

**BARNEY CRAG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX,
CARR SHIELD**

NORTHUMBERLAND



RCHME Newcastle

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Mark Bowden

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1992

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Northumberland
Tynedale
Allendale
NY 84 NW 14, 15 and 16
NY 803 466 (GCE)

Introduction

The surface working area of Barney Crag and Scraithole lead mines was surveyed by RCHME in the summer of 1992 at the request of Northumberland County Council. Modern detail and survey control was supplied by EDM and electronic theodolite; archaeological and topographical detail was added using a plane table with a self-reducing alidade and by graphical methods. The survey scale is 1:1250.

The site, which was worked during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, occupies the bottom and lower slopes of the valley of the West Allen, which at this point lies at about 400m OD. Scraithole mine was worked until the 1970s and the site is dominated by the remains of this episode of work. Nevertheless numerous earlier elements are recognisable - buildings, trackways, culverts and reservoirs; there are also quarries and a limekiln.

In addition to the recently disturbed areas depicted on the plan, considerable quantities of material have been dumped on the site, mainly at access points, to deter illegal camping.

Beyond the area surveyed are further remains consisting of adits, shafts, possible prospecting works, and other quarries; it is intended that these will be mapped from aerial photographs by NCC. It is only necessary to note here that the feature labelled "Loudside Quarries" by OS (NY 807 471) is a linear working at right angles to the Scraithole vein, its S end resting on the line of that vein, suggesting the possibility that it might be a prospecting trench; against this interpretation is the lack of an obvious adit or shaft exploiting the vein on this side of the valley.

Description

Buildings

The lodging shop (B1) is the largest in the north Pennines with internal features which suggest that it was also a smithy and/or an assay house (EH Lead Industry Site Assessment 9). The shell of the building is largely intact except for the SW corner which has collapsed, perhaps because of the demolition of an extension to the S; the floors and roof are in decay.

Blue Row cottages (B2), formerly High Blue Row, were mine buildings. They are now occupied as private dwellings.

A substantial house (B3) was perhaps the mine manager's accommodation.

A ruinous structure (B4) is the remnant of Low Blue Row, a terrace of dwellings now partly destroyed and partly overlain by the tailings heap (W2). The Row was still extant in 1895 but had been reduced almost to its present state by 1919 (OS second and third edition maps).

Three stone-built sheds (B5, 6 and 7) are still roofed or partly roofed and in use. Two concrete sheds (B8 and 9) are probably associated with the later stages of the working of Scraithole mine and certainly post-date the OS map revision of 1919.

Hushes

There are three possible hushes in the area surveyed. H1, on the E side of the river, has been a substantial watercourse and though it may be a hush it is more likely to be a natural feature. It collects water from an extensive drainage system on the hillslope above, originating in the area of Loudside quarries to the NE. H2 and H3 adjoin Barney Crag quarry on the W side of the river and both cut track TR1. H2 contains a small water course originating in a leat or drain from the workings higher up the valley side to the NW. H3 is now dry. Because they cut the track these are relatively recent, and therefore probably man-made, features.

Adits

There are two adits in the area surveyed. Next to the lodging shop an adit (A1) is still visible entering the valley side in a south-easterly direction; about 25m into the hillside a collapse (a), now fenced, reveals that the level turns towards the E at this point. The second adit (A2) is still penetrable but has been partly blocked and closed by a steel grill. This adit was certainly open in the nineteenth century (OS second edition map) but was re-opened after a period of disuse in the mid-twentieth century, when it seems to have been known as Scraithole. It runs W along the apparent line of a vein which has also been exploited from further adits and shafts uphill beyond the limits of the present survey.

Processing Areas

There are few visible remains of the surface working areas of the mine. The stone-built bouse teams (BT1) are probably of nineteenth-century origin but have been substantially modified by the addition of concrete elements. First and second edition OS plans (surveyed in 1859-60 and revised in 1895 respectively) indicate the position of various small structures and tanks, and there is documentary evidence for the existence of a crushing mill at Barney Crag in the 1860s and 70s (NRO.2762 A 58). The claim (EH Lead Industry Site Assessment 9) that remains of these features may be preserved under the later tailings (W2) is supported by the appearance of earthworks protruding from beneath the N end of this heap near B4. The third edition map (1919) shows substantial buildings and tanks in the area now occupied by W2.

Numerous culverts are visible, mainly in the area around the lodging shop, both for draining the levels and for supplying the washing floor. In addition two large reservoirs (R1 and R2) are situated above the washing floor and tailings.

There is a document (NRO.2762 A 138) mentioning a store at Barney Crag in the early 1860s; as it contained candles and gunpowder it was probably sited away from the main workings and therefore outside the present survey area.

Waste heaps

The dead heap (W1) lies on the W side of the river and the finer worked waste (W2) on the E side, mainly downstream from the adits. The tailings heap, which has been "landscaped", overlies some earthworks and structural remains, parts of which

can be seen at the N end of the heap. At the S end of the heap there has been much disturbance leaving confused earthwork remains. The dead heap can also be seen to overlie a lynchet at its N end.

Where it runs between the waste heaps the river course is revetted on both sides by substantial stone walls. That on the W is extremely fragmentary and generally low while that on the E survives in places to its full height; it is eroding, however, both from the action of the river and the pressure of the tailings heap.

Material was carried across the river on bridges, some abutments of which remain (b, b). One substantial stone-arched bridge survives intact, carrying the track to Greenpit. Some railway sleepers and metals survive from the most recent phase of Scraithole mine, running from the adit (A2) to N and S along the waste heap (W1) at this level. The line to the S presumably carried the bouse across the river to the teams.

Quarries and Limekilns






Barney Crag quarry (Q1) has been worked in the latter part of the twentieth century but its origins go back before 1859 (OS first edition). Track TR1 and its branch TR2 are cut by the quarry, though TR2 had served it in an earlier phase. The limestone extracted from this quarry and that on the E side of the river (Q2) seems to have been for burning. However, of the limekilns shown on the OS maps only one (LK1) now survives in recognisable form. This is a simple drystone structure with a single draw-hole facing W; the outline of the pot is clearly visible.

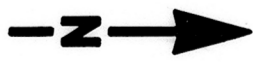
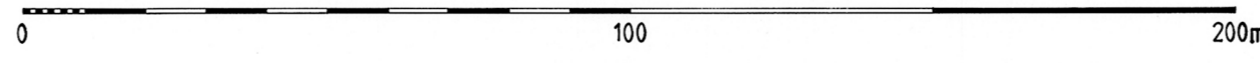
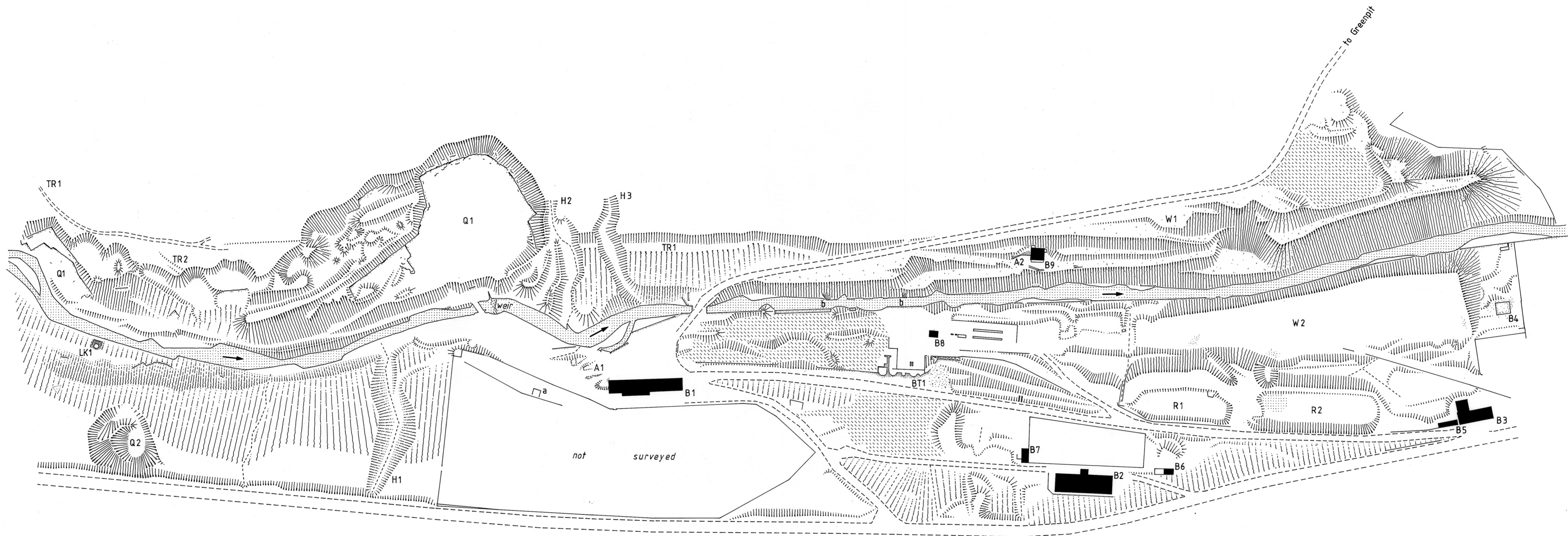
Tracks

The current track to Greenpit is shown on the first edition map (1859-60); the upper part of the dead heap (W1) is served by this track. The N end of track TR1, which is cut by Q1 and by H2 and H3, had possibly gone out of use at an early date though TR2, serving Barney Crag quarry and Ladlewell quarry further S, was still in use in 1919. The multiple tracks on the E side of the valley above the washing floor and tailings heap no doubt relate to these working areas and to the general access routes to the mine from the public road.

M C B Bowden Newcastle-upon-Tyne August 1992

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-  water
-  minor watercourse or drain
-  main areas of recent disturbance
-  other stone structure
-  roofed building





Barney Crag lodging shop



View up the valley from Barney Crag



Scraithole adit



Stone-built culverts