

MEMOIRS 1968

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THE RIMINGTON LEAD AND SILVER MINES

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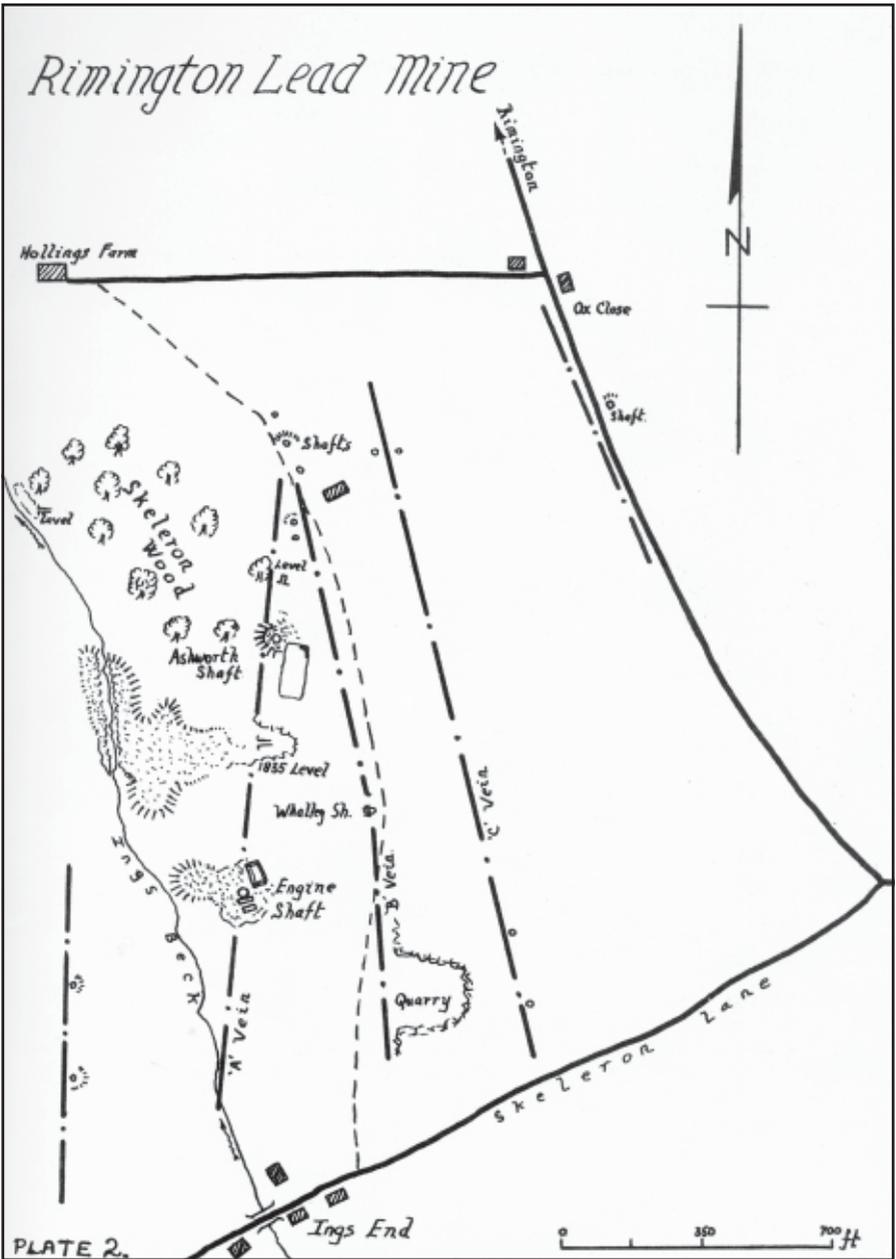
JOHN M. DICKINSON

Rimington or Skeleron Lead Mines are situated at Ings End, SD815448, in the Parish of Rimington near Gisburn, Yorkshire. The workings are on the North Eastern side of Ings Beck, which at this point forms the boundary between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Mineralisation occurs at a number of nearby localities. Most lie in a belt running E.S.E. between Slaidburn and Cowling, parallel to and possibly related to the Barnoldswick Fault. The veins worked by the Rimington Mines occur in Limestones of lower Avonion age, being thinly bedded with shale partings. The Limestones show in places evidence of secondary dolomitisation, mainly along the bedding planes. From surface indications three veins can be traced. Veins 'B' and 'C' (see plan - Plate 2) running in a North Westerly direction and vein 'A' running approximately North East. A shaft has been sunk at Ox Close presumably on to a N.W. vein and there are two or three pits sunk on to another vein West of Ings Beck.

An examination of the spoil heaps shows the deposits to be, in order of bulk, Barytes, Calcite and Galena. Associated minerals also found are Limonite, Fluorite, Smithsonite and Sphalerite. The Barytes is of a good quality, being white and rather crystalline in appearance. Calcite occurs as standard massive white calcite together with Nail Head Spar and a columnar type similar to that of the Greenhow Mining Field.

The earliest account of a Lead mine at Rimington is of a mine "in a field called Skelhorn, belonging to Mr. Pudsey of Bolton Hall" 1556-1629. Pudsey is reported as obtaining Silver from the ore and minting his own coin, and for many years did not declare the workings as a 'mine Royal' i.e. "any mine where in the oar doth yeild such Gold. and Silver as exeedeth the charge of refining". With the relative values of Lead and Silver prevailing at that time it needed but little Silver to allow [21] the Crown rights of seizure. The ore raised by Pudsey is said to have had a yield of twenty six pounds of Silver to the ton of Lead ore. Pudsey's grandson, Col. Ambrose Pudsey, a civil war veteran, appears to have been the next to work the mines about 1660. From then on the mines were worked intermittently.

In 1835 a level was driven from near Ings End to crosscut the veins and was driven in them for 1,140 ft, to judge by the tips from this level some stoping must have been carried out, but reports indicate that not a great deal of ore was found. In 1876 the mines were being worked by the York and Lancaster Mining Co. owned by Messrs. Baynes and Coalville, who sunk a shaft 165 ft. deep onto vein 'A' in 1876 and equipped it with steam winding and pumping gear. Between the years 1876 and 12.85 four tons of zinc were



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mined whilst Lead ore varied between zero and 50 tons in 1884. Barytes appears to have been worked from 1879 onwards when 10 tons were raised, with 1,340 tons in 1882 falling to 308 tons in 1885. During this period up to twenty eight persons were employed at the mines. In 1884 the banksman at the Engine shaft, a James Wiseman by name, was killed when he fell down the shaft. The mine continued to produce Barytes for a few more years but finally closed in 1892.

The mines were re-opened in 1920 by Messrs. Whalley and Stanworth. They sunk a small shaft on vein 'B' and raised about 80 tons of Barytes but the vein thinned in depth and was abandoned. Some time in the 1930's the Greenhaugh Mining Company or one of its successors looked over the mines but it was apparent that they were now exhausted.

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