The Trail with Cheryl Rose

Courtesy of Cheryl Rose Photography

Day 1

These are snap shots from our wonderful (and a little challenging in places) walk along the 83 mile Snowdonia Slate Trail we completed over 10 days.
A stunning walk we won't forget in a hurry, so many amazing views, places and history along the route.

Day 1: Bangor to Bethesda
Thanks to Celtic Trails Walking Holidays for seamless arrangements of hotels, pick-ups and bag transfers! And also Llwybr Llechi Eryri - Snowdonia Slate Trail for great planning info on their website.

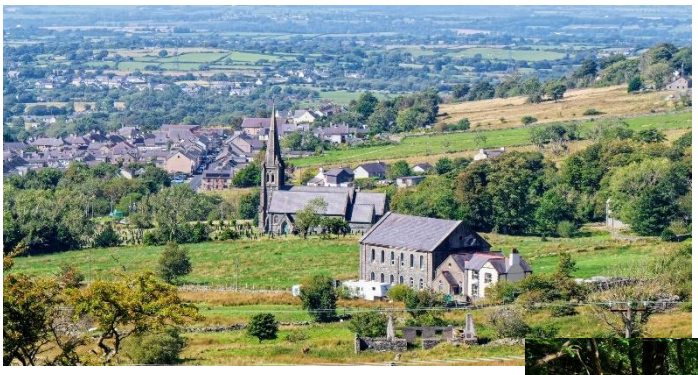
Afon Ogwen near Halfway Bridge

The mountains from above Bethesda

Wonderful ancient woodland

Slate incline above Bethesda

Day 2: Bethesda to Llanberis.
Heading from Bethesda to Llanberis where the slate mining becomes clear to see.
Initially passing by the outskirts of the Penrhyn Quarry where the slate heaps were blending into the mountains beyond (more on Penrhyn on day 10!)
Then dropping down into Llanberis and the large Dinorwic slate quarry.



The photo with the church & chapel shows how important religion was at that time, we passed many churches & chapels on the walk but the church and chapel at Deiniolen particularly stood out. Apparently the church held 600 and often was over that number attending. With an equally large looking chapel nearby.

Just to mention, you will see a common theme of mountains, rivers and woodlands on our walk!
We also popped into the national slate museum and collected a stamp for the Snowdonia slate trail

passport.
Finally looking over to the 12th/13th century Dolbadarn Castle nestled in the trees in the evening sun.

Day 3: Llanberis to Y Fron

Day three of our journey along the Snowdonia Slate Trail led us from Llanberis to the village of Y Fron. Along the way, we passed several slate mines and the ruins of old farmsteads, a reminder of the harsh and isolated lives once lived in these remote areas.
The trail also took us through stretches of moorland, dotted with vibrant gorse and heather, adding

splashes of color to the rugged landscape. It's hard to imagine the challenges of living in the small, weather-beaten homesteads we encountered, now reduced to crumbling walls and memories.

The final section of the walk descended through the old Bryn Fferam slate mine, where remnants of processing machinery hinted at later industrial activity. From there, we passed the disused, water-filled Braich Quarry, a hauntingly beautiful end to the day's trek.

Day 4: Y Fron to Beddgelert

Today's forecast promised rain all day, but luckily, it only caught up with us in the latter part of the walk. Unfortunately, I left my camera behind, so I had to rely on my phone for photos—and none during the rainy stretches.

However, I managed to capture a hyperlapse video of the entire walk! I'll look into editing and including some video clips once I have time to download and review it.

The day began with a trek through one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites—Dorothea Quarry and its surroundings, including the Cilgwyn and Pen Yr Orsedd slate quarries above Nantlle. These quarries are a stunning glimpse into the area's industrial past.
(https://www.llechi.cymru/slateareas/dyffrynnantlle)

One highlight along the route was the ruin of Pen-y-Bryn farmhouse and cottages. If you're curious to learn more, **Historypoints.org** & **https://historypoints.org/index.php...** has great information about the site, and there are QR codes along the trail that offer further historical insights. After leaving Nantlle, we enjoyed a beautiful viewpoint over Llyn Nantlle Uchaf before continuing down the valley. From there, we climbed towards Llyn Cwellyn, where the rain finally caught up with us. It stayed with us as we passed through Beddgelert Forest and continued all the way to Beddgelert, so sadly, there were no more photos from this point on.

Overall, despite the rain, it was another incredible day on the Slate Trail!

Day 5: Beddgelert to Tanygrisiau

Day 5 of the Slate Trail was the first of two more challenging stages, but the effort was well worth it. We started in Beddgelert, passing by St. Mary's Parish Church, which was once part of an Augustinian priory, and followed the Glaslyn River. The path alongside the river became rocky and could be treacherous during high water, so it's important to check conditions beforehand.

From there, we gradually ascended towards Croesor, surrounded by stunning landscapes. After reaching Croesor, the real challenge began with a climb to the Croesor slate quarry. Unlike the more visible open quarries, Croesor is an underground site so you only have the tips to imagine the size. We passed the remains of the ventilation fan house near

the mine entrance, and the substantial mill building which had been powered by hydroelectric from the early 1900's. (It is worth while looking up and reading about the innovative mine manager Kellow).

The trail then led us across bleak moorland, crossing the old Llyn Croesor dam towards the haunting remains of the Rhosydd Quarry buildings. As the mist rolled in, the scene became both atmospheric and eerie, giving us a sense of just how harsh life must have been for those working in such an exposed, isolated

place.

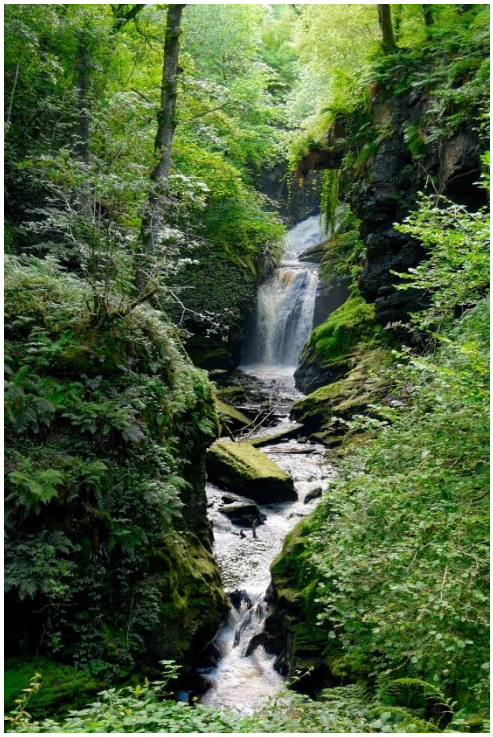
Our final descent took us past the ruins of Rhosydd Quarry and the Cwmorthin Mine. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to stop for photos at Cwmorthin as we didn't want to risk being late for our pickup at Tanygrisiau, marking the end of a challenging but unforgettable day on the trail.

Day 6: Tanygrisiau to Llan Ffestiniog

Today's walk was a bit shorter, beginning at the lakeside café in Tanygrisiau, where we picked up another stamp for our trail passport. Big thanks to the café staff for the lovely cup of tea and the delicious takeaway sandwiches, which made for a perfect lunch later on!
We then made our way to Blaenau Ffestiniog, once known as "Slate City" during the late 1800s. The landscape here is dominated by the impressive Ffestiniog slate mines and quarry tips, which serve as a powerful reminder of the area's industrial heritage.

Leaving Blaenau, we entered a lovely deciduous woodland, followed by stretches of open land offering sweeping views of the surrounding hills. The path then took us through more tranquil woodlands, crisscrossed by streams and rivers, before eventually descending into Llan Ffestiniog, where we settled in for the night.

Day 7: Llan Ffestiniog to Cwm Penmachno



Day 7 of the Slate Trail was undoubtedly the most challenging, with a mix of unpredictable weather, steep climbs, boggy terrain, and bracken trying its best to trip us up. Despite the difficulties, we'd do it all over again—thanks to the breathtaking views and historic sites that made the effort worthwhile!
The day started off sunny, with a beautiful walk alongside the Afon Cynfal gorge. The waterfalls here were stunning and set a perfect tone for the morning. However, as we climbed towards Llyn y Morwynion reservoir, the weather began to change, and by the time we reached the reservoir, it was too wet for photos. The path became increasingly boggy as we pressed on, eventually joining Sarn Helen, an ancient Roman road. Fortunately, the weather improved just

in time to give us views of Drum Slate quarry.
Next, we descended down to an old quarry, passing a ruin with striking views down the valley—marked as Manod slate mine on old maps. We continued uphill past the entrance

to the still-operational Cwt-y-Bugail open-cast slate quarry. Interestingly, during World War II, the underground caverns of this quarry were used to store valuable British paintings.

The route then led us through Blaen-y-cwm, and down a steep incline to the remains of the Rhiwbach quarry buildings. Standing at the top of the incline, we were reminded of the tough conditions the miners once endured. The wind was so strong that it nearly knocked

us off our feet, though thankfully, we avoided rain at that point!
The final leg took us down through Penmachno quarry, eventually ending our walk in the quiet village of Cwm Penmachno. A tough day, but filled with memories that made every challenge worth it!

Day 8: Cwm Penmachno to Betws-y-Coed

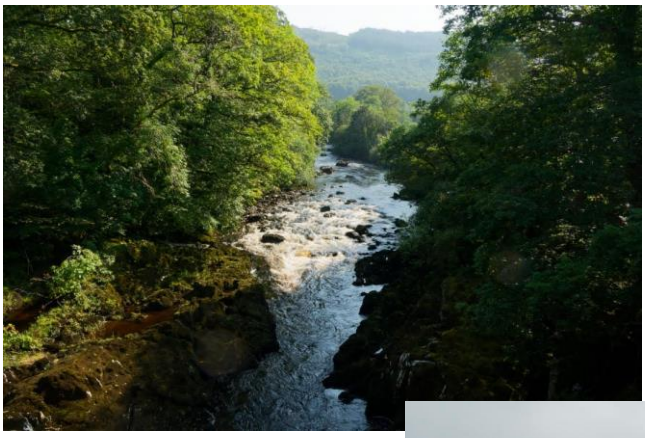
After the previous challenging day, day 8 offered a much-needed, easier walk with the return of sunshine. The route was mostly through serene woodlands, beginning with a climb out of Cwm Penmachno, followed by a descent into Penmachno. From there, we continued through more woodlands, eventually walking along the road toward Conwy Falls.

Though we skipped visiting the falls this time, we did take a break at the café for a refreshing drink and picked up another stamp for our passport.
The final stretch to Betws-y-Coed was a pleasant stroll along old tracks and quiet lanes. Looking back, I realised I didn't take as many photos on this section of the trail—perhaps a sign of just how relaxed the day was.

Day 9: Betws-y-Coed to Capel Curig

Today's walk began with a peaceful riverside stroll alongside the Llugwy River, offering breathtaking views of the iconic Swallow Falls. After soaking in the scenery, we left the river behind at the Ugly House

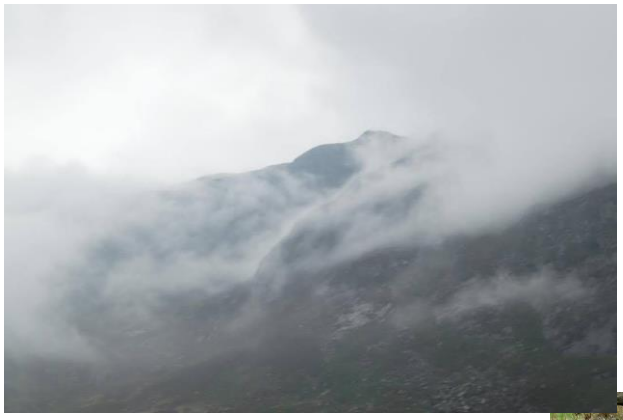
(Ty Hyll), where we enjoyed a delightful tea and cake break – a perfect mid-morning treat and collected our final trail passport stamp.



From there, we ascended the hill past The Towers Outdoor Centre, which brought back fond memories. Anyone who grew up in the Midlands might recognize the name. The centre was owned and operated by Wolverhampton Council for almost 60 years, hosting thousands of children before closing due to disrepair. Thankfully, it has since been rescued and now functions as an educational outdoor centre.

The trail then led us through serene woodlands, eventually opening up to vast, sweeping views of the central mountains. After taking in the stunning vistas, we descended into the village of Capel Curig to end the day.

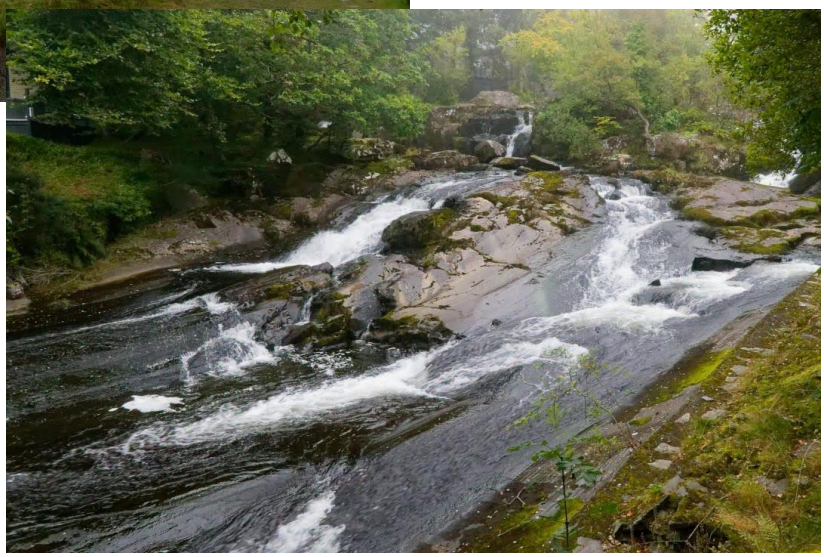
Day 10: Capel Curig to Bethesda



Our final day on the Slate Trail was a bit of a soggy one, with intermittent breaks in the weather. Despite the rain, the day was filled with memorable moments.
We began the day walking along the old turnpike road, which provided easy walking terrain. I even managed to snap a few photos, including one of a rather forlorn-looking sheep, who seemed to have given up and was attempting to shelter its head in a wall!

By the time we reached Llyn Ogwen, the rain and mist had set in. Instead of following the trail around the far side of the lake, we opted to take the roadside path along the pavement. It wasn't the planned route, but it gives us a perfect excuse to return and explore that part of the trail in the future!
As luck would have it, the rain cleared towards the end of the lake, just in time for us to enjoy a delicious pasty at a café before continuing towards Bethesda. We eventually reached the far side of Penrhyn

Slate Quarry, which we had passed near on day two. With mist rolling in over the slate tips, the landscape took on an atmospheric and fitting tone to conclude our journey.
Walking the Slate Trail has been a fantastic experience, and we're grateful to everyone who helped create and maintain it. To mark the occasion, our final photo is of our trail passport and medal. 🙂



Thanks also to **Celtic Trails** for putting together the itinerary including arrangements for our accommodation and transfers.