

EXTRACT FROM ALMICHÉ

" MINING ACTIVITY NEAR NEWTOWN, POWYS "

BY TREVOR MORRIS

4. *Melin-y-Gloch, Aberhafesp* (Also known as Bwlchffridd or Sqwlfa)
So066943.

At Melin-y-gloch by the site of the Bwlchffridd Aberhafesp road are the remains of some quite extensive mining activity. There are three levels driven in a north easterly direction. The most southerly level contains water and is used as a water supply so was not explored. The middle level is blocked while the third level connects with a shaft on the hillside above. The vein strikes in a north easterly direction occurring at a high horizon in Llandovery rocks of Ordovician Age immediately underlying rocks of Silurian Age.

The mining activity took place about 1868 when the Melin-y-Gloch Lead Mining Company Limited was formed to search for lead, under the sponsorship of Lord Joycy of Gregynog Hall. The attempt proved unsuccessful and was abandoned a few years later.²⁶ The mining company was set up to find the easterly extension of the Van Lode. The Van Lode fades away at East Van and this was one of the numerous unsuccessful attempts to relocate it at the time of this mining fever.

Lord Joycy was in fact deceived into investing money in a non-profitable mine. Whenever he used to visit the mine, the miners would buy some lead ore from the Van Mine, put the ore into the head of the level and continue blasting. On blasting, the lead ore would be mixed with the natural rock and Lord Joycy would be encouraged to invest further money. The miners were eventually found out and jailed.²⁷

²⁵ G. W. Hall. "The Van's Nominal Family." *Shropshire Mining Club Yearbook*, 1965-66. Newport, Salop.

²⁶ *History of Bwlchffridd* — Anon. Written for Bwlchffridd Eisteddfod, Christmas Day 1909. Presented to the Montgomeryshire County Library, 18th May, 1930.

²⁷ This tale was related to the author by the late Mr. D. T. Hamer, Crescent Street, Newtown, whose father was foreman at the Van crushing plant. Quite independent.