Site Name: Bryntail Mine

RIGS Category: Historical & Scientific **Earth Science Category**: Mineralogy

Geology 1:50,000: BGS Sheet 164, Llanidloes

RIGS Statement of Interest:

A key feature of the eastern part of the Central Wales Orefield, in western Powys, is the relative abundance of barium (Ba) mineralisation, which was worked in substantial quantities in the Llanidloes district. Bryntail Mine RIGS, and the neighbouring Penyclun Mine RIGS, 1km along strike on the same lode to the ENE, are the best localities for studying the mineralisation and, in addition, both feature interesting industrial archaeology. At Bryntail a fine collection of old buildings has been restored for public interpretation.

Bryntail mine worked the Van Lode, or a branch of it, and produced over 3000 tons of galena concentrates during the mid 19th Century and also several thousand tonnes of barite, working for the latter continuing into the 1930s. It was also worked under the name Van Consols (note that O.T. Jones confuses this with Penyclun); it became commonplace in the latter part of the 19th Century to try to involve "Van" as part of the name of a mine when promoting it on the Stock Exchange, Van itself being one of the greatest lead-producers in the UK. None of these other mines, despite having been given the "Van treatment", lived up to the name!

The chief interest, both here and at Penyclun (where witherite is the predominant Ba-bearing phase), is the origin of a localised area within the orefield, where Ba mineralisation is so well-developed; apart from one very minor occurrence it is absent from Ceredigion. It is noted that scattered occurrences of Ba mineralisation are present from the Llanidloes area to the Welsh Border, with, just beyond, the SW Shropshire Orefield, where barite was a major product. It is certainly a subject deserving further study. The tips at Bryntail, although picked over by generations of students, still yield useful research samples of both barite and galena, along with sphalerite, calcite and minor chalcopyrite.

Surveyed by: J.S. Mason