

BRITISH MINING No.45

MEMOIRS 1992



Arx, R. von 1992
"Vignette on Nanty Mine"
British Mining No.45, NMRS, pp.37-40

Published by the
THE NORTHERN MINE RESEARCH SOCIETY
SHEFFIELD U.K.

© N.M.R.S. & The Author(s) 1992.

ISSN 0309-2199

VIGNETTE ON NANTY MINE

R. von Arx

SYNOPSIS

Since the recent publication of David Bick's The Old Metal Mines of Mid Wales Vol.6 further documents have come to hand which shed more light on the Nanty – Pantmawr – Braces mines in the Wye Valley west of Llangurig in Montgomeryshire.

On 12th August 1853 Anne Warburton Owen of Glansevern, Parish of Berriew, Montgomeryshire gave provisional licence for a sett of 75 acres 2 roods 26 perches on Nanty Farm land to George Brace of Surry Street, Strand, being part of an estate in Llangurig Parish she had inherited. At the request of Mrs Warburton, George Brace underlet the sett on 23rd September 1854 to William Lefeaux of Dollys near Llanidloes for “mineral purposes” at a royalty of 1/12 for 16 years. A year before, on 24th June 1853, Sir Watkin William Wynne, the Lord of the Manor of Arustly and holder of the mineral rights, had granted a Take Note to George Brace with power to demand a lease for mineral ground on Sheep Walk north of Frydd and encompassing 61 acres 1 rood 2 perches, the ground also belonging to Anne Warburton Owen. This sett was being worked by five adventurers, one of whom was George Brace, under the name of NANTY GOCH FAWR Mine.

According to an indenture between Mrs Warburton, George Brace and William Lefeaux of 12th September 1855 the latter two were authorized to construct a “watercourse” through Nanty and Pantmawr Farms, i.e. the fields no.345, 344, 343, 353, 356, 355, 359 on Pantmawr and no.15 and 17 on Nanty, the water power also to be used by Brace on the fields no.15 and 17 (see plan). On 18th August 1856 William Lefeaux sent a Memorandum to George Brace agreeing for the latter to work the upper level (shallow adit) of Nanty Mine with a view to the ground under the Sheep Walk being made available immediately so that Brace should be at liberty not only to work the said level but to have for his own use the ore which might be found in the course of driving the level and also the ore which might be obtained within a distance of 10 fathoms above and below the level, and including the right for ventilation shafts on Lefeaux' land. A further indenture between Brace and Lefeaux was signed on 22nd September 1857 subleasing to the latter the pieces of land no.16 and 20 (Nanty Mine) for 16 years from 25th March 1855 at 1/12 royalty.

Mrs Warburton, not having wanted to use the mineral rights herself, had requested more capital to be introduced to make the Nanty Goch Fawr Mine profitable. Brace stated that he could obtain such capital from friends upon which she expressed her willingness to grant him a proper lease for Nanty

VIGNETTE ON NANTY MINE

Farm and Nanty Northern Frydd for a royalty of 1/16 with powers enabling Brace to bring water from the rivers Wye and Trannant and have full use of the land for buildings etc. This lease was signed on 17th October 1856 for a duration of 21 years starting on 25th March 1857. George Brace's lease comprised the pieces of land no.1 to 5, 7 to 32 except 16 and 20 which together with no.6 and 361, the latter belonging to Pantmawr Farm, were being worked by William Lefeaux. At least four workmen had to be at the mine at all times. After the lease had been signed, James Kingsford of Essex Street, Strand, became interested to work the Nanty Goch Fawr Mine in conjunction with Brace and entered into a partnership with him. It follows that at this time Brace and Lefeaux were working neighbouring mines along the road leading from Aberystwyth to Llanidloes.

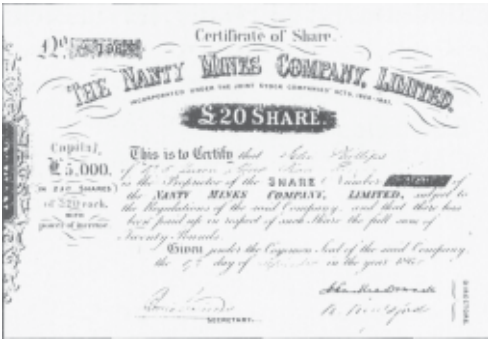
In the course of operating the mines at Nanty and Nanty Goch Fawr disputes arose between George Brace and William Lefeaux with regard to the manner in which the latter was "conducting his mining works and the privileges". As a consequence a bill of complaint was filed with the High Court of Chancery by Brace on 14th July 1859. At this time Brace was obviously in failing health and he made his will on 24th November 1859 appointing his wife Charlotte Catherine and Edward Brace (presumably his son) of Lark Hill, Worcester, executors. Soon he had second thoughts and on 24th January 1860 added a codicil replacing his wife by Thomas Thorby of Bloom field Road, Maida Hill, Middlesex. Nine days later, on 2nd February 1860, George Brace died. Brace's partner James Kingsford then agreed on 3rd September 1860 to acquire Nanty Mine from William Lefeaux under a new lease and pay him a purchase price of £750 including materials, buildings, machinery etc. Following the death of George Brace, the agreement between James Kingsford and William Lefeaux, and the return of the estate title to Thomas Thorby and Edward Brace, the Chancery proceedings were discontinued and each party paid their own costs.

Sometime in 1860 James Kingsford formed THE NANTY MINES COMPANY LIMITED which now included both Nanty Mine and Nanty Goch Fawr Mine. The share certificate shown here is dated 17th September 1860 and bears the signature of John MacDonald and K. Kingsford (presumably a relation of James Kingsford) as directors, and of Paul Ninnis as secretary. James Kingsford signed for the WEST NANTY MINE COMPANY LIMITED as director in 1863 and Paul Ninnis again as secretary. Kingsford, thus, was the new power in the region. Up to this point there is no mention of John Taylor & Sons or a mine called Pantmawr as reported.

Sources – Lease and Assignment of Release and Surrender; David Bick: Vol.4 pp.52-53 and Vol.6, pp.27-28

Rolf von Arx, Buchzelgstr. 39, CH-8053 Zurich/Switzerland

Share certificate of the Nanty Mines Company.



Plan of area. (See text).

