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HENDRE QUARRIES: YSTRAD MEURIG QUARRY

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Commissioned by: Evans Group Ltd Hendre Quarries

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■ INTRODUCTION

This report arises from an application to Dyfed County Council for an extension of the present workings at Hendre Quarry, Ystrad Meurig (Application No : C1/394). Details of the application were referred to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Curatorial Section for comment upon any archaeological implications.

The application involved the removal of a significant portion of land. Existing information in the Regional Sites & Monuments Record indicated that part of the area contained features of industrial archaeological significance, features associated with a 19thC lead mines known as Gwaithyr-Hendre or Hendrefelin Lead mine (DAT:PRN 9306). Furthermore, the application area was one that had never been subjected to adequate archaeological survey, and potentially contained evidence of earlier human activity in the upland landscape

Consequently, recommendations were made to the County Planning Authority that, in accordance with Welsh Office Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 16: Archaeology & Planning, Nov 1992), the area be subject to an archaeological evaluation prior to determination of the application. At the request of the planning authority, further recommendations were made as to the requirements of such an evaluation, and these were forwarded by the planning authority to the applicant. After contacting a number of archaeological contractors, the applicant commissioned the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to carry out the evaluation.

■ AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

These were outlined in the recommendations made to the planning authority as follows:

(1) a rapid field assessment of the application area

(2) a desk-top assesement of:

- (a) available aerial photographic collections and,
- (b) historic documentary evidence including published sources and manuscript collections housed in local authority maintained and national archives.

Furthermore, it was recommended that "the results of such an evaluation should indicate whether any further archaeological work may be necessary in advance of quarrying; for example, detailed survey or excavation...in accordance with restrictions (page 11, paragraph 2) pertaining to developments under Part 23, Class C of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988, areas to be protected from quarrying activity may also need to be identified."

■ METHODOLOGY

Because of the time constraints involved, a rapid review was made of those detailed records held in the Regional Sites and Monuments Record, followed by a field inspection on the 29th September. The inspection of the application area was carried out by field walking using transects at about 5m intervals. Opportunity was also taken to examine adjacent areas outside the current application area, but within the area denoted on the planning application C1/934 as under the applicant's control (and also an area to the northwest of the latter) since these areas contained features which were material to the interpretation of those in the application area. Subsequently, a study of records held by the National Monuments Record was made, especially the aerial photograph collection. Whilst in the normal course of investigation such a study

should have preceded the field inspection, in the event this study revealed no further information than had been gleaned from initial desk-top work and from the field inspection with the exception of Area D, outside the application area to the south west.

■ ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Background information

The area lies at the south western end of the Community area of Ystrad Ystwyth, formerly Ysptyty Ystwyth, the latter thought by earlier authorities to derive its name from a former medi-aeval hospitium reputedly associated with the Knight's Hospitallers. The particular area under investigation does not however seem to have been part of the lands of this foundation. The name Hendre nevertheless may suggest the possibility of an early established settlement in the area.

From examination of record material, the focus of archaeological interest lies in the remains of the Hendrefelin Lead Mine. The mine was also variously known as Ella, Hendre, and West Lisburne (B,W,&B, 1986, 39,54). From 1870-2 it was owned by Robert Girwood and managed by George Green. Output is recorded only for 1870 and shows only 20 tons of lead ore (15 tons of metal). It does not therefore seem to have been successful and is classed as a trial mine (Jones 1922,141-2). The main workings were to the west of Hendre-felin farmstead as indicated on the 1st Edition OS 1:2500, Cards. XVI,7 (surveyed 1887: the mine is named 'Gwaith yr Hendre Mine (Lead.Disused)'). Further detail is recorded on the 2nd edition of this map (surveyed 1904) A survey in 1988 failed to note extant features connected with the mine (CAS 1988,31). A more recent survey showed numerous surviving features (DAT SMR, (R.Prothero-Jones)) though the majority of these lie outside

the precise bounds of the current application area. This also applies to the evidence derived from recent oblique aerial photographs of the wider area.

At the time of the 1845 Tithe Map of Ysbytty Ystrad, the area of Craig yr Hendre was within an 88-acre holding known as Brynllidiart and Craig yr Hendre. The location of the former name cannot be ascertained. It may relate to the building shown on later maps (see Area C (20) below), but this is unlikely since the building itself is not marked on the 1845 map (tithe maps however do not always faithfully represent the contemporary landscape).

■ THE APPLICATION AREA (Area A)

The application area is some 17 hectares of up-land comprising three sides of a hill known as Craig y Bwlch. The land slopes down steeply on all sides. The northern side of the area and a portion on the eastern side have already been affected by quarrying (Fig 1, photos 1-3). Apart from this quarrying the land is rough pasture with patches of bracken and numerous outcrops of rock.

FIELD INVESTIGATION

The majority of the application area revealed little in the way of archaeological features (Fig 1). On the eastern slope there is a ditch and parallel bank(1), approximately 16m long, plus an 'L' shaped ditch (2) with an accompanying spread of stones, each arm being approximately 6m long. At the base of the southern slope a grassed over bank (3), approximately 10m long, was recorded. On the western slope a rocky ridge had been worked (4) and the spoil deposited adjacent to it - this is grassed over. All these features were consistent with early trials to be associated with lead mining in the area

In the extreme western corner of the application area are the spoil heaps of the Hendrefelin lead mine. There are two areas of waste in close proximity to each other - one (5) is a grassed over low mound, while the other (6), covering a greater area, still consists of large upstanding mounds of stone and gravel waste. No traces of shafts, as noted on earlier records, were seen but a very small area of stone revetting was noted in one edge of the larger spoil heap. A series of drainage channels (7) lead away westwards from the spoil heaps. These join together to form one channel which continues for a short distance to the west, beyond the limits of the application area and disappears into an area of bog.

The north western boundary of the application area is marked by a dry stone wall averaging 1.5m in height. This wall clearly pre-dates the larger of the spoil heaps since in part it is covered by this spoil.

■ FEATURES IN AREAS ADJACENT TO THE APPLICATION AREA

Opportunity was taken to examine adjacent areas since these contain the major part of the remains of the lead mine and have a bearing on the features noted in the application area.

Land to the north of the application area (Area B).

This land is under the control of the applicant and is demarcated by a blue border on plan 157/10597 accompanying the application. Much of this area has already been quarried, but a strip remains on the western side and this contains a large number of features associated with the mine (Fig 1, (8)-(19); photos 1, 2.).

These features are as follows: (8) a run-in level at the head of a drystone wall lined gully; (9) a mixed development rock and veinstuff tip; (10) a

subsidence crater filled with scrap; (11) a run-in trench and pit; (12) a rock-cut shaft filled with refuse; (13) a grassed-over development tip; (14) a small pit and bank; (15) two grassed-over co-steaming trenches; (16) a boiler ash tip now severely eroded by rabbits; (17) studs and ruins of boiler foundations (the foundations are clear but the area was surrounded by high bracken); (18) a depression on the site of a balance bob, with traces of stone lining in the south west corner: this feature was also surrounded by high bracken. No trace of a previously-recorded flat rod route could be seen, but the area was obscured by bracken (19).

Land to the west (Area C).

In this area (Fig 1, photo 3) are the remains of ruined buildings (20), a possible trial trench (21) and a number of field clearance cairns (22).

The ruins consist of a building, with a NE/SW long axis, some 10m x 8m with two rooms. The walls stand to a height of approximately 1m with collapsed material internally and externally. Attached to the building on the south eastern side is a small enclosure some 10m x 8m defined by a 0.05m high grassed over bank with protruding stones. To the rear, (northwest) of the main building is a smaller building some 6m x 4m aligned NW/SE. This building contains two units, the one to the south east being open on its northern side.

To the north of the latter building is a short, 5m length of bank with a 1.5m wide ditch on its western side (21).

Some 80m to the north of the buildings is a small group of four stone cairns (22).

The function and date of the buildings is not clear. It is possible that they may be associated with the lead mine, but an agricultural use is also probable. Certainly the area to the west shows

traces of cultivation (photo 3), and the cairns noted above probably represent a phase of field clearance. By 1904 at least, the buildings are depicted as roofless (OS 2nd Edit 1:2500).

Land to the south west (Area D).

This area was not examined in the field. Recent oblique air photographs however show a number of features in this area (photo 1,2). These appear to be trial pits and trenches and should be regarded as part of the mine complex.

■ CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Application Area (Area A)

The bulk of this area contains few features of archaeological significance. Features (1)-(4) are of a minor nature, largely to be associated with lead mine trial works. These features have been recorded and there is no reason to recommend their preservation or further investigation.

In the north west corner of the application area there are important features which are part of the main complex of remains of the Hendrefelin Lead mine. The major part of this complex lies outside the application area, in Area B. The complex needs to be viewed as a whole and should be preserved as such. *It is therefore recommended* that an area comprising some 0.4ha in the north west corner of the application area (fig 2) be protected from quarrying.

Areas B, C, & D.

Area B contains the bulk of the remains of the Hendrefelin Mine and the area shown on Fig 2 should be protected in the event of applications affecting this area. The features in Areas C and D

may also be subject to the same restriction, but further documentary and archaeological investigation would be necessary in order to determine their relative significance and importance, should these areas ever be subject to a development applications.

■ APPENDICES

SOURCES CONSULTED

Aerial photographs. National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

Verticals:

OS 73-231: nos 387/8; 1:7700 1973
RAF 543/887: nos 0040/41 1960
106G/UK/1457; nos 3467/8; 1:9800
1947CPE/UK/2 509; no 5120 1948
541/464: no 3067; 1:10000 1950
CPE/UK/2095; no 3006; 1:9800 1947

Obliques:

RCAHM SN718698: 925069 nos 49,50,51
1992

Maps

Tithe Map, Ysbytty Ystwyth 1845 NLW
Aberystwyth
OS 1:2500 first edition, 1888 (survey 1887).
OS 1:2500 second edition, 1905 (survey 1904)

Dyfed Sites & Monuments Record, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Carmarthen

PRN 9306, including unpublished material by R. Prothero-Jones.

Published sources & References

Lewis 1833 *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*

Meyrick 1907 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Cardiganshire*

Jones 1922 *Lead and Zinc. The Mining District of North Cardiganshire and West Montgomeryshire*. Memoirs of the Geological Survey Vol XX.

Burt, Waite & Burnley (B,W,&B) 1986 *The Mines of Cardiganshire*.

Ceredigion Archaeological Survey (CAS) 1988 *Archaeology in the Ysbyty Ystwyth Area*.
Rees 1932 *South Wales and the Border in the 14th Century*

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures:

Fig 1. Plan of area, showing application area and archaeological features recorded

Fig 2. Areas recommended for preservation

Aerial Photographs:

Photo 1. View of application area from NW.

Photo 2 North-west corner of application area from N.

Photo 3. Area C from NW.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd
October 1993

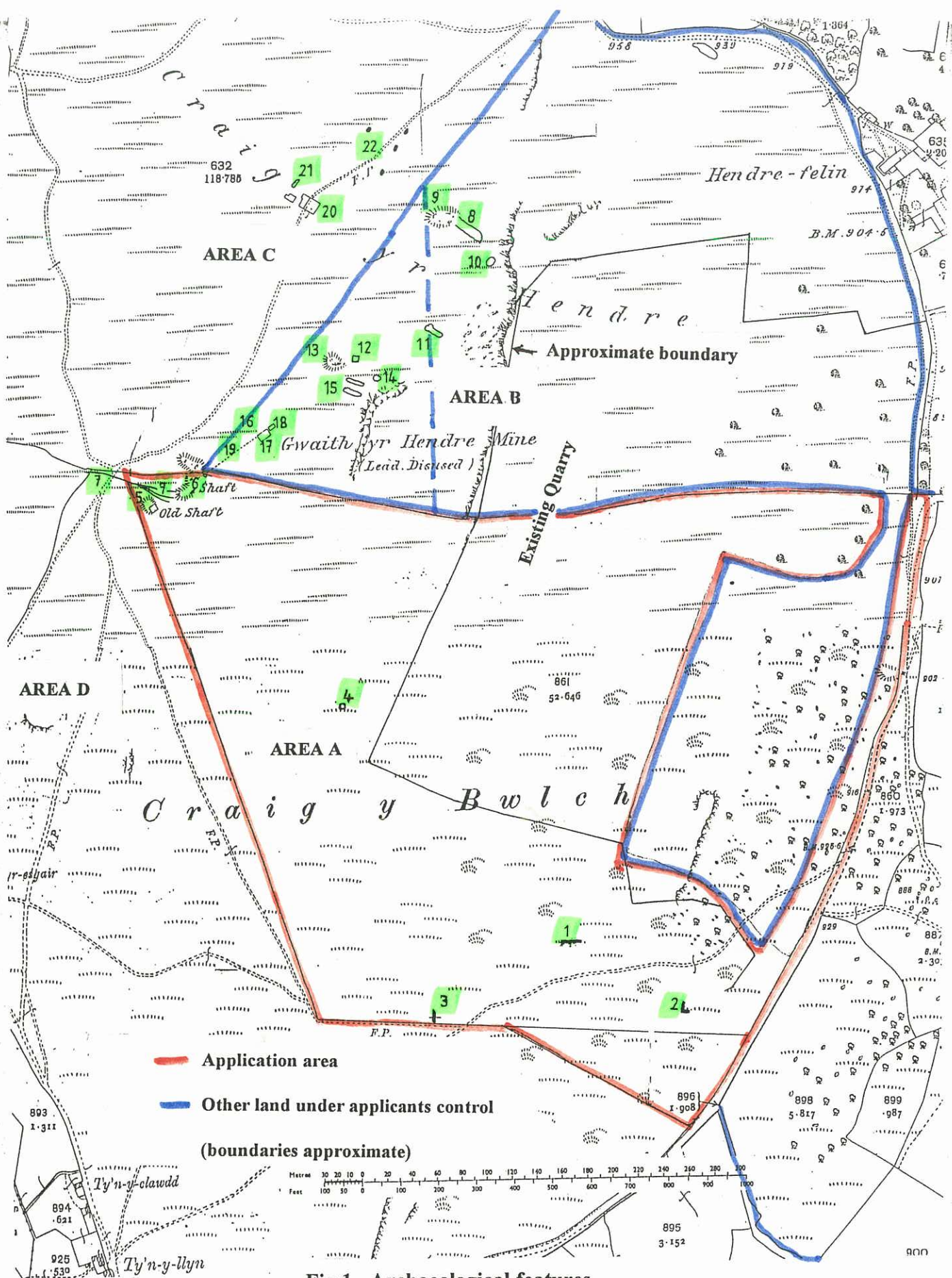


Fig 1 Archaeological features

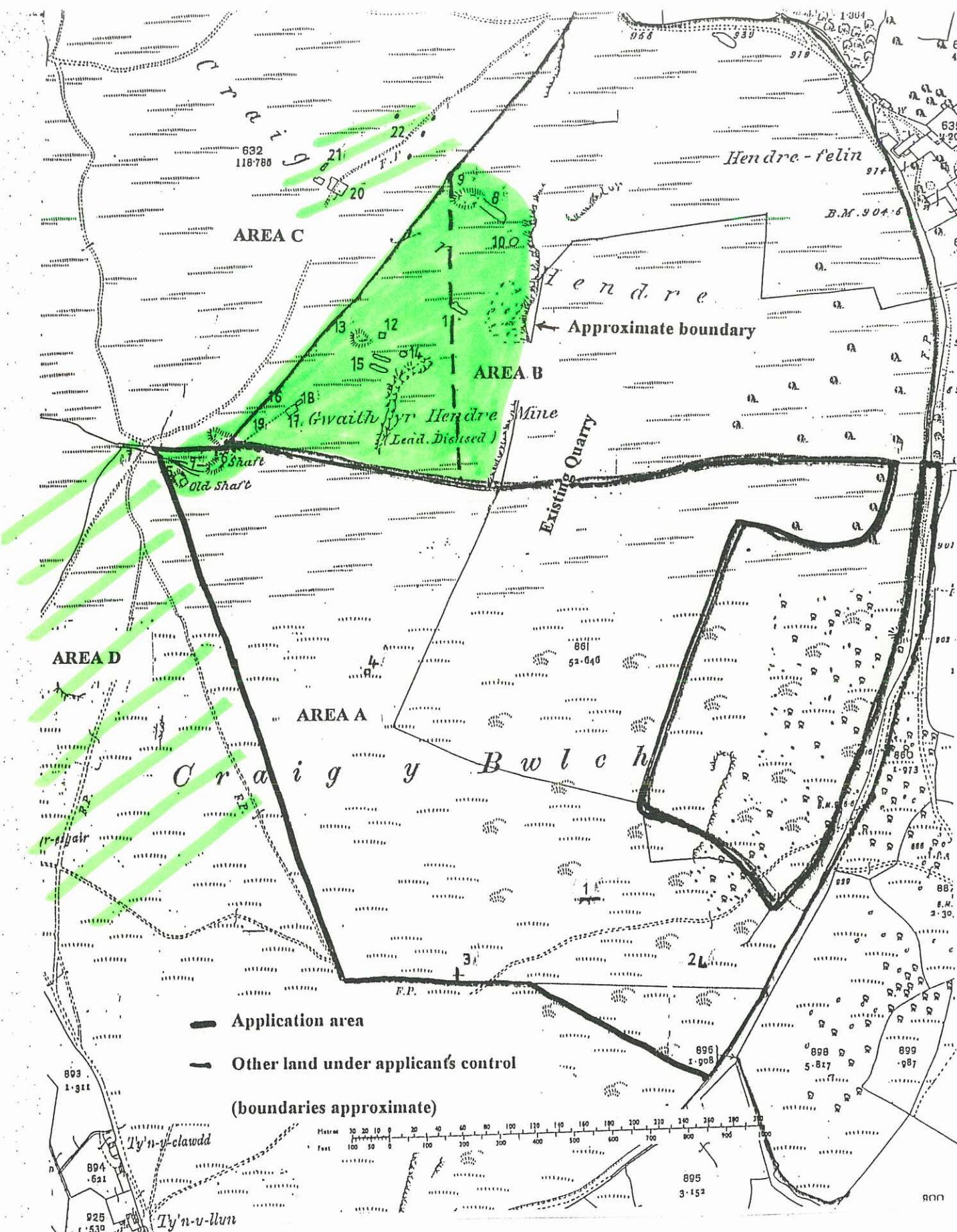


Fig 2 Areas recommended for protection

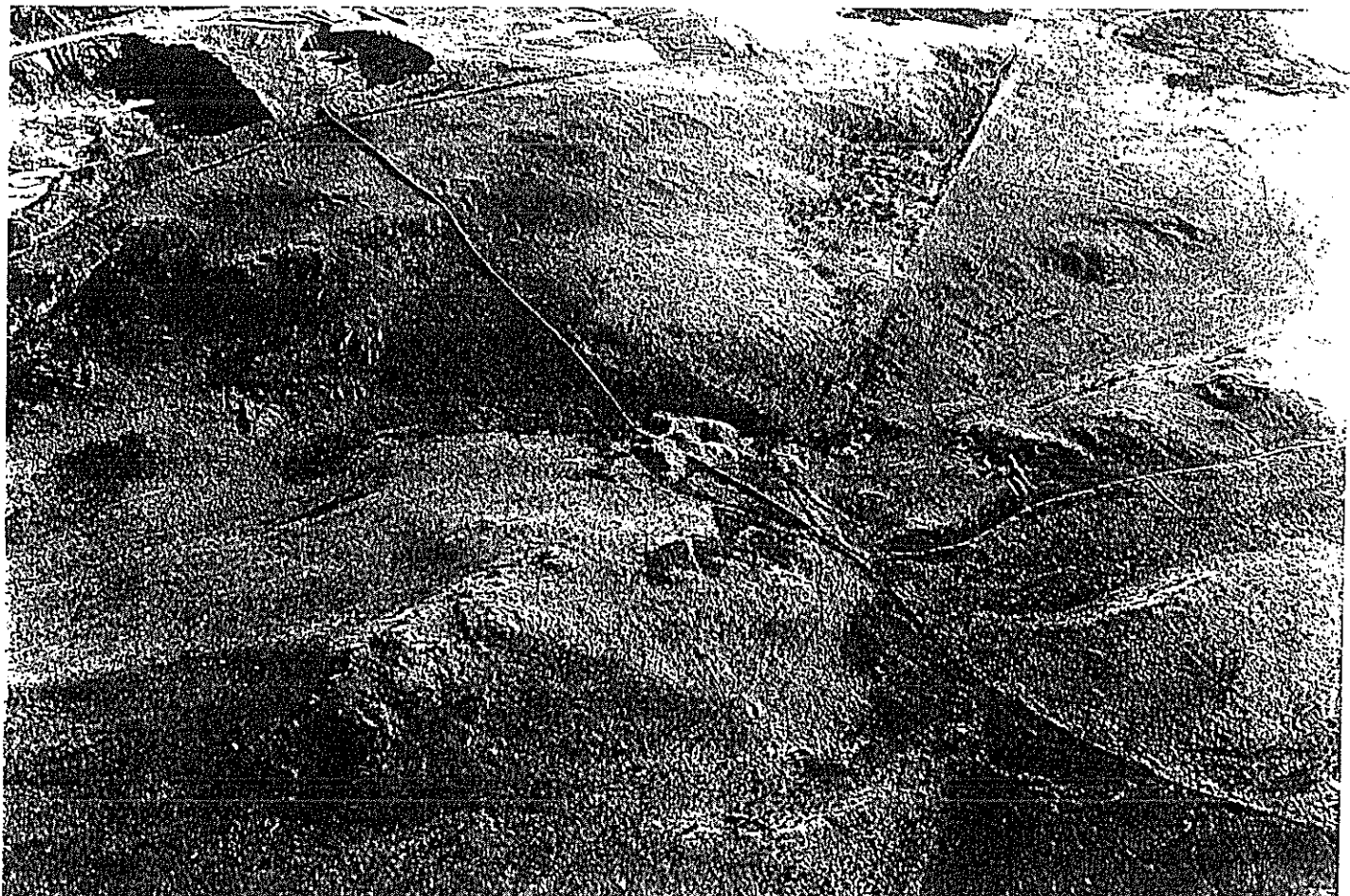


Photo 1. View from NW. The northwest corner of the application area is in the centre, showing the spoil heaps of the mine. On the right of the photograph is Area D, containing unsurveyed features. Photographed by C. Musson RCAHM 1992. Reproduced by courtesy of RCHAM, Aberystwyth.

Photo 2. View from N. The north west corner of the application area is on the lower left. Centre, is Area D showing unsurveyed trial trenches. Photograph by C Musson RCAHM 1992. Reproduced by courtesy of RCAHM, Aberystwyth.





Photo 3. View from NW. Part of the west side of the application area is to the top right. Centre is area C, showing ruined buildings. Photograph by C Musson RCAHM.1992. Reproduced by courtesy of RCAHM Aberystwyth.