

Access to Gwrych Castle Mines and Caves

The OS map of the Gwrych Castle area does not show any public footpaths, however there seem to be three permissive paths used by local people to gain access to the woods and these can be used to gain access to the areas of interest.

Access to the Castle, the remains of the adit and the open shafts further up the hill is easiest via the 'green gate' on the Tan-y-Gopa road at SH93397717. There is space for a couple of cars to be parked at the entrance to the Tan-y-Gopa woods. Passing through the gate there is a dirt track which heads directly towards the castle. There is a significant amount of landscaping work in progress but it should be possible to climb up the hill to a higher path which passes above and behind the castle. The castle adit lies at SH92757753 in a clearing with a few trees. It is not possible to see the adit from the upper path and it is not very obvious from a lower one. A GPS seems to work fairly reliably and is recommended to aid navigation, there is a dead tree just above the adit but other than that there are no other markers. The adit heads directly into the hillside in a SW direction, but is blocked after about 15m by sandy in-fill. It would be an easy dig, but further collapses may be a problem and it is in an area popular with families.



Gwrych Castle Adit



End of Adit

Heading directly up the hill proves more interesting as there is a long trench in a fenced off area. The first thing of note is an open hole at SH92737752 with a convenient nearby tree as an anchor. The hole looks like it is probably the result of stopes reaching the surface and it there looks to be an earth bridge dividing the hole. The hole is about 28m deep and has quite a few blocked side passages and some pack-wall. There are traces of galena on the walls. There is quite a lot of loose material around, but there should be no problems descending/ascending the hole. Use a rope protector or arrange a deviation from one of the other trees. A little further up at SH92727750 is a square shaft. We did not descend this but think that this is the shaft GOES went down in 80's and, again, this seems to have suffered from collapses in the connecting passages.



Abseiling the stope



At base of stope



Square Shaft

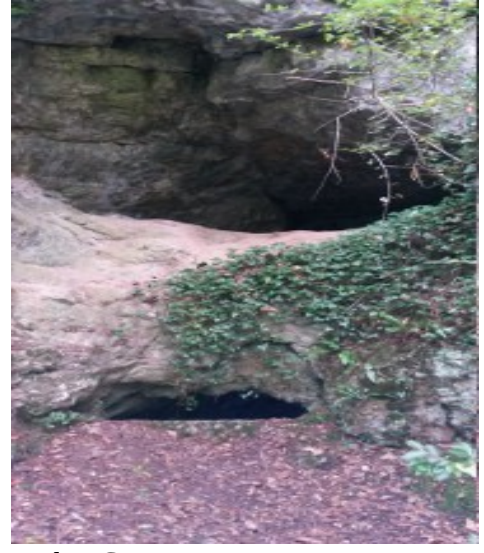
Further up the hill, towards the boundary fence with farmland near SH92707746, there are a series of shallow depressions which could be ancient surface trials or the site of collapsed shafts. The latter seems more likely as the spoil heaps are not very extensive. There seems to be little else in the area until old shaft mounds are encountered on the edge of the woods at SH92227733 and this really marks the limit of exploration from this side.



old shaft mound



Adit near Dulas Cave



Dulas Cave

Access to the Dulas valley workings and Ogof Dulas is from the far side of the estate. It is easiest to park on the village green at Rhyd-y-Foel and take the wide path near the main road which runs North into the forest and almost parallel to the road initially. After some distance the path splits and descends slightly. A narrow path carries on and after a short distance rubble is seen on the hillside above. This is spoil from the adit at SH91377754. Sadly this adit appears to be a trial and stops after 100m. Carrying on along the path and taking a right hand fork leads to Ogof Dulas a few metres uphill at SH91367759. Ogof Dulas is clearly a natural cave but has been modified by mining, there is the remains of an adit under the cave and inside there are various shafts. At the far end a muddy bank blocks what probably would have been a continuation running under the hill and on the surface there are several pits which may be run-in shafts. Definitely an area which would repay a bit of investigation and digging...

The final area of interest is the Tan-yr-Ogof caves which are visible from the expressway. The easiest approach is to park in 'New Road' near Terfyn and walk along the B road towards the expressway. After a couple of hundred metres there is a break in the wall which gives access to a path and this can be followed in a zigzag course up to the caves.

Dave Tyson 17th November 2015