

The fields are first recorded on the 1728 Broseley Estate map, alongside Hay Cop, Skinners Croft, and Ox Pasture.¹ At that time, Lower and Upper Yew Tree Meadows were referred to as Yewlands, and Three Stile Piece as Yew Land Meadow. Although no mines are marked on the map, the accompanying notes state that:

“The Main Fault is upwards of 70 yards perpendicular in some places near 80, its point is from north the westward, and from south to the eastward, about 35 degrees. The largeness of it prevents any communication between the coal and (*iron*) stone work of each side so that the coal and stone on that side of the fault towards Broseley Town is in most places 80 yards nearer the surface than that same sort of coal and ironstone is on that side the fault towards the River Severn.”

In 1828, the minerals under the Yew Lands, in the occupation of Charles Guest, were leased by William Yelverton Davenport (Broseley Hall Estate) to James Foster of Stourbridge for twenty-one years.² No mines are shown in this location on the accompanying map or on the 1833 1” OS map; however, the minerals were probably worked from adjacent mines. At the time of the Broseley Tithe Survey in 1838, Lower Yew Tree was leased to Charles Guest and Three Stiles’ Piece to Jeremiah Perry. There is no mention of a mine, waste or spoil heap.

Around 1858, Thomas Davies of the Coalford Tile works retired, and the business was taken over by his son William, together with William Lloyd. Davies and Lloyd operated the Yewland’s pit, where, in February 1861, Henry Gething met with a fatal accident:

On Thursday last, a young man named Gething, in the employ of Messrs Davis(sic) and Lloyd, met with his death by a fall of earth in the pit which he was at work. It appears that while engaged in taking out the timber from the roof in a faulty part of the mine where what is called “horse back” occurred, about five tons of earth came down and crushed him in a fearful manner, causing instant death.³

At the inquest, he was described as a fearless and courageous workman and that none of his bones were broken, but that his spine was displaced. The verdict was Accidental death.⁴ Henry’s father, Jesse, was also a collier who, in 1861, was living at the Fish Houses. Henry was aged 27 and buried at Broseley on 4th February.

Subsequent references are to the Three Stile Piece, where in January 1863, there was an accident:

On Tuesday afternoon, an accident occurred at the coal pit in the Three Stile Piece. Three men were in the act of ascending the shaft after the termination of their day’s work. They had not proceeded far from the bottom of the shaft upwards when the rope broke. One of the men, Joseph Jones, fell to the bottom and was so severely injured that it became necessary to convey him home on a litter. He was attended to immediately by Dr. Bartlam. It is feared that he has been injured internally. It is alleged that the two other men held on by the rope and reached the surface in safety. Influences of an unfavourable character have been drawn from this circumstance. An examination of the rope by the proper authorities will set this point at rest.

Other reports state that the two other men walked home and that Jones had a fracture of the ribs, a broken ankle and several other bruises. Also, that the pit was operated by a horse gin and the horse was going at a trot when ‘the rope got, it is supposed, out of

the groove of the pulley, which caused the break'.⁵ This was probably Joseph Jones, a coal miner who in 1861 was aged 37 and was living at Birch Meadow.

In June of the same year, the equipment for a mine on Dark Lane operated by Davies and Lloyd was put up for sale:

Several Tons of iron rails, sleepers, parting and other plates, gin-pit head, runner, rope, baskets and tibs, pit timber, chain and wood fencing, a useful dark brown cart gelding and other miscellaneous articles.⁶

The next reference to the mine is in 1867 when it was operated for a few months by Samuel Meredith. In September of that year, records show that between April and July, the mine produced 187 tons 15 cwt of coal and 148 tons of slack, with a royalty of £14 18s 9d paid on the output.⁷

In 1888, Prestage of the Milburg Tileries wrote that:

I am advised that there is a disused cart weighing machine at the Three Stile Pit, between here and Broseley, belonging to General Jenkins (*Broseley Hall Estate*). As we hope in the near future to be able to raise coal for our own use and for sale, would you kindly allow us to remove the weighing machine to our works here?⁸

The 1902 OS map shows an 'Old Shaft (Clay)' as well as two small buildings nearby, possibly from Meredith's re-working in 1887 and one of these buildings may be associated with the weighing machine mentioned by Prestage.

This and adjacent fields were acquired by the County Council for Dark Lane CofE School, which was constructed in 1967. The mound remains, but there is no evidence of the shaft or buildings.



Figure 2. Lidar DSM 1m showing the approximate locations of the shaft and buildings.

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¹ Shropshire Archives 6001/2365

² Shropshire Archives 6000/11420

³ Shropshire News, 7th February 1861

⁴ Shrewsbury Chronicle 8th February 1861

⁵ *Shrewsbury Chronicle* 30th January 1863, *Wellington Journal*, 31st January 1863. *Eddowes Shrewsbury Journal*, 4th February 1863

⁶ *Wellington Journal* 20th June 1863

⁷ Shropshire Archives 1681/191/10. There were no royalties recorded for this pit before March 1887 or after September 1887

⁸ Shropshire Archives 1681/189/4