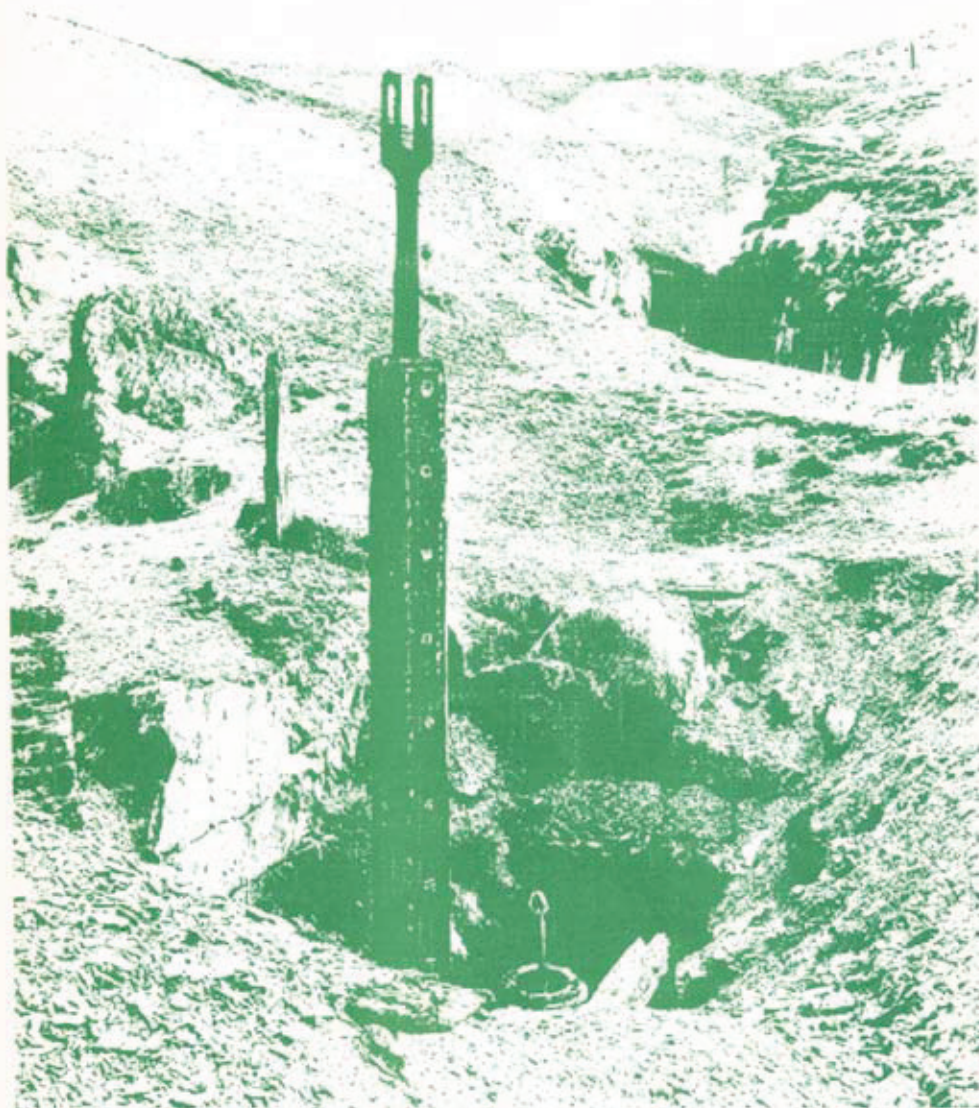


BRITISH MINING No 10



The MINES of MONTGOMERY & RADNORSHIRE



J. R. Foster-Smith.

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THE MINES OF MONTGOMERY AND RADNORSHIRE.

by

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THE MINES OF MONTGOMERY & RADNORSHIRE

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FIGURE 2. Sketch map showing sites of Montgomeryshire mines facing p 3.

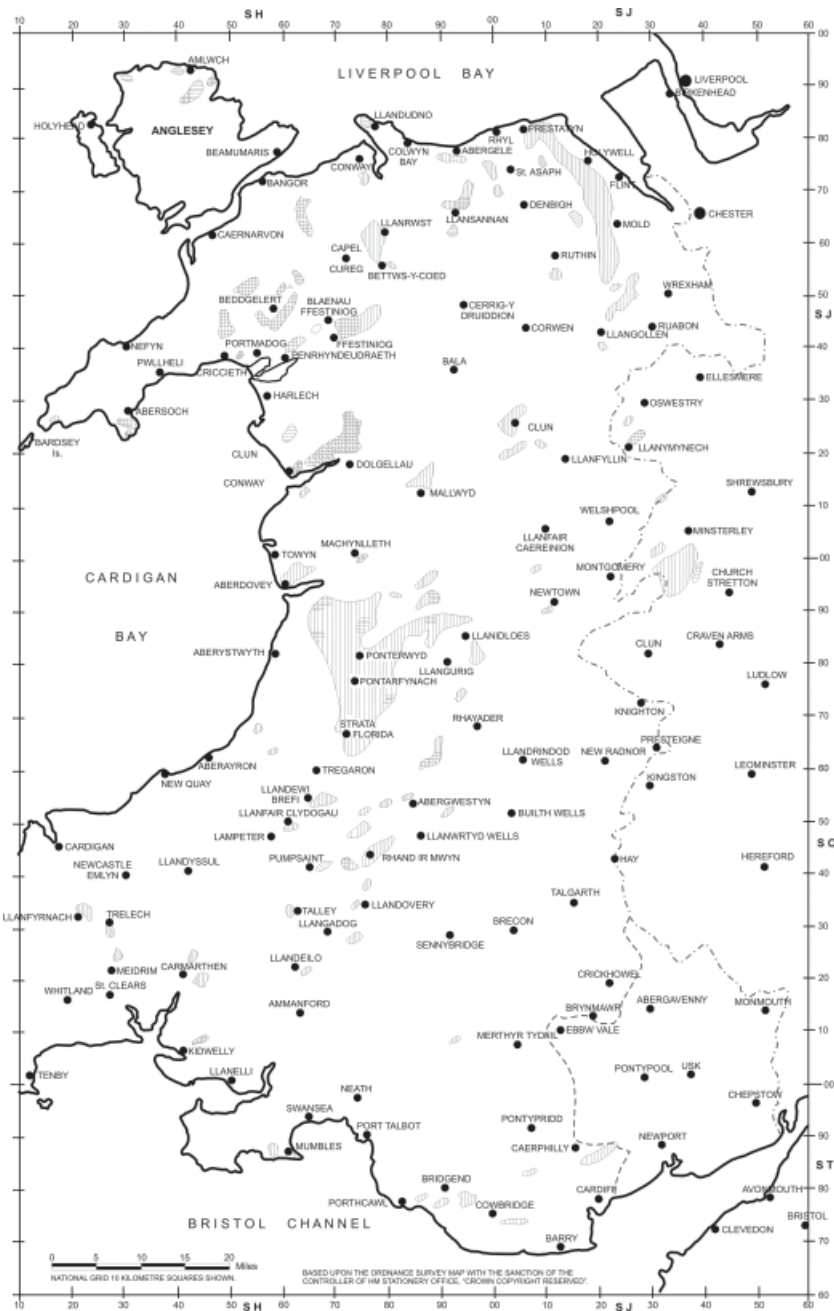
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COVER DESIGN by R.H. Bird: Llechwedd-ddu Shaft, Dylife Mine.

MAPS & SECTION by Geoplot Services, The Radleth, Plealey, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury SY5 0XF.

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NON-FERROUS MINING FIELDS OF WALES

AUTHORS NOTE

This monograph is one part of a larger work which sets out to make a complete survey of the sites and nature of all the presently identifiable non-ferrous metal mines and trials in Wales. Each monograph covers a county of major importance or a group of counties of lesser importance from the point of view of metal mining.

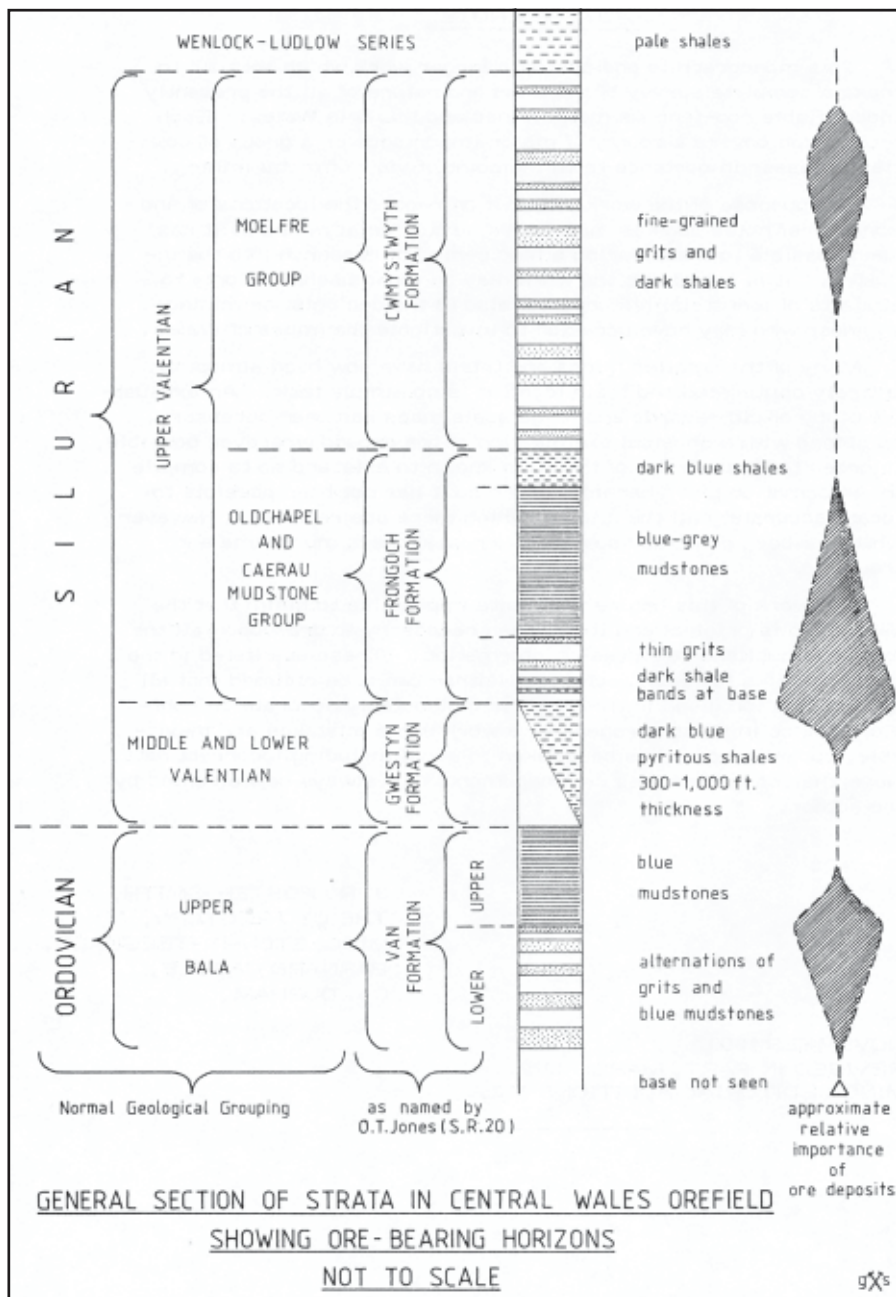
The purpose of the work is to put on record the locations of and some brief notes upon as many non-ferrous metal mines as it has been possible to trace during a long period of research into the industry. It is hoped that the work may be found useful not only to students of industrial history, but also to the geologist or mining engineer who may have occasion to investigate the mines of Wales.

Many of the smaller mines and trials have now been almost or entirely obliterated and their location is no simple task. An exhaustive study of old records and large scale maps has been necessary, combined with a physical examination of the ground wherever possible, in order to locate some of the sites known to exist and so to compile the information given herein. Even so it has not been possible to locate accurately all the sites of which there are records. However what has been done may save future researchers much time and trouble.

In a work of this nature it is quite impossible to claim that the data given is original and it has been necessary to draw upon all the available published sources of information. These are listed in the bibliographies for each section. Neither can it be claimed that all the information given in this work is indisputably accurate or complete, since in so comprehensive a work some mistakes are inevitable, but every care has been taken to avoid including incorrect data. Nevertheless corrections or amendments will always be welcomed by the author.

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THE MINES OF MONTGOMERYSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

The western part of Montgomeryshire shares with north Cardiganshire a part of the once important lead and zinc mining field of Central Wales; second only in importance to the North-East Wales Orefield of Flintshire and Denbighshire. This orefield however differs from the more northerly one in some important respects. Firstly it occurs in an area of pre-Carboniferous rocks, from which it follows that the ore deposits are of a quite different character and secondly it occurs in a much more mountainous area, further from any of the larger centres of population and easy communication. For these and other reasons this orefield was less well-known than that of North-East Wales until comparatively recent times. When fully developed it nevertheless reached a very substantial output and some large mines are included in it, notably the mines at Van, near Llanidloes and those centred upon Dylife.

On the eastern side of the county occurs an orefield of less importance, though it too has achieved significant output at times. This smaller orefield is centred upon Llangynog.

At the present time the mining of non-ferrous ores is at a standstill in Montgomeryshire, having been a more or less active industry from prehistoric times until fairly recently. The largest mine in the county, at Van, mentioned above, was a comparatively recent development. It was only discovered to be an important ore deposit about 1865, and between then and 1921, when the mine was finally abandoned, grew into a very large mine which in its heyday produced enormous profits for its owners, especially considering the small capital upon which it was founded. The mines at Dylife on the other hand, though also prosperous and productive, were no late development and their productive history is spread over a much longer period.

The major ore deposits of Montgomeryshire all occur in rocks of Silurian or Ordovician age and the geology of the deposits is amply described in the various publications listed in the bibliography at the end of this monograph.

Apart from lead and zinc ores, the county has also produced some copper ore, barytes and a little witherite. Here again, as in other Welsh counties, it is quite certain that the published figures of output fall far below the actual totals, even for the period since 1845, during which records are more reliable than for any period previous to that date.

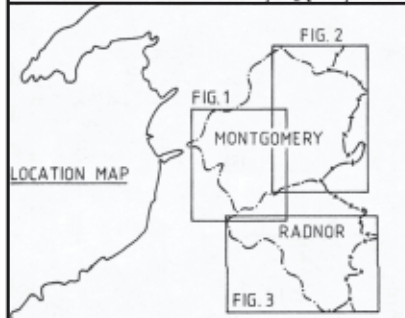
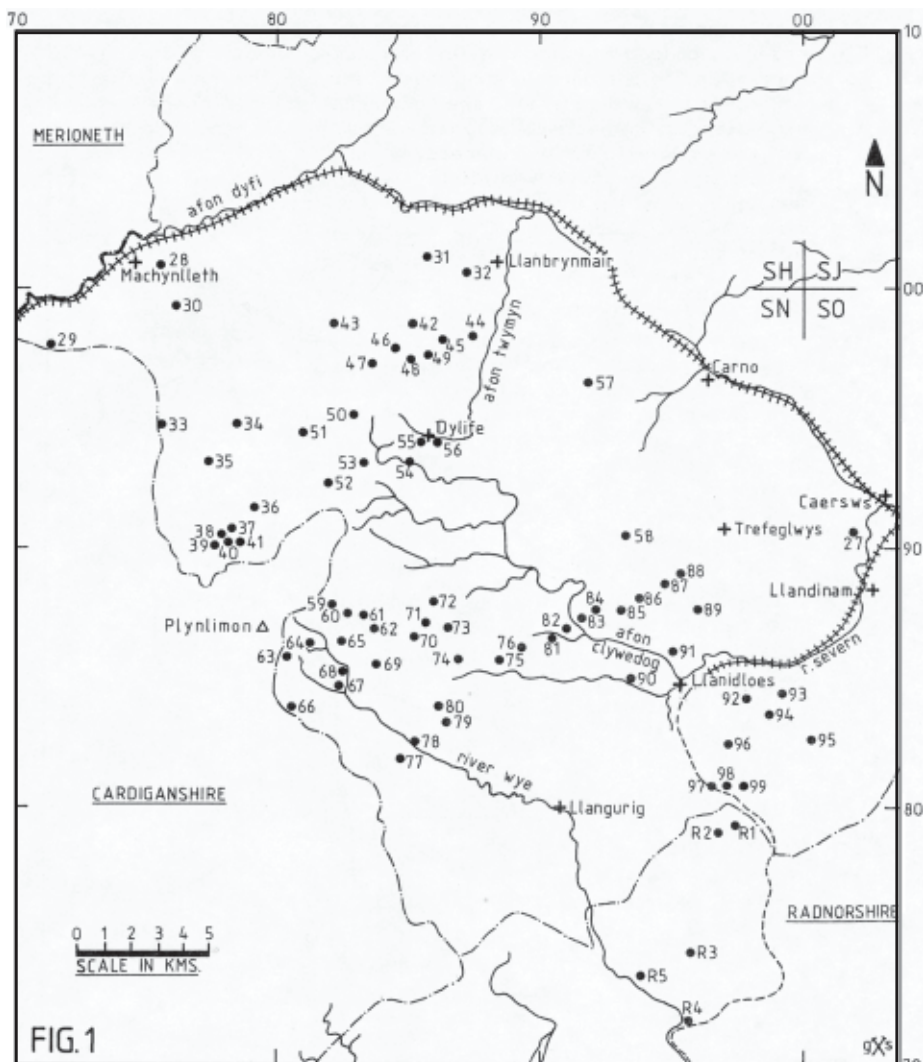
The available figures for the period 1845 to 1969, are as follows:

Lead ore concentrates	-----	175,598	long tons
zinc ore concentrates	-----	35,682	" "
copper ore concentrates	-----	4,860	" "
barytes	-----	66,154	" "
witherite	-----	396	" "

So far as the future is concerned there are almost certainly large reserves of lead and zinc ores in the county, perhaps of zinc ore in particular. Considerable stretches of some of the main vein systems which, as in Cardiganshire, are remarkable for their persistency in strike length, remain virtually unexplored. The reason for this is that the exploration of these areas, which are often covered thickly by peat and other surface deposits, would be difficult and expensive, especially so at the time when mining was active in the county. Under these conditions there was little incentive to carry out such exploration at a time when ample ore could be developed quite easily and cheaply in the more exposed areas.

In stating that resources probably remain in the county there are now some reservations to make however, for since mining in the area ceased large parts of the orefield have been acquired for forestry and other purposes which would render prospecting to-day even more expensive and difficult than it would otherwise have been. A more recent factor of an unfavourable nature is the taking over of some of the valleys for the construction of reservoirs for the supply of water to distant cities. This factor is far more serious from the point of view of the mining industry than that of forestry, for not only does it make prospecting or mining more difficult, it sterilises large areas altogether for these purposes and for all time.

Despite the above mentioned extra difficulties however there remain some places within Montgomeryshire where further search for minerals would be well worth while when the economic climate for such activities is favourable.



LEGEND

- ++++ Railway (standard gauge)
- +++ Railway (narrow gauge)
- Railway (disused)
- ~ River
- + Town or Village
- County Boundary
- - - National Boundary
- 13 Montgomeryshire Mine } number as in text.
- R7 Radnorshire Mine }

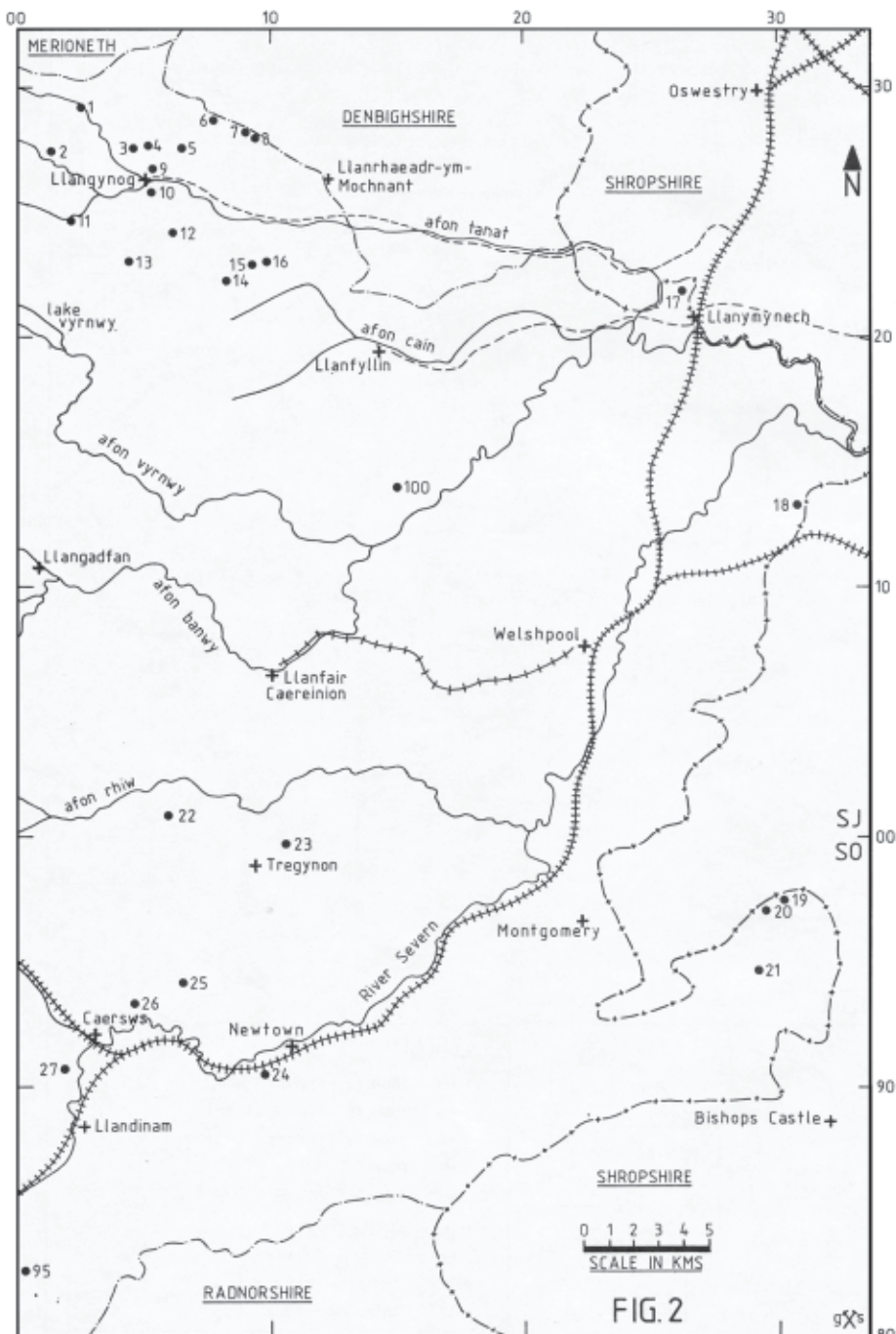


FIG. 2

MONTGOMERYSHIRE - DETAILS OF THE MINES

- 1) **BERWYN** (Also known as **BLAEN RHIWARTH** or **CRAIG RHIWARTH**)
Llangynog Ph. SJ/026291

This mine was actually worked for phosphorite, which occurs in bedded deposits of Ordovician age. Underlying the phosphorite bed are some veins which contain pink barite. This mineral has not however been worked here.

Refs.: WP.46, p.122. AAA, p.264. DEB.PT5. p.42.

- 2) **PENNANT** (Also known as **BLAEN-Y-CWM**)
Llangynog Ph. SJ/015271

This is another phosphorite mine in rocks of Ordovician age. Again here the phosphorite bed is underlain by strata in which veins containing pink barite occur. The barite was found up to nine inches in width in places, but has not been worked.

Refs.: WP .46, p.122. AAA, p.264.

- 3) **CWM OROG**
Llangynog Ph. SJ/046273

The vein at this mine strikes a little north of east and occurs in rhyolite of Ordovician age at the west end of the workings, but enters slates and lavas of the same age toward the east. The vein filling consists of broken country rock with quartz in which barite and some witherite occur in places. Galena and sphalerite both occur in bunches in the vein and the mine has been worked for these minerals. A vein striking north and south was also found in which only barite is known to occur.

Four levels have been driven into the vein and the workings indicate that the ores tend to be rather pockety in occurrence. The mine was active at various times between 1850 and 1909, and some further trials were made about 1915. Nothing is known to have been done since that time. From 1901 to 1903, it was worked by the Vieille Montagne Company, but from 1903 to 1909 it was taken over by Messrs. Newman, Ogle Son and Grace.

Output is recorded for 1900, when 30 tons of lead ore and 25 tons of zinc ore were produced, and 1907-9, when 13 tons of lead ore were got. 60 tons of barytes were produced during the trials of 1915.

Refs.: SR.23, pp.42-4. SR.2, pp.8-9. WP.46, p.121. AAA, p.264. TMT, p.231. WJL, pp.158-9. DEB.PT5. p.34.

- 4) **CRAIG RHIWARTH**
Llangynog Ph. SJ/052273

This mine was worked on the same vein as that which occurs at Cwm Orog Mine, but the workings here lie about 2,700 feet further to the east and higher up the western slopes of Craig Rhiwarth. The vein strikes a little north of east and occurs in porphyry of Ordovician age. It also

appears to be a stronger vein here than at Cwm Orog, being about nine feet wide and containing much barite and witherite in addition to galena and sphalerite. A second vein, whose strike is a little south of east is also reported here and this vein is also reported to contain some chalcopyrite.

The mine was at work between 1846 and 1862, during which period 717 tons of lead ore were produced, 245 tons being got in 1859. The mine is not believed to have been at work regularly since the last date. Old reports also speak of some copper and zinc ores as having been produced, but no figures have been seen.

Some potential seems to remain in these workings, though the oreshoots are believed to have been somewhat pockety.

Refs.: SR.2, p.89. SR.23, p.44. SR.30, p.56. WP.46, p.121. AAA, p.264. TMT, p.231. DEB.PT5. p.32.

5) **CWM LLANAFON**

Llanrhaeadr-ym-mochnant Ph. SJ/066273

Extensive prospecting on two veins striking east of north, toward the Craig-y-mwn and Nant-y-blaidd Mines was carried out here by the Vielle Montagne Company about 1900. These trials were not apparently very successful.

The vein occur in rocks of Ordovician age and contain mostly crushed country rock and quartz. Galena and sphalerite both occur, but the values are not high.

The mine is believed to have been first tried at a much earlier date than the above, according to a report in the Mining Journal of 22 November, 1851. No output figures have been seen.

Refs.: SR .23, p.44. MJ - 22 November 1851. WJL, p. 158.

6) **CRAIG-Y-MWN (also known as CRAIG-Y-MWYN)**

Llanrhaeadr-ym-mochnant Ph. SJ/078287.

A belt of fractures and veins strikes in a general east-north-easterly direction through rocks of Ordovician age at this mine and these have been worked reasonably extensively for lead and zinc ores at various times since about 1768. The country rocks are slates and rhyolites and mineralisation includes much quartz, with a fair amount of barite and some witherite, in which galena and sphalerite occur.

The mine is reported to have been active between 1768 and about 1790, when about 4000 tons per annum of lead ore are supposed to have been produced, but no factual records of this working remain and such a large output is suspect. The mine was further examined and worked between 1850 and 1854, when some favourable reports were published, but no large scale working seems to have resulted. The Vieille Montagne Company held the mine between 1900 and 1903, but did not bring it to production at that time.

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