# *Y Diwydiant Mwyngloddio*

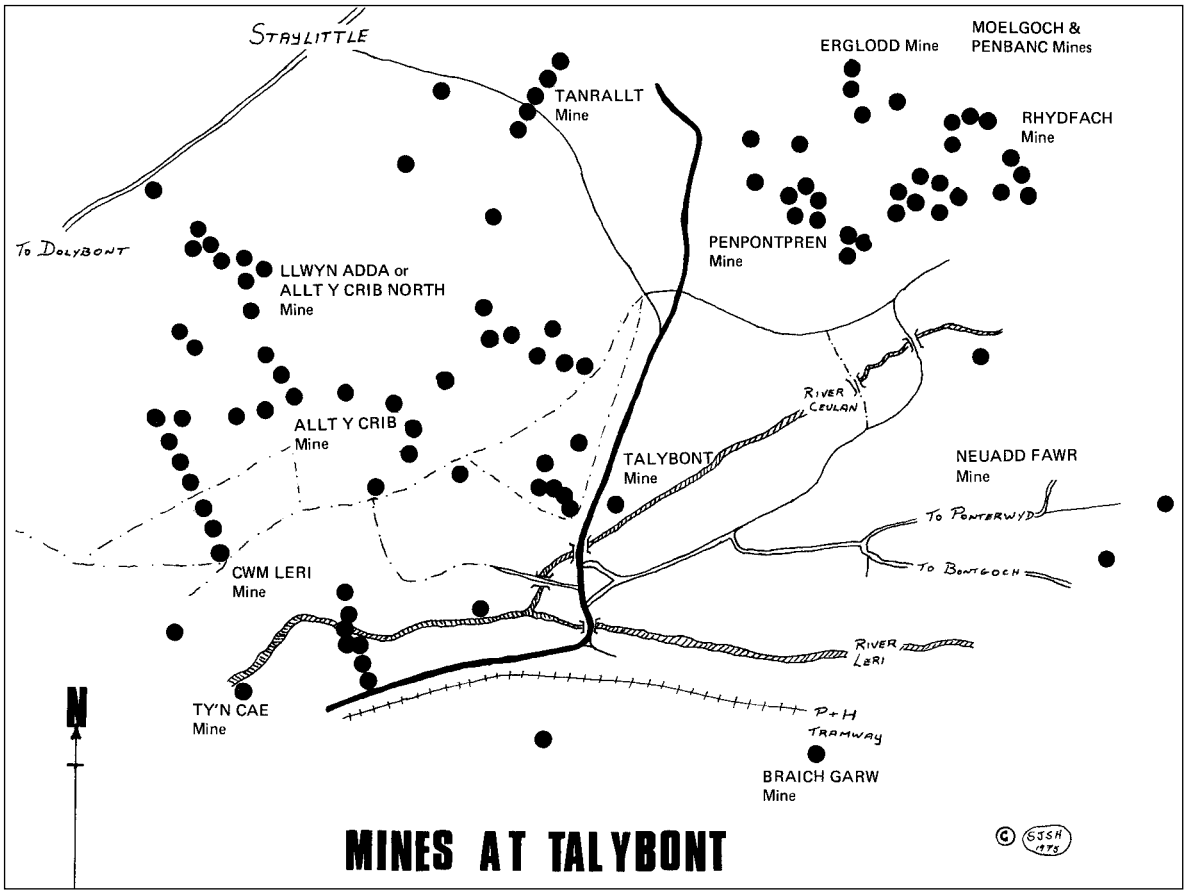
Ers yr Oes Efydd, ryw 4000 o flynyddoedd yn ôl, cafodd metelau eu mwyngloddio o'r bryniau sydd yn amgylchynu'r pentref. Ceir tystiolaeth, er mai prin ydyw, o fwyngloddio a gwaith mwyndoddi yn y gorffennol gan 'Y Dynion Hynafol' a'r Rhufeiniaid. Fodd bynnag, ceir llawer o fanylion o gyfnod Oes Elisabeth ymlaen, pan gafwyd llawer o fwyngloddwyr o'r Almaen ac yn ddiweddarach Cernyw yn mewnfudo yma.

Cloddiwyd am fwyn plwm, arian a chopr hyd at gyfnod pan oedd y diwydiant yn ei anterth ychydig cyn Rhyfel Cartref Cromwell ym 1645, pan ddefnyddiwyd arian o bwll Allt y Crib i gyllido'r Brenhinwyr, ac o ganlyniad cafwyd ysgarmesau lleol gan luoedd Cromwell. Ystyriwyd bod y pyllau wedi eu dihysbyddu yn fuan ar ôl 1800 ond cymerodd amser hir i'r diwydiant ddod i ben yn gyfan gwbl a gadawodd ddigon o dystiolaeth erbyn y flwyddyn 1900 i roi syniad i ni o'r effaith a gafodd ar economi'r pentref ac amodau gwaith y rhai hynny a

# *The Mining Industry*

Since the Bronze Age, some 4000 years ago, metals have been mined from the hills that surround the village. There is evidence, though scanty, of past mining and smelting operations by 'The Old Men' and the Romans. However, details from the Elizabethan period onwards are numerous, when there was considerable immigration by German miners and later by Cornish miners.

Exploitation of the lead, silver and copper ore continued up to its heyday just before the Cromwellian Civil War in 1645, when silver from the Allt y Crib mine was used to finance the Royalists, resulting in local skirmishes by the Cromwellian forces. Soon after 1800 the mines were regarded as worked out. But it took a long time for the industry to die completely and it has left us with sufficient evidence by the year 1900 to give us a sense of the impact it had on the economy of the village and the working conditions of those employed. For instance,




*Mwynfeydd yn Nhal-y-bont* *Mines in Tal-y-bont*

gyflogwyd. Er enghraifft, mae Adroddiad Arolygwr Mwyngloddiau Ei Mawrhydi 1896 ar gyfer Ardal Gogledd Cymru yn rhestru pyllau Tal-y-bont fel Bryn yr Afr oedd yn cyflogi 50 o weithwyr, Bwlchglas a oedd yn cyflogi 5 gweithiwr, Esgair-hir a oedd yn cyflogi 40 gweithiwr a Phendinas a oedd yn cyflogi 2 weithiwr. Pan ddechreuodd y pyllau gau, roedd yn rhaid i fwyngloddwyr Tal-y-bont deithio ymhellach ac ymhellach i ddod o hyd i waith. Ar ôl iddynt gau roedd pobl yn ysbeilio ac yn anrheithio cyfarpar mwyngloddio, ond gellir parhau i weld rhai darnau bychain o beiriannau wedi eu gwasgaru o gwmpas yr ardal.

Roedd yna uchafbwyntiau yn y diwydiant o dro i dro, megis yr adeg pan werthodd Edward Evans, Leri Stores, Bwlchglas i 'Scottish Cardigan Lead Mines Ltd' o Glasgow rywbryd rhwng 1905 a 1907. Cafwyd ffyniant ym Montgoch ar y pryd a chynyddodd poblogaeth y pentrefyn o 16%. Fodd bynnag, ni fu llai na 21 gweithiwr ac ni fu mwy na 33 gweithiwr erioed yn y pwll, y cyflog isaf oedd 3/6d (tri swllt a chwe cheiniog) y diwrnod gyda'r uchafswm byth yn fwy na 6/8d (chwe swllt ac wyth geiniog) y diwrnod.

Yn y 1820au a'r 1830au newidiodd natur y diwydiant mwyngloddio yn sylweddol, yn bennaf oherwydd y dulliau gwell a ddefnyddiwyd yng Nghernyw ers i beiriannau pwmpio ager gael eu defnyddio. Lledaenodd y Cernywod i bob rhan o'r byd lle roedd mwyngloddio ac nid oedd Tal-y-bont yn eithriad. Mae yna hen ddywediad Saesneg 'By Tre, Pol and Pen, you may know the Cornishmen'. Yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg roedd rhai o drigolion Tal-y-bont, a symudodd yma i weithio yn y pyllau, yn dwyn yr enwau Sampson, Trevethan a William Paull. Roedd Henry Francis, mab Absalom – peiriannwr o Gernyw gydag enw da – yn lletya yn Nhal-y-bont oherwydd bod yma ysgol dda a oedd yn dysgu elfennau mwyngloddio a daeareg.

Ym 1883, wrth i bris plwm ddechrau gostwng, aeth dau ddyn o Dal-y-bont i weithio ym Mwyngloddiau Coniston. Cafodd sawl un arall waith fel ffitwr peiriannau. Aeth David John Edwards ('Davy John y Glo') gyda'i dad i Batum yn y Caucasus cyn y Chwyldro Rwsaidd ac yna i Chihuaua yn Mecsico lle y daethant ar draws chwyldro 1911. Yn y cyfamser roedd John James yn arolygu gosod peiriannau yn

the 1896 Report by H.M. Inspector of Mines for North Wales District lists the Tal-y-bont mines as Bryn yr Afr employing 50 workers, Bwlchglas employing 5 workers, Esgair-hir employing 40 workers and Pendinas employing 2 workers. When the mines started closing, the Tal-y-bont miners had to travel further and further to find employment. Salvage and looting of the mining equipment followed the closures, but some small items of machine parts can still be found scattered around the district.

There were spasmodic blips in the industry, such as the time when Edward Evans of Leri Stores sold Bwlchglas mine to the Scottish Cardigan Lead Mines Ltd of Glasgow sometime between 1905 and 1907. The mine caused a minor boom in Bontgoch at the time and the population of the hamlet rose by 16 per cent. However, there were never fewer than 21 employees and never more than 33 employed at the mine, the minimum wage being 3/6d (three shillings and sixpence) per day with the maximum never exceeding 6/8d (six shillings and eight pence) per day.

In the 1820s and 1830s the nature of the mining industry changed dramatically, mostly due to the improved methods being used in Cornwall since the introduction of steam pumping engines. The Cornish spread to all parts of the globe where there were mines and Tal-y-bont was no exception. There is an old adage that states 'By Tre, Pol and Pen, you may know the Cornishmen'. Some of the 19th century residents of Tal-y-bont were Sampson, Trevethan and William Paull who moved here to work the mines. Henry Francis, the son of Absalom – a Cornish engineer of some repute – lodged in Tal-y-bont because it had a good school which taught the basics of mining and geology.

In 1883, as the price of lead started to decline, two Tal-y-bont men went to work in the Coniston Mines. Several others found their niche as engine fitters. David John Edwards ('Davy John y Glo') accompanied his father to Batum in the Caucasus before the Russian Revolution and then to Chihuaua in Mexico where they became caught up in the revolution of 1911. Meanwhile John James was supervising the erection of machinery at Tolima and Frias in Columbia. His daughter was named Juanita,

*Gwaith Mwyn Bwlchglas ar ddechrau'r ganrif (E.O. Jones)*

*Bwlchglas Lead Mine at the beginning of the century (E.O. Jones)*

*Bwlchglas 2000*

Tolima a Frias yn Columbia. Enw ei ferch oedd Juanita, a dalfyrrwyd fel arfer i 'Nita'. Mae'n byw yn Nhal-y-bont ers blynyddoedd.

Pan oeddwn i'n fachgen yn y 1950au roedd atgofion am fwyngloddio yn fyw ym meddyliau pobl. Roedd y mwyafrif o ddynion a oedd yn gweithio yn y Ffatri wedi gweithio yn Allt y Crib, mwyngloddiau Bwlchglas neu yn Camdwr, yr enw poblogaidd ar Fryn yr Afr. Fy mhrif

which was usually abbreviated to 'Nita'. She has lived in Tal-y-bont for years.

When I was a boy in the 1950s the memories of mining were fresh in people's minds. Most of the men who worked in the Ffatri had worked at Allt y Crib, Bwlchglas mines or at Camdwr as Bryn yr Afr was popularly known. My main sources of information were Johnny Richards, Penlôn; Joe 'Bacco' Edwards; Felix Roberts and

ffynonellau ar gyfer yr wybodaeth hon oedd Johnny Richards, Penlôn; Joe 'Bacco' Edwards; Felix Roberts ac eraill. Yr oeddwn yn ddigon ifanc i dybio mai morwr oedd Capten Edwards o'r Llew Du, ac yn ddiweddarach o Lys Etna, yn hytrach na mwyngloddiwr ac yr oedd yn anodd amgyffred pam fod Bill Jaques yn siarad Cymraeg gydag acen Albanaidd.

Yn yr 1880au mentrodd Edward Evans, Leri Stores, drwy yrru lefel ym Mwlchglas i mewn i wythïen a ddarganfuwyd mewn ffos ar yr arwyneb. Erbyn 1907, roedd y prosiect wedi ennill momentwm sylweddol pan ffurfiwyd y 'Scottish Cardigan Mining Co.' a gofrestrwyd yn Glasgow. Ymddengys iddo gael ei ffurfio er mwyn diogelu buddiannau mwyngloddio Albanaidd rhag cael eu difetha yn sgîl anghytundebau llafur. Cyflogwyd yr ymgynghorwyr gorau a thra bod Green's o Aberystwyth yn darparu llawer o'r peiriannau safonol cyflenwyd rhai dyfeisiadau arloesol gan y 'Mineral Separation Co'. Erbyn 1912, Bwlchglas oedd un o'r pyllau mwyaf modern yn Ewrop ond gwnaethpwyd rhai camgymeriadau difrifol ac ymddengys bod hyn yn enghraifft glasurol o '... ormod o Benaethiaid a dim digon o Indiaid'. Erbyn 1916, yr oedd yn dioddef anhawster ariannol er gwaethaf y pris uchel a roddwyd ar fwyn plwm a sinc. Ym 1918 syrthiodd prisiau metel yn enbyd a gadawyd y pwll yn segur.

Yn union ar ôl y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf, rhoddodd Llywodraeth Prydain filoedd o dunelli o blwm a sinc ar y farchnad a syrthiodd y prisiau unwaith eto. Yn ogystal â hyn cynyddodd cyflogau'r gweithwyr o oddeutu £1 yr wythnos i £3 neu £4 yr wythnos. Roedd Ystad Gogerddan yn teimlo colli'r breindaliadau blaenorol yn enbyd ac yn gwrthod gostwng eu rhenti a'u telerau. Yn hytrach na derbyn telerau is, caeodd Syr Pryse Pryse, Gogerddan, a enwyd gan Gomisiwn Seneddol fel y perchennog, bwll Cwmsymlog.

Yng nghanol y 1930au cyflogwyd Edgar Humphreys gan Ward's o Sheffield i ddatgymalu'r peiriannau ym Mwlchglas a'u hail osod ym Mhenrhyngerwyn, Wyndham Morris o'r Wern oedd y trydanwr a Tom Brennan o Benrhiw oedd y peiriannydd. Parhaodd y fenter hon hyd 1939 pan aeth pwmp ar dân rhyw benwythnos; achosodd hyn y pren i gynnau ac roedd y siafft gyfan wedi llosgi allan erbyn yr adeg y cyrhaeddodd shifft fore Llun. Roedd Edgar yn ddisgynnydd o deulu'r Speddings o others. I was sufficiently young to assume that Captain Edwards of the Black Lion, later of Llys Etna, was a seafarer rather than a mining man and it was difficult to work out why Bill Jaques spoke Welsh with a Scottish accent.

In the 1880s Edward Evans of Leri Stores speculated by driving a level at Bwlchglas into a vein which had been discovered in a trench on the surface. By 1907, the project had gained considerable momentum with the formation of the Scottish Cardigan Mining Co. registered in Glasgow. This appears to have been formed to protect Scottish lead mining interests from crumbling due to labour disputes. The best consultants were employed and whilst Green's of Aberystwyth supplied much of the standard machinery, some innovative devices were supplied by The Mineral Separation Co. By 1912, Bwlchglas was one of the most modern mines in Europe but some critical mistakes had been made and it would appear to be a classical case of '... too many Chiefs and not enough Indians'. By 1916, it was in financial difficulty despite the high values placed on lead and zinc ores. In 1918 the metal prices plummeted and the mine was placed on care and maintenance.

Immediately after the First World War, the British Government dumped thousands of tons of lead and zinc onto the market and the prices plummeted yet again. In addition to this, miners' wages soared from about £1 per week to £3 or £4 per week. The Gogerddan Estate was desperately missing its previous royalties and refused to reduce their rents and terms. Sir Pryse Pryse of Gogerddan, named by a Parliamentary Commission as the landlord, closed Cwmsymlog mine rather than accepting reduced terms.

In the mid 1930s Edgar Humphreys of Penlôn was employed by Ward's of Sheffield to dismantle the machinery at Bwlchglas and re-erect it at Penrhyngerwyn, Wyndham Morris of the Wern was the electrician and Tom Brennan of Penrhiw was the engineer. This venture ran until 1939 when a pump caught fire one weekend; this set fire to the timbers and the whole shaft was burned out by the time the shift arrived on Monday morning. Edgar is a descendant of the Speddings of Cumbria who settled at Cwmsymlog in the 1840s and shared a house with the Reeds of Wendron,

## *Mwynwyr*

*Roedd y mwynwyr yn teithio i Gamdwr a Bwlchglas ac yn cario pecyn o fara, cig a chaws ar eu cefnau, ac yn aros yno am wythnos mewn barics. Byddai chwain yn eu poenydio, a'r mwynwyr yn eu llosgi gyda gwêr cannwyll, a'r flanced wely ymhen amser wedi mynd fel tarpwlin.*

*Caledfryn Evans*
Papur Pawb
*Rhagfyr 1979*

*Byddai'r mwynwr yn cychwyn o Dal-y-bont am 4 o'r gloch ar fore Llun gan gyrraedd yno tua saith a dechrau ar ei waith am wyth; hanner awr i ginio a gorffen am hanner awr wedi pump. Arhosai ym marics y Sbaen ar hyd yr wythnos a cherdded adre' ar nos Wener. Byddai gan bob un ei dorth, hanner pwys i bwys o fenyn, 2 owns o de ac ychydig o facwn neu sgadan coch i bara wythnos. Gyda'r nos yn yr haf byddent yn pysgota nentydd y mynydd, a rheini'n llawn o bysgod, ac ar nosweithiau hir y gaeaf byddent yn chwarae cardiau neu trafod gwleidyddiaeth a chrefydd. Cyflog hogyn oedd swllt y dydd a'r dynion yn derbyn o hanner coron i dri swllt. Oes fer oedd i weithwyr mwyn gan fod y llwch yn mynd i'r frest, mwg y tanio'n aros o hyd, a'r lle mor fwll weithiau nes bod y gannwyll yn peidio â llosgi. Fe godwyd nifer o gapeli yn sgil y gweithfeydd mwyn ac un o rheini oedd capel Tabor.*

Papur Pawb
*Ionawr 1978*

## *Miners*

*The miners walked to Camdwr and Bwlchglas carrying bread, meat and cheese on their backs; they stayed there in the barracks for the week. Fleas were a problem; the miners burnt them with candle grease and in time the bedclothes became like a tarpaulin.*

*Caledfryn Evans*
Papur Pawb
*December 1979*

*The miner set off from Tal-y-bont at 4 o'clock on a Monday morning, arriving there at about 7 to start work at 8; he had half an hour for lunch and finished work at half past five. He stayed at the Spanish barracks for the week and walked home on Friday evening. Every miner had a loaf, half to 1lb. of butter, 2 ounces of tea and a little bacon or smoked herring to last the week. In the summer evenings the miners would go fishing in the mountain streams which were full of fish. During the long, winter evenings they played cards or had political and religious discussions. A boy's wage was a shilling a day and the men received half a crown to three shillings. The miner's life was a short one as the dust settled in the lungs, the smoke from the firing lingered in the air and sometimes the place was so close the candle would not burn. Chapels were built near the mines; one of these was Tabor chapel.*

Papur Pawb
*January 1978*

Cumbria a ymsefydlodd yng Nghwmsymlog yn y 1840au gan rannu tŷ â'r Reeds o Wendron, cyndeidiau Kathleen Richards, Bryn ac Ann Jenkins, Llety'r Bugail. Lladdwyd William Reed gan fygdarthau tanio ym Mhwll Mynydd Gorddu ym 1872. Roedd bridfa geffylau yn Nhanyrallt a oedd yn eiddo i'r teulu Thomas a wnaeth eu harian mewn mwyngloddio a nhw a gyllidodd bwll Erglodd am gyfnod byr oddeutu 1905.

Roedd Edward Evans o Leri Stores, ewythr Agnes, o deulu o fwyngloddwyr a dreuliodd beth amser ym Mhyllau Dylife uwch ben Llanbrynmair. Cyllidodd fentrau eraill hefyd megis y 'Pendinas Mining Co' a yrrodd bedair lefel i wythïen gopr a phlwm fechan ger Penpompren Ucha'. Tra cyflogwyd rhai dynion yno am ychydig flynyddoedd, ni the ancestors of Kathleen Richards, Bryn and Ann Jenkins, Llety'r Bugail. Blasting fumes in the Mynydd Gorddu Mine in 1872 killed William Reed. The Thomases, who had made their money in mining, had a horse stud in Tanyrallt and it was they who financed a brief revival of the Erglodd mine circa 1905.

Edward Evans of Leri Stores, uncle of Agnes, was from a mining family who had spent some time at the Dylife Mines above Llanbrynmair. He also financed other ventures such as the Pendinas Mining Co. which drove four levels into a small copper and lead vein near Penpompren Ucha'. Whilst it employed a few men for a couple of years, it never attracted the same interest as Bwlchglas. In association with W.H.

ddenodd yr un diddordeb â Bwlchglas. Mewn cydweithrediad â W.H. Newmarch o'r Wern, ail agorwyd amrywiol byllau ganddynt ger Nant y Moch a Chwmsymlog ond erbyn hyn roedd prisiau yn wael a'r cyfyngiadau yn fwy anodd. Hyd yn oed yn y 1950au, roedd Leri Stores yn perthyn i'r oes o'r blaen. Roedd yno o hyd olion ffiwsiau, taclau, lampau ac offer eraill ar gyfer mwyngloddwyr wedi eu cadw mewn hen flychau gelignit. Yn ogystal â'r tŷ bach roedd yno arfdy bach ar wahân yn yr ardd wrth gefn y siop.

Yn ystod y 1940au cynnar agorodd Mervin Dandrick Bwll Pandy ychydig i'r gogledd o Fedd Taliesin a thra cafwyd hyd i beth mwyn o ansawdd da, methodd Dandrick hybu'r fenter mewn dull priodol ac yn ôl pob cyfrif roedd y gwaith wedi dod i ben erbyn 1947. Y ffrwydron a gadwyd ar y safle oedd achos damwain yn ddiweddarach pan gollodd Hugh 'Bwtsiwr' ei fys.

Enynnwyd fy niddordeb mewn mwyngloddio yn niwedd y 1950au ac ar ddechrau'r 1960au. Ar Fedi 3ydd 1966, mentrais o dan y ddaear i bwll Allt y Crib gyda fy nghyfaill ysgol Simon Read. Ychydig yn ddiweddarach cwrddais ag Emlyn Humphreys, yn awr yn gweithio i gontractwyr yn Rhuthun; bu'n gweithio'r chwarel yn Aberllefenni a chadwodd lygad arnom gan adrodd yn ôl i'n rhieni. Hyd yma yr oeddwn wedi ystyried bod yn batholegydd neu yn wyddonydd fforensig.

Yn ffodus i mi, yn ystod haf 1968, cynigiwyd swydd i mi gan gwmni o Ganada o'r enw Cambrian Exploration Ltd oedd â'u swyddfa leol yn Nhynrhelig. Ein gwaith oedd gweld pa werth oedd i'r mwyn a oedd ar ôl ym mhyllau hen Ystad Gogerddan, yr oedd ganddynt hwy brydles arnynt. Roedd rhai o'r canlyniadau yn galonogol, tra roedd eraill yn anobeithiol, a thros gyfnod o bedair blynedd casglwyd gwybodaeth sylweddol. Syrthiodd prisiau metel yn enbyd yng nghanol y 70au ond ar ôl iddynt godi eto wedi cyfnod o chwe blynedd ail ffurfiwyd y cwmni o dan yr enw Aber Resources Limited ac yn dilyn cyfnod yn Nicaragua fel arolygwr mwyngloddiau, bum yn gweithio fel rheolwr iddynt am gyfnod pellach o bedair blynedd. Ar yr un pryd roeddwn yn rhedeg busnes contractio ac ymgynghori o Dal-y-bont, yn y dechrau ar y cyd â Bob Mathews ac yna gyda John 'The Rock' Mason.

*Simon Hughes*

Newmarch of the Wern, they re-opened various mines near Nant y Moch and Cwmsymlog but by this time prices were poor and the constraints were becoming more difficult. Even in the 1950s, Leri Stores was of a bygone age. It still had remnants of fuses, miners' tools, lamps and other supplies kept in old gelignite boxes. In addition to the 'tŷ bach' there was a small and discrete magazine in the garden behind the store.

During the early 1940s Mervin Dandrick opened the Pandy Mine just to the north of Bedd Taliesin and whilst some good ore was found, Dandrick failed to promote the venture in an appropriate manner and by most accounts it had ceased working by 1947. The explosives that had been kept on site were later responsible for an accident in which Hugh 'Butcher' Davies lost a finger.

My interest in mining had been kindled in the late 1950s and early 1960s. On the 3rd September 1966, I first ventured underground at Allt y Crib mine with my school chum Simon Read. A little later I met Emlyn Humphreys, now working for some contractors from Ruthin; he had worked the slate mine at Aberllefenni and kept an eye on us and reported back to our parents. Up to this time I'd thought about becoming a pathologist or forensic scientist.

Luckily for me, in the summer of 1968, Cambrian Exploration Ltd, a Canadian company with their local office at Tynrhelig approached me with a job offer. Our job was to evaluate what ore had been left standing in the old Gogerddan Estate mines, for which they had taken a lease. Some of the results were encouraging whilst others were dismal and over a four year period a considerable amount of data was amassed. Metal prices plummeted in the mid 1970s but when they picked up after a six year lull the company reformed and returned as Aber Resources Ltd. and, following a jaunt to Nicaragua as a mines inspector, I acted as their manager for a further four years. At the same time I also ran a contracting and consulting business from Tal-y-bont, firstly with Bob Matthews and then with John 'The Rock' Mason.

*Simon Hughes*