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SOME NOTES ON SCOTTISH MINES

by
S.H., R., and P. JACKSON

Mineral veins are to be found in every county of Scotland, but many of them have been worked on only a small scale, and have little value.

The main Scottish mining districts are Leadhills, Tyndrum, Strontian and Southwest Scotland; the other localities are very scattered and remote.

[22]

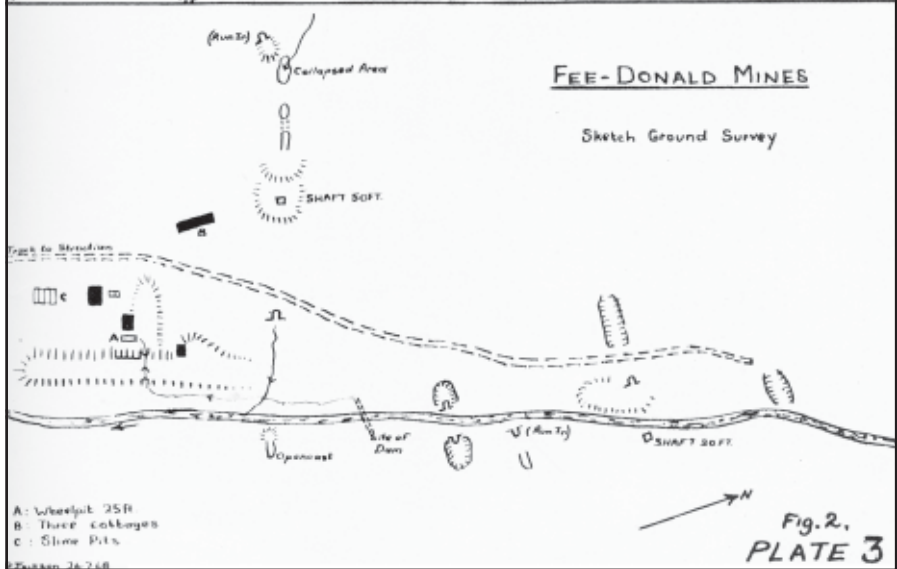
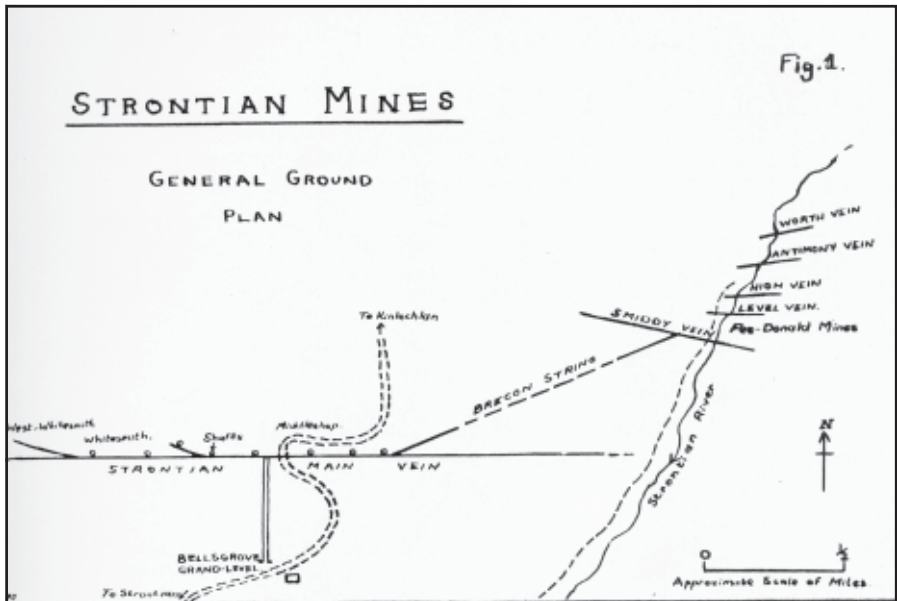
STRONTIAN MINES

The mines of Strontian (Plate 3, fig. 1) are located in desolate country, in the area known as Sunart, about 20 miles north of Oban. Their general position is 3 miles north of Strontian village at NGR NM8265. The property is at present owned by "New Consolidated Goldfields" who carried out a drilling programme in 1965 to test the main vein. This work had ceased by the summer of 1967, but a programme of deeper drilling is supposed to be planned.

The country rock is a narrow area of gneiss, part of the complex around the Strontian granite, which lies to the south. The workings are confined to the Strontian Main vein which runs east-west for four miles, and some smaller veins at each end.

Approaching from Strontian, one first arrives at the mouth of the Bellsgrove Grand Level which lies on the north side of the road at NGR NM 832.655. There is a considerable dump from the level and the remains of a small washing floor. At the level entrance water is 2 feet deep but this soon shallows. The level runs as a crosscut due north to Strontian Main Vein. It may be followed for 360 yards to a point where silting of debris and deep water makes progress difficult. This silt has been partially cleared by the present owners. The level is otherwise excellent.

Continuing up the road one arrives at large opencast workings on the main vein. To the east for about 700 yards is a line of large opencuts up to 150 feet deep. There are 3 shafts about 50 feet deep and one about 100 feet deep. The waste from the workings is scattered over the moor; quartz is common but little else may be found. To the West from the road for 500 yards are opencuts and three shafts. One shaft is choked; one is about 30 feet deep and the other 100 feet. There are the remains of small washing floors and four buildings. Two opencuts are taking sizeable streams which disappear into the depths. These two groups of mines are the Middleshop mines. (NM 833659).



To the west at NM 825660 are the Whitesmith mines, consisting of an opencut 150 yards long and 50 feet deep, and a whim shaft about 200 feet deep. There are also some small pits and opencuts. Further to the west at NM 815660 are the West Whitesmith mines consisting of small shafts and trenches.

There is another working at NM 802658, but this was not investigated.

Two miles to the east of the Grand Level are the Fee Donald Mines (Plate 3, fig. 2) which are approached by a separate trace from Strontian.

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Their position is NGR NM 862665 at 900 OD. Here there are six veins all of which have been tried. There are six levels, three of which are open. In a shaft on Smiddy vein Strontianite 3 feet wide may be seen in the vein. There are several small opencuts which show veins of Blende and galena. There is a well laid out washing floor with buddles and slime pits still to be seen, and the remains of a crusher powered by a 25 foot diameter water-wheel. Three cottages complete the scene.

The strontian mines were discovered in 1729 and worked over various periods; 1733-1815, 1850-72 and 1901-1904. The remains of the smelt mill may be seen close to the mouth of the Grand Level.

TYNDRUM

This mine was visited in 1965 after reports that the Atomic Energy Authority had been sampling the mine for pitchblende which is known to occur there. In the event, these reports proved to be false!

The mine is located 10 miles north of the head of Loch Lomond and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of Tyndrum railway station. (NN 3130). There are several groups of workings; only the main ones were investigated. These all lie on the "Hard vein" which runs NE-SW. Workings are to be found up a hillside from 475 OD to 1200 OD and consist mainly of levels driven directly on to the vein. From bottom to top they are as follows:-

Lowest Level	blocked at entrance.
Lubecks Level	blocked at entrance.
Shaft	25 feet deep, wood lined.
Low Level	blocked at entrance.
New Level	50 yards to fall with 4 feet of water behind.
Macdougalls Level.....	floor stoped away.
Stamps Level	open but 3 feet of water.
Burns Level	floor stoped away.
Long Level	10 yards to deep stope.
Bryans Level	80 yards to block of run-deads.
McCallums Level	Small level 4 feet high with 2 feet of water.

SOME NOTES ON SCOTTISH MINES

Between Long Level and Bryans Level are deep open stopes going down about 200 feet. New Level seems to have been the main outlet; it has shall washing floors at its mouth, and a railway incline ran down the hillside to a brickbuilt plant which is now in ruins.

The royalty is owned by the Marquiss of Breadalbane. The mine was discovered in 1741 and worked 1745-60, 1760-62, 1768-90 and from [24] 1916 to a date unknown to us. There are six other groups of workings which need investigating.

Zinc blende is abundant on the dumps together with smaller amounts of galena and. quartz.

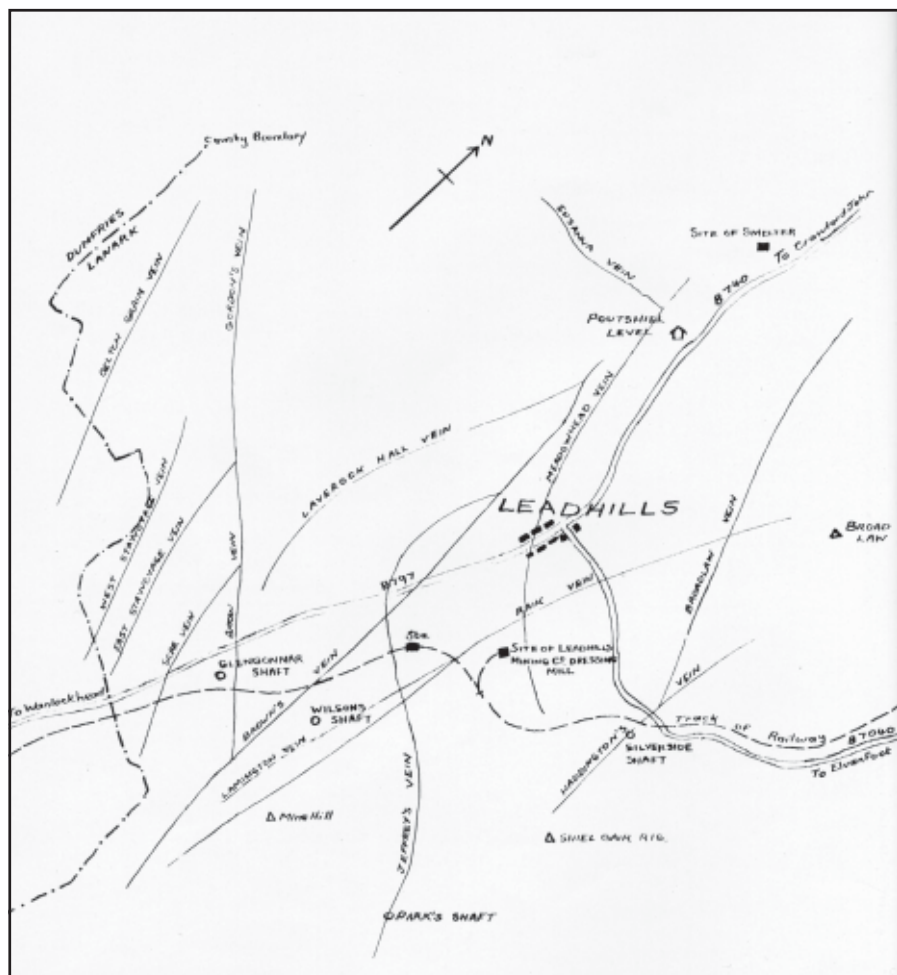
LEADHILLS DISTRICT

Leadhills (Plate 4) is situated 14 miles WNW of Moffat at 1300 OD, the highest village in Scotland. The reason for its existence on the wild Lowther Hills is the vast deposits of lead and zinc which have been mined in the past. The mines were working as long ago as 1239 and gained fame in 1592 when gold was discovered there. Although the gold soon ran out, the mines obtained greater profit from the galena deposits. The area was so rich that a railway was built from Elvanfoot in 1901; this closed in 1938.

The last working mine was Glengonnar Shaft situated at 1460 OD at NGR NS 882.138. This was 249 fathoms deep and was served by a steam winding engine. The shaft top is concreted over. The main haulage shaft was Wilsons Shaft at NS 885.140 at 1500 OD. This was 160 fathoms deep and had an electric winder. By the shaft was a primary crushing mill which fed four orebins from which the material was trammed to a dressing mill close to Leadhills village. The shaft is concreted over. About 30 yards to the north of Glengonnar Shaft is the mouth of a small level at NS 883140, at 1450 OD. It runs as a crosscut in a due north direction. At 25 yards, a drift runs for 20 yards to the west on Brow vein. At 45 yards past Brow vein a drift runs to the east in Hopeful vein. At 15 yards is a sump and a rise; the level continues as does the main crosscut, but was not explored due to lack of time. Half a mile north of Leadhills village at 1200 OD, NGR NS 885.159, is the mouth of Poutshiel Level, whose entrance is buried. The top archstone bears the date 1861. To the west of Poutshiel Level, are the workings on Susanna Vein, around NS 883.158. The main shaft was 149 fathoms deep and is concreted over. There are four levels on the vein all blocked at the entrance.

It miles north of Leadhills village are the remains of the smelt mill; little is to be seen here.

There is a great potential for survey work in this area, but unfortunately most of the veins worked from shafts.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE LEADHILLS DISTRICT

..... ROADS
 VEINS

Approximate Scale is
 Three Inches to the Mile.

SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND

1. PIBBLE MINE NX 526.607

The workings are scattered along one vein up a hillside from west to east. The lowest working is a level under the dressing floors which is blocked at the entrance. This is followed by a shaft about 20 feet deep. Beyond here is the main shaft which has collapsed. It has a very fine winding house of the Cornish type, and to the north are the remains of the whim track. Above the shaft is a level which is open and has 1 foot of water. Above here again, is another level which has been stoped under. To the north is a trial level which is also open. Galena, malachite and quartz are to be seen on the dumps.

2. DROMORE MINE NS 539.623

This mine consists of a shaft which has run in, and a small opencut. Zinc blende is found on the dumps.

3. RUSCO MINE NX 554.615

Here, the vein runs approximately east-west. At the eastern end at 800 OD is a level which is open. To the west are two shafts which have run in. Below the level mouth are the remains of two mine buildings.

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Dates of Survey

Strontian	28/7/1965, 15/8/1966.
Tyndrum	25/7/1965.
Leadhills	15/8/1965.
Southwest Scotland ..	2/8/1967.

MSS Dated 26. 7.68