

CABAN

FEBRUARY, 1963

For personal use
only, original scan
available from J
Knowles

www.train4underground.co.uk

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OAKELEY AND VOTTY SLATE QUARRIES

CABAN

THE OAKELEY SLATE QUARRIES CO. LTD.,
THE VOTTY AND BOWYDD SLATE QUARRIES CO. LTD.,
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG, NORTH WALES,
MITRE COURT CHAMBERS, OLD MITRE COURT (off Fleet Street),
LONDON, E.C.4

● FRONT COVER: *Winter study in the Dwyryd Valley near Blaenau Ffestiniog. The ivy-covered bridge is Pont Dolmoch on a stretch of the river Dwyryd popular with quarrymen-anglers in the fishing season*

"Caban" is the name of the type of mess-room in which the men of Oakeley and Votty meet for their meal-break . . . and which is also the centre of social life, and passing of information throughout the quarries, hence the title of this magazine

IN THIS ISSUE

Page

Flexibility of slate	3
Safety, Health and Welfare	5
Winning slate underground	8
Sculpture in slate and steel	10
Star attraction	12
Votty Quarry	13
Termau'r chwarel	16
Engine for an enthusiast	20
Hobbies gallery	22
Holiday snaps competition	26
Parting gift to pensioner	27

www.train4underground.co.uk



*Flexibility
of
Slate*

AMONG recently completed projects in Cambridge, for which roofing slates were supplied from our Oakeley Quarries, is this new school the distinctive central feature of which is of particular interest. It illustrates how flexibly slates can be used by craftsmen. The building is the new home of the Perse School for Boys which was founded in 1615. The architects were Messrs. Robert Matthew, Johnson, Marshall and Partners, of London, and the roofing was done by Messrs. Pratt (Watford) Ltd. On the next page are pictured other buildings in Cambridge roofed with Oakeley slates.

WELSH ROOFS IN CAMBRIDGE



The new Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge built to the designs of the London architects, Messrs Easton and Robertson, Cusdin Preston and Smith. The roofing contractors were The Manchester Slate Co., Ltd. Addenbrooke's was founded by the bequest in 1719 of Dr. John Addenbrooke of about £5,000 to establish a small hospital, but is now one of the most famous teaching hospitals in the country.

Below are some of the flats which are part of the Cambridge Borough Council's New Road development. The architect was Mr. D. W. Roberts, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., of Cambridge and Messrs Roberts Adlard and Co., Ltd., were responsible for the roofing. In progress is a further extension of the scheme for which our Company are also supplying slates from the Oakeley Quarries. The roofing in this instance is being done by Messrs Tanner and Hall Ltd., of Cambridge who also regularly use Oakeley slates for work for the University Authorities.



SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE

By O. CONNOR, M.B.E., A.M.I.M.M., M.I.Q., H.M. Inspector of Mines and Quarries

IT is generally known that accidents cause human suffering and pain, sometimes death. Therefore, in your mine, safety, health, and welfare is everybody's business. From the manager down, every person on the mine premises has his part to play in the prevention of accidents.

The maintenance of safe working conditions is very necessary for operational efficiency, good industrial relations, and a happy environment. Having these considerations in mind, *Caban* has asked me to record my personal views on matters connected with safe working, matters which have become apparent to me during my many inspections of your workplaces.

Results of carelessness

In my experience, given reasonable precautions and careful thought in carrying out daily tasks, accidents can nearly always be avoided. Most accidents I have investigated are the results of carelessness, lack of thought or knowledge, or failure on the part of the individual to appreciate hazards.

I feel that it would be helpful if I first drew your attention to the principal statutory measures which have been brought into operation with the express purpose of securing the safety, health, and welfare of persons employed at mines. The statutory instruments governing all normal operations at your mine are the Mines and Quarries Act, 1954, The Miscellaneous Mines (General) Regulations 1956, The Miscellaneous Mines (Electricity) Regulations 1956, and The Miscellaneous Mines (Explosives) Regulations 1959. Copies of these documents are kept in the general office and everyone is expected to make themselves familiar with the various provisions. The owners have issued to all employees, a copy of Book 6, "Workmen at Miscellaneous Mines," which was specially prepared by the Ministry of Power to give a guide to the foregoing statutory provisions.

Before I deal with preventive measures I would like to impress on you that every injury, however slight, should be treated immediately by a competent first-aid man or official. Many an untreated injury has resulted in complications such as blood poisoning. When attention is received from a first-aid man, the injured person should report the circumstances to an official as soon as possible, so that the cause of the accident may be investigated in order to prevent its recurrence. Every injured person should give further notice of the accident as soon as practicable after its occurrence by making an entry in the accident book which is kept in the general office, or notify an official to make the entry on his behalf.

Every underground worker is provided with an efficient electric cap lamp and no person should enter the underground workings without it. Likewise, every person before going below ground should ensure that he has a serviceable hard safety hat which should be worn throughout the time he is underground, if he is to avoid the possibility of serious head injuries. It is particularly dangerous to enter disused workings which have been fenced off. You probably know that such workings are not normally inspected and entry to such places is strictly forbidden at all times.

Dangerous practice

It is a dangerous practice to take glass bottles below ground. Where man handling of blocks of slate is a common feature, broken glass can be the cause of serious hand injuries. Any glass which is broken must be collected by the person responsible and deposited in a place where it cannot do any harm.

Sand buckets and fire extinguishers have been provided in the hoist chambers below ground where there is a risk of an outbreak of fire; they should not be interfered with. Should a fire break out, the fumes and noxious gases from the

Oakeley's fully qualified first-aid team — slate makers John Griffith Hughes, who has been at the Oakeley Quarry for 35 years, and Arwyn Williams (14 years), Alfred Humphreys, a steward (34 years) and rockman Arthur Wyn Evans (33 years). Another experienced first-aid man at Oakeley is Hugh Owen Jones.



fire itself could be more dangerous than the flames, they could pollute the whole of the mine atmosphere with very serious consequences. The most dangerous gas produced by a fire is carbon monoxide, which is colourless and odourless when separated from the smoke and not easily detected.

Should any person come across a fire below ground, however small it may appear, it must be treated as an emergency and immediately extinguished. You can help to avoid a fire by refraining from throwing down lighted cigarette ends near to inflammable material. Great care should be taken to keep naked lights away from timber, electric cables, or any other combustible materials.

In the case of a fire ignited by electricity switch off the electric current, smother the flames with a fire extinguisher designed to deal with such fires. On no account

should water be used until the current is switched off and only then if the fire extinguisher, and later sand, are insufficient to control the fire.

Great care should be taken to see that tools are not left on ledges where they could fall on to persons who may be working below, or in travelling-ways where they are likely to cause accidents by persons tripping over them. Keep the floor of your workplace clean to prevent accidents by tripping and falling. A person's character can nearly always be assessed by the cleanliness of his workings.

A great number of accidents and dangerous occurrences are caused by the misuse of explosives. It is true to say that familiarity in their handling often breeds contempt. Treat explosives of every description with the greatest respect at all times. When dealing with gunpow-

der, which is the explosive most commonly used at your mine, smoking should be forbidden. Naked lights must not be brought any nearer than four feet of the shot hole or any explosive or detonator, except when lighting the fuse after the gunpowder has been adequately stemmed in the hole.

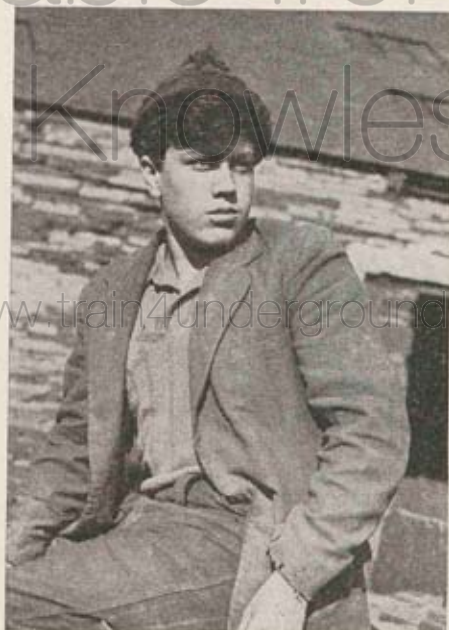
After handling gunpowder it is very important to ensure that the hands are free from explosive before handling the safety fuse. Recently an accident occurred when an explosion took place in the main charge immediately the end of the safety fuse was lit. A possible explanation of this premature explosion was that the shotfirer allowed gunpowder to get on his hands when charging the shot hole and later, when handling the safety fuse a smear of this explosive was deposited along the length of the fuse. When the fuse was lit, the smear on the outside of the fuse caused the initiation of the main charge. I need not remind you of the dangers of allowing grain explosive to fall around the collar of a shot hole and

be left there. This dangerous practice has caused many an accident.

There is always an element of risk when dealing with a miss-fire and careful primary charging in the first place would do much to obviate miss-fires. At all times when dealing with a miss-fire you should take your directions from the miss-fire scheme for the mine, a copy of which has been issued to all shotfirers. Do not try to decide that you have the better method of dealing with the results of a miss-fire; this attitude might well lead to disaster. After all, the miss-fire scheme has been well thought out and is designed for your safety.

You may remark that what I have written is only the first principles of safe working and that in any case you are well aware of the dangerous practices quoted. But ask yourself how many times an accident occurs when these elementary safety precautions are ignored; for your own safety, health, and welfare, do give them your attention.

LEARNING THE CRAFT OF SLATE-MAKING



Newest apprentices at the Oakeley Quarries are (from left) Gordon Alexander MacIntyre, aged 15, who was born in Scotland and has lived in Wales for about seven years, Wyn Wyatt, aged 15, and Christopher Roberts, aged 16.

WINNING SLATE UNDERGROUND

TWO methods of extracting slate from the rock mass in the underground chambers of the Oakeley Quarry are illustrated in these contrasting photographs.

On the opposite page is the scene in No. 4 chamber on M Floor where rockmen are dealing with two huge blocks of "New Vein", together weighing perhaps about 500 tons. These blocks, as well as numerous smaller pieces, were brought down in a controlled fall by shot-firing from the side wall of the cavernous chamber whose "ceiling" is about 120 feet above M Floor level.

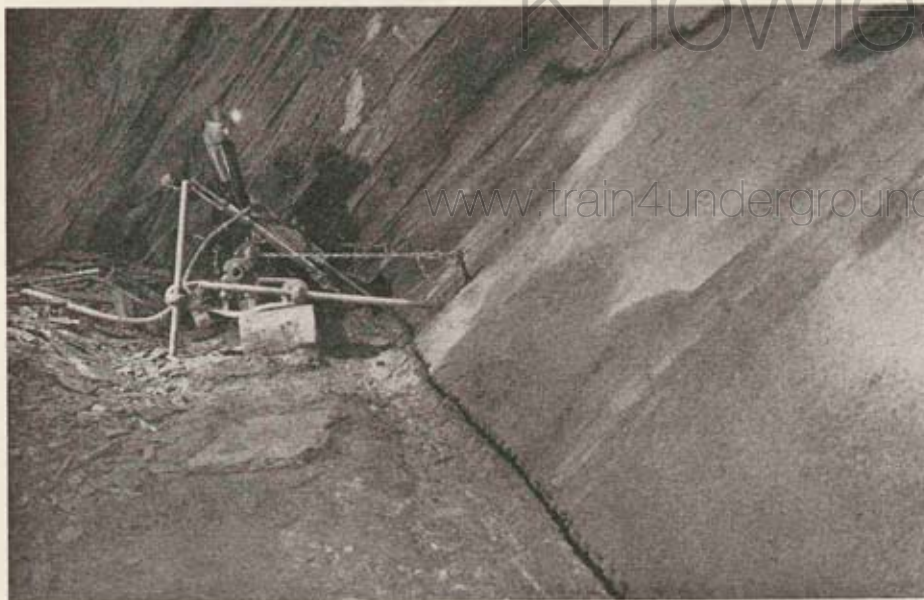
In the foreground rockman Robert G. Hughes is splitting yet another "slice" taken from the big block on the left which had already yielded some 50 tons of slate for the mill. On the right, G. Arthur Williams is using a ladder to examine the other great block (dubbed

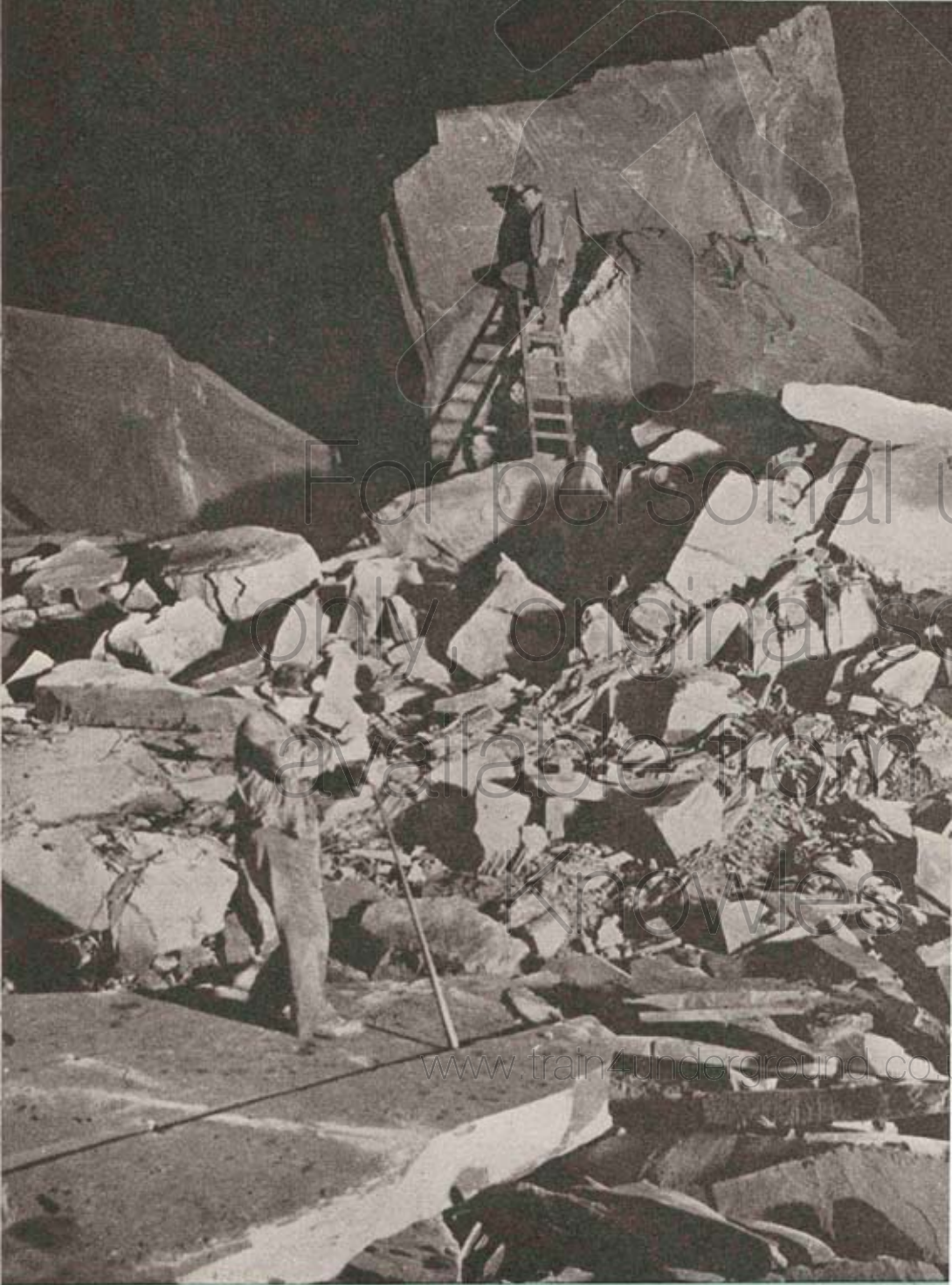
"Pero") to determine the best way of tackling it.

Rockmen partners for six years, the men, who have both been at Oakeley for 13 years, have been working on this productive rock in M4 for about five months and they expected it would take them as long again to clear it.

The photograph below of chamber N5 shows the channelling method of dealing with a "cliff" of "Old Vein". This entails drilling 6ft deep holes along the base of the cliff with a pneumatic channelling machine so as to provide a "free" end to enable rockmen Arthur Wyn Evans and Bob Edwards to break up the rock into blocks of suitable dimensions.

Operating the channelling machine is Richard Lloyd who has worked at Oakeley for 30 years. His hobby is woodwork and he told *Caban* that his home is largely equipped with furniture of his own making.





Chamber 4, M Floor

Sculpture in Slate



WHEN Bryan Kneale of London, who is regarded as one of the most individualistic of young sculptors working in England today, visited our Oakeley Quarries in search of slabs of slate, those who had the pleasure of meeting him might well have wondered where rough-hewn Welsh slate fitted into the artist's scheme of things.

The illustrations here, from photographs which Mr. Kneale kindly made

available to *Caban*, provide the answer. The sculpture in slate and steel shown above is the maquette (the model) for a piece Mr. Kneale is doing for the London County Council's Fenwick Place housing estate in Lambeth.

The monumental sculpture will stand ten feet high on a plinth seven feet high, the latter covered with continuously flowing skin of water. The stone itself, of course, is only part of the complete work, the rest being massive forged iron

and Steel

bars piercing and supporting the slate slabs, which came from the Oakeley Quarries.

The photograph of the maquette made the front cover of a catalogue for an exhibition of Mr. Kneale's sculpture and drawings which was held in November, 1962, at the Redfern Gallery in Burlington Gardens, London.

The other illustration is of a recent piece in which slate is used to counter-balance the steel and which is one of a series of pivots and balances the sculptor has been working on. "The combination of slate and steel has a great interest and attraction for me", says Mr. Kneale. "The two materials combine in such a way as to lead on to endless possibilities".

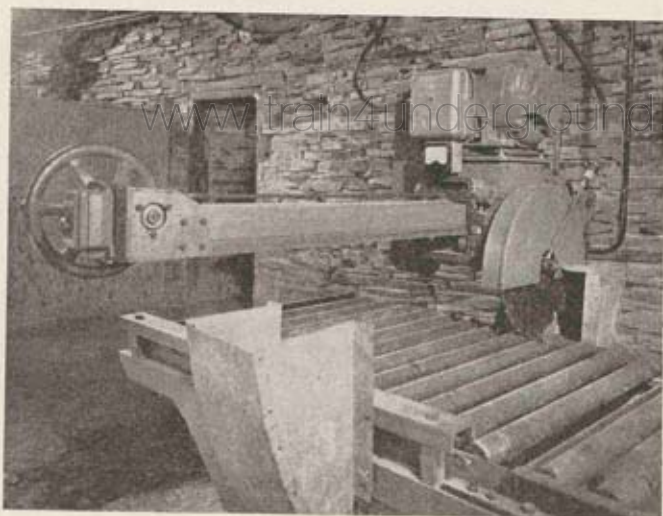
These and other sculptures of Mr. Kneale's are to be shown at a big exhibition of his work arranged to be held in West Berlin in February and March this year.



Mr. Kneale, who is also a painter and has executed portrait commissions for many eminent people, has shown his works at exhibitions at home and abroad. He exhibited at the Royal Academy for six successive years up to 1960.

MACHINE FOR SLATE MAKING

Among new equipment recently installed at the Oakeley Quarries is this diamond saw of American design in Bonc Goedan mill. Manufactured in this country by Wessex Machine Tools Ltd., the saw is one of the most modern of stone-cutting machines and is being used to reduce to suitable dimensions, blocks selected for the production of high-quality roofing slates.



★ Star Attraction ★

*Shop window for
Welsh slate*



IN the constant endeavour to expand the market for Welsh slate the industry “showed its face” most effectively last year with the stand shown here at the Building Exhibition at Olympia, London. It was rated one of the star attractions; it drew a great deal of attention, and among the most interested visitors were British and Continental architects and designers.

Designed by Arnold Rattenbury and Associates for the North Wales Slate Quarries Association, the stand had a floor of half-inch riven slabs contributed by all the North Wales quarries, and included a mural (seen on the left) illustrating the various colours of roofing slates. Tables on display were topped with slates in various finishes and a particularly attractive feature was a decorative slate fountain with three jets. Many

people could not resist the temptation to pause and put their hands into the spray.

The stand also projected some propaganda for the Welsh tourist industry through a map of North Wales which had been carved on a square of slate by Jonah Jones, the sculptor. It showed the quarrying areas in outline and attracted much interest, both for itself and also from people who pointed out to friends where they had spent their holidays—and others who occasionally came forward to ask how to pronounce some of the place-names.

Members of the Quarries Association, assisted by trade friends, took turns in manning the stand and at busy times up to four people were simultaneously engaged in answering all sorts of professional, trade and private inquiries.

VOTTY QUARRY

CABAN records with regret the closure of the Votty Quarry which had been operated since 1874 by the Votty and Bowydd Slate Quarries Company, which in 1933 became a subsidiary of the Oakeley Company.

The decision to close the quarry in October was reached by the Directors with the greatest regret. The step was taken not because of any lack of demand for slates but owing to circumstances at the Votty Quarry, the reduced scale of production having for some time been far from sufficient to cover operating expenses.

The majority of those employed at Votty are now working at the Oakeley Quarries, every effort having been made by our Company to provide work for those who wished to be transferred there.

A number of the men had worked at Votty for more than 40 years and the closure marked the end of some long family associations with the quarry. For instance, the father of David Lloyd Jones, the maintenance fitter, was manager at Votty under the previous ownership and his grandfather held the office before him, the appointment in this case dating from 1881. Both bore the same name, John Lloyd Jones.

David Lloyd Jones reckons that his family link with Votty goes back over 100 years.

Almost as long is the family association of Mr. Emlyn Jones, the present manager, he having been on the staff for 35 years and his father, Mr. John Jones, secretary of the former company, for about half a century.

*Votty Quarry staff:
seated (from left) J.
R. Hughes, E. Emlyn
Jones (manager) and
R. Oliver Roberts;
standing, L. Good-
man, Dennis Roberts,
T. J. Evans and J. H.
Williams.*



QUARRYMEN AND STAFF AT VOTTY



www.train4underground.co.uk

In this group photographed at the Votty Quarry are (from left)—(Front Row): Gwilym Jones, J. Ll. Roberts, Len Goodman, J. R. Hughes, Evan L. Hughes, W. B. Jones, Robert Edwards, Gerald Griffith, W. R. Edwards, J. Harker Jones, T. A. Owen, O. G. Hughes, E. R. Jones, J. E. Jones, Idris Williams, R. Evans, Harry Williams, John Williams, R. Ifor Williams, Richard W. Jones, Dennis Roberts, R. H. Williams, David Griffith and William Jones who were working on the Tuxford tip, 22



For personal use only, original scans available from Jon Knowles

www.train4underground.co.uk

Front Row): Gwilym Jones, J. Ll. Roberts, R. R. Jones, Owen E. Jones. (Second Row): J. H. Williams, T. J. Evans, R. Oliver Jones, Robert Edwards, Gerald Griffith, Derek Davies, R. Ll. Roberts, David E. Jones, Emlyn Jones. Middle Group: Trevor Davies, R. Jones, J. E. Jones, Idris Williams, Richard D. Jones, J. T. Jones, Dennis Jones, W. T. Williams, W. J. Morris, Ieuan Jones. Rear Row): Thomas Hughes, R. O. (Trebor) Roberts, R. E. Lewis, Meredydd W. Roberts, W. Harker Jones, D. Lloyd Jones, W. Ernest Jones, Dennis Roberts, R. H. Williams, William (Madoc) Jones, Griffith J. Williams, H. R. Humpbreys. Inset are: Hugh Jones and two other men were working on the Tuxford tip, 250 feet above the quarry office level when the group photograph was taken.

TERMAU'R CHWAREL

Y MAER rhestr o dermau'r chwarel sy'n dilyn yn gorffen y casgliad a grynhowyd gan Mr. Gwilym Humphreys; ef hefyd sydd wedi paratoi y cyfieithiadau Saesneg.

Er na fu atebion i lenwi y bylchau yn y rhestr, y mae *Caban* wedi croesawu y cyfle o roi ar gof a chadw yn y rhifyn hwn a'r ddau flaenorol "eiriadur" o dermau ac arferion chwarelyddol sydd wedi datblygu ar hyd y blynyddoedd.

Ochor iddi : Another mode of putting back a derailed waggon. Men put their backs against the derailed side and push.

Ochor ora' : The best side, usually of a slate.

Ochor rydd : A free side. The channel or trench blasted between the wall (or pillar) and the rock to be extracted in an underground chamber.

O dani : Not having produced enough to earn standard wages.

Oddiwrth din y fuch : A phrase describing a man who has left agricultural work for quarry work.

Oer; gweithio nhw'n oer : Slate blocks quarried without the aid of explosives.

Offis bach : A sub-office.

Offis fawr : The quarry office.

O law i law : From hand to hand.

Olwyn gocos : Cog wheel.

Palmantu : To pave.

'Paned naw : Nine o'clock cup of tea.

Pant gwynab : Depression on the surface of anything—e.g., a rail.

Papur bach : The weekly pay ticket.

Papur setlo : Monthly pay ticket, i.e., the final or settling pay ticket.

Partner (Padnar) : Partner in any contract.

Partneru : Partnering. This may be by arrangement or sometimes by expediency. Quarry partnerships have been known to last for many years.

Pas bei : Pass by, usually where empty vehicles are left.

Patant llwch : Dust extractor fitted to a rock-drill.

Pedol : Horseshoe shaped piece at the end of a saw-table.

Pefal : Bevel joint which often crosses both cleavage and pillaring.

Pegio : To peg.

Peg bwrdd : Saw table peg for holding slate blocks in position.

Peg ling : Steel peg with link attached.

Peg lli : Pin to keep a saw in position on its axle.

Peil : Pile of slates laid flat on the slatemaker's bench.

Peilio : To pile.

Peilio'n gam : To pile unevenly or crookedly.

Peipan aer : Compressed air pipe.

Pelan : Cartridge of gelignite.

Penna' llifia : Waste-ends from sawn blocks of slate.

Penna' gwynion : Block ends having quartz crystals on them.

Penna' cwn : Unshapely lumps of slate rock.

Pen bar : Uneven rail joint.

Pen balast : Section of the quarry in the open.

Pen doman : Tip-end.

Pen da : Good or the easiest end of a block for splitting.

Pen lli : Sawn end.

Pen ucha : Making it easier for slate rock to pillar by cutting a free top.

Pen isa : Making it easier for slate rock to pillar by cutting a free bottom.

Pen tap : The end of a measuring tape.

Pentwr : Pile.

Pen'bont : Area near the high level bridge.

Pen yr ymyl : Extreme edge.

Pig; pig-floreddoliwr : Pickaxe; a plateplayer's pick.

Pigins : Pickings—rejected slates—not up to standard.

Pigo : To pick.

Pilar : Pillar or wall. **Tynnu pilar** : To take away a pillar systematically. **Ochor pilar** : The side of a pillar.

Pin sgwennu : Steel pin for writing on slate—used by slate inspectors.

Pinsiar : Short, light crowbar.

Pirim : Kind of chisel, now hardly ever used.

"Pitch" : Pitch. Used to seal paper cartridges.

"Pitcher" : First drill in a set.

Pitshio : To use the first drill.

Plaen : A planer.

Plaenio : To plane.



"Platan groes" — Flat plate used to cross from one tram-road to another.

Platan groes : Flat plate used to cross from one tram-road to another.

P'leriad : Pillaring. A structural characteristic of slate, the line of which lies at a right angle to that of the cleavage.

P'leru : To pillar ; **ar b'leriad** : On the pillar-ing line. Also used to describe whether one is in a good humour or not.

P'leriad fel ruban : Ribbon-like pillaring line.

P'leriad fel sidan : Silk-like pillaring line. Very good, both of them.

Plwg : Plug and feathers.

Plygio : To use the plug and feathers for sub-
dividing a block of slate.

Plŷg : Large block of slate successfully dis-
lodged from the main body of rock.

Points : Switch on a tram-road. **Troi points** :
To operate the switch.

Poitsh : Bungle or mess.

Poitshio : To bungle.

Polyn strap : Special pole for putting back
belting that has slipped off the pulley.

Ponc : Gallery, floor or bank.

Post : Series of joints so close together as to
make slate rock worthless.

Post o faw : Ditto.

Powdro : To charge a shot-hole with explosives.

Powdwr : Explosive.

Powdwr du : Black gunpowder.

Pren tshocio : Chocking mallet used for packing
slates.

Pren tis : Apprentice.

Pric mesur : Gauge or measuring stick.

"Priming"

Prinsis : Slates size 24in. x 14in.

Prinsis mawr : Slates size 26in. x 16in.

Pris : Agreed poundage, tonnage or yardage
figure.

Pum' w'ithan : "Five veins"—a set of these
fairly close together in the Old Vein.

Pump a charrag : Meaning five "mwrw" (15
slates) plus one.

Pwli : Pulley.

Pwmp : Pump.

Pwshar : Pusher or air-leg used in rock drilling.

Pwynt : Sharpened point, e.g., on a drill.

Pwyntio : To point.

Pwynt ffeil : Sharpened point filed at the time
the steel is hot.

Pwynt mwrthwl : Sharpened point, ham-
mered when warm.

Pwynt sengal : Single-edged cutting point.

Pwynt dwbwl : Double edged cutting point.

Pwysa' : The weight of material transported as
it affects earnings.

Pwyswr : Weigher.

'Refal : The Smithy.

Restio : To apply leverage.

Rhac : Rake.

Rhaff : Rope.

Rhaff inclen : Incline (wire) rope.

Rhaw : Shovel or spade.

Rhaw fforddoliwr : Platelayer's spade.

Rhaw gaff : Spade for clearing sludge made to
fit the trough in which the saw revolves.

Rhedag : To run.

Rhedag ar 'i hol hi : Hard at it—very busily
engaged ; **Tew wedi rhedag** : A whole sec-
tion of the rock face having slipped or run.



*Frank Thomas demonstrating the use of
"plug and feathers" in sub-dividing a block
of slate.*

Rhoi cerrig i fynd : At the end of the quarry
month a slatemaker gives an account of the
number of slates he has made in the period.
Also an allegorical term when a quarryman
retires.

Rhoi byrddiad : Placing slate blocks on the
saw table.

Rhuglo : To clear rubble in the mill.

Rhys : Very large wooden mallet used in the
mill.

Rhywiog : Easy, kindly.

Rowlars : Rollers.

Rwb : Fall of rock.

Rwbal : Rubble.

Rwbal naddu : Rubble or waste from dressing.

Rwbal hollti : Rubble or waste from splitting.

Rwbal meinars : Rubble or waste from the
miner's heading.

Rwbal brâs : Coarse or large rubble.

Rwbal mân : Fine or small rubble.

Rwff : Roof tunnel.

Ryffio : To drive a roof tunnel.

Rybela : To glean, i.e., make slates out of spare
material or that discarded.

Rybelwr : One who gleanes.

Rybelwr bach : A boy who gleanes, i.e., an
apprentice.

Rybela siawns : Gleaning by depending on
chance rather than a regular source of supply.

Ryn : A train or series of vehicles coupled to-
gether ; **fel wagan gynta' ryn** : Brazen, bold,
like the first waggon in a train.

Safon : Standard.

Safon cyflog : Wage standard.

Safon gosod : Letting standard.

Sa' draw : Distance bar.

Saer : Carpenter.

Saer maen : Stone-mason.

Saethu : To blast.
Saim : Grease.
"Scantling" : Small beam, fairly long, laid lengthwise under rails, especially on inclines.
Screib : Breakaway from the natural cleavage.
"Scotch" : Iron bar used for locking waggon wheels.
Setlo : Settling of the pay.
Sgarsio : To scarify, e.g., to enlarge a level by removing protruding pieces of rock.
Sglefr : Untidy rock face, without regard to the natural cleavage.
'Sglodion : Split slates before being dressed (shaped).
Sgrapar : Scraper.
Sgwario : To square.
Shials : Shattered—thin and narrow pieces of slate.
Shitia : Sheets.
Shyfljo : To shovel.
Shyrcan : The Chert—the hard rock overlying the New Vein bed.
Shiaff : Shaft.
Siambar : Small shed attached to the main slate-making mill.
Siarpio : To sharpen.
Sigiad : Damage to slate caused by a strain.
Sinc : Sink.
Sincio : To sink.
Siomi : Thwart, disappoint; **Paid a'i siomi** : In blasting this expression means that the charge should be sufficiently strong so that the result is not disappointing.
Sist : Shortening of the word "assistance"; a particular reference to the slatemaker's production for the day.
Sist ungoes : Production of one or two sizes only—not sufficient variety.
Slangan : Paper cartridge made to hold gun-powder.
Slatar : Slater.
Sléd : Trolley.
Slediad : Block of slate that is placed on a trolley.
Sleifar :
Slip : Slip joint in the rock, i.e., a joint that lies between the vertical and horizontal.
Yn berwi o sliopia : Many slip joints close together.
Slipan : Rail sleeper.
Slont : Joint, often, though not always, parallel to the cleavage.
Slont glai : Clay slant. A very well defined slant overlying the Old Vein so called because it carries a deposit of clay-like substance.
Smit : When an enforced stoppage of work occurred owing to, e.g., heavy snow, it was called smit. Also a shortage of water could cause a smit. A submission to the weather.
Smotia' : Spots in slates.
Smotia' llaeth : Large spots found in certain Old Vein slates.
Snyffyn : Short piece of candle.
Socad : Socket.
Soldiars : 4½ inch wide slates.
Spar : Quartz.
Spardyn : Spur.
"Specials" : Non-standard sized slates.

Spion Kop : Gravity incline from the office level to Penybont.
Sprag : Iron bar for locking wheels.
Spragio : To sprog.
"Squares" : Square slates.
Stagar : In difficulty—nearly "in extremis."
Stampar : Stemmer, for ramming shot-holes.
Stampio : To stem.
Stamping : Stemming.
Stampar twll hollt : Stemmer for ramming a cleavage (splitting) hole.
Stelin : Place where slate blocks are first unloaded in the mill; a shelf.
Stem : Day's work.
Stepan : Step.
Stiward : Under-manager.
Stocar : Stoker.
Stolpyn : Piece pillared off a slate block while trimming it prior to splitting.
Stolpyr : To trim.
Stop bloc : A stop block.
"Stoppages" : Statutory deductions from wages, e.g., N.I. contributions, etc.
Stordyn : Buttress.
Strap, strap mawr : Belt, belting.
Stric waggon : Level waggon-load, not heaped.



"Sa' draw"—a distance bar used to link up a trolley when a large slate block overhangs.

"Strong's" : Thicker and stronger slates than the "mediums."
Stwffwl : Staple.
Plygu fel stwffwl : Used to describe something or someone bent in half.
Swdwl (sawdl), soda : Lumps of solid rock left in the ground after blasting. They have to be blasted again when level ground is needed as for laying a tram-road.
Swmar : Beam.
Syb : Subsistence money—paid weekly.
Sylffyr : Pyrites in slate.
Tafliad : Geological fault—a displacement.
Tafod : Length of rail that moves in a tram-road switch (points).
Tafod bach : Short length of such rail.
Tafoda' bacha' : Movable rails used to connect two tram-roads so made that they are anchored at one end and shaped to fit over matching rails at the other end.
Tagwr :



Austin Roberts using the "rhys"—a large wooden mallet.

Tâl : Pay.
Talcen bwrdd : End of the sawing table nearest to the splitter.
Tali : Tally—a numbered coin used as a receipt for the pay.
Talu : To pay.
Talu'r costa : At one time, not now, explosives etc., were paid for by the men using them.
Tanio : To blast by explosives.
Tê bach : The much-loved cup of tea.
Tebot oel : Oil can.
Tegins : Broken pieces of china.
Cerrig fel tegins : Very brittle slates—like china.
Tew : A bed or layer of slates.
Tewia : Beds or layers.
Tew bras : Coarse bed ; **Tew caled** : Hard bed.
Tew cyrli : Wrinkled bed ; **Tew sidan** : Silky bed. Descriptive names of some beds of slate.
Tew dwy : The thickness of two slates ; **Tew pedair** : The thickness of four slates ; **Tew wyth** : The thickness of eight slates.
"Thirds" : Usually slates for damp course purposes.
Tin rydd : In quarrying or mining slate it means freeing by cutting or blasting the bottom of the rock face.
Tin wagan : End of a waggon.
Tin bwrdd : End of a sawing table nearest to the point of unloading.
Tipio : To tip.
Toman : Tip or heap.
Twls main : Drills that are thinner than the standard— $\frac{1}{2}$ in. instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Top : Roof of an underground chamber.
Top inclen : Incline top or brow.

Torri flos : Gouging a channel at right angles to the cleavage on a block of slate with a view to "pillaring" it by sharp hammer blows on a chisel.
Torri ochor rydd : Blasting a free side or channel between the rock to be extracted and the side of the wall.
Torri cyswllt : Breaking the partition between the free side and the drilled and channelled cut.
Trafal : Edge against which a slate is laid while it is being dressed (shaped).
Traffic : Quarry traffic.
Trin : To trim or prepare.
Troed : Foot joint—vertically and at right angles to the line of pillaring.
Traed sparia : Foot joints with quartz in them.
Troed inclén : Bottom of an incline.
Troell : Turn-table.
Trosol : Crowbar.
Trwmbal wagan : Waggon body.
Trwm ymlaen : Not evenly loaded—the weight being too far forward.
Trwm yn ol : Not evenly loaded—the weight being too far back.
Trwnc : Trunk—the DE to K incline.
Tsiaen : Chain.
Tsiaen bwrdd : Sawing table chain.
Tsiaen gefn : Back anchorage—chain or rope for sheer legs.
Tsiaen graig : Rockman's chain.
Tsiaenjo slediad : Tying a large block of slate on a trolley with a suitable chain.
Tun bwyd : Lunch tin.
"Turn out" : Tram-road switch.
"Turn out back" : Tram-road switch in reverse to the normal.
"Twenty-one a dwy" : Twenty-one "nwrw" (3 slates) and two—65 slates.
Twill : Mine. Also a shot hole.
Twill cefn : Shot hole to trim the wall (or pillar).
Twill codi : Shot hole inclined slightly steeper than the line of cleavage.
Twill plwg : Hole drilled to receive the plug and feathers for pillaring.
Twill torri : Hole drilled to receive the plug and feathers for breaking across the line of pillaring.
Twill hollt : Splitting or cleavage hole.
Twill p'leru : Pillaring hole.
Twill ar wastad 'i gefn : Flat horizontal hole.
Twill medi methi : Misfired hole.
Twill cadw tew : Special hole to prevent slate from chattering while cutting a free-side.
Twill peg : Hole for putting in a steel peg which may be an anchorage.
Twill yn tanio arno : Accidental blast in which a man is involved.
Hyll-dwll : Hole that does not conform to any of the recognised angles.
Twr-babal : An old open section of the quarry so called because of the variety of languages to be heard there.
Tyllu : To drill.
Tŷ : **Tŷ byta** : Quarryman's name for his mess-room and assembly gathered therein.
Agor y tŷ : Formal opening of the "house" (i.e., caban) for discussion after eating.

(concluded on Page 25)

ENGINE FOR AN ENTHUSIAST

REMEMBER the old "Kidbrooke" steam locomotive "retired" from haulage duty at our Oakeley Quarry some years ago, and then, in its storage shed, became an object of interest and inquiry from light railway enthusiasts?

Our picture shows it dismantled at Boston Lodge, Minffordd, with its new owner, Mr. Richard Hilton of Cambridge, mechanical superintendent for three years of the Ffestiniog Railway Company which was formed by a group of enthusiasts to re-open the narrow gauge railway—"Y Lein Bach"—as a tourist attraction.

At his home in Cambridge Mr. Hilton has two "restored" steam traction engines and a steam roller—working testimony

Lunch-time in the mine

MID-DAY break for lunch in the "caban" — part of a sealed-off tunnel — on N. Floor of the Oakeley mine. Round the table are (from left) W. O. Williams (under-manager), William Thomas (caban time-keeper), John Llewelyn Roberts (secretary), Dennis Jones, Sam Owen (president), David W. Thomas (a member of the Blaenau Ffestiniog football team), William John Jones, David Evans, Robert Edwards, Terry Coleman, Robert Ll. Williams, Arthur Wyn Evans, David Roberts and Richard Lloyd.



of his enthusiasm for these things—and his acquisition of the "Kidbrooke" satisfied an ambition to own a narrow gauge locomotive.

Having dismantled the engine completely "to find out what's what" Mr. Hilton, who trained as a civil engineer but whose bent was for mechanical engineering, told *Caban* that his intention was to restore the old locomotive into proper working order. "I hope it will run again some day on a pleasure railway", he said.

According to Mr. Hilton the "Kidbrooke" was built in 1917 by W. G. Bagnall Ltd., Stafford, for the Ministry of Munitions and was used at a Government stores depot at Kidbrooke, in South-east London. There were several similar engines, all named after the depots at which they worked. Mr. Hilton's information was that the "Kidbrooke" was sold in 1922 as "war surplus" to the contracting firm of G. Wimpey and Co., and apparently the Oakeley Quarry became the next owners.



For personal use only, original source available from Knowles

www.train4underground.co.uk

In caban N at Oakeley

HOBBIES

IN our previous issue were featured a splendid example of model engineering skill and a big trout caught in Llyn Gamallt—contrasting products of our quarrymen's leisure time activities—and *Caban* looked round the Oakeley Quarry to discover what other pursuits were engaging attention. The outcome is this "hobbies gallery" representing a variety of interests.

In the slab mill, for instance, we chatted with Arfon Williams and found that he might be persuaded to turn out some very attractive articles in leather and other materials for a bazaar or other function with a charitable purpose. His handicraft stemmed from a four-year spell in hospital following an injury when he was 14 and handwork was part of an educational course he pursued during his recovery.

Turned to good account

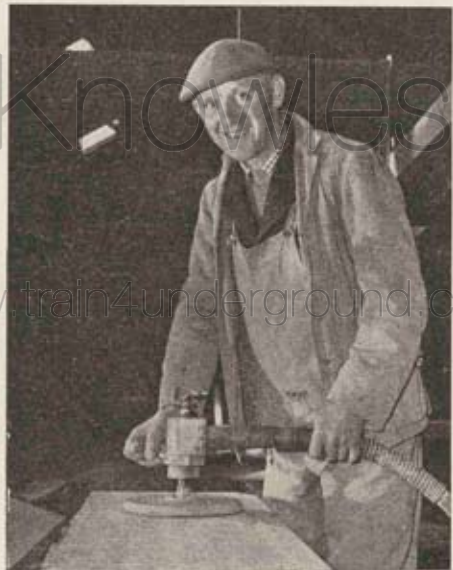
He learned to make handbags, wallets, gloves and rugs, and to fashion articles in cane, raffia and pewter. He became a handicrafts instructor under the Merionethshire Education Authority and used to take classes of young people at the Godre'r Moelwyn Club in Tanygrisiau. Arfon Williams, now 51, confessed that his handiwork has now become entirely a hobby and his practice of it largely confined to making presents for members of his family and friends and assisting some deserving charity. However, his hospital training has been turned to good account over the years.

Slate fans are probably, figuratively speaking, the *piece de resistance* of the quarryman's artistic use of the stone from which he earns his livelihood, and one maker of fans, Thomas John Jones, we also found in the slab mill. He was proud of the fact that his brother-in-law, quarryman William Owen, made the slate casket which was presented to Her Majesty the Queen when, as Princess Elizabeth, she visited Blaenau Ffestiniog during a North Wales tour.

Thomas John Jones can also turn his hand to making walking sticks, an art in which apparently his father, J. E. Jones, also a quarryman at one time,



Arfon Williams, handicrafts



Thomas John Jones makes walking sticks

GALLERY



Gwilym Roberts (right), who collects Welsh books, with workmate Ellis Roberts



Arwyn Evans, exponent of ju-jitsu

excelled to such a degree as to win prizes in competitions. But Thomas John Jones's main interest now seems to be not walking sticks but his motor-cycle combination on which he lavishes attention, maintaining and repairing it himself, and finding satisfying enjoyment touring the countryside.

Incidentally, he thought his work in the slab mill more interesting for its variety than straight-forward slate-making. He is precentor and a deacon at Salem Welsh Congregational Chapel, Rhiw.

Two strangely contrasting hobbies were claimed by Gwilym Roberts, Bonc Siaff—the collection of Welsh books and farm work. His interest in farming may be attributed to his love of horses and an introduction to farming when he was 13. Although for him the attraction of farming is so much less with the virtual disappearance of the horse from the agricultural scene he cannot resist helping out on the farm, as he puts it, whenever the opportunity occurs. Regrettably, he rarely has the chance to handle horses; he drives a tractor.

Gwilym Roberts, who has worked at Oakeley for many years, has since the last war collected about 100 Welsh books for the library he is building up at home, is fond of reading biographies and stories of travels in foreign lands, and poetry. He has an ear for "cynghanedd" and has in fact won a prize for an "englyn" at a quarry cisteddfod.

Exponent of ju-jitsu

In a different and more youthful sphere, 19 year old Arwyn Evans, slate-maker at Bonc Goeden, is an exponent of ju-jitsu, the Japanese art of wrestling or, as Arwyn prefers to describe it, the art of self-defence. Curiously enough, he learned it in a class run by the Welsh cultural movement, Aelwyd yr Urdd, at Blaenau Ffestiniog, and acquired such proficiency that he himself last winter conducted a class in ju-jitsu for a group of boys aged 15 and 16.

Arwyn, who tips the scales at 15 stone, says skill rather than strength is used to overcome an opponent and he was very reticent about an occasion

*Glyn Williams and
James Alan Roberts,
philatelists*



when he efficiently defended himself against a "rough type" whom he encountered at a popular seaside resort.

For our picture of Arwyn demonstrating a hold or two, we asked his slate-maker partner, Eifion Roberts, to co-operate, which he did after some persuasion! Arwyn has worked at Oakeley for four years, starting as an apprentice on leaving school.

A good "find"

Last but not least in this hobbies gallery are two philatelists, Glyn Williams and James Alan Roberts, at Bonc Siafft. Eighteen year old slate-maker Alan, who plays the euphonium in the Royal Oakeley Band, has been collecting stamps for about five years and has about 1,000.

Among them is one of the famous "Penny Blacks", the first adhesive stamps in the world. For Alan his was a fortuitous acquisition. Rummaging in the attic at his home one day the stamp, unused and in good condition, fell out of an old book, and its presence there, Alan thinks, may have had something to do with the fact that his great grandfather was a seafaring man.

At any rate it was a good "find" (a Penny Black in mint condition is catalogued at £28). Alan's collection also includes a "Mauritius" specimen which he believes to be quite rare, and stamps bearing the picture of the dog "Laika", commemorating the Russians' penetration of space, without which no modern stamp collection would be complete.

Although he has more than 500 stamps in his collection, Glyn Williams, diamond saw operator, modestly laid no claim to having rarities among them. Nevertheless, he finds philately to be an absorbing interest and *Caban* left him hoping that perhaps one day a lucky find will also come his way!

ARCTIC WINTER

Winter's tale at the Oakeley Quarry, 1,000ft. above sea level, was of arctic conditions comparable with those of the severe winter of 1947. From Christmas until mid-January (when this note was written) the temperature remained below freezing point, but frost, ice and extensive snowdrifts three to four feet deep had not quite succeeded in halting slate production—a tribute to loyal quarrymen and staff who carried on working in most difficult circumstances.

BANDSMEN OF LONG AGO

THIS picture of the old Llan Ffestiniog Silver Band may touch off a brief journey "down memory lane" for some of our readers. Richard Owen, who is in charge of the lamp room at the Oakeley Quarries, lent the photograph to *Caban* and also supplied the names.



Front row: Evan Jones (afterwards Sir Evan Jones), Joe Edwards, John Owen Jones, Joseph Jones (Clogbydd), William Jones (Bodunig), Edward Evans (Clogwyn Briib). Second row: John Morris Jones (Conductor), R. Thomas Roberts (Tomadl), Hugh J. Hughes (Mantua), Edward Jones (Yr Eos), Ellis Jones (Clogbydd), William Roberts (Bardu), Dafydd Jones (South), Morris Pierce Jones (Station Road). Third row: William Stephen, Owen Alfred Jones, Joseph Jones, John Jones, Edward Davies (Isllyn), John Hughes (Drummer). Fourth row: Isaac Jones, Dafydd Roberts (Tomadl), Robert John Davies (Rhydsarn), Thomas Jones (Bodunig), Richard G. Evans. (Clogwyn Briib).

TERMAU'R CHWAREL (concluded)—

Tynnu byrddiad : Off-loading slate blocks from the saw-table.

Tynnu "loose" : Clearing loose rock and clearing up after blasting.

Tynnu peth peryg : Removing rock which may be a source of danger.

Unarddeg : 11 "mwrw" (33 slates).

Wagan lechi : Waggon to carry finished slates.

Wagan ddrwg : Damaged waggon ; one difficult to push.

Fel wagan gynta' ryn : Brazen, bold, blatant.

Wâr :

Ward : Piece of paper placed between a stamper and a charged hole during stamping.

"Warming pan" : Used to thaw explosives years ago—not now used.

Watro : To water.

Wedi canu : After a set time, i.e., after the hooter has sounded.

Wedi malu : Shattered. Used to describe slate-rock damaged by blasting.

Wedi gweithio'r agor adra : Describes a

chamber from which all the slate has been extracted.

Weili, mynd yn weili : When a loco makes a journey on its own and without a train of vehicles, this phrase is used. It was in more common use when horses pulled the trains.

Wejian : Wedge.

Wif : Iron bar used for levering.

Wislan : Hooter or whistle.

Wrth y llath : Wages earned by working on a price per yard, e.g. driving or widening.

Wrth y dydd : Working on a day rate.

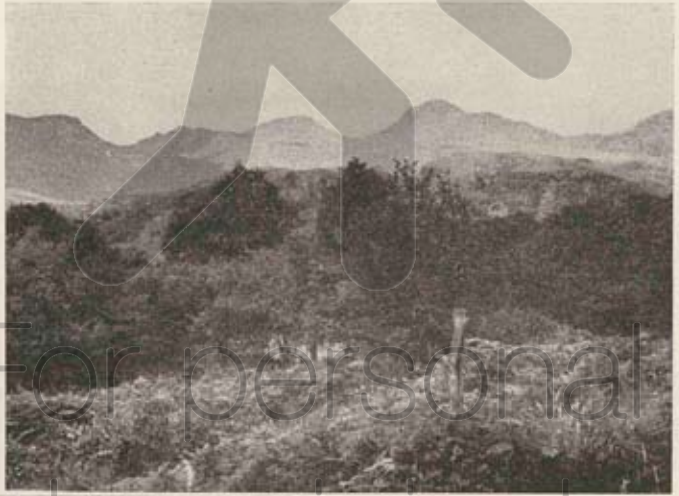
Wythien (gwythien), with'an wen, with'an gam, with'an fawr : Vein. A number of veins appear regularly in the different beds of slate many of them with characteristic and descriptive names.

Wythnos diwadd mis : The last week of the quarry four-weekly period. Special significance in more than one respect is placed on this week.

Ystol fawr : Big ladder. Generally used in securing and safety work.

Holiday Snaps Competition

In our 1962 Holiday Snaps Competition the first prize went to Morris J. Jones for a "holiday at home" picture — a distant view of the Moelwyn mountains.



Winner of the second prize, John J. Williams, found his subject farther afield — the fountain at Chester Zoo.

J. G. Hughes was third with this snap of the floral clock at Southport.



PARTING GIFT TO PENSIONER



AMONG those who retired from the Oakeley Quarries during 1962 was Thomas Hughes Jones after 39 years with our Company. He is seen in our picture receiving a farewell gift from Wyn Wyatt on behalf of his fellow-quarrymen at Bonc Shafft. Others who became pensioners during the year were David Jones Davies (50 years), Benjamin Thomas (52), Richard Gwilym Jones (50), Evan R. Jones (48), John Joseph Williams (42), and Hugh Hughes (30).

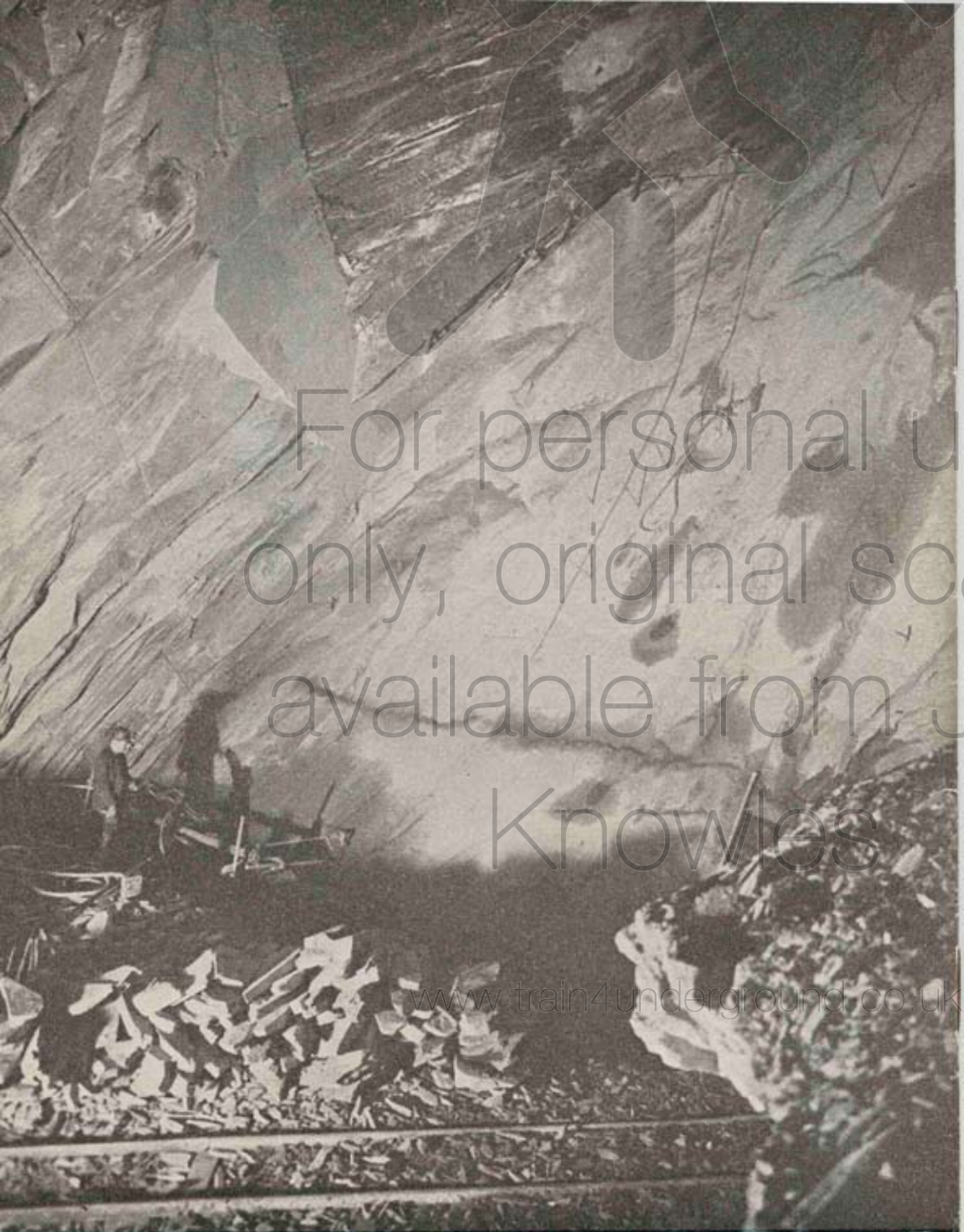
WEDDING



Mr. and Mrs. David J. Jones, of 18, Park Square, Blaenau Ffestiniog, pictured after their wedding last year at Jerusalem Congregational Church, Blaenau Ffestiniog. Mr. Jones is a member of the Oakeley office staff.

BACK COVER PICTURE

Our back cover picture shows in larger perspective the face of the rock in Chamber N5 at the Oakeley Quarries which is the subject of the note on page 8 on the channelling method of winning slate underground.



For personal use
only, original source
available from
Knowles

www.train4underground.co.uk

Cliff of "Old Vein" slate, flash-lit in the Oakeley mine

CABAN is the magazine of the Oakeley Slate Quarries Co. Ltd., of Mitre Court Chambers, Old Mitre Court, (off Fleet Street), London E.C.4, and its associated company, The Votty and Bowydd Slate Quarries Co. Ltd.

Printed by R. E. Jones & Bros. Ltd., The Quay, Conway — 30137