

n°18 The Hesses slate surveys

From the second half of the 19th century onwards, this small, deep valley between two forested areas became a hotbed of slate surveying.

From the *Labotte* mill to the foot of *Madame de Cormont's rock*, on the right bank of the stream, you can still see the more or less visible traces of several test boreholes drilled during slate surveying operations, some more successful than others, and often chosen empirically.

Two of these test boreholes, which can still be made out near the Hesses clearing, are of particular significance.

These two holes are not a slate mine, but galleries used to find a seam of shale. One is horizontal, the other oblique, measuring just a few dozen metres.

The surveying did not reveal the presence of sufficient slate deposits to open a mine.

You will notice that the water runoff is very ferruginous. Iron ore was mined and worked in other parts of the local area in the 17th century.

Of all these surveys, only three led to the opening of small slate mines, including the *Saint-Martin* or *Trou Cadet* slate mine, the largest of the three.



The slate surveys
© Guy Lépine