




2022

A Roof of
Slate
for Every
House



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I n t r o d u c t i o n

Coming to Welsh cinemas this spring, a series of films and activities celebrating the UNESCO world heritage status of the North West Wales slate landscape and exploring lesser-known connections to colonialism.

Between the traditional and rural environments, mountains and valleys of North-West Wales lie quarries, mines and railways created during the Industrial Revolution. As slate was transported to countries all over the world, the agricultural landscape of Wales was transformed alongside communities who lived there – schools, shops and entire towns were built, establishing livelihoods for those who worked in the quarry mines, for over 200 years.

In July 2021, the slate landscape of North-West Wales was awarded the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, sitting alongside other accomplishments such as The Great Wall of China and The Grand Canyon. Much like these impressive man-made achievements, the slate mines of North Wales carry a deeper and more nuanced history about Wales' position as a colonial subject and beneficiary of the wealth generated by the British Empire through slate production which should be revealed alongside celebrations of this new status.



Together with the Screen and Sound Archive

at the National Library of Wales, Film Hub Wales have developed a touring programme of short archival Welsh films, accompanying features and discussions to support generative, informed conversations about the new UNESCO heritage site with cinema audiences across Wales.

Launching officially in February 2022,

heritage shorts can be screened alongside select archival features, as well as contemporary documentaries with opportunities for post-screening discussions highlighting the history of slate mining in Wales, its impact on local communities, connections to slavery and wider colonial projects led by the British empire. In these crucial times of changing political and environmental climates, film could not be a more crucial and important medium to bring together communities, have honest conversations about shared histories and discuss ways to build solidarity together going forward.



Shorts



Men Against Death: A Story of Peril in our Time

1933
6 minutes

The first reel of *Men Against Death* is the surviving part of what was originally a two-reel dramatic reconstruction of a 19th century rock fall at Dorothea Quarry near Tal-y-sarn in the Nantlle valley. Premiered in 1933 at the then newly-opened Plaza Cinema, Pen-y-groes, the film shows some of the quarrymen at their perilous work, including the quarry's assistant manager, Robert Griffith Jones of Groeslon, known as 'Bob Garreg'. The vulnerability of these highly skilled men in their perilous workplace, 'poised between heaven and earth', is plain to see as they face the hazards of working the 'angry rock'.

This is believed to be the first sound film made and set in Wales.



Slate Quarrying

1946
10 minutes

At 1200 ft deep and a mile in length, Penrhyn Slate Quarry, Bethesda, was once one of the largest and most productive quarries in the world, employing around 2,800 men in 1898. Today the site thrills visitors at its Zip World attraction, offering them a bird's eye view, but just after WW2 amateur photographer and keen walker Sidney Whiteley was just as entranced at ground-level, captivated by the scale and activity of the place. The film he produced offers an absorbing glimpse into the array of skilled processes and precision engineering at work in such a quarry, with everything put to good use: whilst steam locomotive 'Gertrude' pulls empty wagons, waste material (90% of the rock quarried), is used locally for doorsteps, flooring and fencing.



**Dinorwic
Quarry**
1963
7 minutes

On a cold, wet day, Len Vaughan Williams – an electricity board employee and later deputy head of Bangor's Ysgol Cae Top primary school – took his camera to Dinorwic Quarry, anxious to capture some footage for posterity (e.g. blasting, transportation, dressing and splitting) as the writing was on the wall - closure was effected in 1969. A handful of men can be seen at work, their number as nothing to the 3,000 that would have been employed during the quarry's heyday. After closure in 1969 the quarry buildings became the National Slate Museum (part of the National Museum Wales) and the quarry itself houses a pumped storage power station.



**Rails to
Talsarn**
1962
4 minutes

The horse-drawn railway from the station at Tal-y-sarn to Pen-yr-Orsedd quarry was part of a longer line - originally all horse-drawn - that ran from the quay at Caernarfon to the quarries of the Nantlle valley. It was the only British Rail horse-drawn line, and here shire horses 'Prince' and 'Corwen' pull the slate wagons - probably the last horses used by British Rail. They are guided by guard and driver Mr Oswald Jones who uses wooden sprags in the wheels as brakes, with Oswald's father, aged 81, helping out at Tal-y-Sarn. Closed in 1963, the Nantlle Railway was the first quarry railway to also provide a passenger service.

- **Rights Holder:** Screen & Sound Archive at NLW
- **Fees:** Free to BFI FAN Members
- **Format:** Digital file transfer
- **Contact:** elen.jones@llyfrgell.cymru / angharad.roberts@llyfrgell.cymru

Features

Y Chwarelwr

Y Chwarelwr (The Quarryman)

1935

34 minutes

- **Rights Holder:** Screen & Sound Archive at NLW and Cwmni Da
- **Format:** Apple Pro res 422 HQ/ MP4
elen.jones@llyfrgell.cymru / angharad.roberts@llyfrgell.cymru

Slate was the lifeblood of Blaenau Ffestiniog and its Llechwedd Quarry, but its dust can be deadly, with a painful legacy for family and society. This landmark drama was the first Welsh language 'talkie', and toured Wales to great acclaim in the 1930s. It portrays the quarryman's life in Blaenau Ffestiniog - work, home, chapel and courtship - and highlights the importance of education to the younger generation, revealing the hardships and tough choices that were part and parcel of life in such a society, alongside its cultural vibrancy and community spirit. This version of *Y Chwarelwr* is a joint restoration by the National Library of Wales Screen and Sound Archive and Cwmni Da, who used local and professional actors to recreate the film's missing fourth reel from the surviving script by John Ellis Williams, and recorded a new soundtrack for the film.



**Aderyn
Papur (...and
Pigs Might Fly)**

1962
1 hr 15 minutes

A boy living in underdeveloped Welsh village hopes for a better time of his homeland when seeing the two Japanese businessmen with the apparent intentions to build a factory there.

- **Rights Holder:** S4C
- **Fees:** Contact rights holder
- **Format:** AS11 in Welsh with commercial breaks. No subtitles.
- **Contact:** jen.pappas@s4c.cymru



Cut Me Loose
1999
40 minutes

Cut Me Loose is a very personal film written and presented by the rap poet and historian David Brown, of mixed Black Jamaican and White Welsh descent, Directed by Colin Thomas and Produced for Teliesyn by Michele Ryan. The half hour film was made in 1999. It contains some scenes and language that are of an adult nature and terms such as "Holocaust of Slavery" which are highly debated terms.

- **Rights Holder:** BFI
- **Fees:** £25+VAT
- **Format:** Digital file, DVD or tape
- **Contact:** bookings.films@bfi.org.uk

Please allow 4 weeks for clearance.



The Welshman

2021

38 minutes

A documentary about Owain Williams who, as an impassioned young man, becomes frustrated by the impending building of a reservoir to serve the industry of Merseyside and finally decides to take action when the construction threatens the loss of a small mountain community.

- **Rights Holder:** Lindsay Walker
- **Fees:** £100
- **Format:** DVD, MP4
- **Contact:** ebbinjoy@gmail.com



Slate Stories

2018

44 minutes

For generations, slate mining was deeply interwoven with peoples' lives in the North Welsh villages. With the decline of the mining industry, the structure of the region is changing drastically. Underground footage shot by former miner Glyn Davies shows a world that no longer exists. Work in the mines was hard, but it gave the region a purpose and an identity. Today, what's left is tourism. With reluctance, the original Welsh population observes the influx of English people seeking weekend cottages.

- **Rights Holder:** Justin Time Productions
- **Fees:** Please check with rights holder
- **Format:** MOV, MP4
- **Contact:** Justin Time – jbrathke@gmx.de

Additional Welsh Films

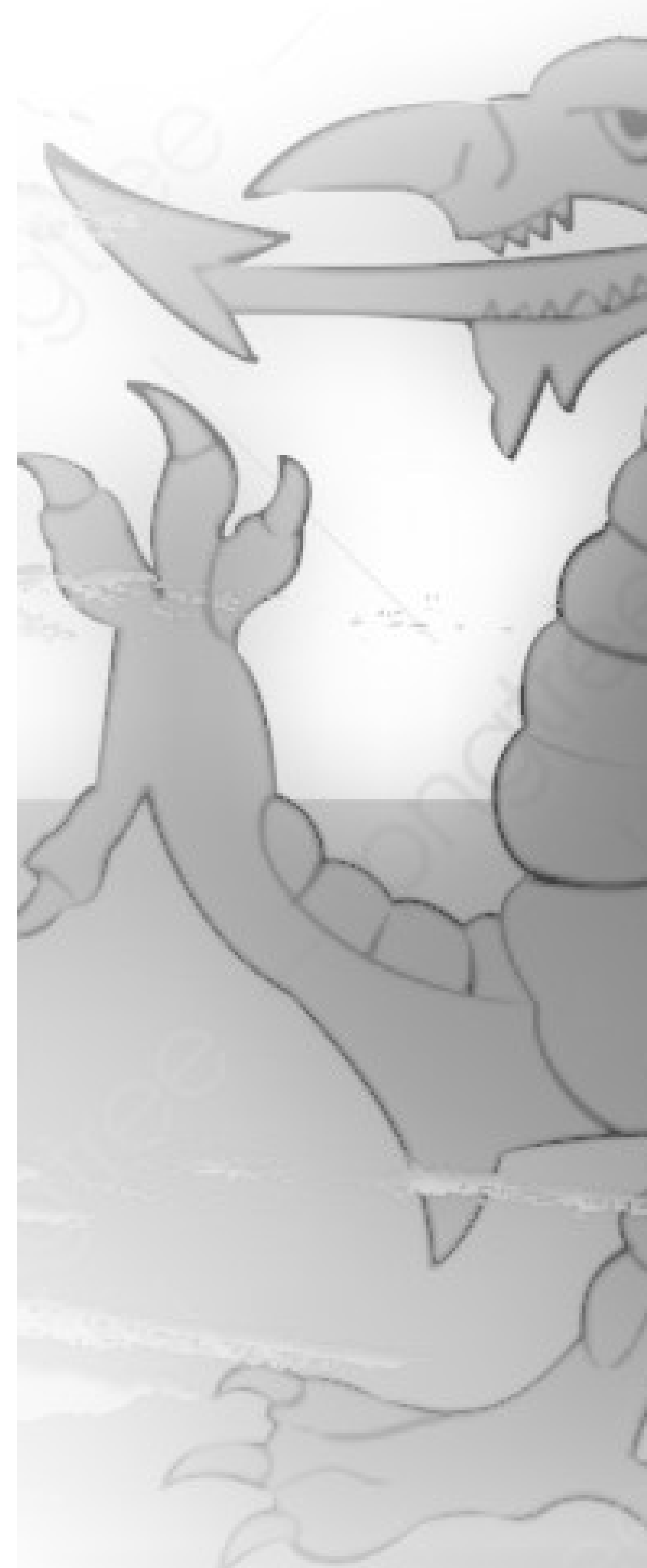
Llechi Cymru Shorts

2020-2021, various lengths

A series of short films depicting the slate landscape of Gwynedd, Northwest Wales, comprising six key areas. Through the landscape, the shorts demonstrate the spectacular story of evolution from sparsely populated upland agricultural society to one dominated by the slate industry; with towns, quarries, and transport links carving their way through the Snowdonia massif down to the iconic ports.

Preview online and [read the individual synopses here.](#)

- **Rights Holder:** Llechi Cymru
- **Fees:** Contact rights holder
- **Format:** MOV, MP4
- **Contact:** GwenanPritchard@gwynedd.llyw.cymru





O'r Graig
2021
8 minutes
55 seconds

Two filmmakers explore how the slate industry in North Wales created a town and a tight knit community proud of its heritage.

- **Rights Holder:** Wicked Wales
- **Fees:** Contact rights holder
- **Format:** MOV, MP4
- **Contact:** rhiannon52@mail.com



Welsh Slate
2017
2 minutes
30 seconds

Ioan Raymond is a stonemason and craftsman based in Southampton, Hampshire. Having grown up around slate quarries in Wales, he was inspired to turn offcuts of slate into wine racks, water features and pieces of art. This is not only the story of the transformation of a piece of slate. It's the story of someone who has found their passion through hard work and exploration. It's just as much a celebration of Ioan as a creator as it is about showcasing his work.

- **Rights Holder:** Neck of the Woods Films
- **Fees:** Contact rights holder
- **Format:** MOV, MP4
- **Contact:** Craig McDougall – hello@notwfilms.com

I n t e r n a t i o n a l / I n d e p e n d e n t F e a t u r e s



A Life with Slate

2006

59 minutes

More than 90 % of Alampu's Thami Indigenous people are involved in the local slate mine as slate miners, contractors, and porters. The film emphasizes their indigenous knowledge of slate production and distribution. The film followed a team in different social arenas, at home, in the village, at the mine, and on a slate carrying trip.

- **Rights Holder:** Dipesh Kharnel
- **Fees:** Contact rights holder
- **Format:** DVD, MOV, MP4
- **Contact:** khareldipesh2036@gmail.com



The Return of the Navajo Boy

2000

57 minutes

The Return of the Navajo Boy, an official selection of the Sundance Film Festival and PBS, is an internationally acclaimed documentary that reunited a Navajo family and triggered a federal investigation into uranium contamination. It tells the story of Elsie Mae Begay, whose history in pictures reveals an incredible and ongoing struggle for environmental justice.

- **Rights Holder:** Grounds Well Films
- **Fees:** \$250 (US dollars) Price kindly reduced for FAN Members
- **Format:** Apple Pro res 422 HQ (standard def wide screen DV 16x9)
- **Contact:** jeff@groundswellfilms.org



Assets Available for Exhibitors

A list of additional films with copy and booking details (all films should be booked directly with the rights holders, not FHW).

[See separate / live document here.](#)

A short trailer to play in the weeks leading up to your events.

[View here.](#)

A pre-recorded video conversation with Welsh historians and specialists for use with audiences. Full discussion will be made available for cinemas to share with audiences.

[Preview here.](#)

A how to guide to help you programme these films and navigate these often-difficult conversations with your audiences

[Download here.](#)

Shared marketing – Social media stories and FHW will coordinate a press release to share news of the screenings **[Feb 2022]**

Exhibitors can access the rolling [FHW Pitch Pot](#) if they need financial support to plan events **[any time from Nov 21 – March 2022]**

For more information please contact:
Radha@filmhubwales.org

M a r k e t i n g

- Send your event details to silvia@filmhubwales.org,
- Tag your events on social media via #ARoofofSlate,
- Consider copying in @Unesco, @welshgocreative, @NSSAW, @CyngorGwynedd, @cadwwales, @NTWales to spread the word,
- Read our prorgammer's guide written by Yvonne Connikie, for partner ideas,
- Play the trailer in your venues leading up to your events,
- Engage with the Whole Story video interview by the sharing clips with your mailing lists, or on social media to get conversations started,
- Have we missed any key films on the theme of slate and colonialism? Share them with us @Filmhubwales.



S u p p o r t



If you have a season or event in mind for spring 2022 that meets the themes of A Roof of Slate and you would like some support, we can offer bursaries of up to £500 (if you have something extra special, or a longer season in mind that requires further funds, then just let us know).

Examples of costs we can cover include:

- Marketing,
- Community outreach,
- Added value (Q&A, workshop costs),
- Audience evaluation,
- Staffing.

All you need to do is get in touch by email to lisa@filmhubwales.org and tell us:

- Your proposed screening/event date,
- Projected audience numbers,
- Any special event plans,
- Your marketing ideas,
- Costs you need help with.

C o n t a c t s

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