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## A GLIMPSE AT NORTH HENDRE MINE

R. Von Arx

“I feel certain you seldom saw such a body of Lead in any mine as you shall see in North Hendre”, wrote Urias Bromley of Abbey Square in Chester, a director of the

### North Hendre Lead Mining Company Limited.

on 30.1.1872 to “W.J. Vercoe”, presumably the very same William, J. Vercoe who was manager of the Mid Cumberland Mine (see *British Mining* No.34 p.34) at about the same time. Vercoe was supposed to inspect the mine but this plan fell through owing to very heavy rains and a fall in adit level. Although Bromley called the water coming into the mine “very trifling”, it was sufficient to prevent a proper inspection and Bromley reckoned that it would take at least nine days of dry weather for the water to recede. In fact, North Hendre was notorious for serious water problems (as reported in *Special Reports on the Mineral Resources of Great Britain* Vol.XIX p.138/9) which considerably impeded the work, most ore lying in the lower part of the mine.

The North Hendre Mine is situated a mile NW of Rhydymwyn Station and 3 miles NW of Mold in Flint, North Wales. The company under consideration was formed in 1867 but only registered on 28.9.1878. The period we are mainly concerned with here is 1878/9. At the 8th Ordinary General Meeting, held in the Company’s Office in the Westminster Buildings, Newgate Street, Chester, on 4.11.1878, the Chairman, Henry R. Bowers was pleased to announce that 1808 tons of lead ore had been sold for £19,790 and the account ending 30.9.1878 showed a profit balance of £12,290 of which all but £110 (!) was distributed as dividends to the shareholders. In early 1878 the mortgage on Hendrefigillt Estate had been redeemed by the Company for £13,186. As part of the arrangement the leases had been extended to 31 years and now also comprised all unlet mines in the parishes of Halkyn, Cilcen and Northop, including the Great Hendre Mine, while the royalty had been reduced from 1/12 to 1/15. Bowers credited the success of the mine to the zeal and skill of Captain Goodman Ellis who in turn reported on the mine as follows:

The Level North of Engine Shaft has been driven 89½ yards and several strings of lead and blende of a “splended character” met with. Driving and roofing West of the above Level for 102½ yards netted only 4 tons of lead. The adit level has been cleared and widened in some parts. It is 600 yards in length. In South of Engine Shaft and East and West of South Main Level 1230 yards of driving, cross-cutting and roofing have been done besides what has been explored by the tributors following the lead. An incline has been erected to bring the stuff down from the West, and another from the East where there is a whimsey worked by a donkey to draw up the stuff. The pumping and winding engine as well as the “locomotive” boiler have been thoroughly repaired. Two additional boilers have also been erected and the steam pump is

able to keep the mine free of water. At surface a new stable, carpenter's shop, saw-pit and reservoir have been built and the washing floors re-arranged and enlarged.

In the 12 months following 2052 tons of ore were sold for £19,690, the price of lead having meanwhile decreased. There still was a healthy profit balance of £8,370. As the success of the Halkyn District Mines Drainage Co. was of so much importance for the Great Hendre Sett, the Company subscribed 200 shares of £10 each. The directors had also been able to acquire the East Hendre Mine for 250 paid-up shares of £2.10. Captain Walter Eddy had inspected the mine in the course of the year and his observations "will be found highly satisfactory".

Since Captain Ellis' last report the Level North of Engine Shaft had been driven another 20½ yards. The ground was so hard that it was decided to use rock drills, the pipes and connections for which had only just been installed. A cross-cut had been driven West from this level for 12 yards and a sump sunk in it 8 yards, in addition to 14 yards of drifts from there. Very extensive drivings of 1824½ yards were carried out in South of Engine Shaft. 25,000 tons were brought to surface resulting in the above 2052 tons of lead ore. The South Main Level was extended by 100 yards to communicate with No.2 Run to facilitate the future working of this part of the mine. It was also resolved to sink the No.2 Shaft on the adit level below adit level to communicate with the West workings. After sinking 27 yards a splendid vein of lead was discovered which was improving in depth.

Two months before the 1879 Meeting a new engine and air compressor had been installed, in addition to the lead crusher, the patent jiggers, the 32 settling pools, the new engine and boiler houses and the lead ore shed erected and rails laid through the washing floors in the same year. The new "pulsometer" pump had been placed on the washing floors to pump water into the new tank.

North Hendre was a successful mine well into the 80s paying dividends of 10% in 1880/1 and 8% in 1881/2. The Board of Directors remained virtually unchanged through the years. Besides the two from Chester already mentioned two other directors hailed from Manchester, two from Denbigh and one each from Lancaster and Holywell. Secretary at this time was John Jones, succeeded by Watson R. Jones and T.J. Powell. The Company's bankers were the North & South Wales Bank Ltd. of Chester.

(Sources: Directors' Reports, Private Papers, Stock Exchange yearbook 1884, SRMR of GB Vol.XIX)

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