MINING SHAFT

WOOGILL MOOR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATCHING BRIEF

JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Yorkshire Water

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

As part of the work to cap an open mining shaft on the moors at Woogill Moor, North Yorkshire (SE 0822 7791,) an archaeological survey and assessment of the site was undertaken prior to works commencing. In addition, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the ground disturbance works.

The shaft appears to date from the mid 19th century and is one of a number in the area which are collectively referred to on historic mapping as 'Woogill Colliery'. The survey and subsequent watching brief on the consolidation works recorded the top of the open shaft with a large spoil tip located to the south of it. The stone built shaft was in very good condition but the spoil heaps were showing extensive signs of erosion. The shaft was made from roughly dressed/squared sandstone blocks several of which were tapered to provide a tighter fit around the shaft.

The location of a small building shown on historic mapping to the south-west of the shaft was identified along with a probable horse gin to the immediate north-west of the shaft.

No artefacts were encountered during the consolidation or archaeological works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 As an integral part of the work to cap and make safe an open mine shaft on Woogill Moor near High Woodale Farm, North Yorkshire, an archaeological survey, assessment and watching brief were undertaken. This was in order to assess the historic/archaeological potential of the site and to record the remains as they currently exist. The survey was also able to advise on how to minimise the impact of the works on the surviving archaeological remains. The site lies in an area of moorland on the northern side of the upper reaches of Nidderdale.

1.2 Research into the site was undertaken in February 2011 and an initial site visit was undertaken on the 24th February, 2011 with the contractor to assess the nature and scope of the works and to carry out the preliminary site survey. The main site work was undertaken on the 29th March, 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Location

2.1 The site lies in an area of extensive upland moors *c.*400m to the east of Twizling Gill and *c.*500m north-west of Thornet Barn (SE 0822 7791). The shaft and associated spoil heaps lie at the western end of a stone track. The site is in Stonebeck Up civil parish, Harrogate District, North Yorkshire (Figure 1).

Geology and soils

2.2 The underlying geology of the site and the immediate surrounding area is Namurian 'millstone grit' of the Upper Carboniferous (British Geological Survey, 2001). Overlying this, the quaternary geology is one of upland peat (British Geological Survey, 1977). The soils that have developed from this are of the Winter Hill association, which is a thick, very acid blanket peat (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

Topography and land-use

2.3 The features are located on the northern side of the upper reaches of Nidderdale on a moderately steep slope at a height of *c.*425mOD. The surrounding landscape is used for rough summer sheep gazing and shooting.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION SOURCES

3.1 The assessment followed the guidelines set out in Appendix E of the *Treatment of Disused Lead Mine Shafts: A Guide to Good Practice* (Derbyshire County Council, 2007, 43) and covered a desk-based assessment, a rapid walkover survey of the site and its immediate environs and a watching brief on the ground works for the capping.

3.2 The principal aims of the assessment were to:

- locate the archaeological and historic features within the landscape and carry out an archaeological survey and assess their importance and to then:
- identify their potential to contain any unrecorded archaeological and/or historical remains
- assess the effects that the proposed consolidation works would have upon known and potential archaeological/historical remains
- propose measures which could be built into the proposals to avoid, reduce or remedy any potential adverse effects identified

3.2 This report is based upon the review of readily available documentation relating to the site and its environs. Documentary research was undertaken and included a review of cartographic sources. The reviewed resources are located at the North Yorkshire HER and North Yorkshire Archives and English Heritage National Monuments Record.

3.3 The following data sources were researched for the assessments:

- North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record
- North Yorkshire Archives
- published and unpublished historical and archaeological studies
- cartographic sources (including historic Ordnance Survey maps)
- National Monuments Record: Listed Buildings

3.4 Site visits were carried out on the 23rd February and 29th March, 2011. The visits were carried out with a number of different objectives. The first visit (23rd February 2011) was to discuss the proposed work with the contractor and to carry out the initial, rapid landscape survey. The subsequent visit (29th March, 2011) was in order to monitor the ground works and record any archaeological features encountered.

3.5 All ground disturbance work was carried out by hand digging by the contractors and under direct archaeological supervision.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Archaeological and historic sites recorded within the 500m radius study area of the site are summarised in Table 1 below. The sites are identified by a site number, which is correlated with the North Yorkshire HER (MNY). A central grid reference, suggested classification and date are provided for each site, which are graded in archaeological significance as of 1 (national), 2 (regional) and 3 (local) importance. This is based upon professional judgement and the criteria in PPS5. The location of the sites is shown in Figure 2.

Table 1. Archaeological and Historic Sites

Site Number	*Reference Number*	*Grid Reference*	*Description*	*Period/Date*	*Grade*
1	MNY29917	SE 0819 7837	Sheepfold	Post-medieval	3
2	--	SE 0816 7828	Coal pit on 1856 map	Post-medieval	3
3	MNY22747	SE 08521 78144	Coal pit on 1856 map	Post-medieval	3
4	MNY29915	SE 0785 7797	Sheepfold	Post-medieval	3
5	MNY22750	SE 08233 77909	Coal pit on 1856 map	Post-medieval	3
6	--	SE 0794 7784	Possible mining level	Post-medieval	3
7	MNY29510	SE 0840 7770	Flint scraper	Neolithic/BA	2
8	MNY29914	SE 0798 7767	Wall/?ruin on 1856 map	?Post-medieval	3
9	MNY30065	SE 0836 7771	Possible hut circle	?Post-medieval	3
10	MNY22749	SE 08402 77732	Coal pit level 1856 map	Post-medieval	3
11	--	SE 0843 7776	Shaft	Post-medieval	3

4.2 A total of 11 sites were identified within the study area of the site, none of which are considered to be of national significance.

Prehistoric to Medieval

4.3 The earliest site recorded within the study area is a chance find of a single struck flint (Site 7) dating from the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age. This, along with other finds of worked flint to the north at Little Haw, suggests a possibility of prehistoric activity within the general area, though currently no specific settlement sites have been identified.

Post Medieval

4.4 The place name for Woogill Moor is taken from Woogill stream which lies to the west of the site. The '-gill' part of the name is from the Old Scandinavian word '*–gil*' for a deep, narrow valley or ravine, whilst the woo part is probably a corruption of wood simply means a wood or trees (Mills, 1998 and Gelling, 2000).

4.5 The features of the post-medieval landscape can be seen to cover two main activities. Firstly is the management of sheep using the moors as summer grazing. This can be seen in the presence of two sheepfolds (Sites 1 & 4) with a third just outside the study area to the east (SE 0888 7799). In addition the wall/building (Site 8,) which is marked as a ruin on the 1856 Ordnance Survey (OS), may well be a shepherd's hut or similar structure. There are two main reasons for potentially linking this to the management of the sheep rather than the mining. The first is that it is shown as a ruin on the 1856 mapping when the mining appears to be well underway. This therefore shows that it was already out of use. The second is that it is located well away from the areas of mining but is in a position that would afford good visibility along the valley but still be relatively sheltered.

4.6 The second main feature of the study area is mining. The cartographic evidence from the 1856 OS 1st edition 6" series shows a series of coal pits (Sites 2, 3, 5 and possibly 11) with a further pit outside the study area to the west (SE 0896 7792). Site 11 is not recorded on the historic OS mapping but is shown as a disused shaft on the modern OS. From observations during the site

visits, this shaft would appear to be a near contemporary with those recorded on the old mapping and therefore probably for coal extraction. In addition a coal pit level is (Site 10) shown at the southern edge of the study area. This level would have been used to control the water levels within the pits to the north. A further possible level was noted (Site 6) immediately adjacent the track where the track approaches the ford over Twizling Gill (Plate 1). Several of the pits are linked by trackways and the whole area is named as 'Woogill Colliery' on the 1856 map.

4.7 The earliest mapping located which covered the site in any form of suitable detail was the tithe map for 1839 (Figure 3). This does not show any of the pits or their associated trackways. However, it should be noted that as the significant stream Twizling Gill is not recorded it is possible that mining activity was present and it has not been noted.

4.8 As mentioned above, the 1856 OS map records the area in some detail and shows several pits and associated features. One of these features is at the site under consideration (Site 5) where a building is shown as a ruin (Figure 4). The fact that it is a ruin would seem to show that the pit is no longer being worked. The OS 25" map of 1892 (Figure 5) shows all of the pits as old shafts and does not record any buildings, ruined or otherwise.

5.0 SITE SURVEY and WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 The initial site visit was undertaken on the 23rd February 2011 with the contractor in order discuss the general outline of works and to undertake the preliminary landscape survey. A subsequent site visit was carried out on the 29th March, 2011 in order to carry out the archaeological watching brief on the capping works. Both visits were undertaken on overcast but clear days with no problems with visibility.

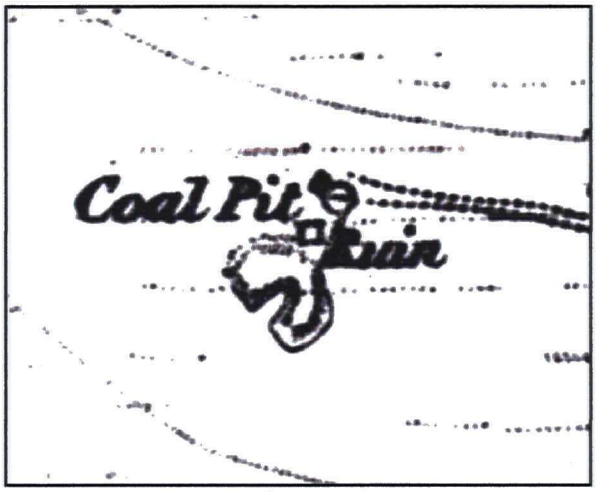
5.2 The initial site inspection recorded the nature and extent of the spoil tips around the shaft (Figure 6). This survey recorded the spoil forming two distinct lobes – one running *c.*39m to the south and 30m wide with the other running *c.*25m to the south-west and 15m wide. The spoil is primarily composed of varying sized fragments of poor quality coal. A comparison of the 1856 OS map with the 1892 edition shows that the southern spoil tip appears to have been the area of dumping as it has grown significantly in size. Unfortunately no evidence of tipping lines could be seen during the survey. Although the main body of the spoil tip appears to be stable, much of the covering layer of vegetation has been eroded away (Plate 1).

5.3 A further, much smaller area of spoil was also noted 18.5m away to the south-east (Plate 2). This area of spoil was much smaller and measured *c.*26x12m and stood *c.*1m high. This too was composed of fragments of poor quality coal.

5.4 It was also possible to locate the site of a small building shown as a ruin on the 1856 OS map (Plate 3). Little evidence of the building remains at ground level

apart from what appears to be a corner showing as a turf-covered right angle. This feature lies *c.*3m to the south-west of the shaft and is crossed by a modern farm track, which may well have had an impact on any buried remains.

5.5 In addition to the remains of this building, what appears to be a possible horse gin or similar was identified to the immediate north-west of the shaft (Figure 6, Plates 4 & 5). This feature is *c.*11.2m in diameter and the wall survives to *c.*0.5m high with roughly dressed stone showing in rows in a number of places. Internally the area is noticeably level when compared to the surrounding areas, though there are a few possible internal features showing as turf-covered bumps. However, it is also possible that these are merely remains left over from demolition or collapse. Only further, intrusive investigation would be able to resolve this. A detailed examination of the 1856 OS mapping shows a circular feature with a small building to the north-west. This circular feature is far too big to represent the open shaft and would appear to possibly be a gin of some form.



1856 Ordnance Survey

5.6 The main aim of the survey and watching brief was to record the top of the open shaft. The shaft was found to be 1.96m in diameter and built from local sandstone derived either from the digging of the shaft or the sandstone quarry shown on the historic OS mapping *c.*900m to the north. The shaft was found to be in a very good state of preservation (Plate 6). A few loose stones survived from what appears to have been the top layer around the shaft (Plate 7). The presence of the lime mortar on the upper faces of some of these stones, which are all otherwise dry built, would seem to suggest that the top course was mortared into place (Plate 8).

5.7 The shaft was made from roughly dressed and squared sandstone blocks of varying sizes. Many of the stones had marks from where they had been worked with a pick or similar tool. No evidence of the use of chisels or bolsters was seen. Many of the blocks had been cut with a slight taper to form a wedged shaped stone. These had then been laid with the narrow end innermost which allowed a tighter fit to be achieved around the shaft. This would also help prevent the shaft from distorting inwards from the pressure of

the surrounding ground. Any spaces between the blocks had been packed with small stone chips in order to maintain a rigid structure.

5.8 An inspection of the inside of the top 2m of the shaft was undertaken from an access platform. This observed the very well preserved inner face of the stones along with two rectangular spaces for wooden beams (Plates 9-11). These slots were located in the south and eastern sides of the shaft at the same level (1.34m below surviving top). The southern slot measured 0.38m wide 0.12m deep and extended at least 0.2m into the wall (Plate 10). The eastern slot was 0.4m wide, 0.12m deep and extended at least 0.3m into the wall (Plate 11). The decayed remains of timber were found in each of the slots indicating that they once both help substantial wooden beams. One of the stones above the eastern slot appears, from its reddening and surface spalling, to have been heat damaged, possibly from the burning of the beam. It is currently uncertain what these beams were used to support within the shaft but presumably it related to the winding mechanism and it is possible that the burning is a result of increased friction from an uncontrolled descent of the equipment.

5.9 The track-way leading to the shaft had been constructed from what looks like the arisings from excavation of the shaft (Plate 12). The track-way runs eastwards to connect with the other track-ways which link the various other pits in the area linking the whole as Woogill Colliery.

5.10 No artefacts were encountered during the consolidation or archaeological works.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 From the results described above, it can be seen that surviving on Woogill Moor are the generally well preserved remains of 19th century coal mining. This is in the form of a network of track-ways linking well-built stone lined shafts with their associated spoil tips.

6.2 The shaft that was the focus of this study was found to be very well preserved with large spoil tips lying to the south and south-west along with the remains of at least one building and a possible horse gin.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 From the evidence and discussions above, it can be seen that Woogill Moor retains significant elements of 19th century coal mining that are generally in good state of preservation. As such these remains give an insight into the exploitation of this resource at a local level.

7.2 Although the shafts are currently in a good condition there will, inevitably, be gradual decay over time. At such points in time where consolidation is required to maintain safety, it is recommended that a similar scheme of archaeological recording and monitoring is undertaken.

7.3 From an archaeological/historical perspective, sample excavations in the areas of the buildings and possible horse gin would provide further insight into the functioning of these shafts.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are extended to Lisa Harrowsmith of Yorkshire Water for inviting me to undertake the project and to Stuart Jones and his team for their help and co-operation during the works which made the job run smoothly.

Sources Consulted

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Maps

1778 A Paln of the Allotments on Low Gatherley Moor, Moor Holme and the High Moor by John Graves, George Jackson and William Head with the Old Inclosures in the Townships of Rawson, Kirkby Ravensworth and Whaston.

1805 A Plan of that part of Riggs or West Moor Called Moorsdale in the Township of Stean Beck Up in the Manor of Netherdale otherwise Ramsgill in the Parish of Kirky Malzard in the West Riding of the County of York by Alexander Calvert.

1839 Plan of the Township of Stone Beck Up in the Parish of Kirky Malzard in the West Riding of the County of York. Tithe Map. North Yorkshire Archives reference: T

1856 Ordnance Survey 6" series (1st edition)

1870 Township of Stone Beck Up in the Parish of Kirky Malzard in the West Riding of the County of York – Plan of the Estates belonging to Thos Carter Esq. and Mrs Hutchinson.

1892 Ordnance Survey 25" series (1st edition)

1977 Institute of Geological Sciences: *Geological Survey Ten-Mile Map, North Sheet, Quaternary.* British Geological Survey

2001 Geological Survey *1:625,000 Map North Sheet Solid Geology.* British Geological Survey

1983 Soils of England and Wales. *Sheet 1 Northern England. Soil Survey of England and Wales.* Lawes Agricultural Trust, Harpenden

ILLUSTRATIONS

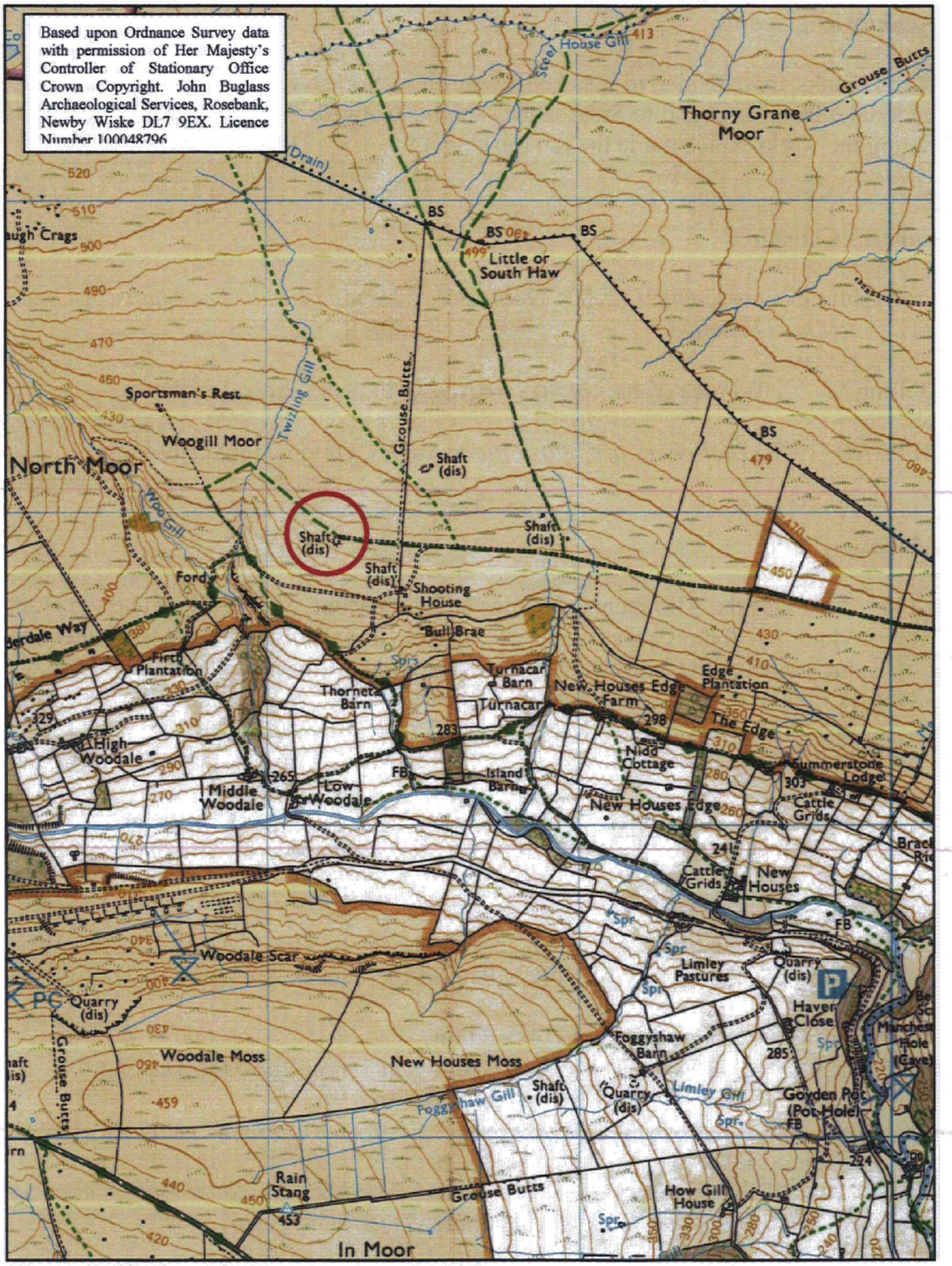

Figure 1. Site Location.

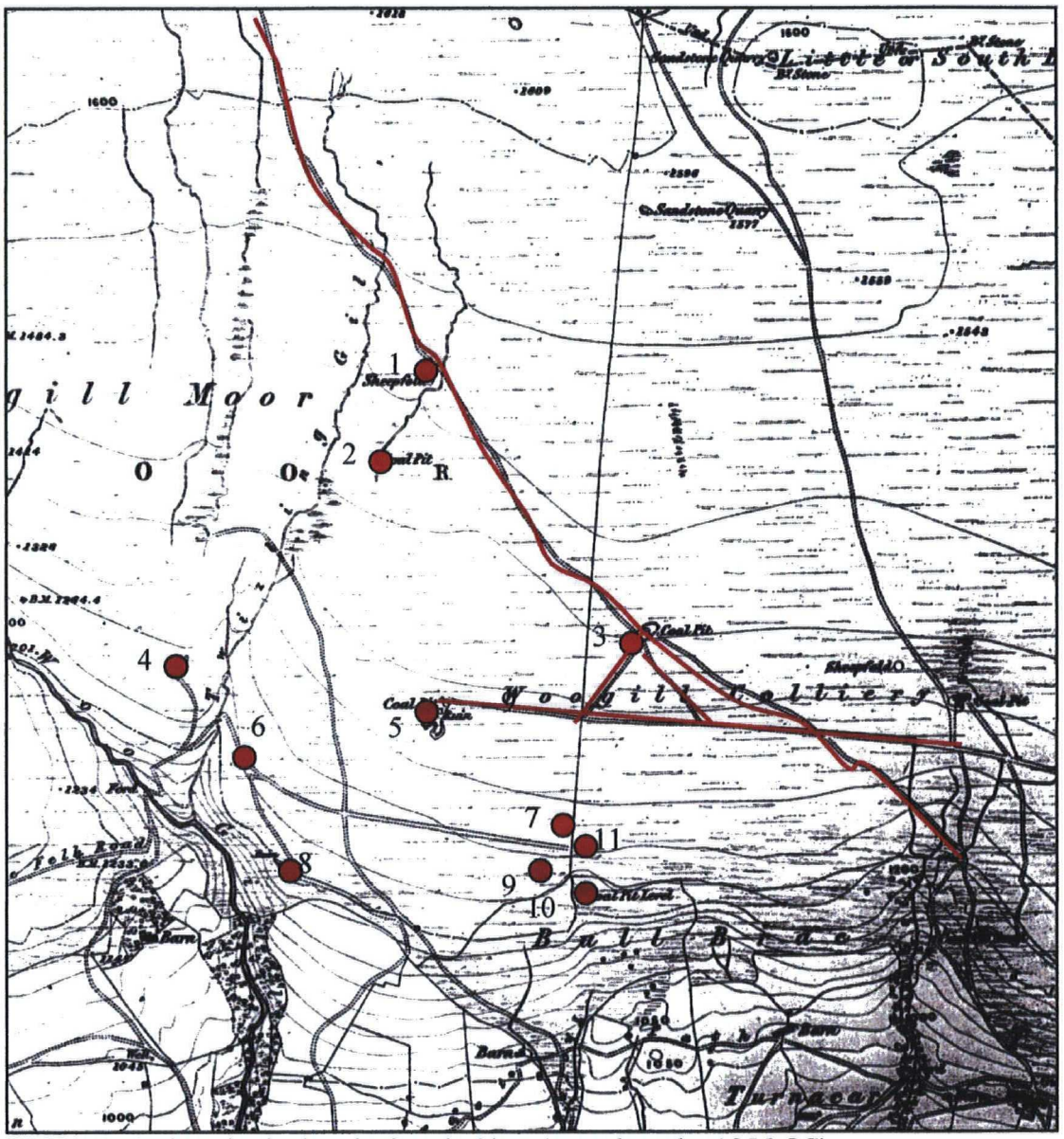

Figure 2. Archaeological and Historic Sites (Based on the 1856 OS)

Key

2 Site and reference number

Track ways for access to pits

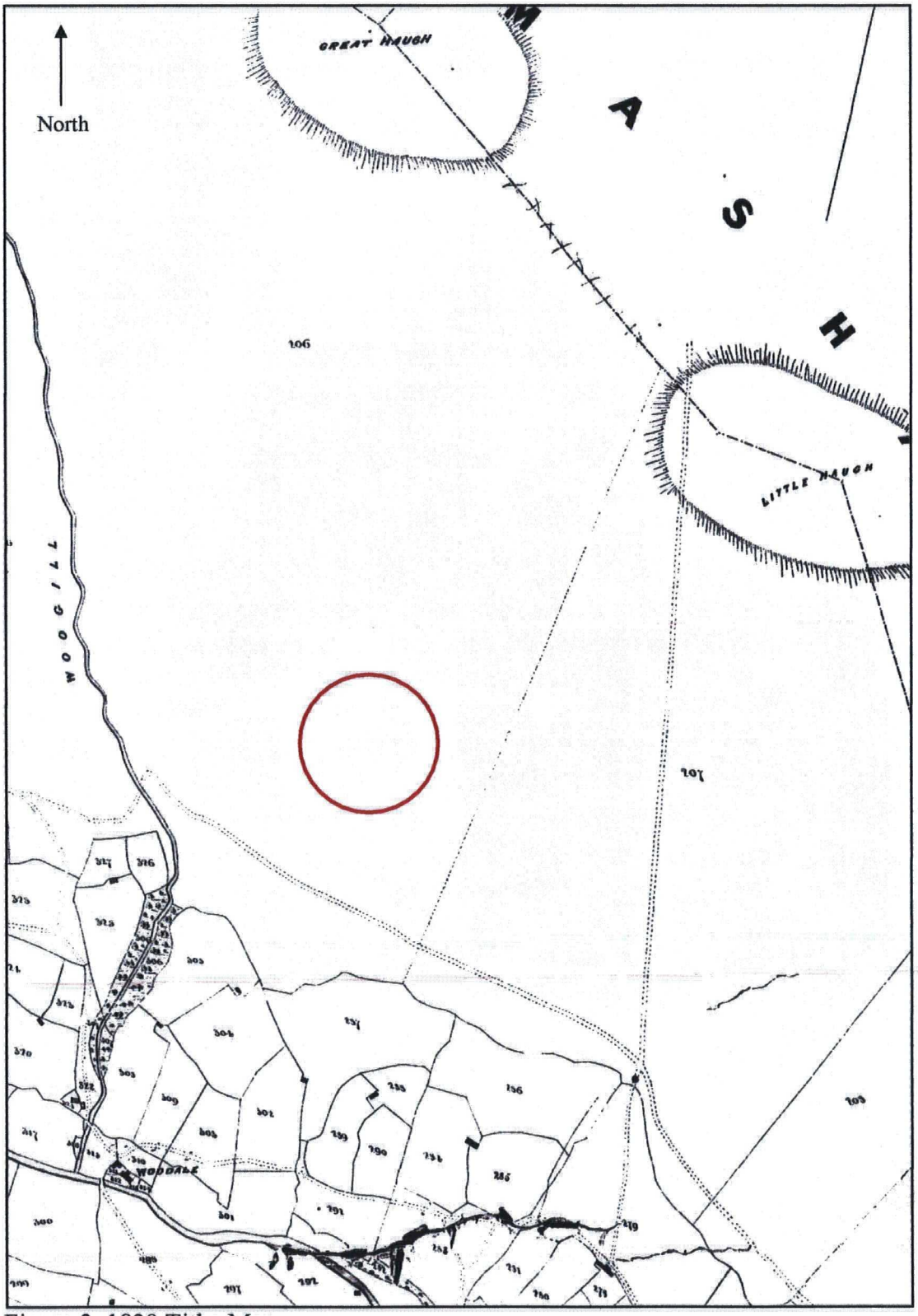

Figure 3. 1839 Tithe Map