

A "ROUND HOUSE" IN THE FIELDS OF SOUTH OSSETT.

On the 1795 Manor Map there is shown a "round house" in the spa area of Ossett. It is difficult from this map to ascertain its exact location, but we can make out a few features which can be positively identified. There is the single storey miner's cottage at the top of Baptist Lane, the "Pauper Park" is across the road from this, and "Whinfield House" is in its own piece of land just to the south of pauper Park. The Ossett / Horbury boundary beck is also clearly visible. Sowood Green (present day Green), and Sowood Farm can also be clearly made out, and comparing this with the modern map we can gain an idea of where this round house was. Jeffrey's Map of 1771 also shows an engine in this area, and has a figure of a windmill. This is located between the Ossett / Horbury boundary beck and what can be deciphered as the Middle Common area. I am fairly certain that this engine is the same one as the round house on the 1795 map.

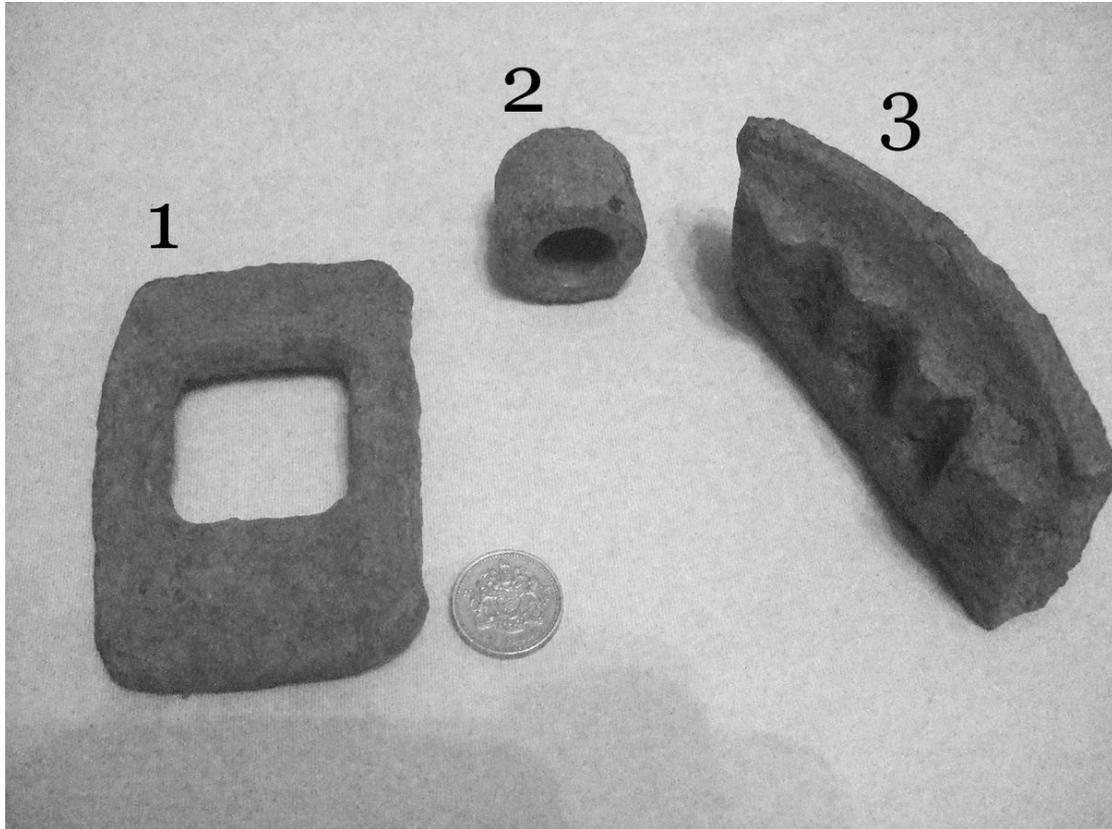
The engine would most likely be a pumping engine, used to remove water from the bottom of a coal mine. This leads us to believe there must have been a coal mine there in the 18th century, if not before. If the engine *was* a wind powered engine then it is notable for this. In the 18th century Thomas Newcomen developed an engine called a beam engine, which was widely used in the larger mines for removing water - this allowed the miners to dig deeper shafts to reach lower coal seams. Maybe the mine here at the spa was only a small affair, and the owners could not afford such a device so continued to use the only available power to them, the wind, hence the windmill device on the 1771 map.

The 1850's Ordnance Survey map shows nothing at all in the area, but on the 1890 Ordnance Survey map a circular feature is shown in a field between Spa Lane and Manor Lane. This field is marked on the 1842 Tithe Award as "Drain Close". The circular feature could be a building, but is more likely to be a pond, caused by the sinking of the land on the site of a filled-in shaft?

On Friday 23rd July 2010 myself, Steve Wilson, Alan Howe and Richard Glover walked down to the site of the 1890 circular feature to investigate it. The first thing which became apparent was a land drain along the eastern field boundary. If a pumping engine had been used here, then a drain to take away the pumped water would be necessary. Hence the name "Drain Close" on the 1842 Tithe Award. We searched for any signs of building materials, left over from the demolition of any structures, but there was none immediately apparent. There might have been stones from a stone structure, or bricks (Newcomen's beam engines were often housed in circular brick structures). No doubt any demolition materials could have been used elsewhere by the land owner. It is of course possible that a wind mill could have been constructed entirely from timber. The only feature which was evident was a slight dip at the edge of the field, right on the place where the 1890 map shows the circular feature. (Was this deeper in 1890 and prone to flooding, showing on the map as a pond?) We decided that an investigation with a metal detector might yield a few hidden clues.

On the evening of Monday July 26th myself and Alan Howe took my metal detector to the site and spent two and a half hours searching the vicinity of the 1890 map feature. The first thing I noticed was the amount of coal fragments in the soil. This could be an

indication of spoil from a coal pit in the field. The finds were mainly copper-alloy buttons dating to no earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century, as well as a few other non-ferrous finds, which would be categorised as personal losses by the people who worked the field. (In 1842 it was described as arable). However the actual site of the dip on the eastern edge produced three iron finds.



Number 1 is made of wrought iron and is slightly curved. The hole in the centre shows sign of wear in the corners, as if something passed through it during its use. This item appears to be the oldest of the three.

Number 2 has the hole going right through. It's thickness is not quite uniform. There is no regular shape to the outside, other than what could be described as rounded.

Number 3 appears to have had a toothed wheel running around the inside. The item (fragment) has traces of red paint on the outer edge (hidden from view in the photo). This leads me to believe that it could be possibly later than the site.

In conclusion it appears that something has been here on the site, and a more thorough investigation with a metal detector may yield more finds which could be identifiable as remnants of an engine house. It is likely that the round house was the housing of an engine used to pump water from the base of a coal mine on the site.