

Cae'r Nant (or Rivals) Granite Quarry, Nant Gwrtheyrn, Gwynedd.

The Quarry is situated high on the northern flank of Nant Gwrtheyrn, split into 2 separate workings. The more northerly at Trwyn Y Gorlech right on the cliffs and a second, earlier digging further inland close to the head of the valley.

The site is accessed from Bwlch yr Eifl by a steep and windy set of tracks, Still readily identifiable but badly eroded and overgrown.

The earliest work seems to have been concentrated on the inland Quarry, and was active pre 1877 in the hands of John Menzies and Robert Newton. It is likely that product from this era was limited to setts carried away over land.

In 1878 the Quarry was worked by Cambrian Granite, and it is likely that the first incline straight down the mountainside from the Quarry to a new 300ft pier. A tramway at the inland quarry led off around the headland to a new smaller digging at Trwyn y Gorlech.

A 2nd working floor was developed in the Nant quarry, and the main incline split in 2, it is unclear whether the top half remained in use or if it was truncated. Similar developments occurred at Trwyn y Gorlech and a 2nd tramway level was brought into use at the same level as the lower Nant floor.

In 1884 it seems the Quarry was taken over by H. J Wright, and in 1901 was transferred to David Roberts of Llanberis. He held the quarry until 1904, when it became the property of Rivals Granite Quarries Ltd.

At some stage during this period, A stone crusher plant was installed below the lowest working floors of either quarry and the incline again split. A New incline was constructed from the top of the Gorlech quarry to lead down to it. Some time later this top level was quarried away, and the incline truncated to the next level down. At this period it appears likely that work ceased on the inland Nant quarry.

Sometime later again, A new section of quarry was opened up lower down Trwyn y Gorlech, on 3 levels, spread between 500' and 700' ASL. The lowest level was at the base of the crushing plant, and it's not clear what product was output, perhaps only setts were produced at this level – it certainly has the largest spoil heap. The middle level was connected direct with the top of the crusher plant. The 4th and highest level appears to have been connected by an incline or ropeway that intersects the old incline coming from the top of the Gorlech workings. At the head of this incline/ropeway is the best preserved building on site, whose function is not now known.

At the crusher, the rock bins were positioned directly above the exit incline. From here the incline led straight down to the pier. Ownership in 1922 transferred to the Croft Granite, Brick and Concrete Co, who held it until closure.

The last phase of development came when the tramways were lifted ca. 1955, and the exit tramway was converted to Aerial ropeway in 1963, with the pier being fed by a conveyor belt. The zigzag track dates from one of these later phases of working.

Locomotives were employed in the quarry, some sources claim a steam locomotive prior to 1912, but it is doubtful. There was a new Ransomes & Rapier 4wdm and a Muir Hill petrol tractor in 1936. These were supplemented by 2 second hand Ruston diesels in the 40s.

In 1951 during bad weather the Amy Summerfield was attempting to dock a 2nd time at the pier, when the line was failed to be caught it ended up around the boat's propeller, leaving it at the mercy of the storm. She was holed on rocks and ended up beached against the shore and pier. The insurance company condemned her, and with the aid of her own capstan she was moved further up the beach and broken up in situ.

The site is now very derelict and difficult to explore, although the rock bins at the shore are easily accessible, along with the remains of the Amy Summerfield. At the quarry most

buildings are ruinous, with little left to be seen of any rail system save a few rails in fence post reuse.



