

Mine at Barn Fold Mine, Benthall NGR SJ 66570 02903

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Analysis

This was a small mid-19th-century single shaft coal mine wound by a horse gin. It was re-opened as a drift mine at the beginning of the 20th century. The small low mound associated with the drift mine survives, but the drift and shaft have been filled or capped. There is no documentary record of the mine.

History

There were numerous small shallow mines in Benthall which worked until the early 20th century. This particular mine was adjacent to a track leading from Spout Lane to Broadacres Farm.¹ In 1811 Barn Fold was part of Halewood Farm which comprised the adjacent fields and was let to William Pearce and Co. who operated the Benthall Pottery and possibly mined in this area.²

The mine is not shown on the 1830 1" OS map but the 1835 Benthall Estate map shows a single shaft which appears to be wound by a Horse Gin. The map also shows a branch from the Benthall Limestone railway to the pit. At this time, the mine was probably being worked to supply coal to Lime Kilns in Workhouse Coppice which were operated by Price and Hill who also operated the Benthall Foundry.³ It was also shown on the 1844 sale map for the Benthall Estate however the mine probably closed in 1854 when the Lime Works and were sold.⁴ The sale advertisement lists two Pit Gins, two handturns (implying four shafts in operation) as well as forty tons of iron rails and sleepers and twelve iron partings (points for a junction/sidings).⁵ There is no record of the limeworks operating after this time.

The mine is not shown on the 1883 25" OS map suggesting the shaft had been filled. It had been re-opened by 1902 and a level (drift from the surface) driven to the coal, clay or ironstone seam. This Level is also shown in 1927, suggesting it was still open, but it was probably not working. It is not known who worked the Level or for what minerals, but it is possible this was to supply coal to Benthall Potteries.

BENTHALL LIME WORKS,
Near the Pitch Yard.
TO LIMEMASTERS, COALMASTERS, AND OTHERS.
MR. LEADBETTER begs to announce that he is
honoured with instructions to
OFFER FOR PUBLIC SALE,
On Monday, the 24th day of April, 1854,
Upwards of forty tons of Iron Rails and Sleepers, twelve
Iron Partings, twenty Jinney Carriages, two Pit Gins,
two Handturns, several Pit Baskets, a quantity of
square and other Iron Plates, wrought Iron Boxes, two
Waggon Horses and Gearing, set of Harness, three Wag-
gons, two Carts, Spring Cart, Gig, Scales and Weights,
two excellent Grindstones, several sets of Rock and other
Tools, a quantity of Timber, a Vessel upon the river
Severn, near the Iron Bridge, in good repair; also a
Boat of twenty tons burden, and other articles, the pro-
perty of Mr. Hiram Hill, who is giving up the Lime
Trade.
Particulars in catalogues, to be had of the AUCTIONEER,
Broseley, ten days prior to the sale.
The sale will commence punctually at eleven
o'clock.

*Figure 1: Sale of Lime Works equipment.
Eddowes's Salopian Journal, 5th April
1854.*

¹ Broadacres Farm is a relatively recent name and is not shown on old maps

² Valuation of Part of the Benthall Estate by Valentine Vickers. Shropshire Archives 515/9/58.

³ Benthall Estate Map. Shropshire Archives 3956.

⁴ Sale catalogue for Benthall Estate 1844 and map. Shropshire Archives SC/12/12. The map shows a dotted line joining the limestone railway and the sale document lists plot 261 as 'Roads and Railways'

⁵ Eddowes's Salopian Journal 5th April 1854.

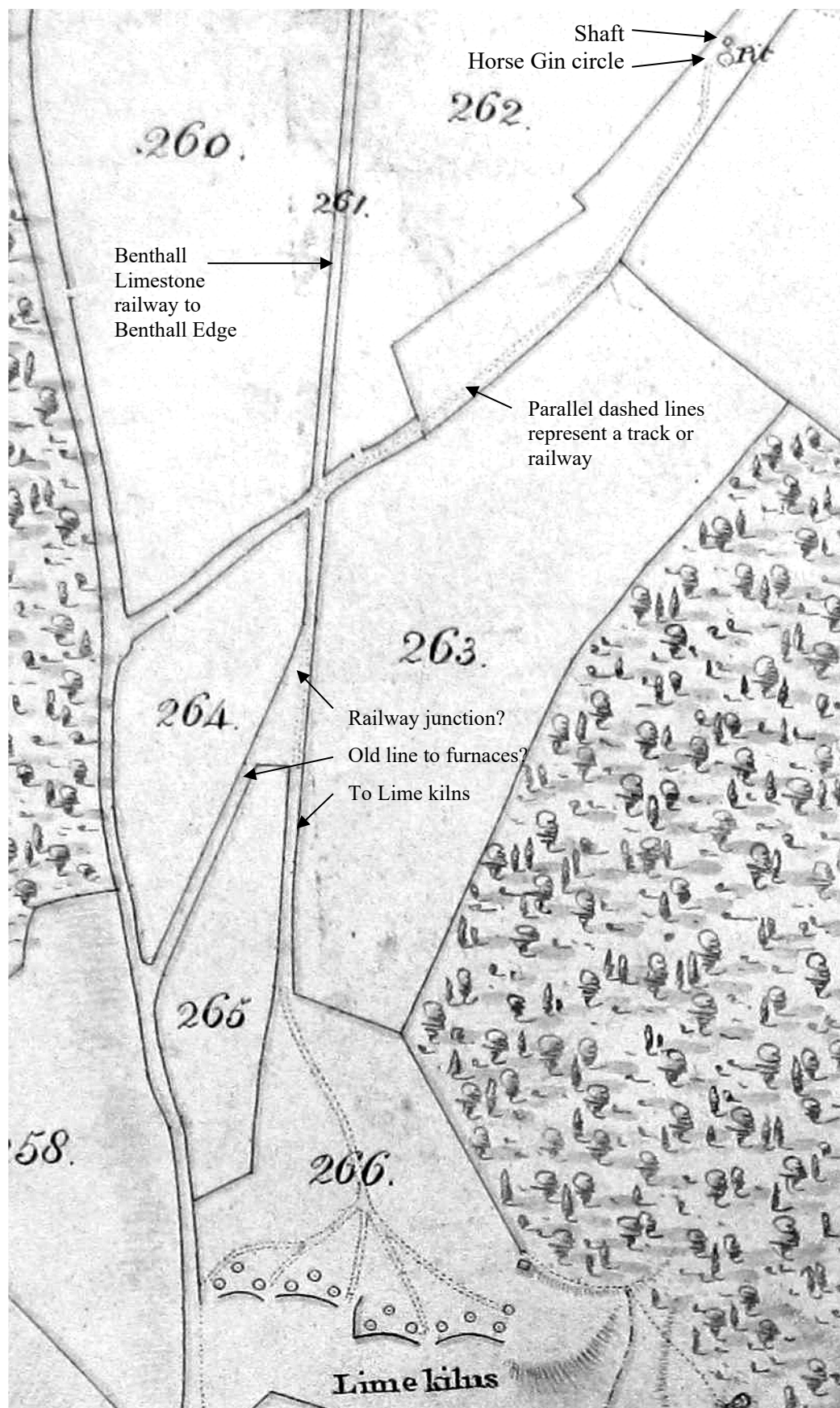


Figure 2: Benthall Estate Map 1835 Shropshire Archives 3956

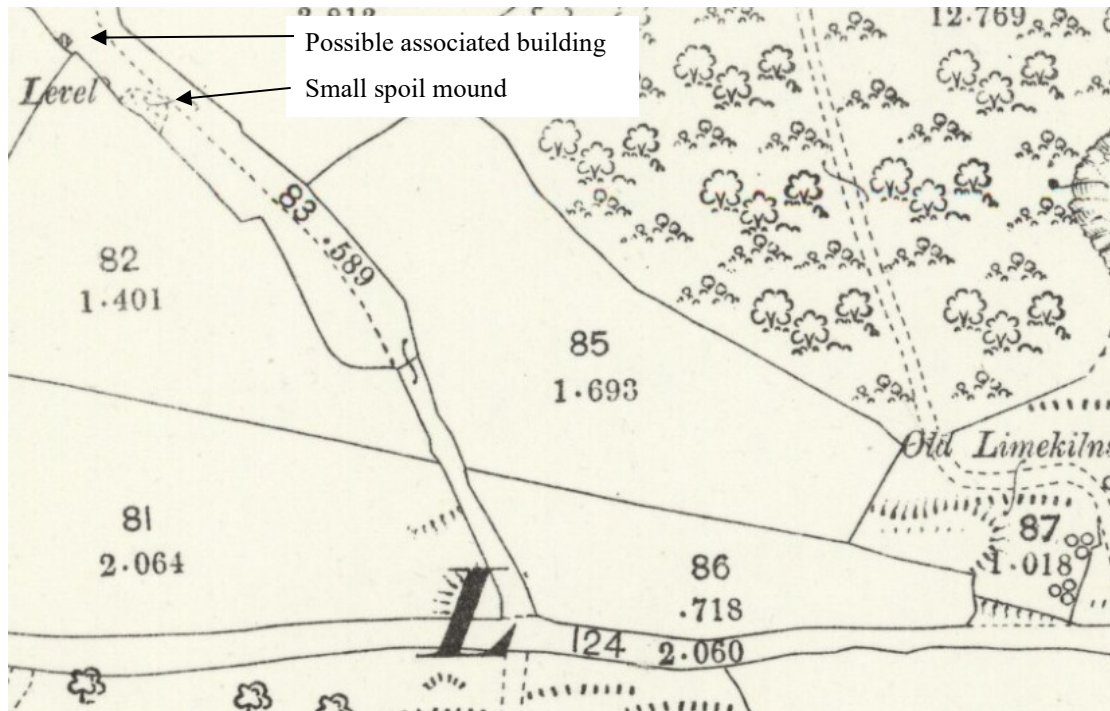


Figure 3: 1902 25" OS map. Shropshire LI.2. Between 1883 and 1902 a level has been opened. The 1927 edition shows the Level but not the mound or building.



Figure 4: Looking NW - The mine was located on the grass verge to the left of the road. S. Dewhirst 2017



Figure 5: Looking SW – The small spoil mound can be seen in the centre of the picture to the right of the road.
S. Dewhirst (2017)