

A Roof of Slate for Every House

A Programmer's Guide

Developed with the support of Yvonne Connikie

This selection of archive films on slate-mining portrays community, skilled work and comradery, the beauty of the blue-grey landscape, plus social and spiritual joy of the locals. Mining culture is regularly reflected in Welsh art, literature, poetry, music and film. However, the Slate industry is underpinned by a history of African Slavery and Colonialism which needs to be understood.

These are sensitive and nuanced topics, so the following reference materials have been designed to support you [exhibitors] as you navigate these discussions with your audiences leading generative, informed conversations.

The materials include:

- A glossary of terms to support post-screening discussions,
- Ideas for curated events and activities,
- Possible speakers for panel discussions,
- Partner organisations.

Exhibitors can access the rolling [FHW Pitch Pot](#) financial support to plan related events.



Glossary

Having the right language is important when discussing themes of slate and slavery. This allows space to delve into discussions on colonialism in the Caribbean, industrialisation in Wales and its impact throughout the world.

Colonial Matrix of Power

A term coined by Aníbal Quijano to describe the legacies of colonialism in structures of power and control, as well as in systems of knowledge. The colonial matrix of power emphasises that many institutional, social, and cultural power relations today can be traced back to structures and cultures implemented during the colonial period.

For example, Richard Pennant married Anne Susannah Warburton, heiress to one portion of the Penrhyn Estate in North West Wales. Richard Pennant used the profits from his late father's West Indian sugar plantations to develop the Penrhyn estates in Caernarfonshire, an example of how the colonial matrix of power was implemented in the Caribbean and Wales.

Epistemic Injustice

Discrimination against certain forms of knowing or knowledge, including based on race, gender, sexuality, culture, social background and other similar factors. Epistemic injustice results in the exclusion of certain people from the process of knowledge production. It invalidates their ability to be seen as having knowledge, or systems of knowledge of their own.

Coloniality

A concept to describe the social, cultural and epistemic (knowledge) impacts of colonialism. Coloniality refers to the ways in which colonial legacies impact cultural and social systems as well as knowledge and its production.

Decoloniality

A movement which identifies the ways in which Western modes of thought and systems of knowledge have been universalised. Decoloniality seeks to move away from this Eurocentrism by focusing on recovering 'alternative' or non-Eurocentric ways of knowing.

Global South

A phrase that usually refers to Asia, Africa, and South America. It identifies them as broadly less economically developed and as politically or culturally marginal. The term has become prevalent in recent years as a replacement for terms like 'Third World', 'periphery' or 'developing world'. It is a comparative term that juxtaposes the South to the North and has its roots in ideas that modernity, wealth, and power are located in the West.

Global North

A phrase that usually refers to Europe, North America and Australia. It broadly identifies them as economically, politically and culturally dominant global regions. The term has become prevalent in recent years as a replacement for terms such as 'First World', 'core' or 'developed world'.

Monoculturalism

The process of supporting, enforcing or allowing the expression of one cultural, ethnic, social or religious group to the exclusion of others. Monoculturalism encourages assimilation, where members outside of this dominant group may be expected to adopt its behaviours and practises.

Reparations / reparative justice

The process of making amends for injustices and human rights violations. Reparative justice is a process which might include: symbolic reparations (acknowledgement or apology and memorialisation); guarantees that the offence will not be repeated; compensation; rehabilitation (compensation beyond economic or financial repairs such as providing care and wellness services); and restitution (taking measures to bring the wronged parties into the position they would have been in had the injustice not occurred). This is very useful to discuss the legacy of Slate miners and enslaved Africans.

Resistance / rebellion

The Penrhyn Strikes can be discussed as a form of rebellion/resistance, like the slave uprisings in the Caribbean and The Rebecca Riots in Wales. These actions were an organised response to terrible working conditions both in the global south and the global north.

Please Note - the experiences of Slate Miners and enslaved Africans were harrowing, therefore it is ok to feel some emotion whilst discussing these topics, some audience members/ panellists may have a personal connection to these histories and appreciate a safe space to share their stories.

Possible Partner Organisations & Panellists

- Caribbean Association of Wales,
- NWAMI (Networking for World Awareness of Multiculturalism),
- North Wales Regional Equality Network,
- Black Lives Matter Cardiff/Newport,
- North Wales Jamaica Society,
- South Wales Jamaica Society,
- Artists and Founders of '[Merched Chwarel](#)' - a project about Welsh women and slate
- Unloved Heritage (various projects),
- Llechi Cymru (Slate Cymru), including their [list of local experts](#),
- Gaynor Legal - Archivist,
- Colin Thomas – Director of *Cut me Loose*,
- Abu Bakr Madden Al Shabazz – Historian and Educator,
- Charlotte Williams – Author of 'Sugar and Slate',
- Emlyn Roberts – Former Miner and Local Slate Expert,
- Yvonne Connikie – Film Programmer,
- Merfyn Jones – Author of 'The North Wales Quarrymen, 1874-1922'
- Pred Hughes – Local Slate Historian and Author.

Planning events on the themes of slate, slavery and colonialism:

Before planning an event, you might want to think about:

1. What you want your audiences to take away, or learn, from it?
E.g. Do you want them to know more about class disparities between the workers and the managers? The impact on the environment? How slate mining is connected to slavery
2. How do you want them to learn? E.g. Through a workshop, conversation, or post-screening discussion?

Consider Counter Story-telling:

Counter-storytelling is used to magnify the stories, experiences, narratives, and truths of underprivileged communities. Everywhere we turn, the world is filled with dominant culture narratives.

We recorded a discussion for The Whole Story between Charlotte Williams, Emlyn Roberts and Abu-Bakr Madden Al Shabazz. This is a good example of counter storytelling. As a result of this film, we are enriched with new perspective of Welsh history within the wider context of world history. Exhibitors can use this discussion to develop their understanding of Welsh slate mining and connections to slavery, and share it with their audiences too.

Event Ideas

Idea One: Who Is Missing?

Imagine you are planning a workshop where you want your audiences to learn more about the people who are missing from narratives about slate mining.

You could screen the four archival shorts and the film '*Cut Me Loose*'. You may also want to screen the film '*A Life with Slate*' and / or the Whole Story panel discussion.

Before you start the film – ask your audiences to shout out, or write down the first people and places that come to mind when they think about slate mining.

After you've shown the films, ask your audience members the same question and get them to reflect on their answers. You might also want to ask:

- Who is missing from our narratives about slate mining?
- Why do you think they are missing or have been left out?
- What are the parallels / differences in how people connected to slate mining have been treated?
- Are there any similarities in how they've overcome hardships?

Idea Two - Women in Mining

Welsh Women have often been left out of the history of the slate mining. To talk more about this, you could start by showing 'The Quarryman / Y Chwarelwr' followed by the international feature 'Return of the Navajo Boy'.

To engage your audiences further, you could invite the artists involved in the project 'Merched Chwarel' to host a creative workshop and further examine the portrayal of women in these films. You might also want to ask your audiences:

- What is their connection to mining?
- Are their struggles similar or different. If so, why?

Other assets available

- [Season guide](#)
- [Film list](#)
- [The Whole Story interview](#) with Charlotte Williams, Emlyn Roberts, Yvonne Connikie and Abu-Bakr Madden Al Shabazz.
- [Season trailer.](#)

For more information please contact:
Radha@filmhubwales.org

