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1986/06. The Mike Howes Marsh coalfield

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Abstract

The Mike Howes Marsh coalfield is situated in central Tasmania. Apart from samples taken during prospecting activities late last century no coal has been mined in this area. The coalfield has limited potential for further exploration.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

The coalfield is confined to a marsh around part of the Blackman River situated north-west of Mike Howes Lookout, a 740 m high hill at EP211216. Access is gained from the Interlaken Road, which branches off from the Midland Highway at Oatlands.

GENERAL GEOLOGY

The geology of the area has been examined by Twelvetrees (1902) and Nye (*in Hills et al.*, 1922).

The coalfield is covered by the Geological Atlas 1:50 000 sheets Oatlands (Forsyth *et al.*, 1976) and Interlaken (Forsyth, *in press*).

The coal is of Triassic age and the seams occur as a minor component of a dominantly lithic sandstone sequence, the upper part of the Upper Parmeener Super-Group. The coalfield is of limited lateral extent.

PREVIOUS MINING HISTORY

Apart from a few prospecting activities, no coal has been mined from this coalfield. The marsh from which the coalfield is named, and a hill immediately to the south of the marsh, Mike Howes Lookout, are named after the particularly callous and brutal bushranger Mike Howe, who used the area as a base. His bushranging career lasted from 1815-1817.

COAL QUALITY

The only analyses available from this area are of an historical nature.

	1	2
Moisture (%)	25.4	8.4
Ash (%)	21.0	10.8
Fixed carbon (%)	33.0	62.4
Volatile matter (%)	20.2	18.4

1. Weathered and waterlogged sample collected by Twelvetrees (1902) from the short prospecting adit.
2. Drier sample collected from same seam (Twelvetrees, 1902).

RECENT EXPLORATION

Twelvetrees (1902) visited the Mike Howes Marsh coalfield in 1902, when an outcrop of coal on the northern side of Mike Howes Lookout [EP211216] had been opened up by a series of test pits and a short drive. The seam was

noted to be 1.07 to 1.22 m thick with a sandstone roof and clay floor. The test pits and short drive were all full of water at the time of Twelvetreets visit.

Two chip holes have been drilled in the coalfield in recent years as part of coal exploration programmes by two companies (Appendix 1). The first hole (O-04) was drilled in 1982 and the second (JC-01) in 1984. Both holes were drilled to a depth of fifty metres. One 0.12 m thick coal seam was intersected in O-04.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

Due to the restricted lateral extent of the coalfield, and the thin nature of the seam exposed, the inferred reserves of this area are very small. The coalfield is of minimal interest for further exploration.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1

AMG References of drill holes in the coalfield

1982 Capricorn Mining Drilling

O-04	520800 mE	600 m asl
	5323760 mN	

1984 CRA Drilling

JC-01	521000 mE	600 m asl
	5323600 mN	