

Slate

The slate of Snowdonia was originally deposited 550 to 450 million years ago. It was then heated, compressed and folded by geological forces. By this process mudstone was transformed to shale (a compact hard rock). One of the characteristics of slate is that it easily splits to create the roofing material for which it is widely known. Natural slate

can also withstand extreme environmental and weather conditions.

Caernarfonshire slate from Nant Ogwen is purple or green in colour and is widely recognised as the finest natural slate in the world. The story of Lôn Ogwen – taith y llechan – will trace the journey of slate from Penrhyn Quarry to Port Penrhyn and beyond. Of course, where there's slate, the stories of Welsh quarrymen will follow.



Penrhyn roofing slate



Colours of Penrhyn slate

The Origins of slate working

The use of slate as a building material can be traced back to the Roman period where it was used at Segontium Roman fort in Caernarfon. Later, in the medieval period, slate from Bethesda was used on the roof of St Asaph Cathedral. However, the expense of transporting slate on the poor roads of Caernarfonshire meant that the use of slate was only on a very small scale.

THE SLATE TRAIL

Follow 'The Slate Trail' along Lôn Las Ogwen, where you can find a series of information boards recounting the unique story of Ogwen slate, Penrhyn Quarry and the people involved in its production.