

## **Penclawdd Canal**

**Reprinted from “A Dark & Pagan Place” by R N Cooper**

The major part of the railway track between Gowerton and Penclawdd was built on top of the ill fated Penclawdd Canal. This short lived venture was built initially to serve a mine opened by Messrs. Lockwood, Morris and Leyson at “Wain Arglwydd” (Waunarlwydd). It was completed in 1812 and on May 25<sup>th</sup> it was announced that coals were ready for export at the “New Dock” at Penclawdd. This new dock was probably built on the foundations of an older basin and projected at right angled to the line of the canal at Abercedi. At its out end it reached as far as the main river channel so that vessels had reasonably easy access to it. The dock structure was 130 feet wide and had a quay wall 183 feet long. This dock is interesting since it is one of the very few artefacts of the industrial era left standing around Penclawdd. The canal basin can still be discerned and parts of the quay wall.

The canal itself was 8 feet wide. Its course within Subboscus fruns for less than a mile to Berthlwyd from whence it continues on to Gowerton along the edge of the marsh. Around Berthlwyd it makes a curve inland in order to follow the contour of the land and around this point it can be clearly seen but for most of its length it is overlain by the railway track built in 1865. The canal and dock were used for only 4 or 5 years. The small number of mines at its head had been taken as a major factor contributing to the lack of traffic. By 1817 the canal was disused but in spite of this the canal company was still meeting in 1845. By this time, however, the company can have entertained little hope of reviving the project and they must have been relieved to have the land taken off their hands for more advanced transport methods.