

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Regional Historic Environment Record

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Drws y Coed Copper Mine, Llanllyfni

Primary Reference Number (PRN) : 20535

Trust : Gwynedd

Community : Llanllyfni

NGR : SH54605342

Site Type (preferred type first) : MULTI-PERIOD COPPER MINE

Legal Protection : Scheduled Ancient Monument

Summary :

Drws y Coed Copper Mine is believed to have been worked in the thirteenth century, and may have been worked in the Bronze Age and in the Roman period. The mine was at work again by 1760 and was abandoned by 1777. It was revived in 1792, and operations continued spasmodically to 1920.

The area of the mine on the slopes of Fron Felen (SH 5450 5430 C) was actively exploited in the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth, an extensive series of workings of typical late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century type, exemplifying the pre-mechanised nature of copper mining in Wales in this period. The area covers 1.5 hectares and extends from 150m above ordnance datum to 200m above ordnance datum. It is riddled with small-scale features connected with the extraction and processing of copper ore - adits, tips, cobbing shelters.

The stone walls and base of a water-driven stamp-mill survive SH54415345. It is the earliest (1769) dated stamp-mill (in which ore-bearing rock was reduced by vertical stamps operated by a cam action) to survive substantially intact in Wales, and is unusual in that it is built out of stone. The twentieth century mill site immediately to the east, centered on SH 5460 5340 is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (C162).

Near the mine are two short rows of houses (SH542534 and SH546536), one of three dwellings, one of five, as well as a number of detached cottages. Each of the dwellings has a single door in the long wall and two rooms. They were in existence by 1830-31

The small roofless and dilapidated chapel near the houses was built in 1836 by both the Baptists and the Independents. This served the community until a rock fell through the roof in 1892, and the congregation constructed the present chapel.

Description :

(SH 544535) Drws-y-Coed Copper Mine (dis) (NAT)

The Drws-y-Coed copper mine produced copper pyrites and its deepest workings were 480ft. Tradition has it that copper ore was mined here by the Romans, and that in the late 13th century the mine was visited by Edward I. In 1761 a group of Cornish adventurers came for the ore but were unsuccessful. The workings started sometime before 1767 and continued until 1890. A railway was opened in 1828 and carried ore from the quarry to Nantlle Pool, a distance of 9.5 miles. In 1829 there were many buildings on the site. The existing remains include buildings, waterwheel pit, engine-house, shaft, water tower, and foundations for crushers and dressing machines. <1>

Sources :

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Events :

40413 : Gwynedd Metal Mines Survey (year : 1998)

Related PRNs : 33774

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