

Industrial Sites in the Llandogo and Tintern Parva Area

MILLS, PONDS, AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL SITES IN THE LLANDOGO AND TINTERN PARVA AREA

by Dr. D. G. Tucker

BY COMPARISON WITH the areas immediately to the north and south of it, the area of about seven square miles comprising Llandogo and Tintern Parva to the west of the Wye, and Bigsweir and Brockweir to the east, as shown in the accompanying map, is not one of much former industrial activity, and the remains of this activity are very few. Only eight possible sites of dammed ponds have so far been identified, and of these, two may have had no industrial purpose. (This contrasts with 37 sites in the area of the same size to the north,¹ of which perhaps 26 were industrial; and with the formerly intensely-industrialized Angidy valley at Tintern Abbey to the south.) Of the six definitely industrial sites, four were corn mills operating up to the 19th century at least, one was a blast furnace used in the 17th and early 18th centuries for smelting iron ore with charcoal, and the early use of the sixth is not known, but it was thought to have been used in the 19th century for wood-turning and the drying of wooden hoops (used in the making of barrels and casks).

In locating the sites of old industries, a good guide is the finding and identifying of old embanked ponds, since when power was required, it was almost always water power which had to be used. Old maps, such as the Tithe Maps produced in the 1840s, and the early Ordnance Survey maps are very useful in this work. (The recent reprints by Messrs. David & Charles of the first-edition 1-inch O.S. maps are helpful although the date of any particular information entered on them is very uncertain owing to numerous partial revisions; the 25-inch County series are based on a survey of 1879, but the revisions of 1918 somewhat reduce their value, and reference to the earlier edition is desirable when possible.) The sites of ponds located positively are shown on the accompanying map in black (i.e. P1, P2, P4, P6 and P7), but those which remain uncertain are shown with dashed outlines (i.e. P3, P5, and P8). The uncertainties are of different kinds; at P3 one can see a site which looks like a completely overgrown and derelict pond, but which does not appear as such on any map; at P5 one has no field evidence nor map evidence of a pond, but one knows that there must have been one to drive the blast for the blast furnace; at P8 the evidence is just that one old map shows a mill there.

The corn-mills can sometimes be identified positively from what remains of them, as at Brockweir Mill (M2), or from good map evidence, as at Mork Mill (M5). The former existence of Llandogo Mill (M4) is known from old legal documents although its exact location is uncertain, while the evidence for the existence of the mill (M6) at Bigsweir is very slight. In addition to these mills, there may have been another one at or near Brockweir, for Hart² has found a reference to 'Abbots (Hudnalls) Mill' in addition to Brockweir Mill.

The site of the old blast furnace (M3) at Coed Ithel is very easily seen in winter, for the remains of the furnace (see photograph) tower above the main Wye Valley road; in summer it is disguised by vegetation and foliage.

The industrial use of the Cat Brook at Tintern Parva is not at all clear and the original purpose of the buildings the remains of which are shown on the map as M1 is not known. There must once have been a good deal of industry there, for Lambert,³ writing at the beginning of last century, said: 'The remains of a colour mill, of some magnitude, and an anchor smithery, are now to be seen, both seated on a rivulet called the Catbrook.'

Evidently there is scope for much further research on this area, but it is thought the account presented here makes a useful framework on which to base it.

A systematic presentation of the information at present known to the author is given in the Schedule which follows.

SCHEDULE OF PONDS AND MILLS, ETC.

Pond P1 On the Cat Brook, grid ref. SO 518 025.

Small shallow pond with stone edging and stone dam, possibly a sheep-wash. In 1971 it was filled in with road-stone.

Pond P2 On the Cat Brook, grid ref. SO 528 016.

Now forms part of the garden of a house called 'Steadholm', but the dam (which carries a bridle path) seems old. No sign of any industrial use.

Pond P3 On the Cat Brook, grid ref. SO 530 009.

Possible site of an old pond, but not shown as a pond on any known map (e.g. not on Tithe Map of 1844, Tintern Parva parish). Lies just above mill M1 and in a suitable position to provide power for it.

Mill M1 Part of an old building and chimney still remain. Local tradition says this was a wood turnery and drying-place for wooden hoops.

Pond P4 Grid ref. SO 540 011.

Dam and pond still identifiable, but derelict. Shown on 25 in. O.S. Map with area 0.45 acre, and on Tithe Map for Hewelsfield parish.

Mill M2 Brockweir Mill, stone building now incorporated into Messrs. Bevan's yard and stores. Some shafting and a pulley remain. 'Grist mill and pond' owned by Henry Smith is shown on Tithe Map, according to Hart.²

Pond P5 No trace or record of this pond can be found, but it must have existed in the 17th century to supply power for blowing the blast furnace (see below).

Mill M3 Grid ref. SO 527 025.

Coed Ithel blast furnace. The remains of this 17th century charcoal-iron furnace can still be seen among the overgrowth of trees and creepers. See the paper by Tylecote for a full description.⁴

Pond P6 On the small stream at Llandogo below Cleddon Shoots waterfall, grid. ref. SO 523 041.

This small pond and dam on this very steep stream are shown on the 25 in. O.S. map and on the Tithe Map (Llandogo parish), but no trace can now be found on the site. It must have been the power source for Llandogo Mill, M4.

Mill M4 The site of the mill cannot now be located, but it must have been below and not very far from the pond; one piece of evidence of its existence is a mill-stone of the local quartz conglomerate (or 'jack-stone' or 'pudding-stone') lying near where the stream passes under the road at grid ref. SO 524 041.

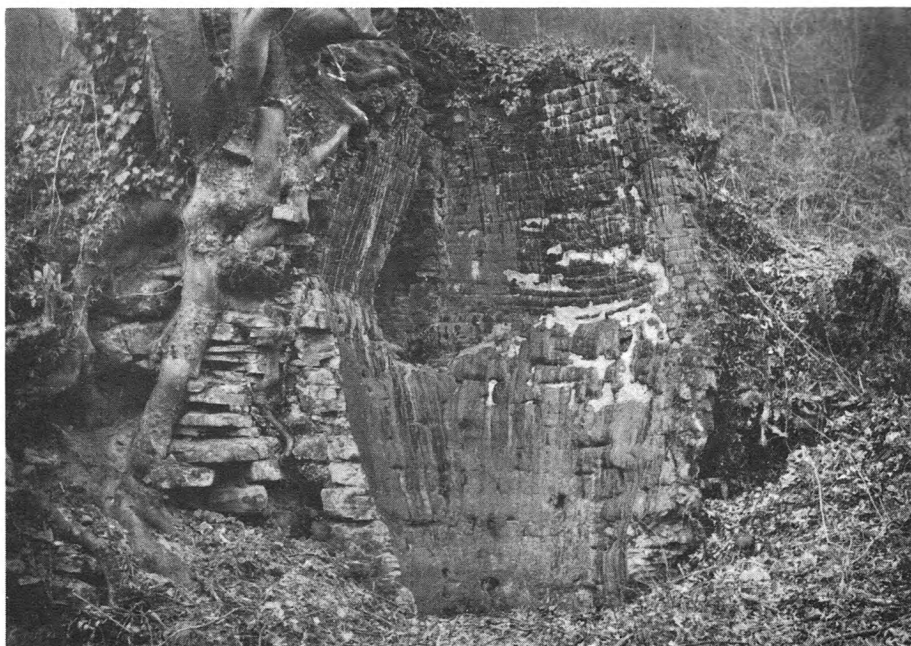
Documentary evidence of this mill exists, however. A lease⁵ dated 1 Feb. 1799 transferred from Elizabeth Prosser of Llandogo widow to Wm. Morgan of Llandogo miller the '... Dwelling house, Stable and Water Grist Mill situate lying and being in the parish of Llandogo ... and known by the name of Llandogo Mill, together with ... watercourses, Banks ... Mill ponds, ...'. An interesting provision was that Elizabeth Prosser was to have occupation of the same room in the house that she already occupied and also the use of a small room in the mill to wash or brew in.

By a conveyance⁶ dated 6 April 1864, Antonio Gallenga of the Falls in Llandogo purchased for £500 'all those three messuages or dwelling houses Malthouse Grist Mill and buildings situate ... in the village of Llandogo' from John Luff, Farmer of Llandogo and John Ralph Norton Norton, solicitor of Monmouth.

A further interesting reference⁷ is that in 1871 a John Morgan was an innkeeper and miller in Llandogo (note that above we had a Wm. Morgan miller in 1799).

Pond P7 On the Mork Brook, grid ref. SO 551 053.

There is a leat from the stream with two small ponds immediately adjacent to each other;



The remains of Coed Ithel blast furnace near Llandogo. The photograph shows the inner surface of the furnace. At the bottom was a circular hearth, not visible here, and above this was the 'bosh', made of 6 inch blocks of white sandstone, linking the hearth to the square-section shaft made of 3 inch blocks of grey sandstone. The total height of the furnace was probably three or four feet greater than that of the remains shown here. (Photo: D.G. Tucker)

they still contain water but are largely derelict. They are not marked on the maps, so their age is not known.

Mill M5 Mork Mill. A corn or grist mill, probably powered by the ponds P7. It stood in the grounds of the house called 'Lindors'. It is shown on the Tithe Map for St. Briavels parish and on the early Ordnance Survey maps, but according to Hart⁸ was disused by 1881.

Pond P8 Again on the Mork Brook, at grid ref. SO 540 049. There is now only a small timber dam on the site and no evidence of its existence as a mill-pond, which has been deduced only from the evidence for Mill M6.

Mill M6 Nothing is known about this mill, the only evidence for its former existence known to the author being that it is shown (in addition to Mork Mill higher up the stream) on the 1st edition 1 in. O.S. map;⁹ it is not shown on later maps.

REFERENCES

- 1 See D.G. Tucker, 'The embanked ponds of the Penallt-Whitebrook-Redbrook area and their industrial uses', *Severn and Wye Review*, 1, Spring 1971, p.51.
- 2 C. Hart, *The Industrial History of Dean*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971, p.374.
- 3 W. Lambert, *The Beauties of Monmouthshire*, Chepstow, about 1810, p.276.
- 4 R.F. Tylecote, 'Blast furnace at Coed Ithel, Llandogo, Mon.', *J. Iron and Steel Inst.*, April 1966, pp.314-319.
- 5 Mon. Record Office, D398.3-3.
- 6 Mon. Record Office, D398.14-12 and 13.
- 7 *Kelly's Directory for Monmouthshire*, 1871.
- 8 C. Hart, loc. cit., p.375.
- 9 See reprint Sheet No.68 *Bristol*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1968.