

23rd-27th March 1989
Wales Easter Meet

Camping at Erwbarfe Farm, Ponterwyd, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, NGR SN 749784.
£3 per night for a small tent, site appeared 'run down', with poor facilities.

Present - D Blundell, (Meet Leader), A Lings.

Both members attending arrived by Thursday evening, just in time to experience the gale force winds and horizontal driving rain of Thursday night. By the morning, the rain had penetrated the inners of both tents. Friday dawned dry, but very windy, a good drying day for the tents. It was expected that additional members would arrive during the day, so it was decided to make a couple of local trips, returning to the campsite in between.

South from the campsite, a halt was made to inspect the portal of Level Fawr NGR SN 739722, the drainage level for the Lisburne group of mines. The level is situated in the centre of Pontrhydygroes village, beneath the sharp bend on the B4343 road. Commenced in 1785, it had the distinction of being the longest drainage tunnel in Central Wales.

To the South of Pontrhydygroes, lies the village of Ffair-Rhos and the start of the mine road to Esgairmwyn mine NGR SN 754693 the site of a recent attempt by Messrs G W Hall and R Gunn to rework the dumps of the old lead mine for Zn. After a false start up the mine road (due to the meet leaders reluctance to chance puncturing another fuel tank on his car on the rough track) an alternative route was found, involving a half mile walk across the moor. There are no levels or shafts remaining open, the principal features are a timber framed, steel-sheeted dressing mill, a timber office and storm building, slimes lagoons and, of particular interest to Alastair, the remains of 2 Series 1 Landrovers and 1 Series 2.

After lunch at the campsite, a visit was made to the Llewernog Mining Museum at Ponterwyd NGR SN 733810, £1.95 per head admission, well recommended if you are in the area. A visit was made to Esgairhir Mine (Pb) NGR SN 735912 and Esgairfraith Mine NGR SN 741912, at the Northern end of the Nant y Mock Reservoir (CEGB).

Saturday, a dry and blustery day, it was decided to walk in to inspect two mining sites seen across the Nant y Moch reservoir the previous day. Parked adjoining Maesnant NGR SN 775881, at Llam. Walked north up Afon Hyddgen to Hyddgen Mine NGR SN 782907, under Plynlimmon. The mine, which commenced in 1873 produced Zn and Pb. Run in level and pit for 40ft waterwheel and crusher, on east side of stream, with trial level in side valley to east. To west of stream are two flooded shafts, each with a rising main in situ. Small opencut above, with good specimens on the dumps. Followed the vein. over the ridge to the west to the valley of the Nant y March to wade the Afon, Llechwedd-Mawr, then through the swamps to the Nant y Baracs. After a light lunch, followed track around shoulder of hill and reservoir to Brynyrafr - NGR SN 746879, a late (1879) development for Pb. The mine was a shaft working, which reached a depth

67 fathoms by the time of closure in 1912. Total production, 5,000 tons Pb, 8000 tons ZnS. Little in the way of surviving features. Around an arm of the reservoir to Camdwrnawr SN 751877 the vein was alleged to contain appreciable quantities of Manganese, but between opening in 1854, and closing in 1877, only 22 tons of Cu and 5 tons of Pb were recorded. Again, no surface features remaining. Walked NE up hill, over shoulder of Drosgol and down hill to Afon Llehwedd-Mawr, which was waded again, to save heading 1 mile upstream to a crossing place. Waded across yet another bog to Afon Hengwm, for the final river crossing of the day, reaching the car by 5pm, having covered a distance of 9 1/2 miles.

Sunday, another windy dry day, headed S.E. to Cwmystwyth Mine NGR SN 804747 (Ref. is for dressing mill.) Parked at mill site and walked up to Copa Hill at the Eastern end of the site. Inspected Taylors Level, Aldersons Level and the supposed Roman opencuts on the crest of the hill. Walked back down to the stream, inspecting the spectacular waterfall into Huberts Stope. Alastair entered Huberts Level, but pronounced it to be dangerously understoped and made an exit.

Walked back down the valley, inspecting the collapsed portal of Jackilass Level en route back to the mill site for lunch. After lunch, walked back up the hill to inspect the Graig Fawr opencast for ZnS. At the end of the day a 'Welsh Tea' was taken at Cwmystwyth Post Office, excellent value at £1.20p per person.

Monday another dry windy day. After a late start due to striking camp, visited Frongoch Mime, SN 723744, to inspect the engine houses and the opencast workings for ZnS. Travelled down the valley to inspect the generating station built to supply power to the mine and the mill constructed at Wemyss mine site. Returned to the campsite at lunchtime with the meet terminating at approx 1:00pm with the meet leader returning to Cumbria and Alastair setting off on a hill walk up Plynlimon, before returning to Pembroke, to catch the ferry back to the Irish Republic.

D J Blundell. 24th April 1989.