



Simply Exploring Group

Mine Information: Rhiwbach Quarry

Entrance grid ref: please contact us Quarry grid ref: SH 742 464

Number of levels: 8

Number of inclines: 1



Rhiwbach quarry is situated in the mountains above Cwm Penmachno. It was started in the early 19th Century. The first workings are now on what is the south side of the quarry (deep working on right of mill) this is a deep pit working which is now partially flooded. By the late

1880's work had transferred to the present site now known as the main workings (just north of mill). This developed extensively underground to eight levels. The drainage for the mine was sought by a drainage tunnel which began some 350ft below the surface and emerged on the hillside above Cwm Penmachno. This adit is intact despite rumors of a collapse although this adit is gated as is the rest of this mine. But with some little effort access to the mine can be sort

Surface Workings

There is quite a bit to see at Rhiwbach in the sense of remains. On the lower level there are quite extensive remains of the living quarters which comprised of family barracks and single man barracks. Rhiwbach also had it's own chapel and school house which was a



rare thing within slate quarries but the reason for this was due to the remoteness of the quarry being one of the remotest in the area. On the upper

level there are still remains of the old dressing mill. Not much to see in the way of artifacts though. There are also the remains of the old boiler house which would have powered the old exit incline. This was a distinguishing feature of this mine as the exit incline was one of only three in north Wales in which the slate was transported up hill and not down. This is the beginning of what is now known as the Rhiwbach tramway and connects with two other mines on it's route these being Blaen y cwm and Cwt y bugail and followed on through Manod quarry and then into Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Underground Workings

There are two ways into Rhiwbach which make it a nice through trip. The best way is to enter through the drainage tunnel above Cwm Penmachno. Once inside you can walk along the old trackway for a while before coming to a truck (Pic right) which is still intact and can be pushed for a short way along the track. As you progress further you soon come to the main workings there are a number of chambers both sides of the adit. The main tunnel however does eventually come to a blockage but it can be passed by crawling via the chamber to the left. It is then just a matter of a short walk up an incline, at the top there are several more chambers some are open to the surface but are gated and some are impassable due to fallen bridges. There is a small opening into the quarry at the end of the incline which is the route out. However there are some interesting little artifacts to be seen along the way ranging from padlocks and a shovel to the remains of a winching system and a suspension bridge. There is also evidence of several winze's that have been driven downwards but are now flooded.

