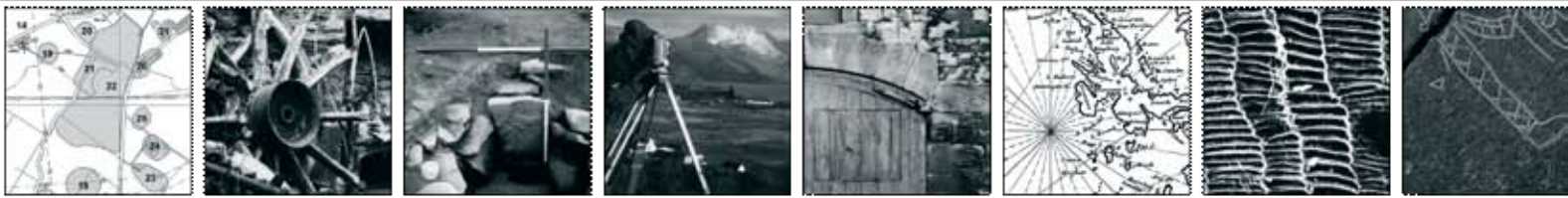


TVMS/02



# TANKERVILLE MINE, SHROPSHIRE

Watching Brief

commissioned by Shropshire Mines Trust

SAM No. 1014865

July 2014



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## Watching Brief

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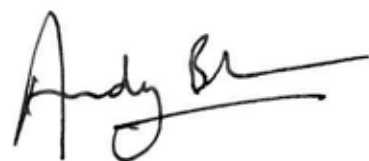
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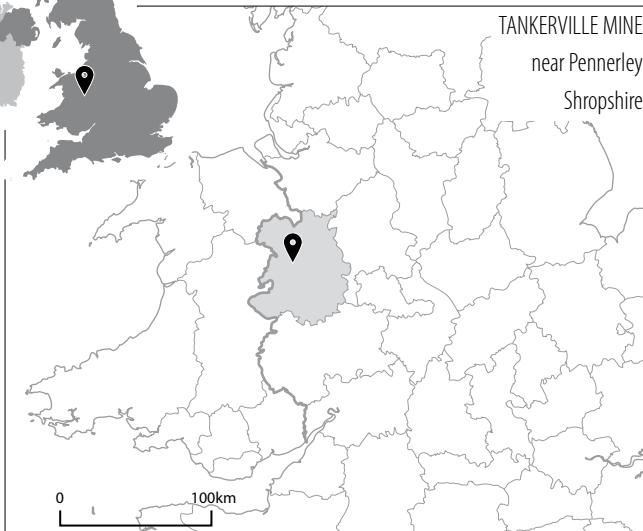
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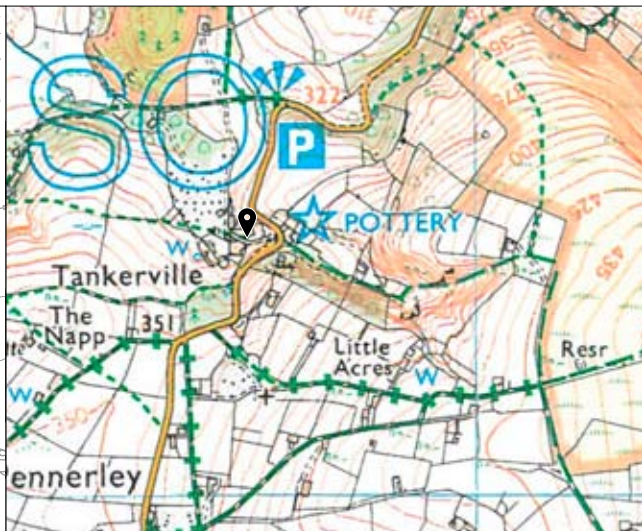
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TANKERVILLE MINE  
near Pennerley  
Shropshire



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scale 1:600 @ A4

N

0 30m

ILLUS 1  
Site location

# TANKERVILLE MINE, SHROPSHIRE

## Watching Brief

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by the Shropshire Mines Trust to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of drainage trenches at Tankerville Mine, Shropshire. The drains are to assist in managing the water levels in the reservoirs and to prevent flooding of the farmyard below. Demolition deposits post-dating the working life of the mine were observed. The drainage works did not impact upon deposits of archaeological significance.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by the Shropshire Mines Trust to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of drainage trenches across the site of Tankerville Mine, near Pennerley in Shropshire (NGR SO 335485, 299475). The Site is located within the south of Worthen parish, in the old township of Upper and Nether Heath, between Pennerley and Snailbeach on the eastern out-crop of the lead field. The site is currently being consolidated and conserved by the Shropshire Mines Trust and is a Scheduled Monument (SM: 1014865).

Restoration and consolidation works are currently being undertaken on a stone revetment wall which divides the upper and lower levels of the mine complex. As part of these works, improvements to the drainage system are required to reduce flooding of the adjacent farmyard and reduce water pressure on the restored masonry. Two trenches were excavated for the insertion of drainage pipes which will drain water from the former reservoirs into the redundant mine shaft (Illus 1).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Tankerville mine was named after the Earl of Tankerville, one of the major landowners in the Shropshire lead field. The mine is located on the eastern edge of the Shropshire lead field and mining is believed to have started on the site in the 1850s with the sinking of a vertical shaft. The mine continued in operation until about 1884, and after a failed attempt to re-open it in 1891 the mine was finally closed in 1893. There is evidence that the mine was leased by the Shropshire

Lead Miners Ltd. between 1911 and 1913 but they were probably working above ground as the heavy machinery had been sold off at auction in 1902. Eventually the site was sold off and became incorporated into a farm. At the height of the mines production in 1879 there were around 171 employees and it was regarded as one of the most up-to-date and best working mines in the county (Morriss, 1991).

Previous work was undertaken by the City of Hereford Archaeology Unit in 1991 who conducted a desk-based assessment and survey of the existing structures on the site (Morriss, 1991). Headland Archaeology also undertook a building survey in 2011 to record the structures during clearance and advise on planned conservation works (Mayes, 2012).

The remaining mine buildings are located on two levels. The lower level in the north-east of the site formerly housed the dressing floor, winding engine house and boiler house. These buildings are no longer visible as above surface features and the site is set to scrub and demolition debris. A stone revetment wall (the subject of the current restoration works) separates the lower level from the upper level which was the former location of the crushing floor. Ore hoppers and a Cornish engine house are still visible as surviving features at this level.

Two reservoirs associated with the mine complex are present in the south of the site. The lower reservoir is situated on the upper level to the south-east of the stone revetment wall. The upper reservoir, as the name implies, is situated at a higher level to the south-west of the lower reservoir (not illustrated).



## ILLUS 2

Drainage trench heading north-west towards mine shaft

## ILLUS 3

Section facing north-east showing rubbish pit [104]

# 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological work is:

- to record any remains or finds of archaeological significance encountered in the course of the groundworks.
- to produce a report and deposit the archive with a local repository.

# 4 METHOD

Two trenches were excavated to enable the drainage works. Trench 1 was excavated from the top of the mine shaft (north-east of the Cornish engine house) in a south-easterly direction, towards the eastern side of the upper reservoir. Trench 2 was excavated from an aperture in the revetment wall (giving access to the mine shaft) in a south-easterly direction across the former dressing floor.

The main contractor mechanically excavated deposits as necessary for the insertion of drainage pipes. Both trenches measured 0.60m wide and excavations did not exceed a depth of 1.0m below the existing ground level. Works undertaken on the first day of the project were monitored by an archaeologist who was permitted sufficient time to record the stratigraphic sequence once deposits had been removed to the depth sufficient for the insertion of the drainage pipe.

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 14th May 2014. In consultation with John Tiernan from English Heritage it was decided that the works observed during the first day of the project were satisfactory to meet the requirements of the Shropshire Mines Trust and the Scheduled Monument conditions. Archaeological supervision was not undertaken on the south-eastern continuation of Trenches 1 or 2.

All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards. 35mm colour and black-and-white prints were taken with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. Digital photographs on a 7.2mp camera were taken for illustrative purposes only and will not form a part of the site archive.







ILLUS 4

Metal box recovered from pit [104]



ILLUS 5

Section facing north-east in Trench 2 showing demolition and burning layers

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 TRENCH 1

Trench 1 was excavated on the upper level to allow the insertion of a drainage pipe from the upper reservoir (not shown on plan) to the top of the redundant mine shaft (Illus 2). This area formerly functioned as the crushing floor of the mine where steam powered rollers crushed the ore as it came up from the mine shaft. A trench measuring 21.0m x 0.6m was excavated to a depth of 1.00m at the south-east end but shallowed out to 0.60m at the north-west end.

A deposit of immature topsoil (100) was present along the full length of the trench. At the south-eastern end of the trench, orange and grey clay deposits (103) believed to be geological in origin were observed immediately below the topsoil.

Extending 3.50m from the north-west end of the trench a dark brown silty clay (101) containing rotting timbers was present. The location of the deposit (abutting the modern cast concrete mine shaft) may indicate that it represents the remains of a former wooden lining to the mine shaft. Abutting this deposit to the south-east, a deposit of redeposited slate (102) was present to a depth of 0.75m below ground level. The slate potentially represents arisings from the mine or a levelling episode on the site.

At the mid-point of the trench and cut into geological deposits was a shallow pit [104] containing what appeared to be the remains of a 20th century rubbish dump; deposits of gravel (106) overlay farm refuse (107) containing twine and plastic (Illus 3). A rectangular metal object (0.50m x 0.30m x 0.12m) perforated with regularly spaced circular holes (Illus 4) was recovered from deposit (107). The function of the object is unknown but there is the possibility that it related to mining or processing activities and has subsequently been redeposited in a later rubbish pit. Natural deposits were observed beneath deposit (107) at a depth of 0.70m below ground level.



## 5.2 TRENCH 2

Trench 2 was excavated on the lower part of the site for the purpose of draining water from the lower reservoir into the redundant mine shaft. This area was the former location of the dressing floor and also contained buildings of which the function is, to date, unclear.

A trench measuring 15m x 0.60m was excavated from the lower entrance to the mine workings in a south-easterly direction. An immature topsoil deposit (200) overlay a demolition layer (201) measuring 0.50m in depth. Worked stone, mortar and rubble were present in the deposit which appears to represent either the gradual collapse or the intentional demolition and leveling of structures on the site (**Illus 5**). The lack of stratigraphic change within the deposit would suggest the latter.

A deposit of charcoal and ash (202) beneath the demolition layer suggests the occurrence of a fire within the structures prior to demolition. The depth of the trench did not exceed 1.0m and no in situ deposits were observed.

## 6 DISCUSSION

No remains of archaeological significance were observed during this scheme of work. The deposits observed appear to relate to the collapse of former mine buildings and subsequent levelling of the site. The rubbish deposits identified in Trench 1 appear to post-date the use of the site as a working mine.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mayes, S 2012 *Tankerville Mine, Shropshire: Building recording and Watching Brief*, Headland Archaeology: HAS 915.

Morriss, KR 1991 *Tankerville Lead Mine, Pennerley, Shropshire*, City of Hereford Archaeology Unit, HAS102.

## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

#### Context register

Context	Description	Depth below ground level
100	Topsoil horizon. Dark brown silty clay with ash, charcoal and demolition debris. Present throughout trench.	0.00 – 0.30m
101	Deposit adjacent to concrete mine shaft. Dark brown silty clay with rotted timbers contained within. Probably relates to an earlier wood-lined shaft subsequently replaced by concrete. Length:3.50m.	0.30 – 0.70m+
102	Fragmented slate pieces. Arisings from the mine workings, leveled and grassed over. Length:6.00m.	0.00 – 0.75m+
103	Natural. Orange/grey mottled clay.	0.30 – 1.00m
104	Cut of modern disposal pit.	0.00 – 0.70m
105	Primary fill of pit [104]. Modern stone aggregate.	0.00 – 0.70m
106	Fill of pit [104]. Gravel.	0.00 – 0.30m
107	Tip line in [104]. Includes baler twine and modern plastic.	0.30 – 0.70m
108	Rotten wooden frame.	0.00 – 0.70m
109	Gravel/grit deposit. Evidence for high temperature burning.	0.00 – 0.62m
200	Topsoil horizon. Mid brown silty clay with frequent worked stone inclusions.	0.00 – 0.30m
201	Rubble layer. Related to the abandonment of the mine a subsequent collapse/leveling of structures on the site. Includes worked angular blocks, ash and charcoal.	0.30 – 0.80m
202	Black charcoal layer and burnt timbers underlying demolition layer (201)	0.80 – 1.00m+

#### Photo register

Photo	B+W	Colour	Digital	Direction facing	Description
01	37	37	1	SW	Section through drainage trench to east side of Cornish Engine House
02	36	36	2	NW	General view of drainage trench to east side of Cornish Engine House
03	35	35	3	NE	Trench 1 adjacent to lower shaft entrance way
04	34	34	4	NW	Trench 2 on lower level
05	–	–	5	NW	Timber overlying natural in upper trench
06	–	–	6	–	Perforated metal box recovered from upper trench
07	–	–	7	–	Perforated metal box recovered from upper trench
08	33	33	8	SE	General view of Trench 2
09	32	32	9	NW	Southern end of Trench 2
10	31	31	10	NW	Mid point of Trench 2
11	30	30	11	SE	Mid point of Trench 2 with (108) wooden lining
12	29	29	12	SE	Slate deposits in Mid point of Trench 2
13	28	28	13	SE	General view of Trench 2
14	27	27	14	SE	General view of Trench 1
15	26	26	15	S	Section of Trench 1







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