

Welcome to the Manx Mining Trail

Mining on the Isle of Man reached its peak profitability during the 19th Century, with 20% of all Zinc and 5% of all lead produced in British history attributed to the island.

As you embark on an immersive journey through the Manx Mining Trail prepare to explore its fascinating history. Witness the impressive remains of chimneys, engine houses, wheel casings, and adits, and visit the well-preserved Great Laxey Mine, home to The Lady Isabella—the world's largest working waterwheel.

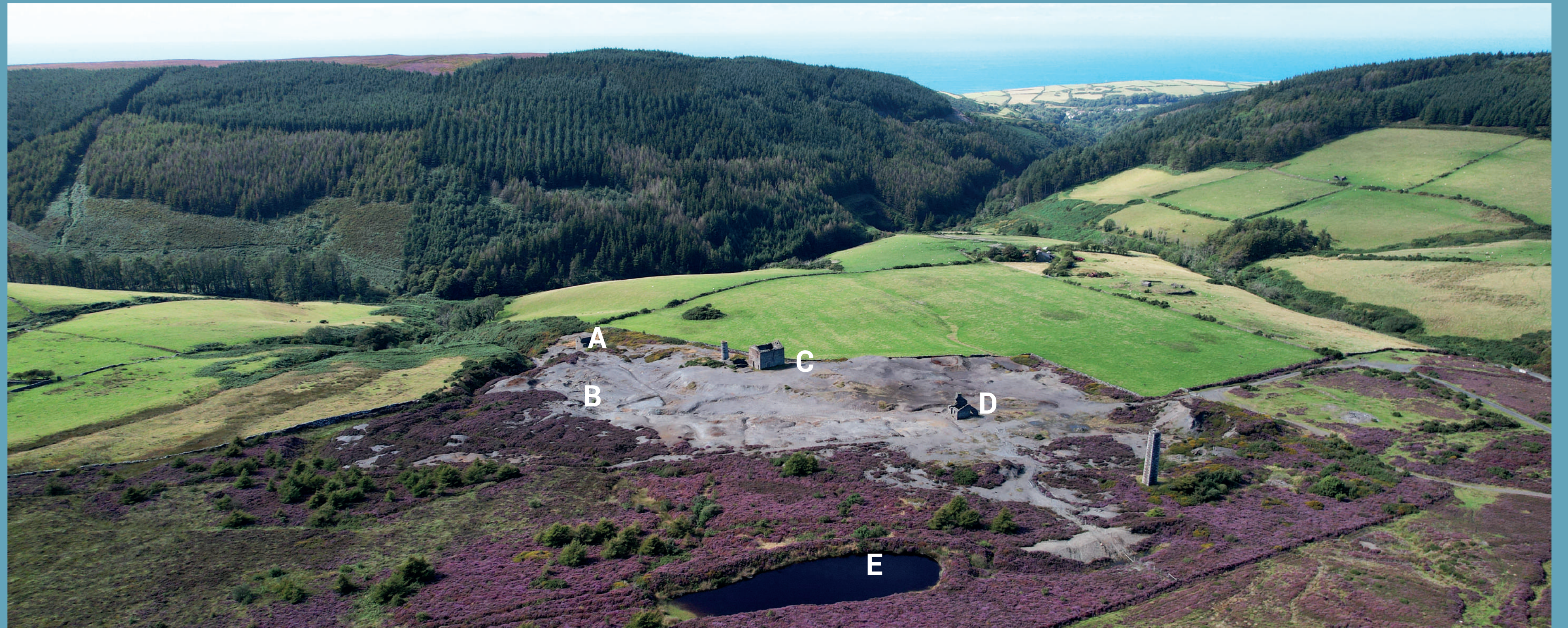


Fig.1—Aerial view of Beckwith's Mine. [Image courtesy of John Wornham, Island Images](#)
A: Stamp House and connected waterwheel, B: Wash floors, C: Engine House and Engine Shaft, D: Mines Office, E: Water supply collected from Valley

Beckwith's Mine

Mining at Beckwith's commenced in 1831 after a hay cart uncovered a lump of lead on its track through Glen Rushen. Miners from the Foxdale mines were immediately tasked with digging for lead from shallow depths, retrieving 650 tons from the surface before work on the shafts commenced later in the year.

Throughout its operation, the mine encountered serious flooding problems, especially when sinking the engine shaft. Thus, a new engine was ordered from Coalbrookdale and installed in 1837 to pump water from the levels. In 1838, when the mine reached a depth of 35 fathoms, the existing engine could not handle the continuous influx of water. So, in order to increase the pumping capacity at Beckwith's, a forty-foot waterwheel was taken from Old Foxdale mine and re-erected in Glen Rushen at the instruction of William Jones, company director of the Isle of Man Mining Company. This allowed the engine to focus on crushing and operating winding machinery.

However, the sinking of the shaft was abandoned at 50 fathoms in 1840 due to water shortages during an exceptionally dry summer, preventing the operation of the

waterwheel. As a result, by August 1842, the mine had badly flooded to the 30 fathom level, causing a number of levels to collapse. Jones suggested improving the water supply to the wheels rather than installing another engine as running an engine was expensive and required imported coal. However, continuous underground flooding forced the Company to reconsider. A 50in cylinder engine was purchased from Gwernymyndd Mine, Wales, in November.

During its operation, the Isle of Man Mining Company constructed lades to channel water from the valley above Beckwith's to supply the waterwheels and a dam was built to create a reservoir from which water could be released on demand. The washing floors were developed to house a steam engine and waterwheel for crushing and milling the ore. Produce was crushed in the Stamp House by machinery powered by a waterwheel connected to the building – the casing of which is still visible. The metals were then fed into shallow pits known as rotary 'buddles', in which water was fed through the ore to wash out the lighter waste material, producing pure concentrate.

Despite ongoing flooding problems, mining continued in some capacity until 1879 to a depth of 185 fathoms when The Isle of Man Mining Company sold Beckwith's sett for £5,000. Production at Beckwith's totalled 50,000 tons of lead

ore worth £750,000, however, the mine grew barren and entirely unprofitable below 140 fathoms.

The surface remains at Beckwith's mine are well preserved. Whilst the capped engine shaft collapsed in 1996, The Laxey Mines Research Group safely consolidated the ruin using a concrete cap. A great leaning chimney dominated the site for 150 years, however, strong winds toppled the structure in April 2012. Only the bottom half of the chimney remains at the engine shaft.



Fig.2—Beckwith's leaning chimney before collapse (left); after collapse (right). [Images courtesy of Manx Scenes \(left\) and Energy FM \(right\)](#)



**Mineshafts are dangerous
please KEEP OUT**



What 3 Words
///birthday.conjured.scenic

