



MINERAL RESOURCES TASMANIA

**Archaeological Survey Report
1999/08**

**An archaeological inspection
of historic gold workings
near Bridport**

by Parry Kostoglou





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Location of inspection

This inspection of small scale historic mine workings was undertaken in a 400 x 600 metre area located between the Brid River and the township of Bridport in northeastern Tasmania. The location of the survey area is shown in Plate 1.

Job brief

This inspection was requested by Mineral Resources Tasmania in order to assess the archaeological significance of several small mine shafts located in an area now subject to a minerals exploration program. In addition to an on-site inspection of the mine shafts, the consultant was required to provide an assessment of their significance in writing. This brief report summarises both the field findings and all relevant significance assessments.

Methodology

The site was visited over a three hour period on 12 July 1999. All known historic workings, in addition to an earthen dam in the vicinity of the proposed exploration related excavations, were inspected. The entire area was also searched for previously unknown features. All sites in the main exploration area were recorded in plan form and photographed. One half day was spent archivally researching the history of these workings and writing this report.

Statement of significance

These underground workings are unremarkable examples of small-scale ephemeral gold workings found throughout the peripheries of gold-bearing areas in the northeastern/northwestern regions of Tasmania. The modest size of the workings indicate that the resident miners met with little success in locating a viable gold deposit, and abandoned the workings with little ceremony. The physical remains are very limited and consist of small collapsed shafts to five metres in depth and their companion mullock dumps. A number of small and unremarkable costean trenches also occur around the main mining precinct. All of these sites similarly lack any apparent noteworthy historical significance. A search of historic Mines Department records unusually failed to locate any reference to mining at this location. The absence of a county chart, with accompanying lease summaries for the Bridport area, further highlights the absence of economically significant mining activities throughout this area in general. In summary, this site is deemed to be of Low archaeological/historical significance.

Recommendations

Although no recommendations regarding the historic mine sites wholesale preservation are made, an inspection of the site with the resident exploration geologist and relevant MRT officer culminated in an agreement to orientate all requisite trenching and related earthworks around existing mine shafts and their mullock dumps. The nearby dam site lies well outside the proposed impact area, and as such was not deemed to be in any danger.



Plate I

Location of survey area.

Historical summary

An examination of the all known mineral charts held by MRT failed to yield any lease related information on the Bridport area. Further perusal of all mineral bulletins and the catalogue of internal Mines Department reports likewise failed to locate any record of these workings, apart from an undated chart showing this vicinity as a gold-bearing area (see Plate 2). A nearby gold mine known as Brewers workings appears on the MRT data base, although no historic documentation could be located in the time allocated for this job. It is therefore inferred, from a knowledge of other gold mines in the northeast region, that the Bridport gold workings described in this report date from between the late 1880s and c1910.

Site reports

Three principal precincts containing historic mine related features were examined for the purposes of this report. Plate 3 shows the general disposition of these precincts and related features.

Main underground workings

The major precinct containing vestiges of several underground workings lies in dry open woodland on the south side of a track branching from the Bridport municipal rubbish dump road. Six small shafts and adjacent mullock dumps were located in a 70 x 40 metre area. The largest shaft collar measured 5 x 4 metres in dimension, and some four metres in depth. The attendant mullock dump for the main shaft measured 22 x 8 x 2 metres in height, and was consolidated by a timber retaining wall on its southernmost facet. The other five shafts were more modest versions of the main shaft. No artefacts were noted at any of these workings. Plate 4 shows a scaled sketch plan of this site.

Dam

A 20 x 1 x 3 metre high dam wall built from compacted mud fill was located 80 metres south of the main underground workings. This dam wall crossed a resident seasonal stream and retained water for use at the adjacent mine workings.

Satellite costean 1

Two sets of costean trenches in the immediate vicinity of proposed exploration works were visited. The first of these consisted of two trenches located at the end of a 45 metre long tape line from the road. The largest of these trenches measured 3 x 0.5 x 0.5 metres in depth. A rusted metal pick head lay beside the trench.

Satellite costean 2

The second site near the Brid River consisted of two costean trenches and a small 2 x 2 x 2 metre shaft. All three features were accompanied by small quartzitic mullock dumps.

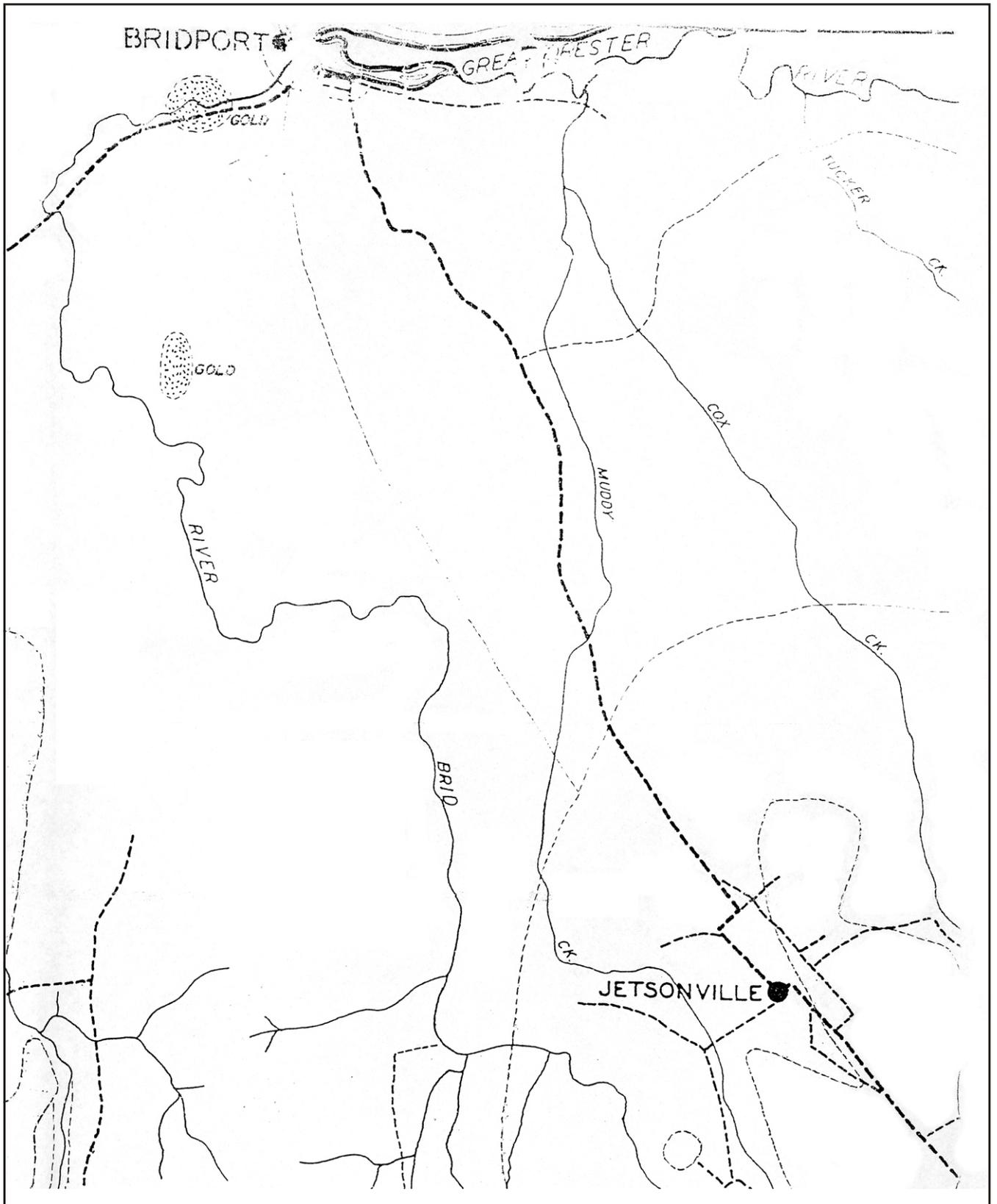


Plate 2

Undated map showing gold-bearing area southwest of Bridport.

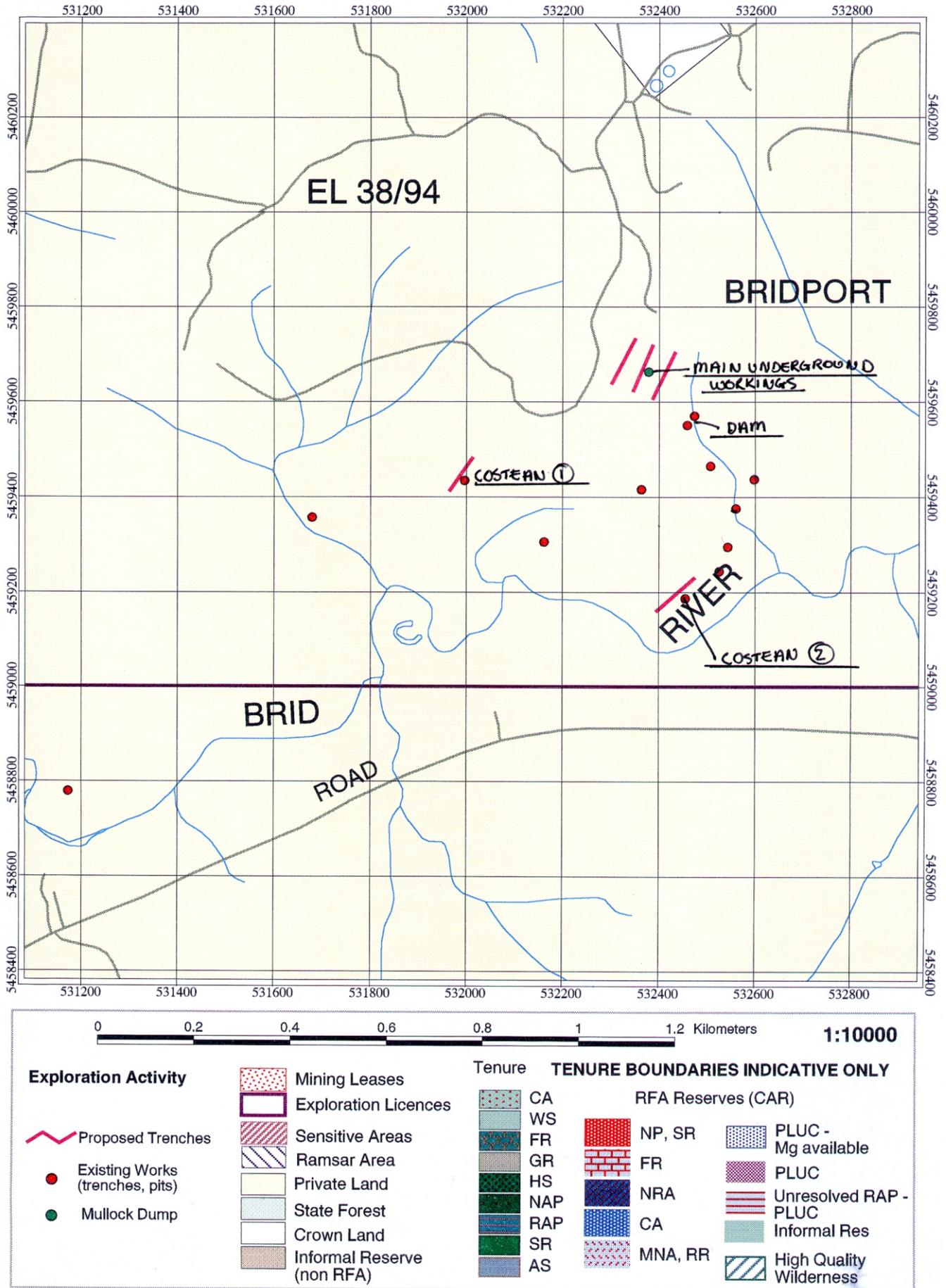


Plate 3

1:10 000 scale map showing features in survey area.

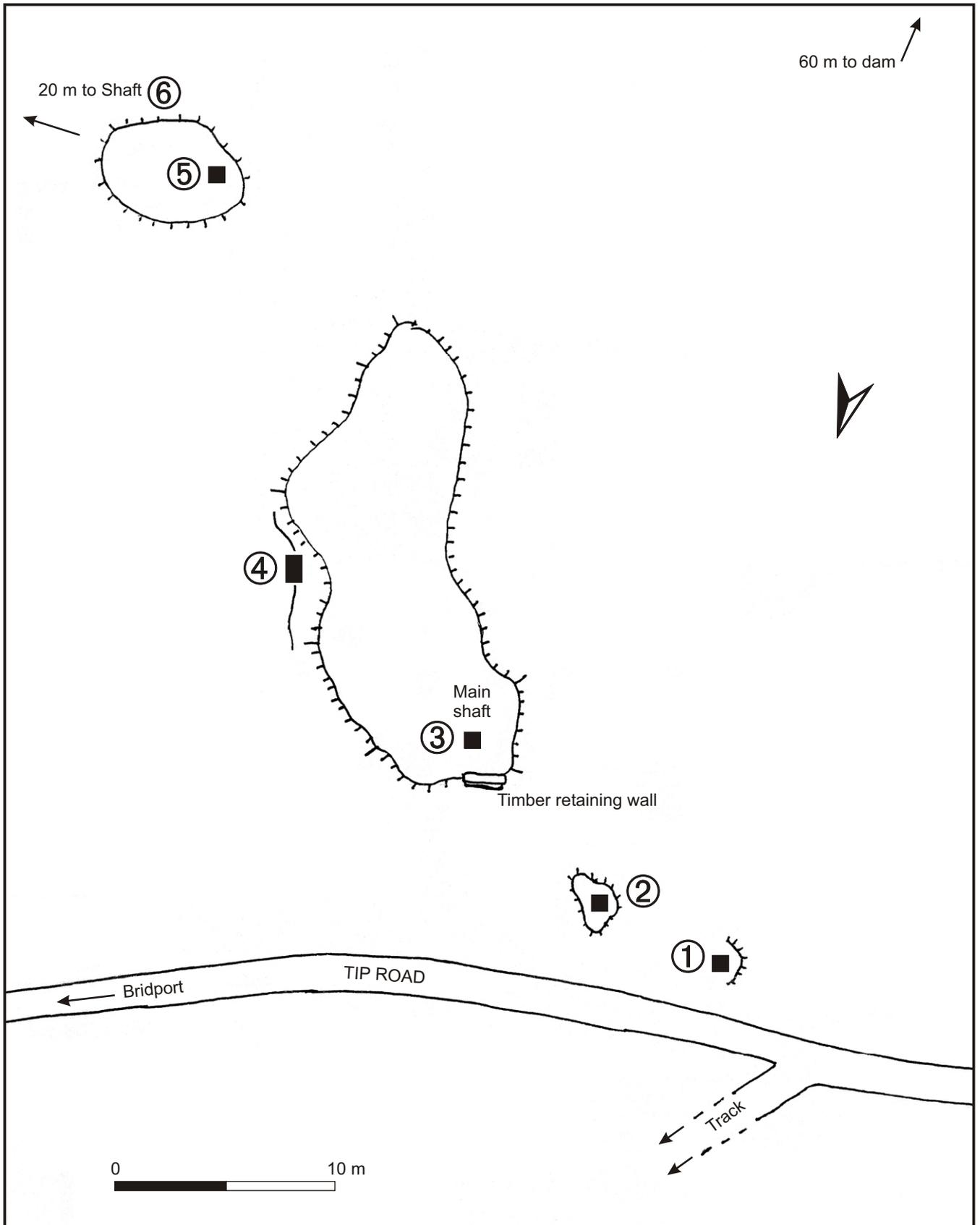


Plate 4

Scaled plan showing disposition of features at main underground workings.

APPENDIX

Contemporary survey photographs



Plate 5

Main shaft looking southeast.



Plate 6

Shaft No. 4.



Plate 7
Costean No. 1.



Plate 8
Quartzitic mullock at costean No. 2.