

## Penrhyngerwin

There is a convenient place to park in a lay-by at SN669941. At the back of the lay-by can be found the now filled in head of a stope on the lode. Opposite the lay-by, there is a minor road and the main adit and engine shaft can be found between the two roads. Further along the main road towards Aberystwyth, to the south of the bridge is a fine wheel pit. This appears to have been for an undershot wheel and the power train appears to have passed through a shallow tunnel under the road to reach the engine shaft.

Below the main road and adjacent to the square engine shaft are several flat areas with concrete machinery bases. The whole area is now heavily overgrown. The entrance cutting to the main adit is easily found. Near its start, and behind a fall of rock, is a short trial to the south, which can be explored on knee-deep water. Close to its entrance is a tallow candle, which I hope will remain where it is.

Following the line of the cutting towards the engine shaft are two large hollows, which represent collapses into the workings. The one nearest engine shaft is a collapse into an understope and has a large landslide to the south. I did not realise this until I studied the section. This is shown in a section in O.T.Jones, and the ground here is marked as "Loose Ground". This section of adit must have been supported on timber that eventually rotted.

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2005 Dave Seabourne and I attempted digging here to gain access to the adit. This was unsuccessful. The ground here is a conglomerate of broken mudstone and pebbles, hence the "Loose Ground" description. Finally, in frustration, Dave volunteered to abseil the engine shaft, against my advice. In view of the nature of the place I was fearful of a carbon dioxide build up in the shaft with possible gas from decomposing rubbish that had been thrown in. However, the shaft was found to be OK.

The adit was found to enter the shaft in its northwest corner, pass through the shaft to continue inbye from its southeast corner. There was a solid plug in the shaft that may have been rubble resting on a timber platform. Looking along the adit outbye, Dave could see at least one timber adit tree, the water in there being nearly up to the roof. Inbye, the water was almost up to the roof; however he decided to go for it. Further in the water level dropped somewhat and he was able to explore until prevented by a hole in the floor that would require a buoyancy aid.

When he emerged from the shaft he was shivering uncontrollably and deserves praise for his effort and determination.

It is interesting to compare the results of this exploration with the O.T. Jones section. All together the adit must extend for a distance of about 120 metres. If the hole in the floor were passed, about 40 metres further one would probably encounter a solid collapse corresponding with the filled in stope by the layby. Further to the east, O.T. Jones shows two more "Old Shafts". I cannot see any sign of these today.

On the face of it, the engine shaft was sunk in a silly place, as it cuts the vein at adit level, a north-south section in O.T. Jones shows cross cuts connecting the shaft with the lode below adit. Prof Jones comments that the "shaft was sunk too far to the south for economical working". Why this was done escapes me. The shaft could have been sunk further to the north and pumped by a wheel pit with overshot wheel, water being conveyed in a raised launder from near the bridge.

The mine was worked from about 1880 until 1940, being one the last to work in the county.

As final comment I have to add that there is some rumour of the workings being very extensive, possibly based on the amount of spoil below the mine. This area was in fact once a council rubbish tip and the spoil came from the widening of the main road just out of Machynlleth, being nothing to do with mine.

A tramway embankment once ran from the engine shaft over the minor road by means of a bridge.