

Quarries

Sacred Geography

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2021 UNESCO – declared six areas of Northwest Wales, Gwynedd, as a Slate Landscape

<https://museum.wales/slate/story-of-slate/>



Welsh Slate and the Miners

A Case Study of Stone and its Miners



Slate has been quarried in north Wales for over 1,800 years. The Romans used local slate to build the fortress at Segontium, Caernarfon



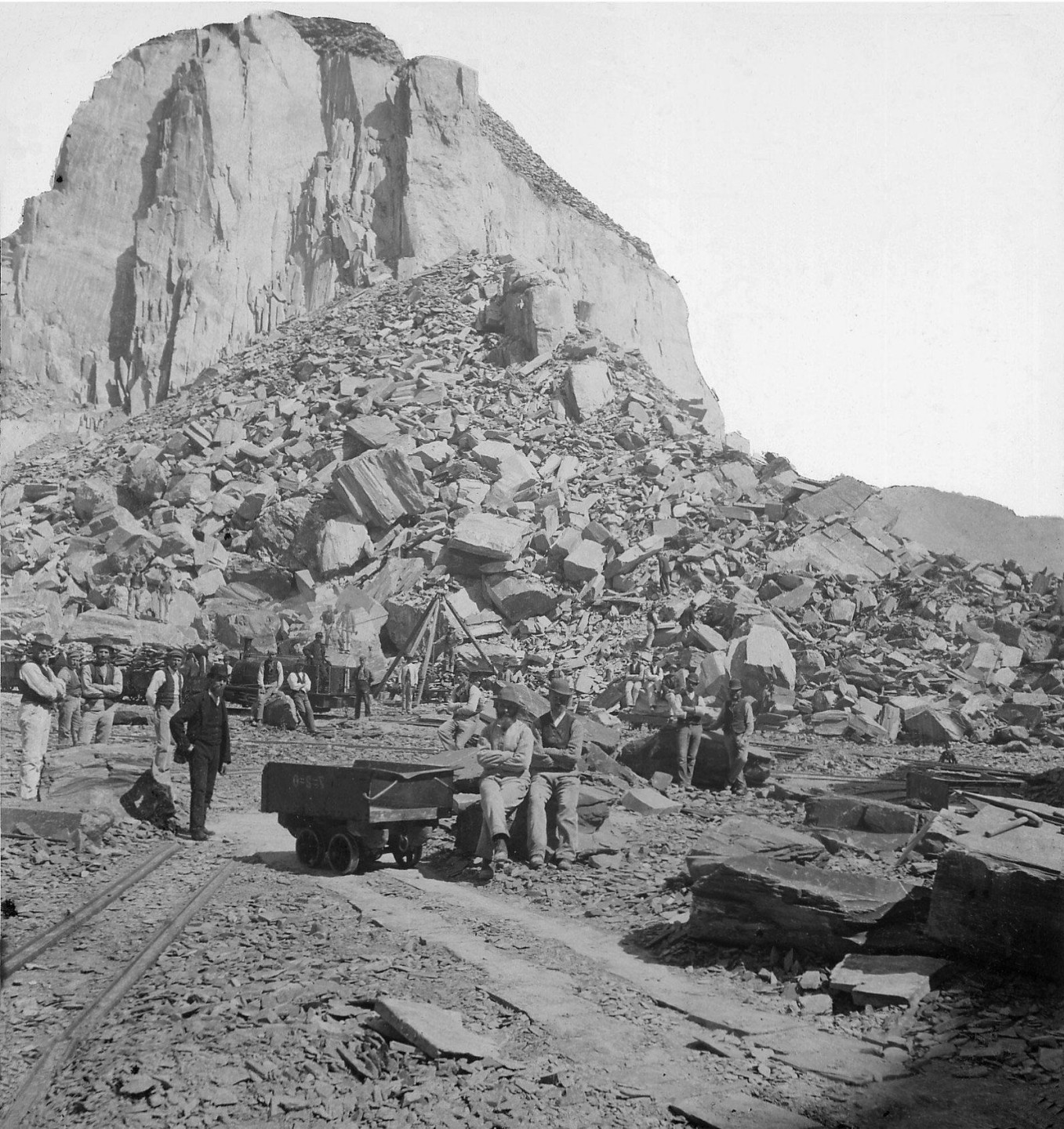


‘In 1882 the county's quarries [Northwest Wales] produced over 280,000 tons of finished roofing slates, and in 1898 the slate trade in Wales as a whole reached its peak with 17,000 men producing 485,000 tons of slate.

It's a story full of hope and magic as well as sadness and poverty.’



<https://museum.wales/slate/story-of-slate/>



The Welsh Slate
Museum talks of the
slate mining activities
as the idea of :

To Steal a Mountain

The stolen mountains of Northwest Wales



Roofing the World

‘Half the buildings in New York were once kept dry using Welsh slate, as was the Governor’s Palace at Williamsburg in Virginia. The decorative properties of differently shaped and coloured Welsh slates were greatly appreciated by the builders of the dome of the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, Australia, built in 1879. It was the roofing material of choice for the huge number of terraced houses built in cities such as Liverpool, Bristol, London, and Dublin during the 19th and early 20th centuries.’

Slate and Culture

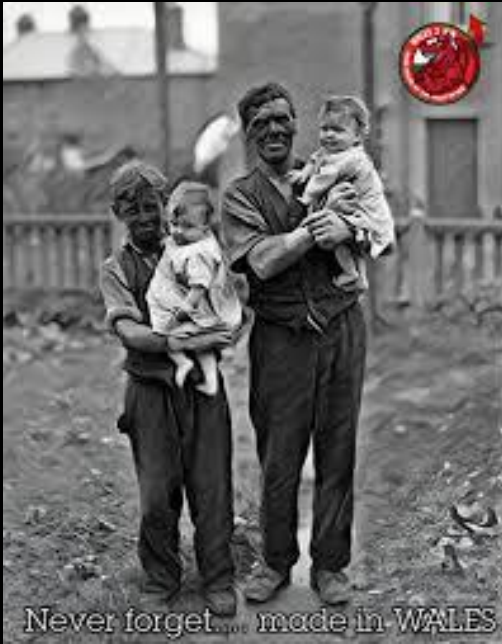
‘The extraction of slate from the hills of Snowdonia [Eryri] is not just an industry – it is a way of life bound up with chapel, politics, and the preservation of the Welsh language.’

<https://the-past.com/feature/welsh-slate-chiselling-through-time/>

Blue Slate Man, Chwarel Penrhyn, Bethesda, North Wales



Slate and its union with culture



‘It was possible, then, to become relatively prosperous in this industry through hard work and application; consequently, entry to the industry was jealously guarded, with some jobs being passed from father to son, or being under the control of one chapel congregation or another. The legacy is a vital culture – an intangible heritage in UNESCO terms – that is alive and well among the slate communities of North Wales, a blend of political radicalism, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to temperance and teetotalism, to education, and to Protestant non-conformity.’



UNESCO

Gwynedd Slate Landscape defined:

‘It is a cultural landscape
– one where the works of
nature and humankind
combine to express a
deep relationship
between people and their
natural environment.’

Slate and its union to culture

University at
Bangor,
established in
1884 with the
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the slate
quarrymen.

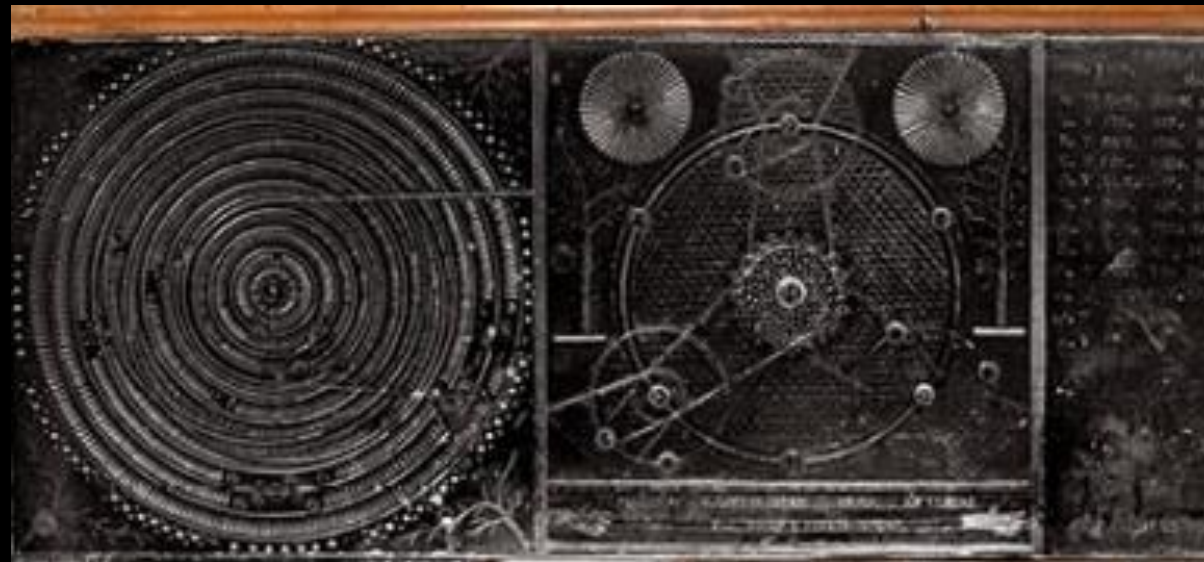


Slate and its union to culture



The University at Bangor, was established in 1884 with the contributions of the slate quarrymen.

Slate and its joining to human culture

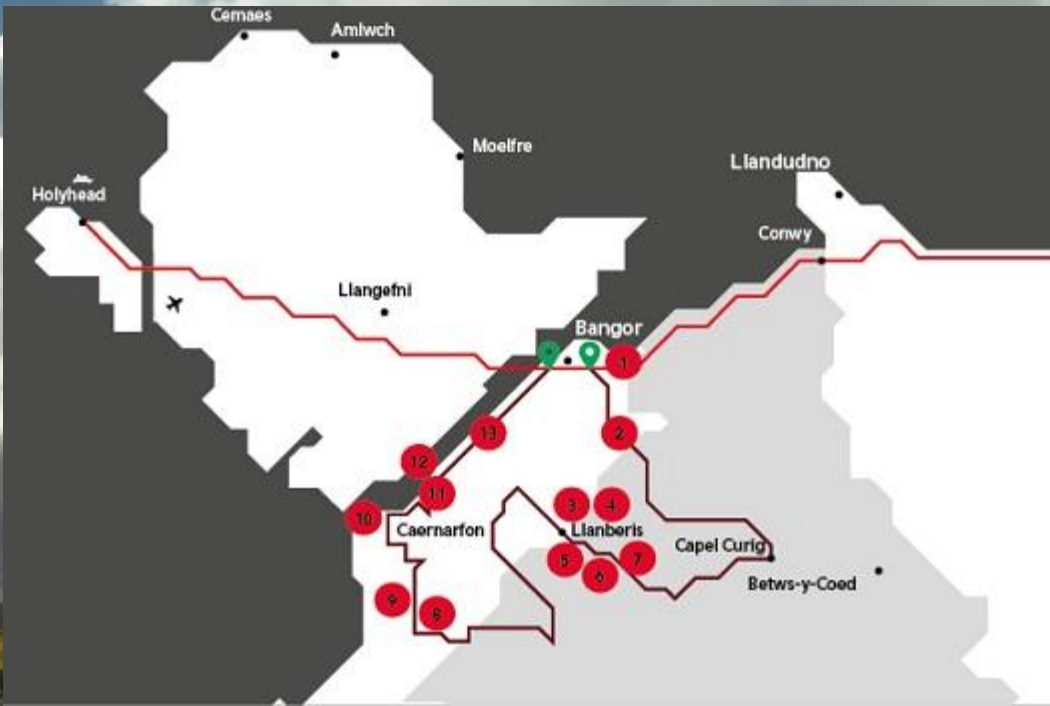


Slate and its union with culture



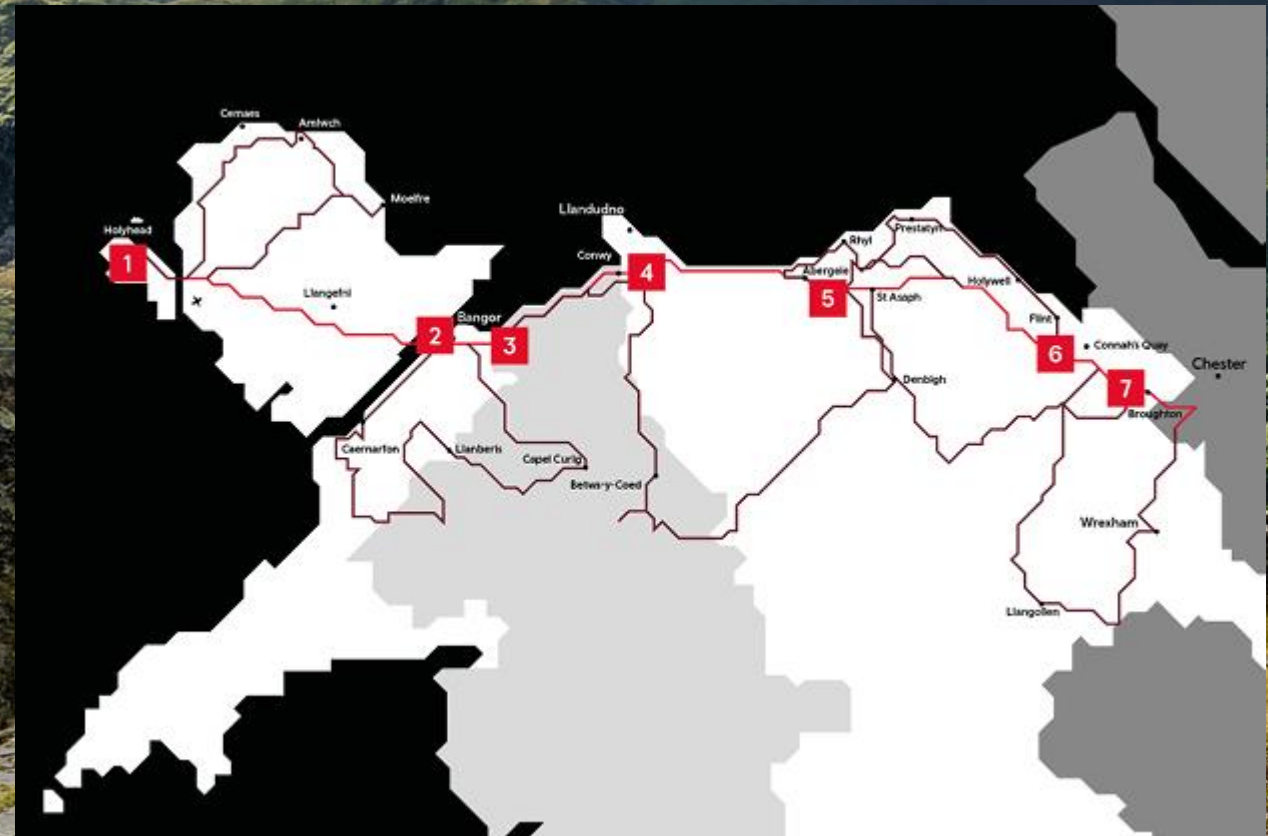
Slate is linked to:

- the maintenance of the Welsh language through the Industrial Revolution.
- The development in Wales of the idea of education in the working classes – the Cabans.
- The development of a Welsh Protestant work ethic.



Welsh Slate Shipping Routes

Where mountains moved or
did the mountains migrate?



Dinorwic Slate Quarry



How Landscapes Migrate

Mining:

Metal or stone is mined for building materials that are then shipped worldwide. Precious stones – shipped worldwide for objects and jewellery.

People:

Buy objects and take them home.
Find a stone on a path and take it home.

Mountains move by forming a
relationship with humans

Moving Mountains
Philip Gray



A symbiotic relationship is a close, long-term biological interaction between two or more organisms of different species. The term "symbiosis" comes from the ancient Greek word for 'living together'.

Another term is required in Sacred Geography for the union of the inorganic to the organic for mutual benefit of both.

- Bioinorganic is the synergy of organic and inorganic used in chemistry
- Bionics – used for implants – technology and human

Bioscape (a new Sacred Geography term):

A term to describe the cultural and environmental interplay between stone quarrying (inorganic landscape components) and human culture.

A **Bioscape** can represent the evolving relationship between humans and the geological environment shaped by, in this case, quarrying. It includes:



- **Physical Transformation:** The reshaping of landscapes through mining and quarrying for stone.
- **Cultural and Architectural Impact:** The use of quarried stone in creating enduring cultural landmarks (e.g., pyramids, temples, cathedrals).
- **Symbolism and Mythology:** How stones and quarries influence human stories, myths, and religious practices.
- **Economic and Social Systems:** How access to and trade in stone resources has historically driven settlement patterns, trade routes, and societal structures.
- **Environmental Consequences:** The long-term ecological effects of quarrying, altering the biosphere.