

7 Conwy and district: Short Introduction



The former borough of Conway (now usually rendered as the Welsh form Conwy) is entered from the east via a long, narrow causeway or "cob" across the entrance to the estuary of the Rive Conwy. This has always been the traditional crossing point; by a somewhat hazardous ferry until the embankment was constructed across the mudflats in the mid-1820's, as part of Telford's coast-road improvements.

The artificially-narrowed river is now crossed at the western end by means of a modern steel and concrete bridge, on the seaward side of the two older and somewhat more famous structures built for Telford's road and the Chester and Holyhead Railway respectively.

The elegant suspension bridge was originally proposed, like that over the Menai Straits near Bangor, as a cast iron arch in 1802, but not proceeded with.....

.... Robert Stephenson's tubular railway bridge, built 1846-48, is beyond the Telford Suspension bridge. Consisting of wrought iron box sections riveted together into a complete unit before being lifted into position on the towers, it was built as a small-scale trial of the method proposed and soon adopted for the successful bridging of the Menai Straits at Llanfair P.G., a feat that was considered impossible by many at that time.....

....the railway line penetrates the old town walls by means of a splendid arch, specially designed to blend with the existing masonry, but which met with much opposition at the time of construction.....

.....The former Conway Union Workhouse (775782) now forms part of the hospital, a conversion of use shared by many others of its type.....

.....a visit to Gwenddar Mill is to be recommended (763745). This is unfortunately very derelict, like many others in the county, but nonetheless strongly reflects the atmosphere of the typical farm mill, as opposed to the usually larger and more recent types of estate mill we have so far noted. This mill was built in the late eighteenth century....

.... Retracing our route from Roewen to the coast, the shell of a three-story building (772759), now serving merely as a farm store, was formerly a Candle Manufactory. Remains of a building over the Gyffin stream near the crossroads were the Conway Flour Mill.....

Leaving Conwy westwards, we enter the famous granite quarrying district

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centred on Penmaenmawr, the first evidence of which is in the form of tramway inclined planes descending Conwy Mountain.....although affording excellent sea and mountain views which repay the stiff climb, there is little physical evidence of interest to be seen nowadays other than the actual workings at the rock face.....By 1922 the building at the foot of the inclines, beside the main road (757783) was functioning as the "Hadley Holiday Homes". One of the few permanent landmarks on this barren stretch of highway, it is of considerably superior architectural merit to the sprawl of holiday development that has taken place all around.....

.....Beyond, road and rail head for the seemingly impassable bulk of Penmaen-Bach, descending sheer to the sea, and penetrated by tunnels for both trains and cars. The road tunnel was completed in 1932, replacing the older route that can still be followed around the headland.....



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