

4 Capel Curig and the Lead mining district: Short Introduction



The 1802 road of the Capel Curig Turnpike Trust deviates from the present A5 at Pont Ty-Hyll - by the "Ugly House" of c1475 (756575), to run south of the river past Cae'r Llugwy and then cross it by the older bridge, Pont Cyfyng. Just before this bridge there is a group of workmen's cottages, with a loading dock on the left-hand side of the road: this marks the foot of a series of inclines and a tramway which once extended over two miles to serve the slate quarries at Rhos and Moel Siabod.....

.... Dressed slate and slab left the quarry by a tramway running past the second group of buildings, which comprised the pay office, foundry, workshops, stores and two barracks with latrines. The site is well preserved and it is still easy to identify the various buildings and to visualise the workings of the quarry complex as a whole....

.... Returning to the village, the Capel Curig Turnpike Trust's tollhouse survives at the junction of the Llanberis and Nant Ffrancon Pass roads (721581) By the hotels, descendants of Lord Penrhyn's original enterprise, may be seen the former stables....

....The area to the north-east of Capel Curig, towards Llanrwst, has been extensively mined for lead ore for some three hundred years: it is recorded that in the period 1611-15 the land owner Sir John Wynn sent samples of ore from his estate to a friend, Sir Thomas Challoner, for analysis. The outcome was to result in the commencement of organised work in the mines of the area in 1619-20. Excellent examples of some of the different periods of operation since then are to be seen in the five or six larger mines, out of a total of about twenty-one formerly operating, which still possess substantial remains.....

.....The main working level is high on the opposite bank, and emerges straight onto the remains of a timber trestle bridge leading into the top story of the crushing mill. The building is typical of its type, in stone and corrugated iron, and there are outdoor settling tanks just to the east, by the river. Four further mines of varying period and character are situated adjacent to the minor forestry road (driveable) running northeast from the "Ugly House" to Llanrwst. The oldest of them is undoubtedly the Hafna mine.....

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.... Parc Mine (788603) was one of the largest, most productive and most recent worked of the North Wales lead mines, as a sight of the vast ugly slurry tips alongside the road will testify..... the Forestry Commission road climbing up past the crushing mill was formerly the main tramway incline near the top of which, some 150 yards above the mill, is an entrance to further workings which may be entered for distances of up to half a mile or so - inside the tunnels, the 2 ft gauge tramway track and points survive.....
.....the modern working methods used at Parc mine may be contrasted with those traceable at Aberllyn, which despite its title of lead mine was worked principally for zinc ore, in the period 1869 - 1904. The ore processing mill was situated near (796577) and was water-powered, latterly by turbine. Examination of the site as at present shows it to consist of about seven levels arranged down the hillside, the mined ore being tipped in at the top, and passing downward through the various stages by gravity.....the bases of round frames and "buddles" will be noted.....

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