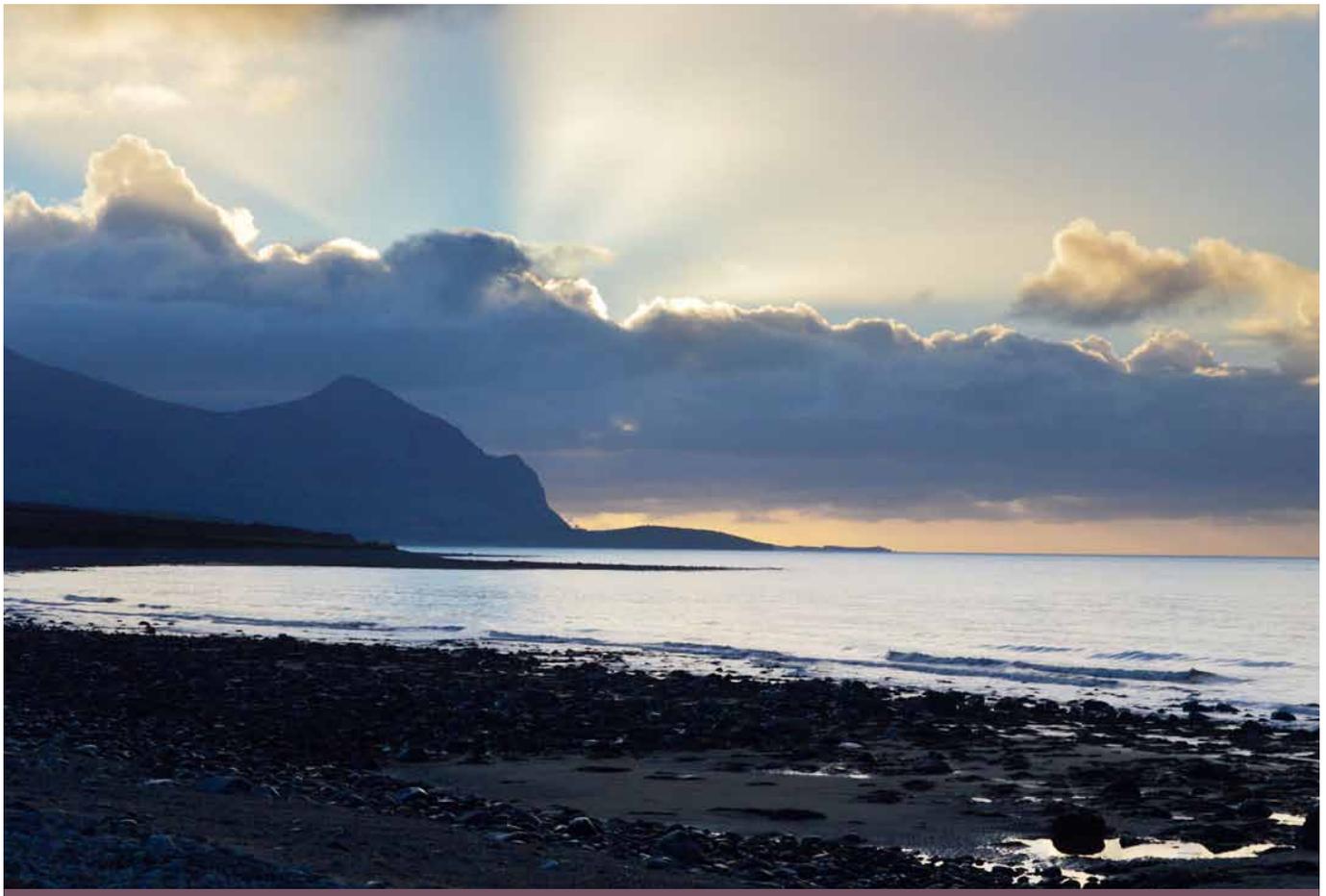




Ein Treftadaeth
Our Heritage

Quarries and Mines



Quarries of Pistyll and Nefyn

There were a number of small quarries between Carreg y Llam and Nefyn, the working conditions just as hard but they provided people with a wage at difficult times.

In Nefyn, there were 58 men working in the quarries in 1851, but with the demand for setts increasing and quarries opening more people moved into the area, particularly to Pistyll parish, according to the 1881 census.

Chwarel y Gwylwyr (quarry + Gwylwyr) (SH 31904140) above Nefyn opened in the 1830s. An incline ran from the quarry, across the road and down to the jetty on Wern beach (and its remains are still to be seen). The setts would be loaded onto ships, usually ones owned by the quarry owners.

There were two other quarries close to Pistyll village – **Chwarel Tŷ Mawr** (quarry + Tŷ Mawr) and **Chwarel Bodeilias** (quarry + Bodeilias) (SH 32004160). They were also productive at one time, and exporting from Doc Bodeilias (dock + Bodeilias) (SH 3190422). The work came to an end in the early years of the C20th but there are still remains to be seen.

Chwarel Moel Tŷ Gwyn (quarry+ bare hill + white house), Pistyll was opened in 1864 and **Chwarel Moel Dywyrch** (quarry + bare hill + sods) high up on Mynydd Nefyn near Carreg Lefain (rock + echo) in 1881. They closed in the early C20th.

Chwarel John Lloyd (Quarry + John Lloyd) on the slopes of Mynydd Nefyn was working from 1866 onwards, but closed for some periods and closed finally in 1937. One of its owners was John Lloyd Jones of Llandwrog.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government





Quarries and Mines of Llŷn



Trefor Quarry

There was great demand at one time for setts to pave the streets of cities in England, and granite quarries opened in Llŷn, bringing work for the men of the area. The granite came from the igneous rocks and the biggest quarries were on the Eifl mountains and Mynydd Nefyn. There were quarries at Mynydd Tir y Cwmwd, Llanbedrog and also excavations at Trwyn Dwmi, at Porth y Pistyll, Uwchmynydd. In addition, there was a quarry at Carreg yr Imbyll (Gimblet Rock) in Pwllheli. But there's more than just granite in Llŷn.

The earliest industrial production we have evidence of dates from five or six thousand years ago in the Neolithic age with the Stone Axe Factory at Mynydd y Rhiw

According to tradition, the Romans mined for lead at Penrhyn Du in Llanengan parish, and we have definite evidence of this happening in the mid C17th. Copper was mined at Pant Gwyn for a short time, and lead at Penrhyn Du, and over towards the village of Llanengan. In the C19th there were 240 miners employed, the majority from Cornwall.

Early in the C19th manganese was discovered, and mined at Nant y Gadwen, Rhiw and exported from Porth Ysgo and from Benallt, near Clip y Gylfinir where it was carried on an aerial ropeway to be exported from Porth Neigwl. There was great demand for manganese during the two World Wars but the work ended in 1945.

At Mynydd Carreg, near Porthorion it was jasper that was mined, and also at Llanllawen, Uwchmynydd.

On Aberdaron beach, at Porth Simdde there are remains of a jetty. It was built in the late C19th for exporting barytes (heavy crystal) ore from Gwaith Pompren in the early C20th. It is said the dock was never used.

But the most unexpected mining was in the Rhoshirwaun and Llangwnnadr areas, when coal mining was attempted in the late C19th.

Beginning of setts production



It was granite quarries that produced the setts to pave city streets. There was great activity in the areas around Penmaenmawr and the Eifl, and people would move from one to the other. Quarrymen moved there from other quarrying areas such as the north of England and Cornwall.

Samuel Holland was a prominent person in this industry – the father was a pioneer in Ffestiniog and his son in the granite quarries of the Eifl area. The work began here about 1830, and when Trevor Jones became the quarry supervisor the village at the foot of the Eifl - Trefor – took his name. Eben Fardd wrote poetry in strict metre englyn form to praise the new quarry owners, Hutton and Roscoe.

By 1850 the area's granite quarries were owned by 'The Welsh Granite Co. Ltd'. It was bought for £3,000 and the shares were worth £13,000. In 1911 the Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan quarries were joined with the Eifl ones to form the 'Penmaenmawr and Welsh Granite Co. Ltd'.

Trefor quarry (SH36304600) developed to be the world's biggest granite quarry, and by 1931 had produced 1,157,000 tons of setts.

The stone to commemorate Llewelyn Ein Llyw Olaf (Llywelyn the Last) which is to be seen at Clilmeri was excavated at Trefor. Also from Trefor came the memorial stone to The Old Man of Pencader and I D Hooson.

Three quarries were opened near Nant Gwrtheyrn in the C19th: Cae'r Nant, Nant and Carreg y Llam and the villages of Llithfaen and Porth y Nant developed.

The quarries of the Pistyll and Nefyn area developed to produce setts. As plans were drawn up to develop



Porthdinllaen as a port and build a railway there from Caernarfon or Pwllheli, it was felt there would be a demand for a different kind of stone. The development never happened at Porthdinllaen but stone for breakwaters and small stone for tarmacadam and such like continued to be produced.

The quarries have long since been much quieter for a long time, but there is still some activity at Trefor Quarry, which produces curling stones and other items.

Quarries of Yr Eifl



On the other side of the Eifl mountains, towards the west, there were two quarries, either side of Nant Gwrtheyrn – Chwareli Cae'r Nant (Quarries of Cae'r Nant) (SH 35204550) and Nant (SH 34904660). Chwarel Nant was opened around 1860 and Porth Nant (harbour of Nant) village developed in 1878 with a co-operative shop, chapel and school. There was barrack accommodation for workers there.

A track led down to the village from Llithfaen but people also depended on sea transport to connect with the rest of the world and for importing coal and goods for the shop.

There is mention of a landslide in 1922 when the barracks, two fields (Llwyn Du and Cae Bach) and the smithy were swept into the sea.

At the beginning of the C20th there was a substantial population in Porth Nant, but the quarries slowed down during the next decade and closed completely in 1946. The last people moved from the houses in 1959.

Chwarel Carreg y Llam (quarry of the rock of the leap) (SH 33704380) opened in 1918. It exported about 100,000 tons a year between 1929 and 1939. After the decline of settmaking, stones of different sizes were produced and there was a pier there for exporting. Before the Second World War 50 people were employed there, but it too closed in 1963.

The quarry workers had a hard life – walking some distance to work and back each day, the rock dangerous and cold and the workings exposed to the northerly wind. The heroism of the quarry workers is commemorated with a memorial at/on Pen y Nant (top of Nant / the valley). (SH 35304408)

The author Myrddin ap Dafydd describes them coming to work, bent double in the teeth of the wind.

*They are tied to earning their living from this rock,
as if they chiselled it with their fingernails, summer
or winter, it's the same yoke of stone on their shoulders.*

*But they, on the path in the sky, bending, stumbling
to the top of the mountain, they are the
cornerstones of our walls – and we, so far from the
wind that cuts like a knife, are shaped from what
they once were.*

There is an opportunity here to follow the Llithfaen Heritage Walking Trails.

Porth y Nant and Carreg y Llam (SH 347449 and SH 349455)



Directions: Follow the road from Llithfaen village (on the B4417 Nefyn – Llanhaelhaearn) down to Nant Gwrtheyrn.

You can get to Carreg y Llam by taking the B4417 from Llithfaen towards Pistyll. After 1.25km follow the track towards the farms named Ciliau and follow the public footpath signs for 'Carreg y Llam'

The bay between Trwyn y Gorlech (headland of gritstone) and Carreg y Llam (rock of the leap) is associated with Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenwu (Vortigern) – a legendary character who was said to have turned traitor by giving land to the English. He was pursued by Emrys Wledig and Garmon and managed to escape to the place now known as Nant Gwrtheyrn (valley of Vortigern). He built a wooden castle there but his pursuers came after him. Rather than yield, he jumped to his death from a rock and fell into the sea. That is Carreg y Llam.

Nant Gwrtheyrn and Porth y Nant were very busy when the Eifl quarries were working.



Ships would carry setts from Nant Gwrtheyrn and Carreg y Llam quarries. In the book by Griffith R Williams, *Atgofion Canrif* there are interesting reminiscences of working there for many years.

There are very few names for parts of this sandy beach, except for Cerrig Nant and Carreg Draï (ebb rock) near Carreg y Llam.

Gallt y Bwlch (slope of the pass) is south of Nant Gwrtheyrn, and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest because it has open coastal woodland, singed by the westerly winds. It is ancient woodland, mainly of oak and birch.

On Carreg y Llam there are Penrhyn Glas (blue / green promontory) and Porth Hywel (harbour of Hywel). There is a patch of land with grass growing on it over the edge of the precipice, called Clwt Llwg (plot of starvation). A sheep would very easily be attracted to the green grass on the plot, but then be unable to get back to safety. The only solution would be to leave it until it was too weak to move and then carry it to safety.

Traeth Trefor (SH377473)



Directions: Follow the signs for 'Trefor' from the A499 (Llanaelhaearn – Clynnog Fawr). The road to the beach is at the northern end of the village.

At Trefor, the granite of the Eifl (from 'geifl' = forks) Mountains forms an end to the coast of earth cliffs that extends for much of the way from the granite of Penmaenmawr.

Trefor is in Llanaelhaearn parish, and before the quarry village was established this part of the parish was called Hendre.

Trefor village developed after the granite quarry opened, and the Doc Bach dock, Quay and Harbour were built for exporting setts. By now, the harbour is used as a sheltered anchorage for fishing boats.

On the hill up to the village is the former Llanaelhaearn lifeboat shed, established here in 1883 but it was not used much and was closed in 1901.

Closer to the Eifl, there are rocks with names like Trwyn y Tâl, Ynys Fawr and Ynys yr Adar (island of the birds).

The beach at West End is sandy, and the Nant Fawr stream running from Llawr Sychnant is an example of a valley formed during the Ice Age.

The steep rock extending into the sea from the Eifl is Trwyn y Gorlech (headland of the gritstone), and beyond it are Nant Gwrtheyrn and the land of Llŷn.



Follow the Story

Find out more about local industrial life by visiting Nant Gwrtheyrn – A former granite quarrying village that is now home to a Welsh Language Centre.