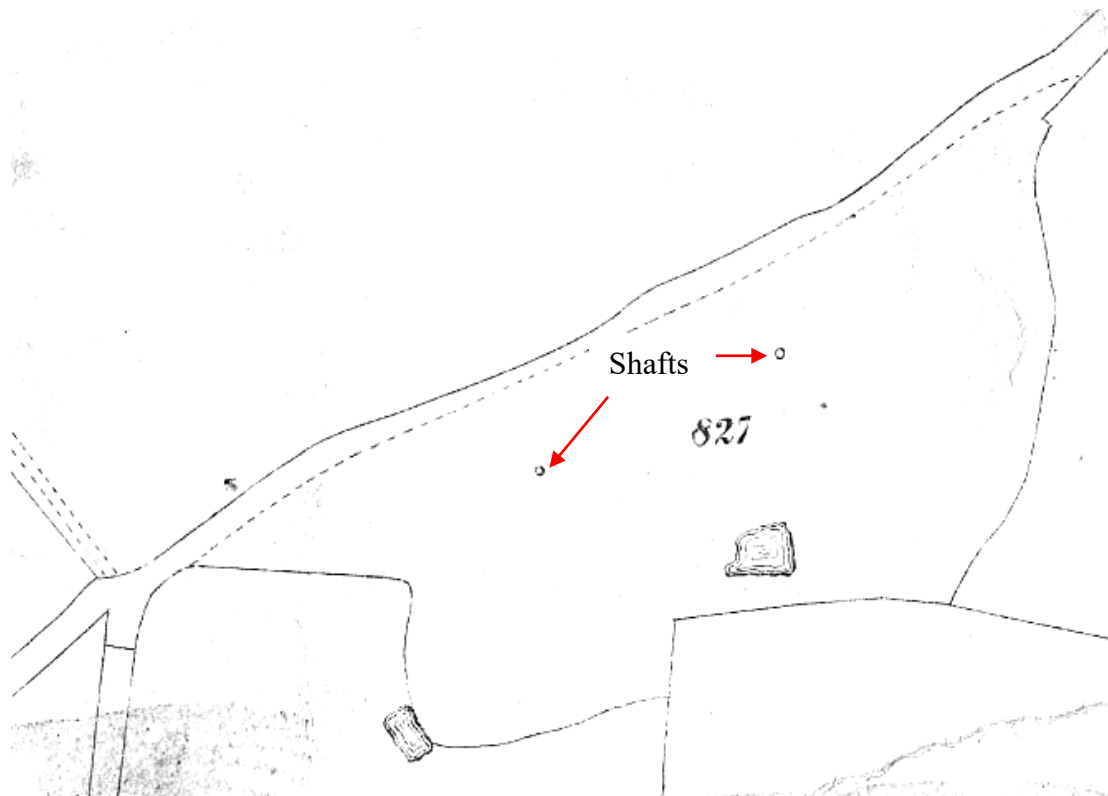


Figure 3. Broseley Tithe Map 1838 The plot is not shown on the tithe apportionment, but it clearly shows two shafts and a pool on plot 827 which is the Coneybury mine site. Only one of the two pools shown in 1822 remains and the road which ran between the shafts has disappeared. (IGMT)

The mine appears to have closed, and the plant was removed as it is shown as disused, and no buildings are shown on the 1882 OS map. By 1886 it had been re-opened by Samuel Meredith who had operated nearby the Bottom Coal Colliery, and he was extracting over 1,000 tons of coal and slack per year probably to supply the brick and tile works.⁸

An unusual experiment was carried out at the mine in 1887 when F.C. Percy, a local watchmaker, used the mine to test an electric light powered by an accumulator. The trip lasted two hours and was regarded as successful.⁹ The filament lamp had only

⁷ Eddowes Salopian Journal. 9th July 1877. Sale to take place at the Foresters Arms 22nd October 1877.

⁸ Groves returns for mines on Broseley estate 1886,87. Shropshire Archives 1681/191/10

⁹ Wellington Journal 30th April 1887

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just been invented and the Royal Commission on Accidents in Mines reported in 1886 that lamps should soon be available however it was not until 1893 that the first commercial electric lamp was introduced in mines in the UK.¹⁰ Meredith died on 30th January 1896 and later that year the plant at the put was put up for sale:

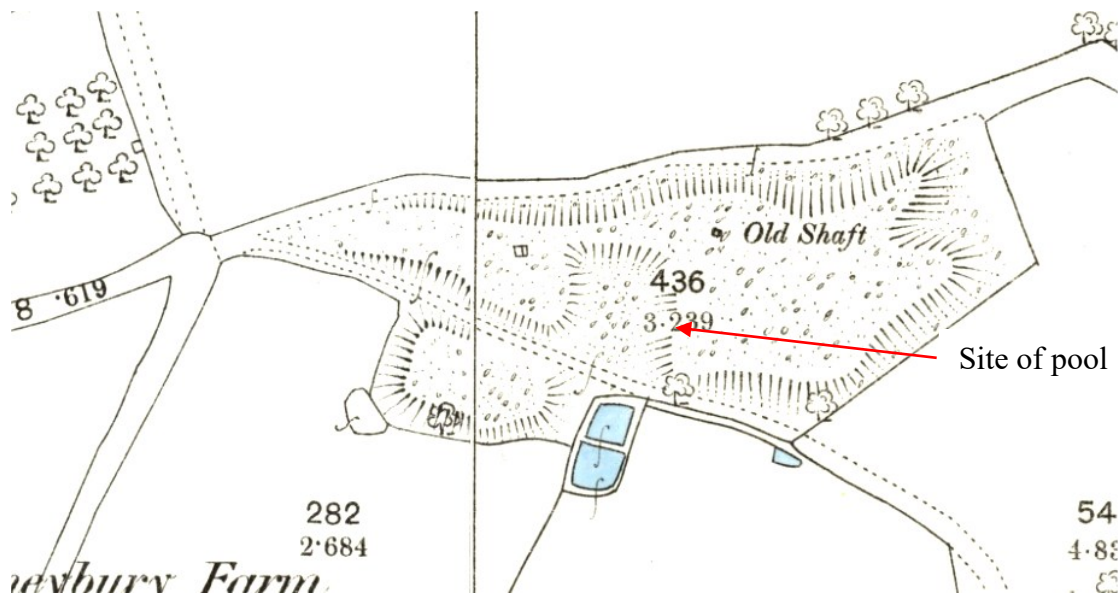


Figure 3. 1882 O.S. map Shropshire LI.2 showing abandoned mine. Some working of the mine appears to have taken place since 1838 as the pool shown on the tithe map is covered by spoil. Two new pools appear to have been constructed to the south of the mound.

Sale Notice 1896:

ALL the WORKING PLANT which will include a nine-horse-power Upright High-pressure Engine (with brake and all connections). One Steam Boiler (27ft by 4ft. 6in., 7/16 split, with all the brickwork attached), Two Force Pumps (with water feed tank), One tank Water Boiler (27ft. by 4ft. wide, with stop valve and all connections), Pit Frame and Pulley, a New Winding Chain (120 yds.), quantity of Pit Timber, about 1,250 Yards of Iron Rails (in lots), about 400 Iron Sleepers, Two Pairs of Chain Tackling (with bonnet), Five Pit Baskets, 10 Squares, a Six-ton Weighing Machine (which has been tested, with all brickwork), a New Wire Rope (120 yards, quite new), Two strong Carts and Thripples, Horse Gearing and Horse Pit Gearing, a Pit Pony (5 years, with gearing); about 30 Tons of Prime HAY, the growth of 1895-6, with all the Working Tools and Plant of the Pit.¹¹

At the closure, he was employing 17 men underground and three on the surface.¹²

In 1899 Donald Prestage of the Milburgh Tileworks wanted to re-open the mine for tile clay in association with his new works at Wallace. At this time some of the plant and materials appear to have still been on-site as he requested permission to remove them. Prestage found the shaft was badly bulged and required repairing He also

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safety_lamp#Electric_lamps

¹¹ Wellington Journal, 25th July 1896

¹² From the Tables compiled by W.N Atkinson, H.M. Inspector for the North Staffordshire District in his Report for 1896. Peak District Mines Historical Society website.

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wanted to try the clay in the mound for tile making.¹³ Nothing came of his plans and any remaining machinery was removed and buildings demolished at some time later.

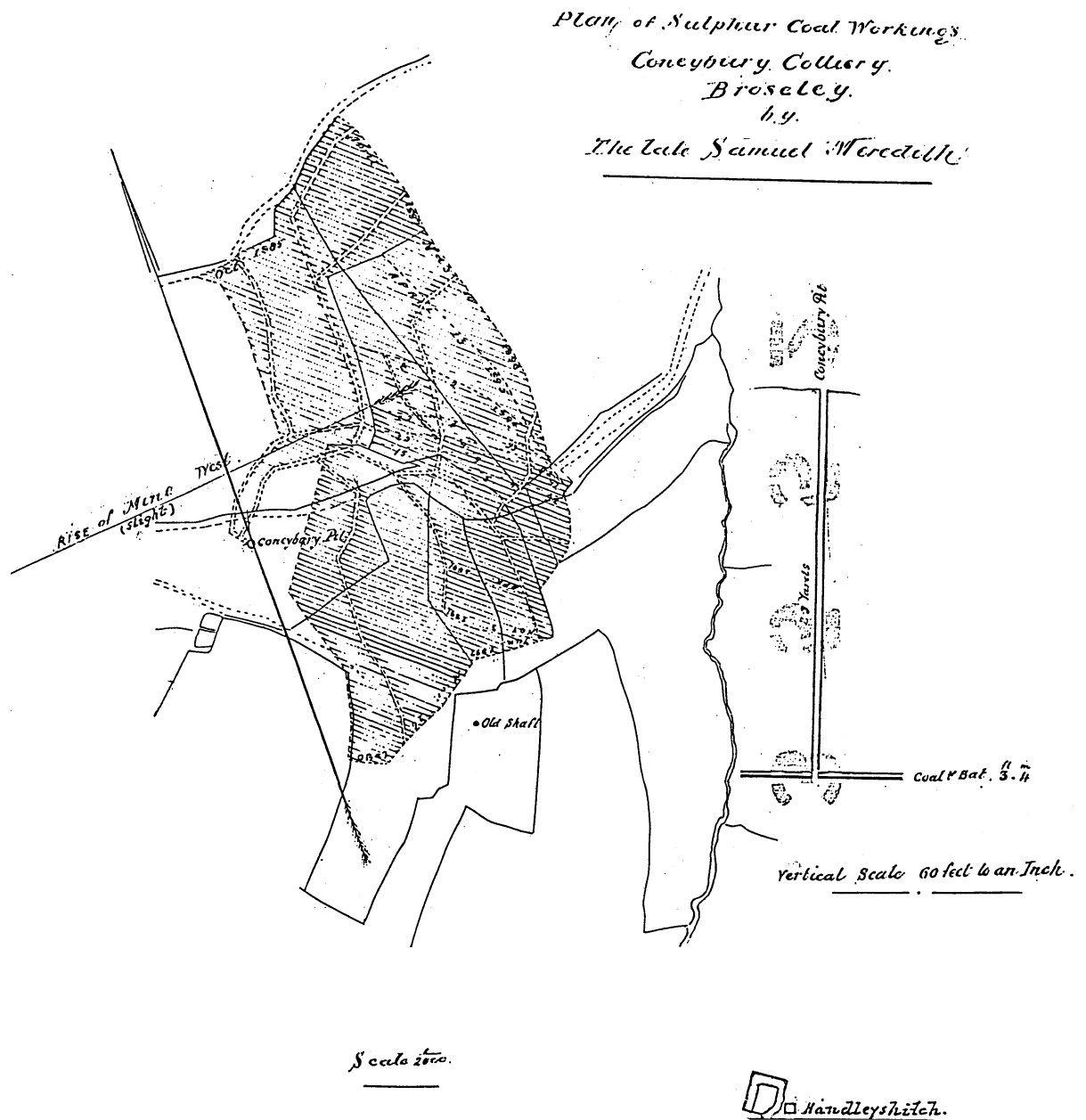


Figure 4. Abandonment plan which shows mine workings in 1896 on the death of Samuel Meredith. Coal Authority.

¹³ Shropshire Archives 1681/5189/4

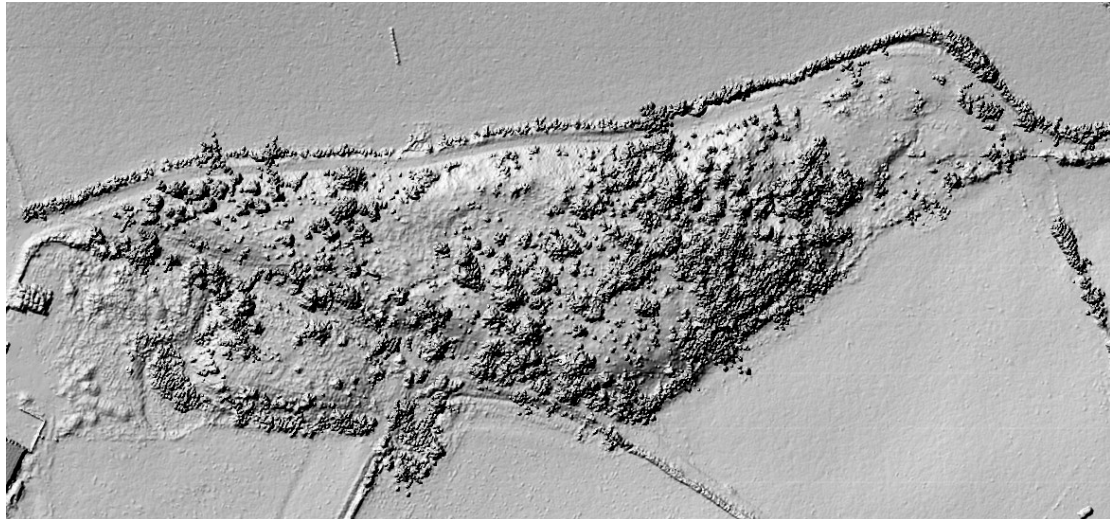


Figure 5. Lidar 25cm DSM Hillshades



*Figure 6. Concrete engine bed for Upright Steam Winding Engine. (SJ 68460 01895)
The square section to the right has four 1" holding down bolts and was probably for
the engine iron base. The rectangular block to the left was cast separately and has
two 1" holding down bolts but its purpose is unclear.*



Figure 7. Iron fence and remains of winding chain fence bottom left SJ68465 01852



Figure 8. Left: Remains of winding chain used as fencing. Right: Example of the triple-linked winding chain as listed in the sale documents and used for fencing. (IGMT)



Figure 9. Pool, possibly used for engine water supply. SJ68450 01860