

**1988 Easter
Welsh Meet**

Addendum to report of Easter Meet 31st March – 4th April 1988, based at Dolgamedd Farm Campsite, Bont Newydd, Dolgellau, Gwynedd, by D.J.Blundell.

Friday 1st April: As previously reported by joint meet leader A.C.P-Thomas.

Saturday 2nd April: The day dawned wet and showed every sign of continuing that way. It had been collectively decided to visit the Bryneglwys & Cantrybedd Slate Mines, at Abergynolwyn, NGR S.H,695054, D.Blundell, A Lings, P Blezard & Ann Danson, in two cars detoured en route to the cosmopolitan delights of Dolgellau, to purchase gold pans, at £8.99p each, from Roberts Hardware shop. The rain continued, the spirits weakened, it was decided to adjourn to the local coffee shop, to get warm. Having tasted the 'high life', the desire to get cold and wet down a mine diminished and it was decided to adjourn to the Centre for Alternative Technology, at Machynlleth, for a wholemeal lunch. Lunch over, we finally arrived up at Bryneglwys at 2:30pm. Anton had by this time given up on searching the highways and byways for us and had gone underground in the Cantrybedd section of the mine. As it was rather late for venturing underground, we surface walked the central (collapsed) area of the quarries and followed the 10B / 15B & 10B / 5B inclines on the Bryneglwys section. Returning towards the cars at 6pm, we met Peter Fleming on his way out.

As the rain had by now eased off, it was decided to return via the coast road to Dolgellau, stopping off at Anna Maria mine, at Friog, on the beach, at NGH S.H. 610120. The levels are sited below the railway and above the boulder beach, most have been blocked off by walling up, only 3 levels remain open and they are fairly short and ocherous.

Following our return to the campsite and somewhat of a 'falling out', between the joint meet leaders, for the remainder of the weekend, for the purposes of trips, the group split into two, group 1 comprising Anton, Sheila, & Andrew, group 2, D Blundell, A Lings, P Blezard, Ann Danson, Margaret, & Peter Fleming, Sam Sparks had to leave early on Sunday morning. These notes refer to the activities of group 2 for the remainder of the weekend, the activities of group 1 having already been covered by Anton's meet report.

Sunday 3rd April: At last the rain stopped and the day was sunny and bright. A Lings expressed an interest in geological sampling of the Manganese of the Harlech Dome formation, to test for the presence of gold. Cwm -mynach mine was chosen, NGR680215, and the convoy of cars (3 no.) parked at the farm. The ascent of the hill to the head of the former incline can only be described as hard work, due to the presence of a densely - planted forest on the hillside. The levels, on the outcrop of the 12" thick bed of manganese, are all very short, maximum length 50 yards and the workings follow the steeply - rising bed over the shoulder of Mynydd Cwm Mynach, to the Votty mine in the valley to the west. A descent was made to the cars and a leisurely lunch, with cocktails, was taken in the sunshine on the banks of the Afon Cwm-Mynach. After lunch, it was decided to visit Clogau mine, in an attempt to discover the current situation, as an attempt

was made earlier this year to turn it into a show mine. We were unsuccessful in our attempt to get underground and ended up spending 1 1/2 hours talking to the guardian of the site, 78 year old retired Clogau miner Jack Williams of Bontddu. We were shown the remains of stone built Brittan Pans, at the 1875 mill site, just upstream of the office. Jack really "took a shine" to Ann, giving her a gold sample, with visible gold, along with a baseball type cap adorned with the name "Clogau Gold Mines". At the same time, he displayed an aversion to Geologists, as typified by Alastair, saying, "It takes a gold miner to find gold, you geologists cannot find it, you can only tell where to look for it." Mr Lings, displaying great restraint, did not rise to the bait.

Afterwards, the party drove round to Gwynfynnydd mine, all appeared quiet at the lower part of the mine, it appears that operations have moved up to the higher workings. We panned for gold in the Mawddach, between Gwynfynnydd mine and the old mill site downstream, with little or no success, although Pete Blezard did collect a few specks of gold in a concentrate. Returned back to campsite for evening.

Monday 4th April Anton decided to head off home. I had to leave for home that evening, everyone else was staying on for another night. The day was sunny and bright, Margaret & Peter Fleming went walking, the remainder of the group, D Blundell, P Blezard, Ann Danson, A Lings & A Sibbald drove round to Pont Hirgwyn, above Bontddu, to walk into Vigra mine (NOR 665192) from the road to the north, a distance of 1 mile, across country. The main adit to this mine is blocked, although it appears diggable, so Anne, Alistair and Andrew descended the main engine shaft (approx. 70' deep to water, life belts essential) down to the flooded stopes. Alastair found another scrambling route out of the mine via an adjacent adit, which did not require any tackle. On return to the surface all described it as a "sporty little mine". Arrived back at the cars at 5.20pm, I set off for home.

In true tradition, the other named joint meet leader did not show at all over the weekend.

D. J. Blundell.

Compiled from notes 24th. September 1988