

The Bryneglwys Incline System

Bryneglwys quarry incline and horse tramway system was a way of transporting slate down from the quarry to the railway and of transporting goods and 'night-soil' between the village and the railway. This system, linking both the quarry and the village with the railway, is thought to be unique.

The quarry and village inclines were 'self-balancing'; loaded wagons going downhill hauled the empty wagons uphill.

There were two lines of rails on each incline, each with a steel rope to which the wagons were attached. The ropes were run out from a horizontally-mounted winding drum in a drum house at the top of the incline. As one rope ran out the other was wound onto the drum. The speed of the wagons was controlled using a band brake pressing on the drum.

Along the length of the incline, rollers kept the rope from wearing out through friction on the ground.

Further Information

More detailed information can be found in the Quarry Inclines History companion leaflet or on our Facebook page (address on back of leaflet).

Websites

naturalresources.wales/nantgwernol
coflein.gov.uk - search for Abergynolwyn/Bryneglwys talyllyn.co.uk/about/history
narrowgaugerailwaymuseum.org.uk
llechi.cymru

Videos

Visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/channel/UCHeq3AlrqQY4HPgxZNDdu3g

Books

Bryneglwys Slate Quarry, Abergynolwyn, Merionethshire by Alan Holmes & Sara Eade 2013.
Slates from Abergynolwyn: The story of Bryneglwys Slate Quarry by Alan Holmes 1986.

Cover top photo: Cantrybedd Incline Drum © Ann Hatherill
Cover bottom photo: Lower Dressing Sheds © Tom Chapman

Abergynolwyn, probably the only village in the world to have its own dedicated incline!

About the Abergynolwyn Community Heritage Project

The Abergynolwyn Community Heritage (ACH) project was set up in response to Gwynedd Council's bid to acquire UNESCO World Heritage status for the North West Wales Slate Landscape Areas, including Bryneglwys Quarry, Abergynolwyn Village and the Talyllyn Railway.

The ACH project provides an opportunity for current and former members of the local community to share their own local heritage and knowledge of this landscape and to have a voice in shaping how World Heritage status might impact on it.



15B Incline and Winding House
© Jane Thornton 1979

Our Partners:



Facebook: Abergynolwyn Community Heritage
Email: abergynolwyncommunityheritage@gmail.com



Treftadaeth Gymunedol
Abergynolwyn
Community Heritage

Heritage Trail: The Quarry Inclines Walk



A walk exploring the industrial heritage landscape of Abergynolwyn village and Bryneglwys Quarry

This route takes you up the narrow gorge of Nant Gwernol to the higher ground where the Bryneglwyns slate quarries were located.

It is a “strenuous” walk of approximately 6.4km (4 miles) climbing 250 metres (800 feet). Allow at least 2.5 hours.

1 If you are starting your walk from the car park in Abergynolwyn village, walk past the Ganolfan (village hall) and up the short steep hill past the ‘Not Suitable for Motor Vehicles’ sign.

2 After approximately 125 metres, turn right on to a footpath and follow this path alongside the river up to a bridge. Do not cross the bridge.

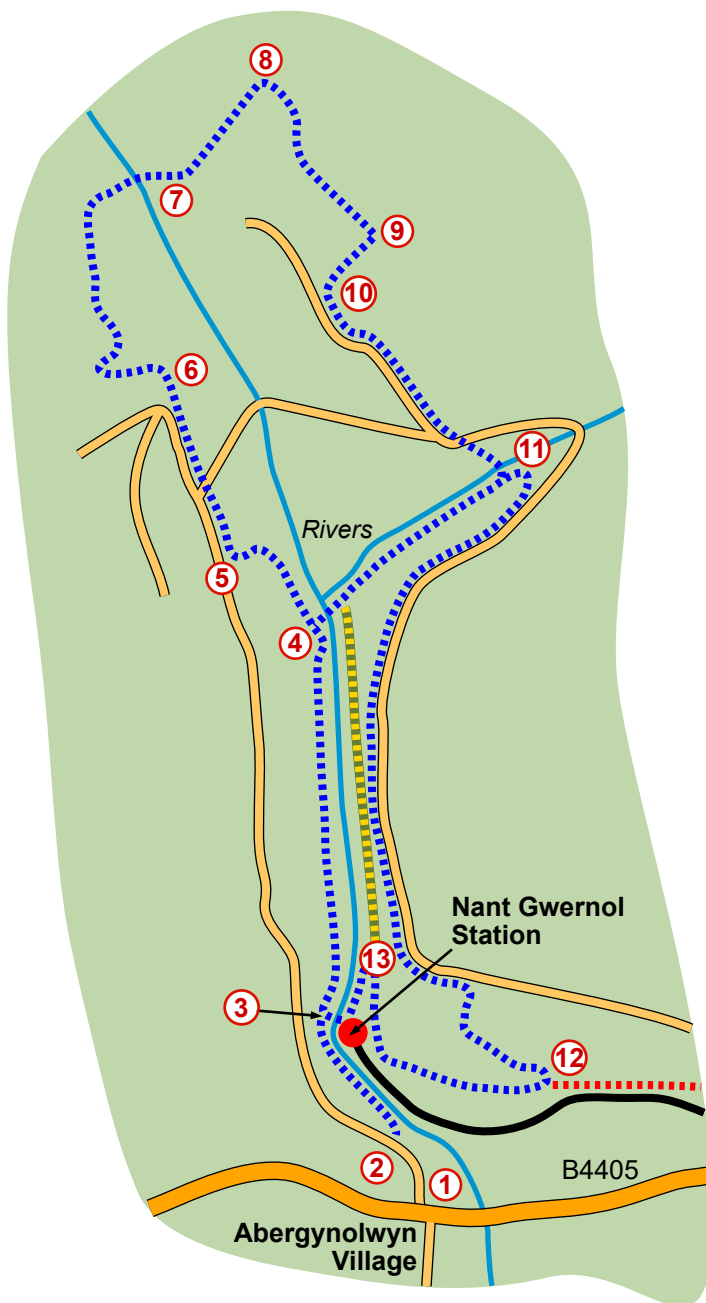
3 If you are starting your walk from Nant Gwernol station after arriving on the Talylyn Railway, follow the level path from the end of the platform and cross the river bridge. Whichever route you have arrived on, take the path up the steep steps cut into the rock, which can be slippery when wet. At the top of these steps, follow the path straight ahead, beside the river.

4 You will arrive at a second bridge over the river. The **BLUE** route path climbs off to the left. If you only wish a short walk, you can cross the river bridge and take the few steps up to the level of the old horse tramway, then turn right and follow the level course of the tramway to point **13**. This is waymarked path **YELLOW**. The **BLUE** waymarked path climbs up, with the river on your right and slate tips on the other side of the river.

5 At the top of the climb you will join the gated farm road that forms an alternative route up from Abergynolwyn village. Turn right on to this farm road.

6 You will come to a place where a track leads off to the right, down to the former **Cantrybedd** level of the quarry. The farm road veers left up the hill. You need to take the grass path that goes forward on the level. This takes you past a small stream after which it crosses the line of the former **Beudynewydd Incline**. A short distance beyond this you reach the level of the quarry tramway. Turn right and follow this path, with the (now flooded) Broad Vein quarry to your left. The path follows a gentle right hand curve into the old quarry workings at this level.

Heritage Trail: The Quarry Inclines Walk



7 At the talking post in the forest road turning circle, turn left and take the narrow woodland path up to where it becomes straight at the former **Boundary Incline**, with abandoned workings on your left and slate waste tips on your right. At the top of this incline proceed straight ahead up another incline, the aptly named **Short Incline**.

8 At the top of the **Short Incline**, turn right and follow the level path with the slate waste tips on your right.

9 The level section ends at the top of **Cwmcwm Incline**. Follow the grass incline down to the road.

10 At the bottom of the incline, turn left on to a modern forestry road. After about 700 metres another forestry road merges from the right. Turn left on to this road and then after a short distance, turn right off the road and follow a path down to a bridge over the small river.

11 Here you have a choice of two routes. If you turn right you follow a path down alongside the river to point **4** where you will see the **Cantrybedd Incline** on your right before the bridge. This path is steep and can be muddy and slippery when wet. At point **4** you can either retrace your steps along the path that follows the river downstream, or you can follow the level path along the old tramway, with views down to the river, as far as point **13**. For a longer walk from point **11**, turn left after you have crossed the river and follow the path upwards to the forestry road. Turn right on to this road and follow the **BLUE** waymarked path.

12 The **BLUE** waymarked path joins the **RED** (which is the ‘Stations Link’ path from Abergynolwyn station to Nant Gwernol station). Turn right and follow the path to the **Alltwyllt Incline**.

13 Turn left on to the path that leads down the incline. Part of the incline is now made into steps (no handrail) but throughout there is loose slate, so care is needed. At the foot of the incline either turn left to go to Nant Gwernol station, or turn right to cross the river bridge, then turning left on to the path back to Abergynolwyn village.

IMPORTANT SAFETY ADVICE: Please ensure you wear sturdy footwear. Do not stray from the paths as the old works can be dangerous. It is unlikely that you will have mobile phone coverage on this route.