

## 10 Port Penrhyn and the 1800 horse tramway: Short Introduction



Slates from what became the workings of Penrhyn Quarries have been shipped from Abercegin near Bangor since about 1700. Originally boats were loaded on the beach at low tide, but the great increase in demand that marked the onset of the Industrial Revolution resulted in the development from 1780 of the present extensive facilities on the site that became known as Port Penrhyn.

The Penrhyn Railway, running down to here from the Quarries near Bethesda, was first built as a horse tramway in 1800-1 then replaced by a 1 ft 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in gauge locomotive-worked line on a different route circa 1878.....

.....on the western jetty of Port Penrhyn quay is a circular slate “loo” possibly contemporary with that part of the quay built in the early nineteenth century and reputed to have been the first flush toilet in Bangor (with assistance from the tide). It recently achieved some fame on becoming a listed building of architectural or historical interest, as the largest such communal structure in Wales (with seating for twelve)! It may not have been originally designed as such, since it displays the distinctive style of a quayside lock-up once used to detain drunken seamen and other offenders....

...The port's river bridge bears a plaque “GHDP – 1820” (George Hay Dawkins Pennant was the 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Penrhyn) and it replaced a cast iron span of circa 1813 at a higher level to give horses an easier climb up the hill.....

.... Below and to the right (593724) is the stone three-arch bridge of the 1800 horse tramway route, intact but heavily overgrown, which then curves sharply to pass beneath the newer bridge at its far end. A short distance further on the Cegin is crossed once more, and bridges on both routes survive here also. The stone arch of the tramway one, now to the left, was probably shared by the old main coast road route....

.....The 1801 tramway route follows the lane in front of the workmen’s cottages before heading into open country on a shallow embankment parallel to and one field away from the A5. To the west, the deep cutting leading to a rabbit warren of surface and underground workings (598695) marks the site of the Penrhyn Iron Mine (1913-22).....

..... The arch under the old road at Dinas (609685), two thirds of the way up the incline, is partially visible on one side, and the trace continues upward to meet the 1878 route of the Penrhyn Railway running on a slate slab embankment high up on the hillside.....it is interesting to note the changing manner in which the three very different railways to Bethesda tackled the obstruction of Tregarth Hill..... all three routes are easily traceable and provide an interesting comparison of construction techniques.

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