

Felin Fawr

Felin Fawr has a fine series of original buildings belonging to the slate quarrying industry. A mill for sawing blocks of slate was built here in 1803, and two original water wheels, which were in use as late as 1965 powering the slab mill and foundry, survive. Possibly built in c.1846, one of these mills is thought to be the oldest industrial waterwheel in Wales.

Felin Fawr was the starting point for the railway to Port Penrhyn. The six miles of bullhead railway track between Felin Fawr Works, Bethesda and Port Penrhyn, was donated to the Ffestiniog Railway and was lifted in 1965.

Today, the Penrhyn Quarry Railway is



Slatemill at Felin Fawr, 1913

slowly being revived by Felin Fawr Cyf, a local company that owns the Felin Fawr Works site and additional trackbed. The first phase of the restoration at Bethesda has been restored, and work is now under way to refurbish a number of locomotives. 'Gwynedd' was the first 'Port Class' locomotive supplied by the Hunslet Engine Co. of Leeds in 1883 to Penrhyn Quarries, along with her sister 'Lilian'. The locomotive was named Gwynedd after the Hon Gwynedd Douglas Pennant, a daughter of George Sholto Gordon Douglas Pennant, 2nd Baron Penrhyn. Although the locomotive was intended for port shunting duties at Port Penrhyn, she actually spent most of her working life at Penrhyn Quarry where she remained at work until she was withdrawn in 1954. Other locomotives continued to run on the line until 1962, when the line closed.



Interns/apprentices from Bethesda working at Felin Fawr

Two of the engines, Blanche and Linda now work on the Ffestiniog Railway. An agreement has been reached whereby the Penrhyn Quarry Railway will assist with the restoration of the locomotive 'Gwynedd' in the hope of returning her to working order at the earliest opportunity, a great example of how Felin Fawr has today become the focus of attempts to involve the local community in the efforts to preserve and promote the significance of the slate quarry to the public.

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.