

## IMPRESSIONS OF VISITS TO PARC MINE, NORTH WALES

by W.G. Jones and L. Willies

Some observations, based on a visit in 1955, may be of interest to members. This was towards the end of the mine's productive life; lead had then fallen to some £120 per ton, and was creeping nearer the (then) "critical" £100 mark.

Accompanied by our host and guide — former P.o.W. Otto Phillip Feise, then in charge of a drilling team, my son and I traversed the whole 1½ miles of the recently completed main level. Whilst some water ran underfoot towards the adit mouth, this appeared to present no practical difficulties.

Our attention was drawn to a small winze towards our left and overhead. This was sealed by wooden stemples and loose stones, and we were told that it connected with older workings. Also that our guide had found it possible to come out in Cyffty.

Approaching the end of the level, we had to negotiate two 30 feet ladders which carried us up to a level above, and a stope, reputed to be "ore-wise" the best part of the mine. There were certainly 25-30 men at work in this one part alone. The vein followed the track of an almost vertical fault and there had evidently been further considerable movement after ore deposition — resulting in pronounced slickensiding on the ore itself.

In response to my request for "a specimen" the Shift Boss picked up a magnificent piece weighing 9 lbs which he suggested better be kept out of sight!

*Flotation Plant* — This was sold to South Africa. A considerable amount of copper and other scrap of value was sold in situ to Enston Bros., local quarry owners.

*Mine Manager* — The mine was reopened on behalf of Llanwrst Lead Mines Ltd. (under auspices of Johannesburg Consold. Investments) by Mr. W.S. Gray, one of their geologists from South Africa. A reference to Welsh Lead Mining will be found in the Mining Journal, somewhat after this period, under his signature, in which he observed that Welsh lead ore "was very lean", approximately 4.5% lead metal content. Unquestionably, however, there were many other metals of value in the Parc ore.

Commenting on the closure of nearby Irecastel, one of the Parc Mine Assayers told the writer that "they had only themselves to blame". "We (Parc) extensively diamond drilled before operations started".

W.G. Jones.

### Parc Mine, North Wales

In December 1974 I was fortunate to be a guest of Christopher Williams and the North Wales Caving Club on a visit to Parc Mine, where I was able to go over some of the ground mentioned in the December 1974 Newsletter, and by Mr. Jones, together with some other sections.

Our party split into two groups, the main group descending a shaft at what will be the Cyffty that Mr. Jones mentioned, where at surface there remains a bob and the pumping rods once operated by flat rods from a water wheel. The group were recovering some of the pumps, after which they were to descend to the No.3 level, and then out by No.2. We engaged on a more leisurely photographic tour and entered the mine by Parc No.2 level. The level is a typical modern high and wide level, with rails and compressor pipes. A hundred yards or so in the level communicated with another at a 'T', one arm returning to the day. The other followed the principal vein, of which little is left but stopes 4 or more feet wide, rising some 200 feet on a considerable hade to the level above, whilst the level on the right hand side plunged downwards in a similar way to the level below, in a most impressive manner, here and there obscured by a few rotting timbers. In one place the rails were held by chains underslung from bolts put into the wall. Occasionally, and more frequently further in were groups of ore chutes discharging above the rails. Apart from a few twitches, caused presumably by cross-faults, the level is more or less straight with only a few obstructions by falls from the stopes.

In what was once Llanwrst Mine, the level has broken through a winze, following the hade, down which an iron rod projects. By clambering up the rod, and its wooden spear above, and via very dubious stemples and ancient wooden ladder some 20 feet a further level is gained, with narrow gauge tramway, and an enormous angle bob, each timber about 7 feet long and 12 x 12 inches square, the third side of the triangle formed by a wrought iron rod. This was connected to a flat rod running on rollers by a further iron rod. This was connected to a flat rod running on rollers by a further iron rod, so that the flat rod actuated the spear in the winze via the bob. The flat rod passed under the roof of a short gallery to a further angle bob in a large chamber cut out in the side of a large pumping shaft, which had its pitwork almost intact.

The shaft was divided into two sections by a brattice, the near part for winding, the other and larger for pumping, whilst a timber bob, or pivoted beam, with the pivot resting on two further large timbers reaching to the edge of the shaft, connected at an acute angle to the angle-bob, and squarely to the main rod in the shaft, though the iron connecting rod is not now linked up. There are two spears in the shaft, which goes down a further 60 or 70 feet to what seems to be a blockage, and also to rising mains of 10 or 12 inches diameter. In the back right corner of the shaft, partially let into the wall is a wooden cistern about 5 x 5 feet square and 7 deep, still full of water, but no pumps. A small launder carried water from the chamber, and perhaps the gallery, but it was obscured by deep mud left from flooding prior to the driving of the Parc Levels, whilst a wooden 'pipe' carried surplus water from the cistern down presumably

to the pumps below to avoid splashing in the shaft. There were two wood and iron staved ladders attached to the pumping side of the brattice, though these have partially fallen away as has much of the light timber.

The purpose of the flat rods and spears down the winze was presumably to either allow a trial at depth to be made, or to follow a rich shoot downwards, in either case so as not to risk flooding the main shaft and its levels. A little further up the No.2 level a further pumping shaft has been cut into, but only the rising main survives, and the shaft is blocked.

We then followed the No.2 level up to its practical limit, where again there are the narrow gauge rails of an older working just above the main level, and also the board working the limit reached by an earlier PDMHS party. A little further back along the level is a winze, with a series of eight wooden or chain ladders leading by stagings to the No.3 level below. On this lower level, by moving towards the entrance, a further and main gallery is reached, with compressor pipes, rails, and many ore chutes. Downstream the level is blocked, but upstream is open. The water here flows very quickly, and is scouring the floor, and by following it upstream the entry via a series of winzes from the shaft entered by the other party is easily discerned by the water hurtling itself down. No wonder the others had raced past us to get out of the mine.

Lynn Willies.

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