

History



Find out about Coed y Bleiddiau's past...

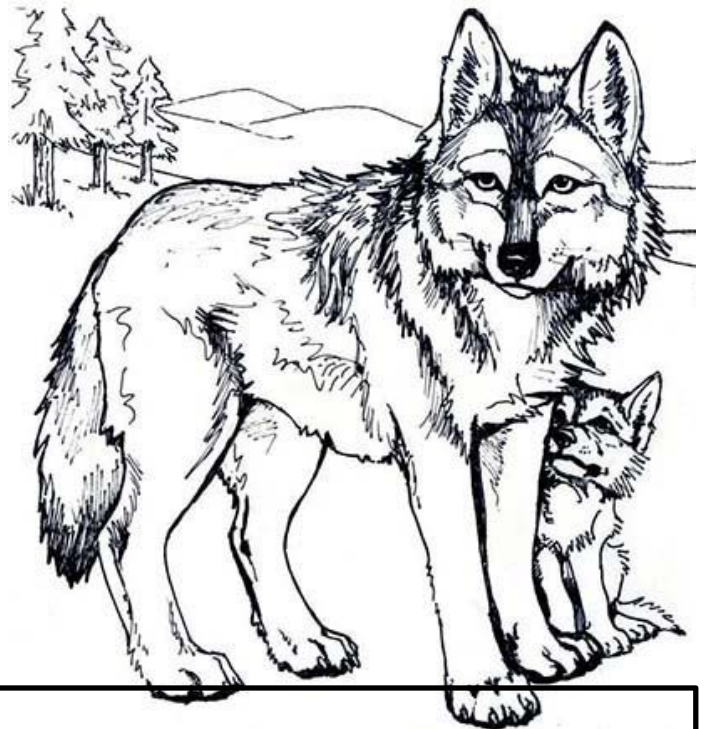
Hello! Welcome to Coed y Bleiddiau (say 'Coy-dee Bly-thee-ow' hard eh? In Welsh, some letters sound different than in English). Coed y Bleiddiau is Welsh for Wood of Wolves! It's called that because this is the last place wolves were seen in Wales. My name is Tom and I lived here over 100 years ago with my Dad, Mum and my two brothers and sister.

My Dad was the **Superintendent** of the railway here. They built this cottage especially so he could keep a close eye on the railway and the trains. Shame they didn't build the cottage a bit bigger – It was quite a squeeze all of us kids!

Each day there were 9 trains that went by taking the slate from the mines down to the sea at Porthmadoc, carrying a few passengers and delivering goods too. Each morning Mum passed her shopping basket and list to Alun the guard on the train as it went past. Alun gave it to the shopkeeper in Porthmadoc who filled it with all the things on the list and then Alun would bring it back to mum on the uphill train. Easy! Draw a picture of mum passing her shopping basket to Alun on the train in the box below.

Fact:

A **Superintendent** (say 'soop-er-in-ten-dent') is the manager of the railway line.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to draw a picture of a woman passing a shopping basket to a guard on a train.



On Saturdays my brothers and I went exploring the hills and forests. We'd build dens out of fallen branches and fill the gaps with leaves and mud to stop the rain getting in.

In summer we camped out overnight making a fire and cooked fish that we caught in the stream. We pretended we were Ancient Britons who lived in the forest and hunted for their meals. Once my brother Bran was trying to catch a rabbit and tripped over a log. He cut his leg and it was bleeding everywhere – gross! Luckily **sphagnum moss** (say 'spag-num') grows here so we quickly ran and picked some, wrapping it around Bran's leg. He was fine in no time!



Fact:

Sphagnum Moss can absorb up to twenty-six times its own volume of liquids! It was used as a dressing in WW1 for injured soldiers. It also kills germs.



When I grow up I want to be a train driver. I don't want to go and work in the slate mines like the other men. Its horrible being stuck underground all day. I'd much rather be riding the trains and travelling to new places. I want to work on one of the big railways where the trains travel really fast. I know lots about trains - did you know that the first railway line opened in 1825 and that the first steam engine travelled at 19km an hour! I bet that when I'm old enough to be a train driver trains will be even faster! What do you want to be when you grow up?

.....

Unruly Rulers

Who were the Saxe-Coburgs and Windsors?

Saxe-Coburg was the surname of German Prince Albert who was Queen Victoria's husband. When Victoria died **Saxe-Coburg** continued as the royal family surname. It changed to **Windsor** in 1917 because England was fighting against Germany in World War One and the King was worried British people wouldn't like a German royal family anymore - so he changed them to **Windsors**, after the castle.



King Edward VII

He loved shooting game and had an eye for the ladies! A granddad by the time he became king, he wanted peace not war.



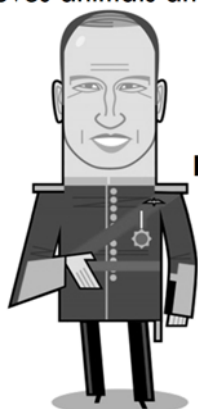
King Edward VIII

A romantic and selfish king. Married the woman he loved and 6 months later gave the throne away to his brother, George.



Queen Elizabeth II

Good queen Lilibet has been on the throne the longest of all the rulers! She loves animals and has 5 corgis. Woof woof!



Prince William

1837 Queen Victoria

A good queen who was never 'amused'. She ruled more than a fifth of the earth's population as Empress – Wowza!



1901

1910 King George V

A boring but good king. He loved stamps but also loved his country, always trying to do the best for it.



1936

1936 King George VI

A very good king who loved his people. Even when Buckingham Palace was bombed in World War Two he stayed in London with his family to show everyone was in it together!



1952

Who's next???

Prince Charles





Meet Queen Victoria

– who ruled when Coed y Bleddiau was built.



Hi Vicky!

So when did you become queen?

I became queen on the 20 June 1837 when I was 18.

What's your nickname?

Some people call me The Grandmother of Europe. I had 9 children who married different European princes and princesses. I had 42 grandchildren in total!

What is your favourite thing to do?

I loved visiting Scotland. I even built a castle so that I could go all the time!

Why do you look so glum?

My beloved husband died when I was 42. I've been sad ever since.

What is the naughtiest thing you've ever done?

How dare you, I am never naughty. Everyone must be well behaved at all times.



History of steam travel

Before trains, horse drawn carriages were the fastest way to travel – but the roads were awful! The first steam engine was invented by Richard Trevithick in 1804 and was used to transport iron in South Wales.

Then in 1829 there was a competition to design the best steam engine. Robert Stevenson won with a steam engine called The Rocket that travelled 47km/h. People had never seen anything so fast! The fastest horse drawn carriage only travelled 11km/h. After that Parliament decided that railways should be built across the country so that people and goods could travel faster. Some people didn't like the idea of trains, they were worried that the trains passing animals in the fields would scare the animals so much they'd die or be sucked up by the whooshing air! How silly.

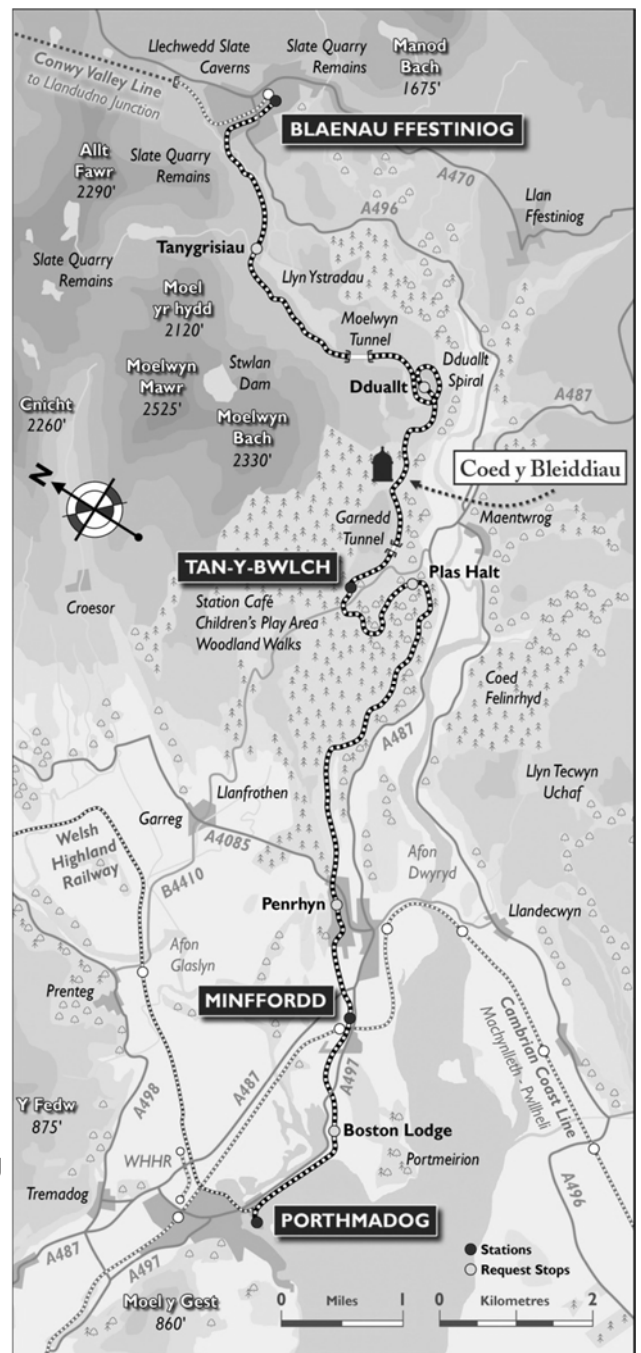
Between 1833 and 1836 they built **narrow gauge rails** to transport slate from the quarries in Blaenau Ffestiniog (say 'Blane-ow Fest-in-e-og') to Porthmadoc on the coast – that's 13.5 miles (21.7km)! Wagons were loaded with slate in the mine and then sent down the hill (there was a man controlling the brakes so it didn't go too fast!) At Porthmadoc the wagon was unloaded and horses pulled the wagons back up the rails to the mine.

Fact:

The **track gauge** of a railway is how far apart the rails are on the railway track. A **narrow gauge rail** is a railway built with a narrower gap between the rails than the standard of 4 feet 8½ inches (that's 143.51 cm). At Blaenau Ffestiniog the track gauge is 1 foot 11 ½ inches (59.7cm) – better for going along the mountain side.

In 1863 they decided to introduced steam engines to the Ffestiniog line, so it was quicker and easier to move the slate. George England and Co. designed them. When the line opened in 1865 it was the first narrow gauge railway in Britain to carry passengers.

The Cottage you are staying in was built as a private stop for the Superintendent of the Ffestiniog Railway. Coed y Bleiddiau cost £340 to build – cheap hey! It is built of local slate, mudstone and granite blocks all dug from the mountains around. Look outside the cottage, can you work out which is which?

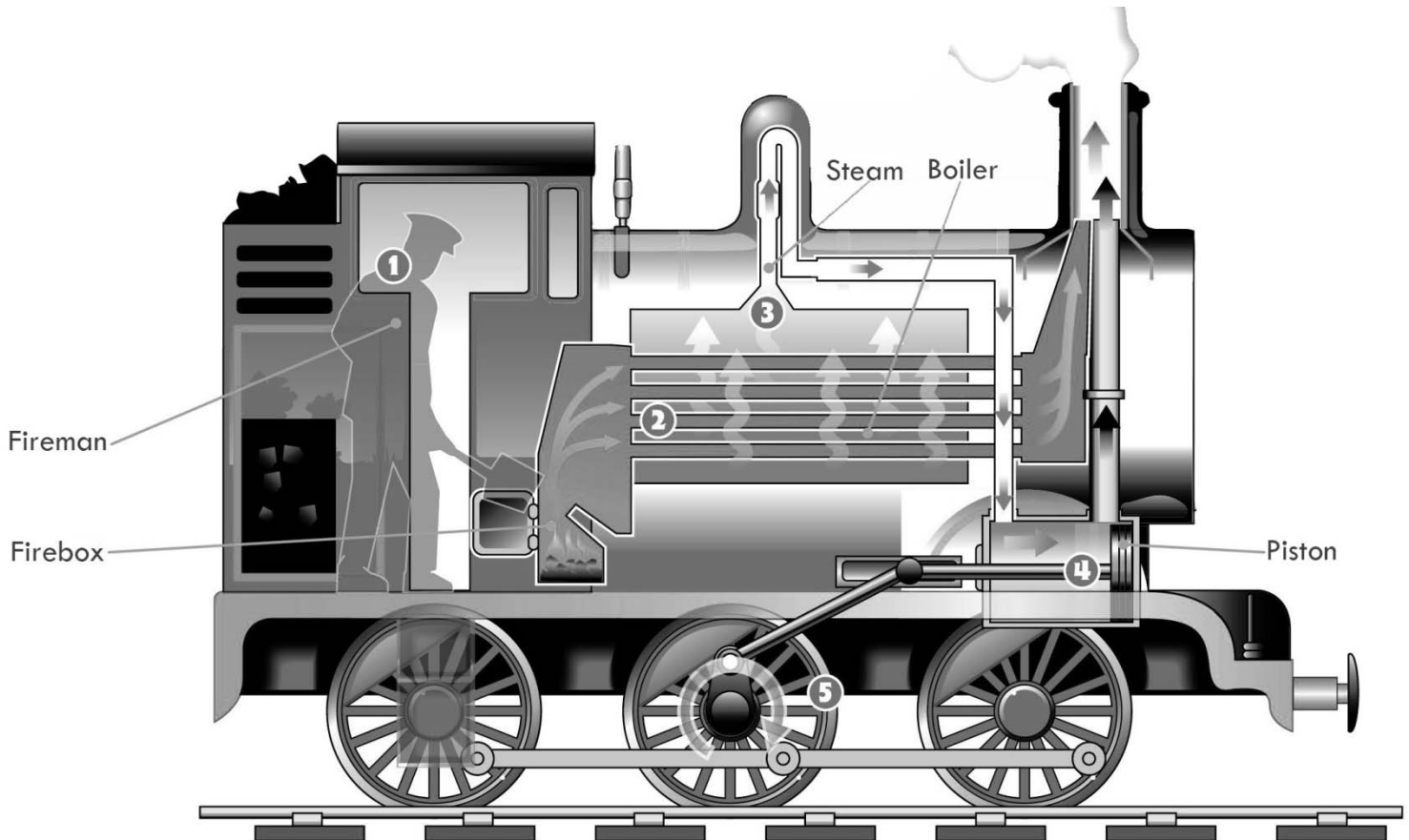




How do steam engines work?

The **engine** pulls the **train** which means all the carriages and wagons. People travel in carriages. Animals and things travel in wagons.

Look at the diagram below and follow the numbers to see how a steam engine makes power to move.



1. The Fireman feeds the firebox with coal
2. The fire heats the water in the boiler to make steam
3. The steam makes the pressure in the boiler rise
4. Steam pressure moves the piston forwards
5. The moving piston pulls a connecting rod that turns the wheels.

It wasn't easy being a Fireman. Imagine how hot it was shovelling coal into the firebox. I'm melting just thinking about it!

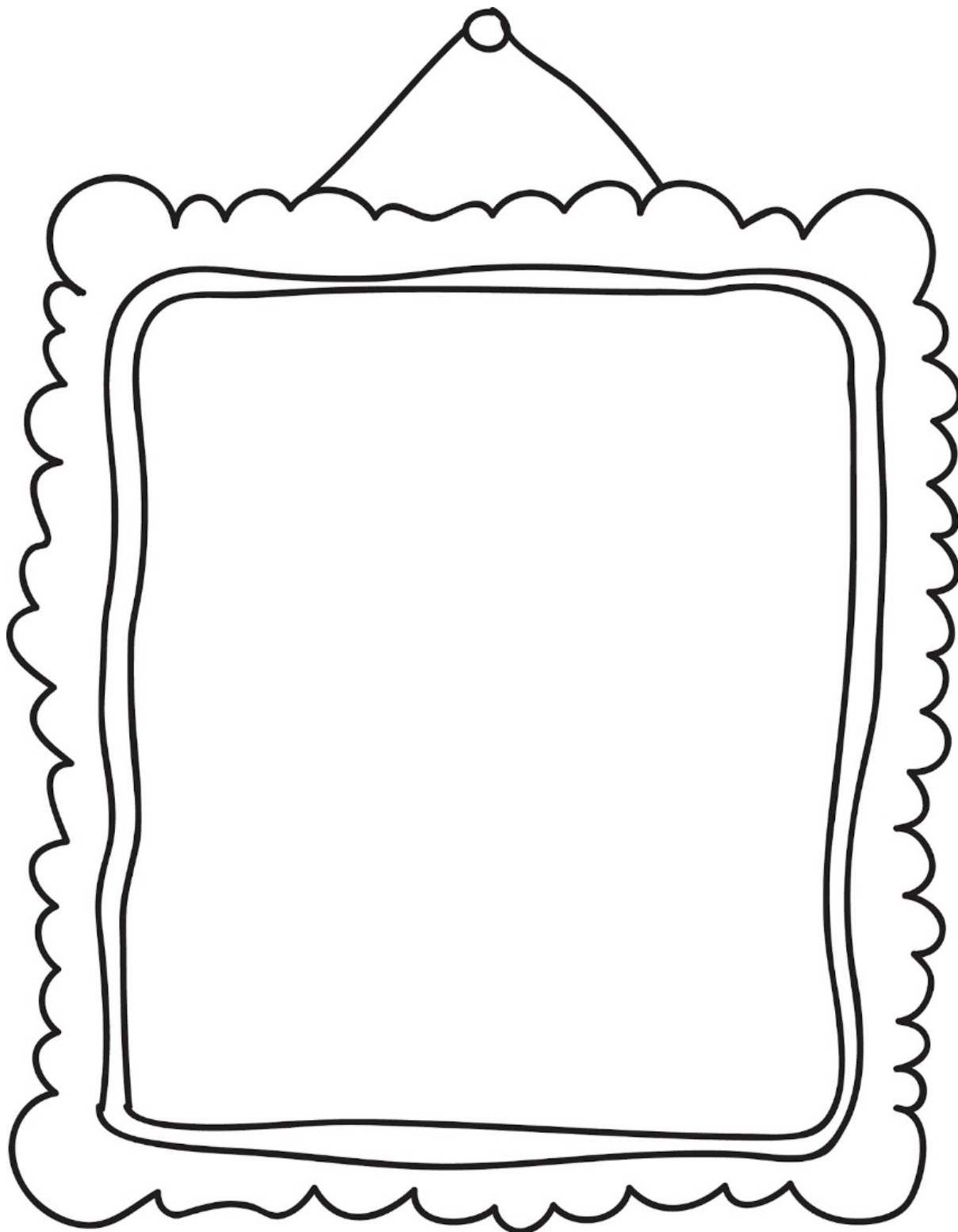


Buildings are quite easy to draw. They are usually made up of lots of geometric shapes, like squares, triangles and circles.

Have a go at drawing the front of Coed y Bleiddiau.

Please tell an adult where you are going so they don't worry about where you are! And don't forget to look out for the train.

And don't worry if you make a mess of your drawing, just use the other side.





What is slate?

Fact:

The earth's crust is made up of large plates that are always moving – they're called tectonic plates. Sometimes they slam into each other. Sometimes they grind past each other. Sometimes the plates pull apart making large cracks called rifts. This is how earthquakes happen.

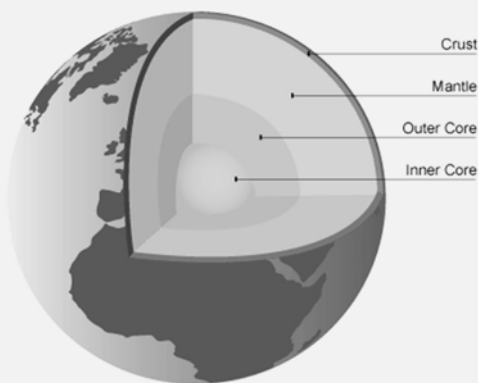


Plate movements can cause rocks to be deeply buried or squeezed. As this happens, the rocks are **heated** and put under great **pressure**. They don't melt, but the minerals in them change chemically to make **metamorphic rocks**.

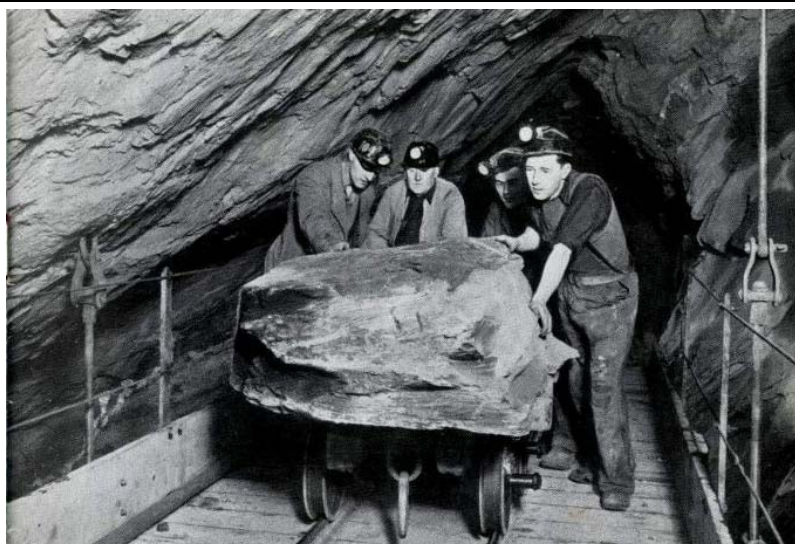
Slate is a **metamorphic rock** (say 'met-a-morf-ic'). This means it's a rock made of other rocks that have changed. Slate is made when a rock called Shale is squeezed tight at a warm temperature when the earth's plates move. Shale is made from a mixture of mud and clay.

There is a lot of slate in North Wales. At the end of the 1700s slate became very popular. At Blaenau Ffestiniog slate was mainly **quarried** (they dug straight into the ground to get it). Sometimes slate was **mined** (by tunnelling underground).



Before railways and trains the miners loaded up the slate into wagons that ran downhill on tracks. The wagons were unloaded and then pulled back up the hill to the mine by horses. This meant slate was usually used close to where the quarries were. The invention of trains made it easier to transport the slate all over Britain, Europe and even America!

Slate mining and quarrying was a very hard and dangerous job. Men worked 6 days a week and it took 5 years of training until you were a full miner or quarryman. The men worked in groups of four; two rockmen (they blasted the rock to make blocks), a splitter (he'd split the blocks with a hammer and chisel) and an apprentice (he was learning how to do it all).



Quest



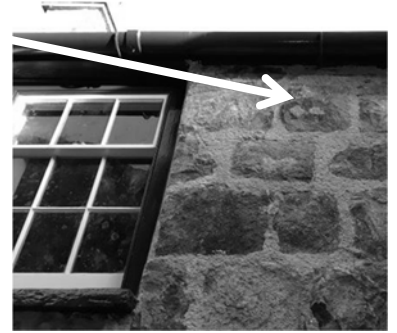
Discover more about Coed y Bleiddiau

Coed y Bleiddiau was built in 1863 as the Superintendent's house. That's over 150 years ago! Follow this Quest to discover more about it.

Can you find the stone sleeper? It's the one with two filled in holes.

Stone sleepers were used to support the tracks that the horse drawn slate trucks travelled along. When they changed to steam trains they changed them to wooden sleepers.

The sleeper stone has been reused and is high up on the wall next to the first floor bedroom window, the stone with the two mortared holes.



Can you find the manufacturers plaque?

This tells you who made the kitchen range.



Can you see any bats?

They live in this part of the loft – if you're lucky you might get to see them!



Is there anything else interesting that you've found? Draw a picture in the box and write about it below.

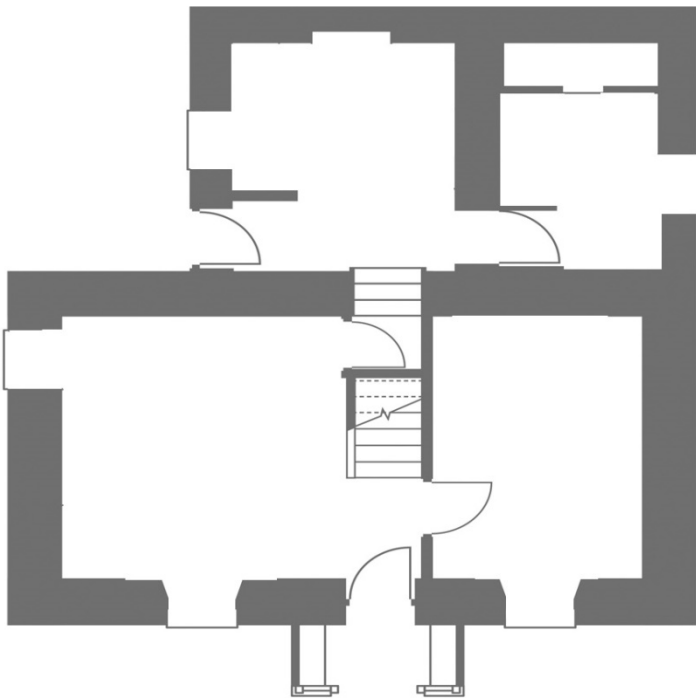
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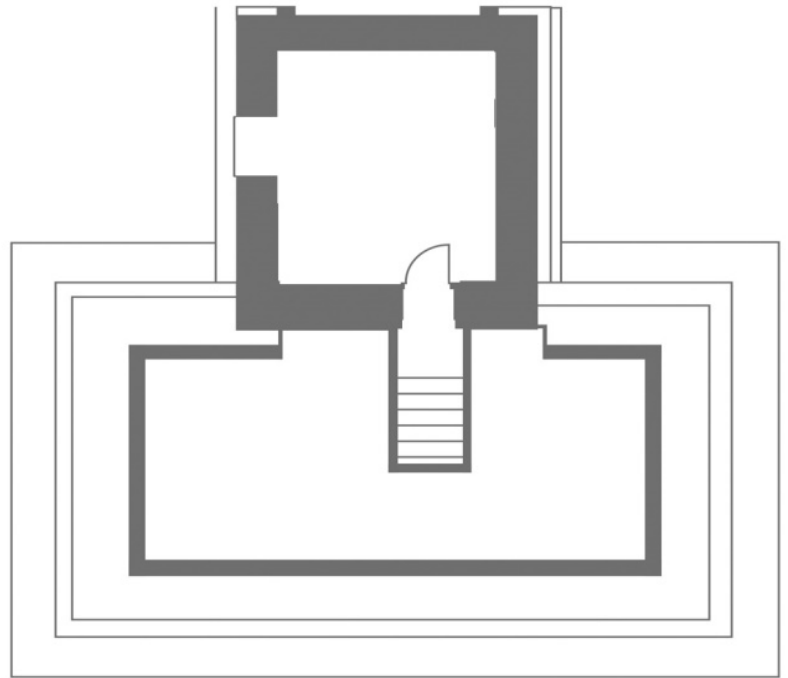


Living in Coed y Bleiddiau

The floorplan of a building is a map of the rooms. Coed y Bleiddiau has two floors. The plans below show you the shape of each room. Take a walk around each room and write on the plan what each room is used for.



Ground Floor

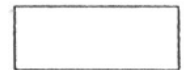


First Floor

We use these symbols to show where beds, tables and bathrooms are. Draw the symbols on to the floorplans to show where the furniture is.



Bed



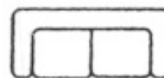
Rectangular (or a round) table



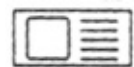
Bathroom



Cooker



Sofa



Kitchen sink



Can you find an example of each of these things inside Coed y Bleiddiau. Describe, or draw the object when you find it.

Your favourite chair

A large empty rectangular box for drawing a chair.

The fireplace (is it an open fire or does it have a stove?)

A large empty rectangular box for drawing a fireplace.

Draw the pattern of a rug on the floor

A large empty rectangular box for drawing a rug pattern.

In the box below, draw the view from your bedroom window. What can you see in the distance? Are there any animals or any trees that look very old and interesting?

A large empty rectangular box for drawing a view from a window.



Bat Facts

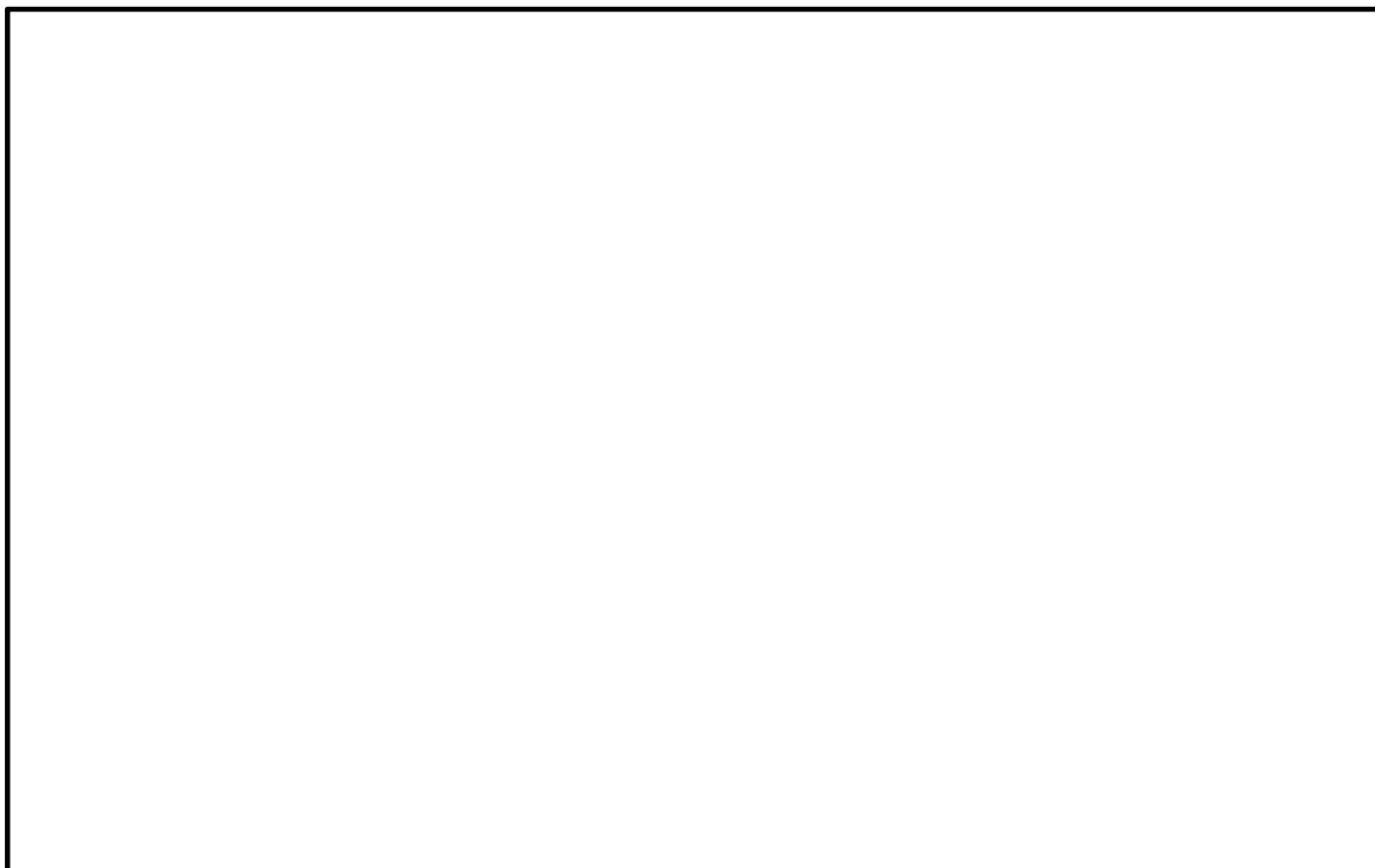
Bats are mammals like humans (except they can fly!) A mammal is a creature that breathes air, has warm blood and gives birth to its babies. Bats fly using their “hands”. Like us they have two arms and two legs. Their skin stretches from their fingers to their body which makes wings for them to fly.

Bats are nocturnal (say ‘*nok-turn-al*’). This means they come out at night and sleep all day. They sleep hanging upside down with their feet holding them in place. If you’re lucky, you might see them flying as the sun sets.

It’s quite hard finding food in the dark so bats use their ears to help them. They can ‘see’ with their ears (huh?) Bats shout as they fly and listen for echoes to bounce back to tell if something is there. That’s why they have such big ears – all the better for hearing with! But their “shouts” are so high we can’t even hear them.

FALSE MYTH ALERT: Bats aren’t blind! They can see just as well as us in twilight. But they only see in black and white (it must be like watching an old movie).

In the box below draw your own bat.





Sphagnum Moss Facts

Sphagnum (say 'sf-ag-num') moss is a special type of moss that can store water. It can absorb up to twenty- six times as much water as its dry weight. Impressive huh!

Sphagnum moss was used in World War One to make bandages for the soldiers. Doctors and nurses wrapped these bandages around the soldier's wounds. The moss bandages absorbed all the blood and puss but also kept the wound clean as sphagnum moss kills germs (it is anti-septic).

People all over Wales, Scotland and England went on organised trips to collect moss for the wounded soldiers. They'd fill sacks full of moss and then dance on top of the sack to get rid of all the water in the moss and help dry it out.

Fun Fact: Did you know that Native Americans used sphagnum moss as nappy material for their babies as it can absorb all the wee!



Test it yourself

When you go out walking, see if you can find some sphagnum moss. Pick some and let it dry out so there is no water left in its cells. Most of the moss cells are dead already and are ready to absorb water. To get the best result leave the sphagnum moss for a day or two just to make sure that it is dry.

Once it is dry put some sphagnum moss at the bottom of a glass or jug. Pour water on top little by little to see just how much water the moss can absorb! Clever plant, eh?





Superintendent's Word Search

Now have a go at the word search. Think about different parts of the building and what might have been here in the past. The words to find are at the bottom of the page.

R A T S T A T I O N N I D J
 O A L F T R I V E R O P F J
 N T I A H K D I H E D O O W
 A T K L B T R A V E L L H E
 T S E U W R O Y A M A J S T
 O R P E I A L O D I N M E R
 R Q A I U I Y A I P G S S O
 C U I C A N Q C U T I F R P
 H C L U K N E T A L S Y O S
 L A W T U N N E L L I G H N
 N M A C O W I E T M A E R A
 E P H K O M M O S T E A M R
 Y V I S I T O R S U S E N T

TRAIN
 SLATE
 TRAVEL
 SIGNAL

RAILWAY
 STEAM
 MINE
 HORSES

TORCH
 TRACK
 STATION
 VISITORS

TUNNEL
 WOOD
 RIVER
 TRANSPORT

How many of these words did you find? Put your score in the box.

16



Can you answer these questions correctly?

1. What year did the first railway line open?

1624

1825

1990

1240

2. How much did it cost to travel third class in the 1850s?

Two pounds a mile

One pound a mile

50 pence a mile

A penny a mile

3. What did they mine at Blaenau Ffestiniog?

Coal

Gold

Slate

Diamonds

4. What does Coed y Bleiddiau mean?

Wood of rats

Wood of butterflies

Wood of wolves

Wood of zebras

5. How fast did the Locomotion train travel in 1825?

100km an hour

59km an hour

25km an hour

19 km an hour

6. What is the name of the railway here?

Coed Railway

Ffestiniog Railway

Bleddiau Railway

Blaenau Railway

7. What is the name of the special moss found in the woods here?

Sphagnum

Spaghetti

Slippery

Silver

8. What is the name of the National Park you are in?

Brecon Beacons

Snowdonia

Peak District

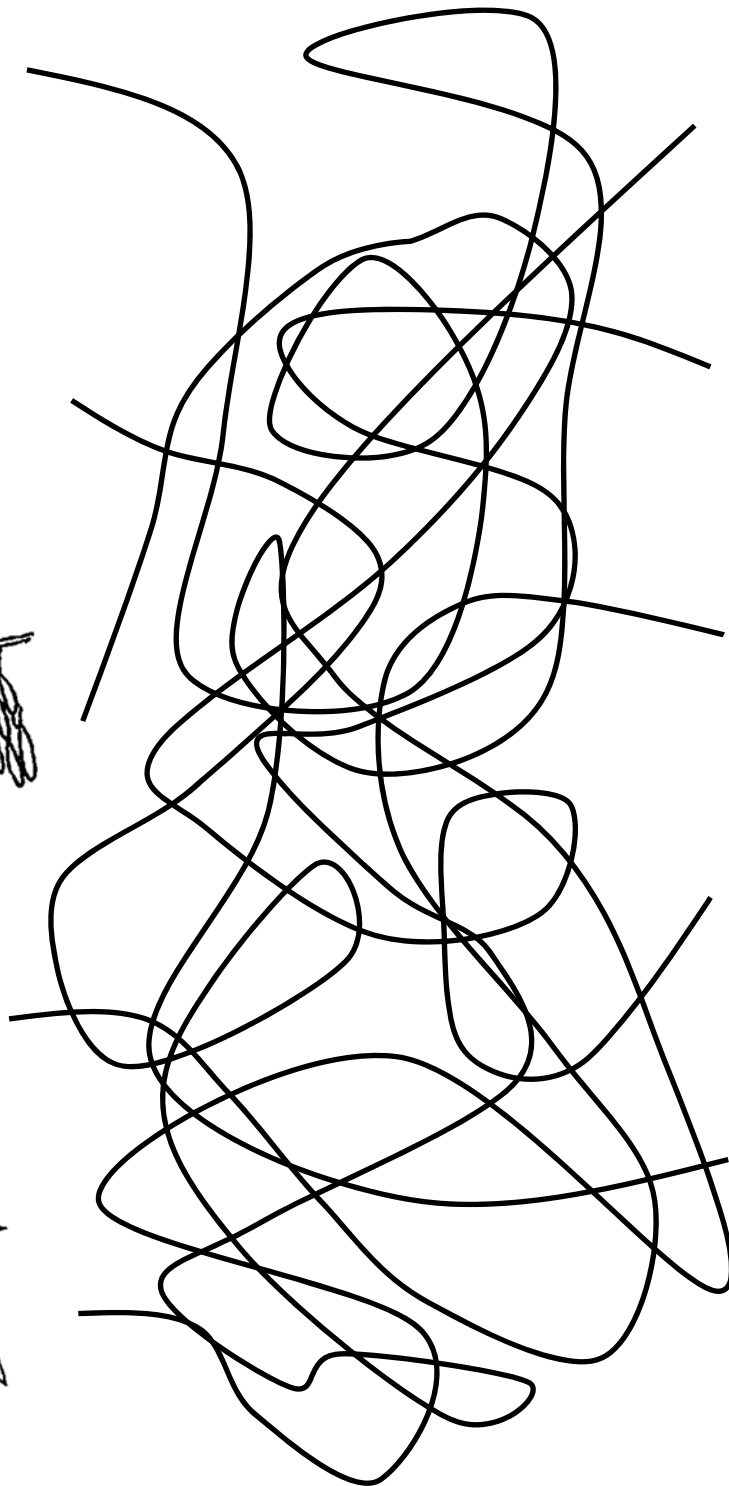
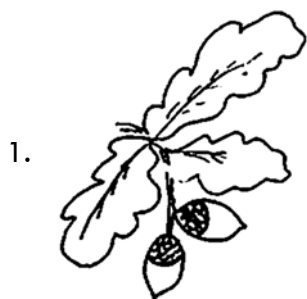
New Forest

To find the answers skip a page...



Which leaf belongs to which tree?

Match the leaf to the correct tree.



Horse Chestnut

Willow

Pine

Ash

Oak

Did you match them correctly? Put your score in the box.

Look out for these when you go for a walk!

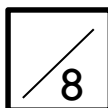


Answer sheet:

Quiz answers:

1. 1825
2. A penny a mile
3. Slate
4. Wood of Wolves
5. 19 km an hour
6. Ffestiniog Railway
7. Sphagnum
8. Snowdonia

How many did you get right?



Fact:

When trains were first invented people were scared about travelling in this new way! They were used to travelling in carriages pulled by horses. It was very strange for them to travel using the power of steam!

Imagine you lived here 100 years ago. Write an acrostic poem describing life at Coed y Bleiddiau. Each line has to begin with the letter shown, so that the lines spell 'Coed y Bleiddiau'!

C

O

E

D

Y

B

L

E

I

D

I

A

U



Make a traditional Welsh Rarebit (easy!)

The cheese needed for a good Welsh Rarebit uses a harder cheese than was made in Wales so the Welsh had to swap their sheep for hard Cheddar from England.

Here's a simple recipe for you to try. You will probably need the help of an adult.

Ingredients

4 slices of bread	2 tsp Worcestershire sauce, if you like
225g grated, hard cheese like Cheddar	1 level tsp mustard, if you like
1 tbsp butter	2 tsp flour
4 tbsp milk (or beer!)	Shake of pepper

Pre-heat the oven: fan 140 °C or electric 160 °C: Gas 3

- Put the cheese, butter, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, flour and pepper into a saucepan.
- Mix well and then add the milk or beer to moisten.
- Stir over a gentle heat until all is melted. Stop stirring when it becomes a thick paste.
- Leave to cool for a few minutes while you toast the bread on one side (if possible).
- Spread the rarebit paste over the untoasted side and put under a hot grill until it starts to bubble and go brown in places. Doesn't that smell good! Make sure you let it cool down a bit before you eat it.



Make some Welsh cakes (Picau ar y maen)

These spiced cakes are also known as bakestones in Wales because they were traditionally cooked on a flat stone over a fire. When spices became available in the 17th century these were added for extra flavour. You can use a frying pan instead of a bakestone!

Ingredients

225 g self-raising flour

110g g unsalted Welsh butter

1 large egg, beaten

1 tbsp raisins or currants

85 g golden caster sugar

A little milk if needed

Fact:

Picau ar y maen (say
'Pikay air ee mine')

These are traditional Welsh tea cakes popular in Wales for the last 200 years.

- In a large bowl, rub the butter into the flour until it looks like fine breadcrumbs.
- Add the sugar, dried fruit and then the egg. Mix to combine, and then push together to make a dough. If the mixture feels a little dry, add a little milk.
- Lightly flour your work surface. Roll out the dough until it is about 5mm thick. Cut into rounds about 10 cm wide. If you don't have a cookie cutter, use a drinking glass instead.
- Rub a frying pan with a little unsalted butter.
- Place over a low-medium heat, and cook the Welshcakes slowly until golden underneath and slightly puffed.
- Turn them over and cook the other side until golden. They need about 2-3 minutes on each side.
- Remove from the pan and dust with caster sugar while still warm. You can eat them warm or cold, with or without butter on top. Yum!





Design your own railway cottage

Imagine that you've just got a job on the railway and have been given a plot of land to build a cottage to live in, just like Mr. Hovenden. In the space below design your very own railway cottage. You can be as creative as you like! Don't forget to draw the background too.