



24 Penygroes to Caernarfon: Short Introduction



We have seen how the quarrying districts of Moel Tryfan and Nantlle Vale sent their products by tramway in the general direction of the sea at Caernarfon, and can now proceed to follow these routes noting the changes that took place with the gradual development of the railway system.....much of the former Nantlle Railway route to Caernarfon Quay can still be traced, since its course was far too sinuous to be re-

used by the standard-gauge railway builders.....the LNWR branch terminus and slate transshipment point was called Nantlle station despite being located in Talysarn village. The station building survives complete with canopy.... around the village there are several examples of decorative patterned slate roofs, on quarry company “showpiece” houses.....

.....at Dinas Junction the old Nantlle route is parallel to the later line (now the revived WHR); in about half a mile it dives into a deep cutting followed by the extremely waterlogged Dinas tunnel (abandoned since 1869), of which both ends may easily be examined from the later railway and cycle route.....at Bontnewydd there is another impressive reminder of the old line in the form of a high embankment and single, frail-looking stone arch bridge a curious survival in the midst of a housing estate....By Pont Seiont on the outskirts of Caernarfon the Nantlle Railway course deviates again, passing through its short Pant tunnel.....

....Taking the left fork in the road beyond Pont Seiont leads down to Caernarfon slate quay, in front of the castle, where many items of interest may be seen.....the virtually unaltered factory premises of the famous locomotive and marine engineers, De Winton..... the ornate yellow brick building was the Company office and the name may still be discerned in the glass panel above the door. The footbridge over the railway line is an autographed example of the company’s work.... On the quay note the Harbour Trust offices dated 1840 and the Customs House, a reminder of the international traffic in slate and copper. Some of the slate company offices remain too....

....Much of the general trade of the town was carried on in the vicinity of the “new basin” at Turkey Shore, whose Victoria Dock was constructed in the 1870’s..... the stone-faced covered market (Palace Street) was built by Lord Anglesey in 1836, and the Working Men’s Conservative Club, 1871 (rebuilt 1886, Market Street) are of some architectural interest.....a hospital now occupies what was the Caernarvon Union Workhouse....adjacent was a large brickworks, now derelict.....

.....An interesting diversion is the Belan Fort complex beyond Dinas Dinlle, built by an eccentric Lord Newborough to defend the Menai Straits

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from invasion by Napoleon. It retains its full complement of fire power. The dock here was used for unloading Anglesey stone for the rebuilding of Glynllifon mansion in 1836..... this impressive neo-Palladian house is now open to the public.....interesting features are a working stationary steam engine and waterwheel-powered machinery in the estate workshops.....

In the rural hinterland of Caernarfon were once many woollen and corn mills....Felin Wen has an intact 15 ft cast iron overshot waterwheel.....Melin Llwyn Gwalch at Groeslon is very old, an interesting building with vaulted floor and arched windows; the upper storey consists of slate slab flooring laid upon wooden joists. Nearby Felin Forgan, another corn mill retains its 18 ft diameter waterwheel.....the Inigo Jones Slate Works is still in operation on traditional lines and open to the public.....



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