

# CABAN



JANUARY 1950



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE OAKELEY AND VOTTY SLATE QUARRIES



# CABAN

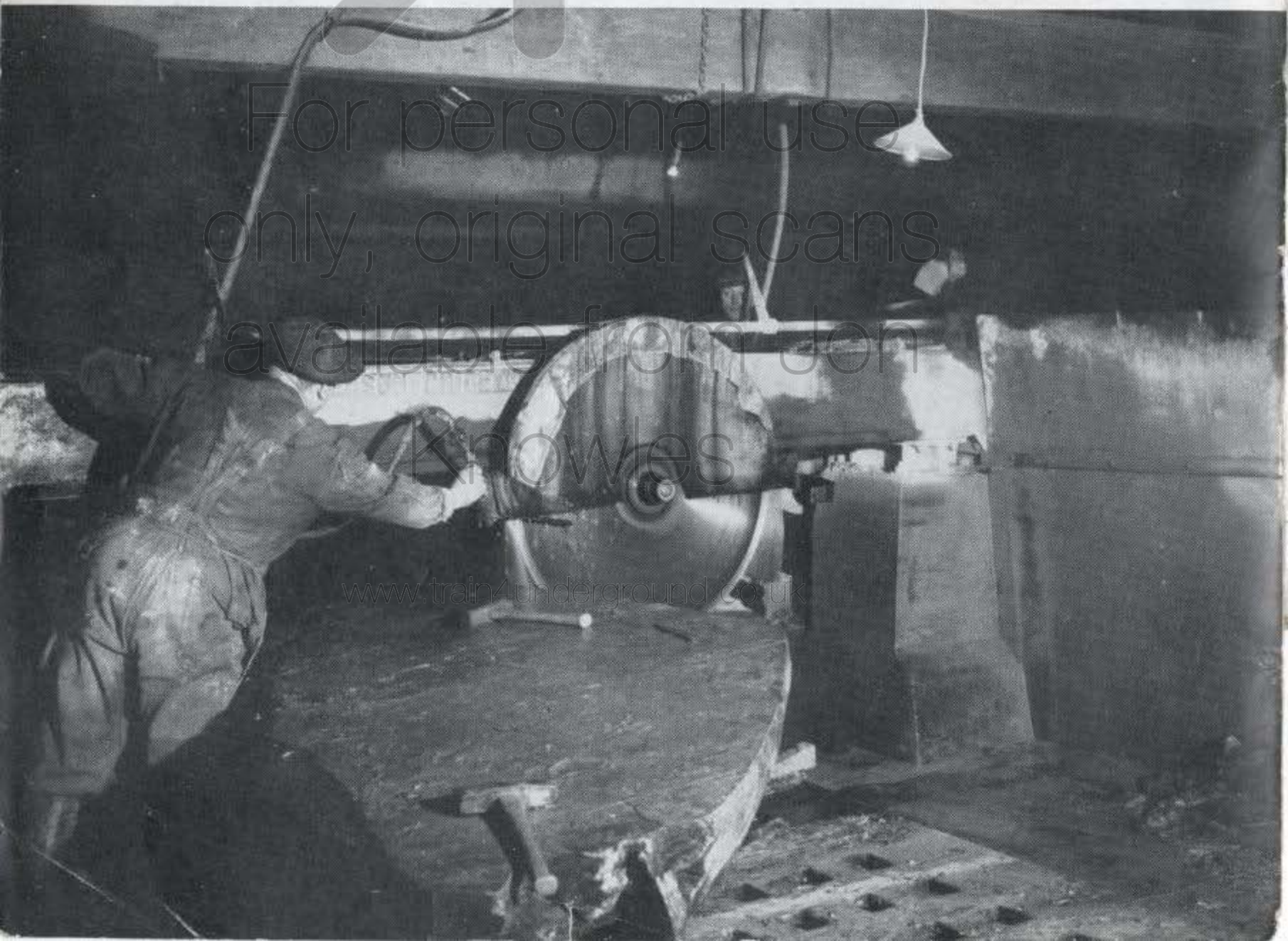
THE OAKELEY SLATE QUARRIES CO. LTD.,  
THE VOTTY AND BOWYDD SLATE QUARRIES CO., LTD.,  
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG, NORTH WALES,  
4, OLD MITRE COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

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"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. Our cover picture this time shows the Caban of "C" Mill, Oakeley Quarry. Below is illustrated the Diamond Saw in one of the Oakeley Mills.



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## NEW YEAR GREETINGS



From **Sir Charles R. A. Oakeley, Bart.**

"Caban" provides me with a most welcome opportunity of sending to you my very best wishes for this New Year.

I send these greetings both as Chairman of the Company and as President of the Club, and also on behalf of my fellow Directors, with every hope that we may be successful in our work and find great enjoyment there and in all our other activities.

May it be a Prosperous and Happy Year for all!

CHARLES OAKELEY.



# MESSAGES FOR 1950

## From Mr. H. CUTTS

I cannot very well come round and give to you individually my very best wishes for this year we have just started, but I trust you will believe that the greetings I am sending by this message are just as deeply sincere—I heartily wish you all a most happy and prosperous New Year.

You know that some improvements have been made during the past year. We want, with your co-operation, to continue the process of making the quarries as efficient and as pleasant to work in as we can. Now, when "co-operation" is mentioned I do not look on it merely as a catch-word; I believe that we should strive to realise its full meaning, for the welfare of all of us and our industry. You can rely on me, for my part, to keep that well in mind; you yourselves can do much by maintaining that happy spirit of comradeship that illumines the daily task, and upon which I think we can justly pride ourselves.

To those who are away ill I should like to send a special word to let them know that we have not forgotten them, and to wish them a speedy return to health.

Lastly, a greeting on behalf of all who work in the quarries to our friends in the trade, whose support we have so greatly valued over so many years. I assure them that they can rely on our efforts, not only in 1950 but also in the years ahead, to supply them with the material which is an essential part of so many homes and buildings.

HARRY CUTTS,  
*General Manager,  
Vice-President of the Club.*

## From Mr. H. G. HUGHES

ANWYL GYDWEITHWYR A CHYFEILLION,

Hyfrydwch o'r mwyaf gennyf cael eich cyfarch a dymuno yn dda i chwi ar ddechrau blwyddyn newydd arall. Boed i chwi bob bendith a llwyddiant i'r dyfodol.

Wrth ffarwello a'r hen a chychwyn ar y flwyddyn newydd, y mae yn gwbl naturiol i un fel myfi i dremio yn ôl a sylwi ar y gwelliannau a'r rhagorfreintiau mawr a ddaeth i'n rhan fel gweithwyr, yn ogystal a sylweddoli fel y mae y pellter a fu rhwng cyflogwyr a gweithwyr bron wedi ei lwyr ddiddymu. Drwy garedigrwydd a haelioni mawr Cwmni y Chwarelau cawsom adeilad hwylus a chysurus yn Glwb, lle y ceir cyfleusterau pob math o ddiwylliant ac adloniant. Y mae Côr Meibion yr Oakeley yn brysur baratoi ei hunan i fod o wasanaeth i'r cyhoedd. Y mae gennym ddo-barth dygn yn astudio "Athroniaeth Gyfoes" dan nawdd Cymdeithas Addysg y Gweithwyr, ac erbyn hyn ceir hefyd yn y Clwb lyfrgell deilwng iawn o unrhyw sefydliad. Daeth yr eisteddfod bellach yn sefydliad blynyddol yn ein hanes, ac estynnir trwyddi hi gyfle i bob dawn a thalent i amlygu ei hun. Ar yr ochr adloniadol y mae gennym bob math ar chwareuon, megis, Billiards, Table Tennis, Darts, Quoits, ac edrychir ymlaen at sefydlu clwb pel droed, a chael cae addas i chwareu ynddo. Trefnir cystadleuaethau yn y cyfeiriadau hyn a dangosir diddordeb mawr ynddynt.

Fy apel atoch ar ddechrau blwyddyn, yn arbennig felly, y tô ifanc, ydyw, ar i chwi werthfawrogi y manteision hyn a ddaeth i'ch rhan, trwy ddal ar bob cyfle i ddiwyllio eich hunain er bod yn well dinasyddion a bod o fwy o wasanaeth i gymdeithas yn gyffredinol.

Gyda phob dymuniad da,  
Yr eiddoch yn ddiffuant,

HUGH G. HUGHES,  
*Vice-President of the Club.*





*Transport on the inclines is an essential service . . . carrying up and down the men by whom the slate is won . . . the equipment with which the quarry is worked . . . and, at last, after millions of years below the surface, bringing the slate itself up to the light of day.*

## A Whole Community of Jobs

In previous issues of CABAN, we have tried to show the major steps in the story of slate . . . how it is quarried from the depths of the earth, brought up the inclines, and split and dressed in the mills into the conveniently sized grey rectangles used all over the country (and overseas) for roofing, damp-course and many other purposes.

In doing so, we have inevitably thrown the spotlight first on to the rockmen, below ground, and the slatemakers in the mills above.

Fair enough! But there are many other important jobs involved in the making of slates.

A quarry is in fact a gathering place for trades and crafts of all kinds—a whole community of jobs packed into one small compass. And, as you walk round Oakeley and Votty, you will find a host of “backroom boys”, providing the equipment and the essential services without which the quarries could not operate at all.

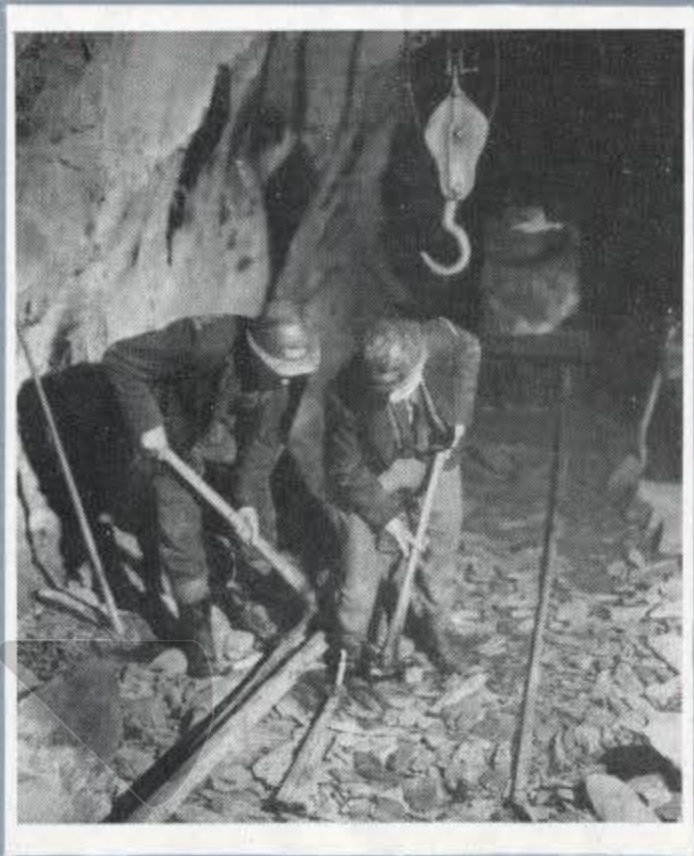
You’re going underground. What





#### ABOVE GROUND

Time was when the haulage work of the quarry, above ground and below, was done by horses; memories still linger among Blaenau veterans of some of the fine animals which used to move great loads without any apparent effort. Now, Ruston & Hornsby Diesel locos do the job.



#### THE PLATELAYERS

Tradition has it that there are more than fifty miles of railway in Oakeley Quarry alone. Certainly the work of the Quarry—above ground or below—could not go on without the platelayers, to provide the tracks along which the great slabs of slate will be brought to the inclines, and then delivered to the Mills.

the offices, ordering up the supplies, and the storekeepers, with anything from voltmeters to explosives, and helmets to mechanical spare parts . . . a thousand items and more, under their constant care. The joiners above ground and the timberers below—each of them, in his own way, as much a craftsman in wood as the cabinet maker who makes the furniture for our homes. The electricians, who keep the power flowing to the machines. The slaters who see that all the quarry buildings are in good repair whatever Blaenau storms may sometimes try to do to them! The inspectors, who check the

finished slates, and the staff of the wharf who despatch them to the final users . . . and many, many more.

From beginning to end, the making of slates is a *team* job. It's teamwork between the rockman down in the chamber and the men far above in the mills, that produces the right sizes of slabs which, in turn, will give the greatest number of slates. In just the same way all the different trades that we illustrate with this article . . . and many others which it has not been possible for us to include on this occasion . . . are all part of the same big team.



# ROOF OF THE WORLD

In previous issues CABAN has used this space to record the stories of some of the companies who use our slates in their daily work. This time we have tried to show something of the complexity of this other end of the job.

What happens after the slates we make are delivered to the building site? What skill is needed to make a first-class roof? We in the quarries—through the very nature of our jobs—know the story of slate from the first splitting of the rock, deep underground, to the dressing of the finished article. Then, as they go off towards the wharf, our contact with the slates is broken. The next steps of their story, the steps that we do not see, have an interest of their own.

## *Roof Construction*

First of all, then, let's have a quick look at the way in which slates, as we produce them, are ultimately used on roofs. In essentials they are one of the simplest and most straightforward forms of building construction that you can imagine—just a series of flat surfaces laid side by side. Unless something were done to prevent it rain water would naturally be able to penetrate the joints between them, and therefore there must be what is in effect two layers of slate over the roof, so arranged that the joint between any pair is protected by the overlap of another. All water falling on the roof strikes a slate, no matter where it may land, and any which passes through an exposed joint between two adjacent slates is prevented from going further by another slate beneath. Given a proper amount of overlap—both of length and breadth of the slate—to suit the angle of the roof, the roof will not leak.

Given these principles, the use of our slates efficiently to give the maximum satisfaction to the owners of the buildings on which they are used depends to a great extent upon our friends the slating contractors. It is they who—apart from probably advising on the suitable sizes of slates for the pitch or angle of roof desired—have to see, with their skilled workmen, that

the innumerable points of detail are dealt with in the proper manner to ensure a watertight roof.

The man on the job has the responsibility for using his materials properly. The main part of the slating may be fairly straightforward, assuming that the battens are spaced correctly and that care is taken to keep the joints between the slates properly in line, but it is when we come to the places where the slating ends that the craftsman shews his quality.

A valley—that is where two slopes, often of different pitches, meet—looks so simple, but even with the simplest style the slates have to be shaped and the whole job carefully built up to ensure that all the water reaches the gutters! There's more beneath that valley than meets the eye.

Then weathertightness must be assured where the slates join up with brickwork—chimney stacks and so on—and at the verges where the slates overhang the brickwork. We see these features every day without considering the detailed touches that the conscientious slater puts into them to produce the thoroughly sound job. Hips, ridges, and undereaves all have their special purposes to be borne in mind. A roof can be spoiled by lack of appreciation of the purpose and of experience in the application of the various fittings.

## *Continuous Craftsmanship*

We shall be told that this is far too scanty a note for the subject. Reading this, a slater might very well say, "And what about so-and-so, and so-and-so . . ." Well, in the space available we could only touch upon a few points. We should agree that there is surprisingly much to learn. But we hope we have made it clear that the craft of the people who work in slate is continued all along the line. The rockmen, down below the surface of the earth; the slatemakers in the mills; the slaters who finally build the roofs—each must have a skill of his own, but each depends also on the skill of the others so that the homes and buildings of Britain may have roofs in which reliability has become a tradition.



## ROOF OF THE WORLD (continued)

### Some Outstanding jobs on which Oakeley and Votty slates are being used.

In a recent issue, we had something to say about the depot of Messrs. Hall & Co., Ltd., of Croydon. This time, we have visited another of their branches—at Bristol, where CABAN found everything in the customary bustle of activity.

Prominent in Bristol itself is the “pro-Cathedral”—whose expanse of slated roof can hardly be missed by any visitor to the City. It's only a few minutes' walk from Hall & Co.'s offices and—need we say—now that it is undergoing a re-roofing, they and Ffestiniog slate, are both in action.

Oakeley and Votty slates were also used for another of the big re-roofing jobs in the

district—this time, the Old People's Homes at nearby Clifton.

\* \* \*

From South West to North—to Messrs. Newton Robertson, Ltd., of Glasgow.

In their offices at St. Enoch Square—overlooking St. Enoch Station, the first sight of Glasgow for thousands of visitors who travel by the East Coast Route—hangs an enthusiastic notice which details the benefits of roofing by slate. So we were not surprised to find that they, too, have been making use of our products on some big roofing jobs recently.

Among them was one of the largest sheds at the docks at Greenock. In these days when imports and exports are so vital to the life of our country, we can, CABAN feels, be proud that what we make is playing a part in the work of the Docks!

## SNOWDONIA

“Snowdonia” is the latest addition to the library of the Oakeley Club. The book is one of a series covering special areas which have particular interest for the naturalist. In “Snowdonia” the Editors have compiled a wealth of information ranging from geology and scenery, plant and animal life to the manifestations of men's activities in the past.

In this volume the reader who is interested in Snowdonia will find many references to the area around Blaenau Ffestiniog, to the past history of the area, and how slates were first used. He will find a detailed introductory account of the geology and physical background of that part of the countryside. He will learn about the early formation of the valleys and mountains and how they developed into their present forms.

Early in the book he will see a very interesting table of strata giving the age of the rocks in millions of years, and he will notice direct mention of Blaenau Ffestiniog whose slate formations were deposited between 350-400 million years ago.

Although much mention is made of the slate industry, the work is, of course, written in general terms and we are sure that members will find it quite absorbing.

Many excellent reproductions appear in the book, some in colour, others in black and white.

The book delves deeply into the past, offers valuable reading for the person who wants to know how Snowdonia developed a personality of its own; it deals with the history of the Naturalists of the area, the living conditions through the ages, the plant and animal life in the Alpine, Grassland and Valley zones.

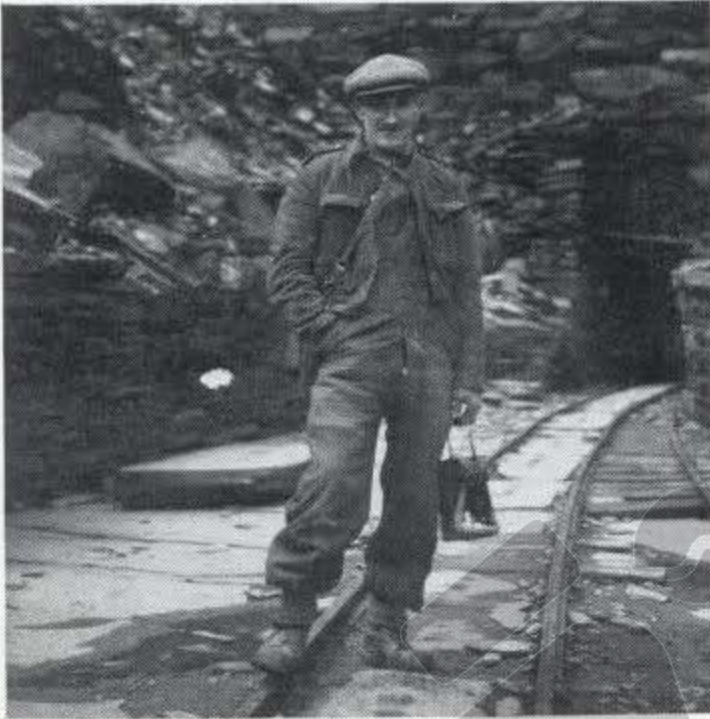
The last part of the book is the story of the first colonising of north-west Wales about 2,000 B.C. and how through strife and calm they moved forward to industrial changes of later years—to the full development of the slate quarries, to the opening of new roads for the influx of visitors.

In the last chapter but one the reader will find a considerable amount of reference to the slate quarries and their impact upon the Snowdon Hills. It mentions the romantic story of how the first large quarry was developed at Ffestiniog about 1800, and reveals in considerable detail the gradual development and the rising in importance of slate quarries in the area.

*Snowdonia.* By F. J. North, D.Sc., F.G.S., F.S.A., Bruce Campbell, Ph.D., and Richenda Scott, Ph.D. (Econ.). Published by Collins in the New Naturalist series.



# ON DUTY — OFF DUTY



## *A Dual "Driver"*

A man who lifted steel bars as part of his job might be an excellent weight lifter—if he trained for it in his spare time. In many cases a man's work helps his spare time hobby.

Here is J. B. Williams, a platelayer at Votty Slate Quarries. In one picture you see him at the Quarry, and in the other he poses with his trophies. Is there any connection between the two? If there is, it must be the strength of his arms, for Mr. Williams pursues the hobby of golf, and with great success.

In 1947 he won the Captain's Prize at Crickieth, receiving a Silver Tray. And only a short time



ago he reached the semi-final in a competition for the "S.V. Beer Tankard" at Portmadoc, with E. Jarrett Jones of the Oakeley Quarry Office.

It seems that Mr. Williams has more than one hobby, for he is the proud owner of a 500 c.c. B.S.A. motor-bike which he rides to work, to his golf club at Portmadoc and which, no doubt, takes him to places even farther afield.

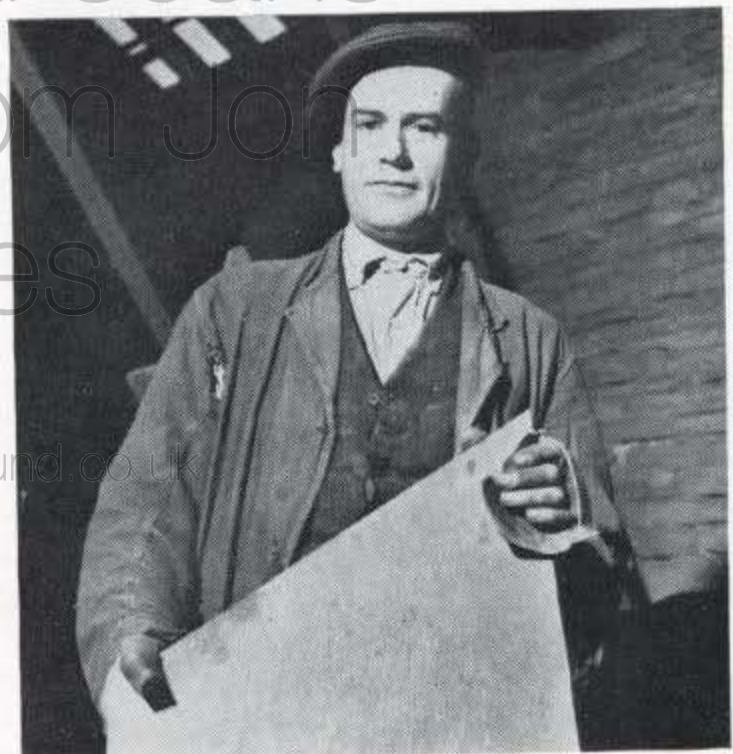
## *Ambulance Sergeant*

This column has already recorded a variety of "off duty" activities by Oakeley and Votty personalities—many of them, more than just a pastime, but producing a very useful result.

None of them is more valuable, or more public spirited, than that of Arthur Evens—whom we met during a recent walk round the Bone Shaft Mill, where he is busy as a slate dresser.

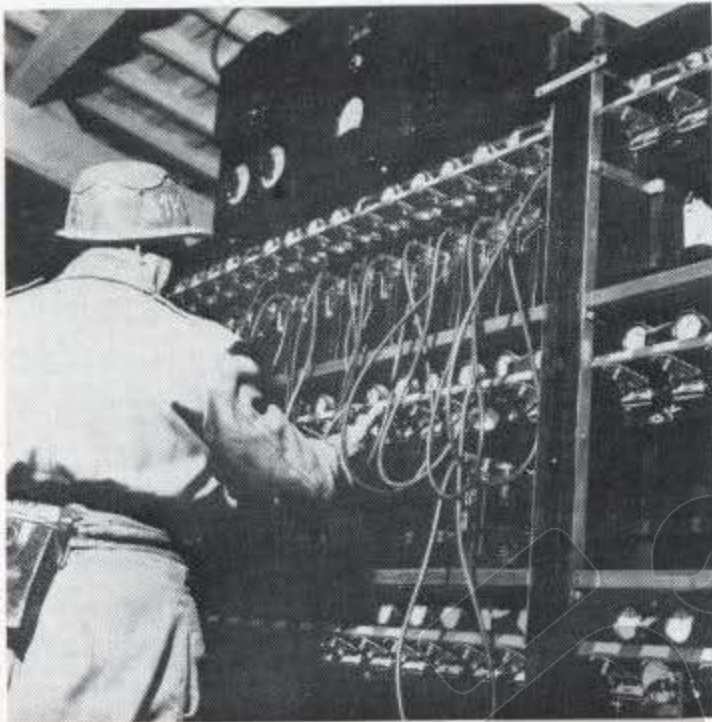
For 21 years Arthur has worked at Oakeley; for 17½ of those years, he has in his spare time been an enthusiastic member of the St. John's Ambulance—in which he is now a Sergeant.

St. John's men are of course always "on duty"; and one of Arthur's self-imposed jobs is to attend to the cuts or other minor injuries which take place in his part of the quarries. Apart from this, he goes on public duty on occasions such as the recent National Eisteddfod at Dolgellau—as well as turning out regularly as first-aid man for the Blaenau football team.





## “Caban” Interviews Some Oakeley and Votty Personalities and Presents Some News Items from the Quarries



An Oakeley worker puts the battery of his cap-lamp into the charging apparatus.

### *How far this little Candle . . .*

Ever since underground quarrying began, the familiar tallow candle has been the quarryman's constant underground companion and his inseparable friend. So much so that, in Oakeley alone, the annual consumption of candles added up to *over seven tons a year*. (Yes! Believe it or not!)

We must confess that when we first heard of it, a candle seemed a very inadequate illumination for a vast chamber deep in the rock. Soon CABAN realised its mistake, and that Shakespeare was right—a candle *does* give a very useful light, and throws its beams for a long distance, in the darkness of the quarries. A number of our pictures in the early issues of CABAN were taken partly with the aid of the rockmen's candles.

However, there has recently been installed the latest and most efficient type of cap-lamp, which throws a strong and steady beam wherever the rockman happens to want it at any moment. Above ground, a large battery-charging unit has been installed; on coming to the surface, all that the underground worker has to do is to leave his lamp-battery on charge, and by morning it will be all ready for another day's work.

The charger, as can be seen from our picture, is in itself a very impressive machine, with an individual space for the lamp and battery of every underground worker.

### *Travelled in America*

A man whose chief occupation—on duty as well as off—seems to have been *travelling*, is John Hughes, joiner at Votty. He started his working life at “the Lord”—then took a fancy to seeing the world. In 1906, just 43 years ago, he gave up his job and went across to America.

For 29 years he roamed about the “land of opportunity,” during which time he saw most of what there is to be seen. For eight years he was on house-building work—much of it in places where he had to play a big part in designing the house, as well as building it. For a spell, he was a foreman during the building of the Western Pacific Railway, from Salt Lake City to Oakland, California. Another job was on the double-tracking of the Union Pacific, which at the time he landed was still only a single line. He was in San Francisco after the earthquake “and never saw a sight like it.”

Then he developed a yearning for home, and came back to Blaenau again. After 30 years it had not changed much—in fact, the biggest change he noticed anywhere in this country was the improvement in the roads.

His biggest regret? That he passed many times within 50 miles of the Grand Canyon, said to be the most magnificent piece of scenery in the world. Yet, somehow, he never got around to covering those extra 50 miles and seeing it for himself.



Robert Hughes—recently-retired Votty joiner—settles down with his radio to listen to the commentary on the England-Italy soccer match.



*W.E.A. Classes are a Big Success*

## CLUB MEMBERS DISCUSS PHILOSOPHY!

One of the most successful items on the Oakeley Club programme last year was the W.E.A. class in current affairs, which ran right through the winter months.

This year, the classes are now in full swing again—though, of course, on a different subject—this season's choice being "Modern Philosophy," based on a book by Professor R. L. Maron, Professor of Philosophy at Aberystwyth.

The class meets for roughly an hour and a half, the first three-quarters of an hour being spent in study of the subject, and the remainder of the period (after a welcome cup of Bovril provided by Mrs. Jones) being given over to a free-for-all discussion in which ideas are ventilated and points argued out. The class, we understand, has its own enthusiasts for the ideas of each of the great philosophers, while other members of it prudently prefer not to commit themselves.

Instructor at the classes is Mr. E. Cadfan Jones, the tutor-organiser of the W.E.A. for the county, and an enthusiast for the movement for more than 30 years. His own story is a tribute to the value of the W.E.A. classes; at one time he was working in a quarry, and with their help was able to go to the University (for which he qualified by means of a Scholarship). At the University he took his B.A., B.D.,

M.Litt., and B.Sc., and later entered the Ministry.

He is now responsible for some 43 classes, held in many towns and villages throughout the district; as well as taking a number of them himself, it is his responsibility to enlist volunteers for the remainder.

It is a job which, one would have thought, would keep him busy throughout the year. But he does not let it interfere with his interest in the life of the quarries—which he himself knows so well from his own experience, while his father before him worked a lifetime at Oakeley. Dur-

ing the summer months, he tries to pay a visit to every Caban, for a lunch-hour chat.

A regular attendant at the Oakeley classes is Richard Jones, who for 22 years has been a stalwart of the Class at Tanygrisiau; while a number of other familiar Oakeley and Votty faces will be recognised in our pictures.



ABOVE—You can't stop talking philosophy—even in the interval; the Instructor joins in the argument too, but soon (BELOW) they're back at work again!





## The Quarries Progress—Better Roads and Bigger Ships

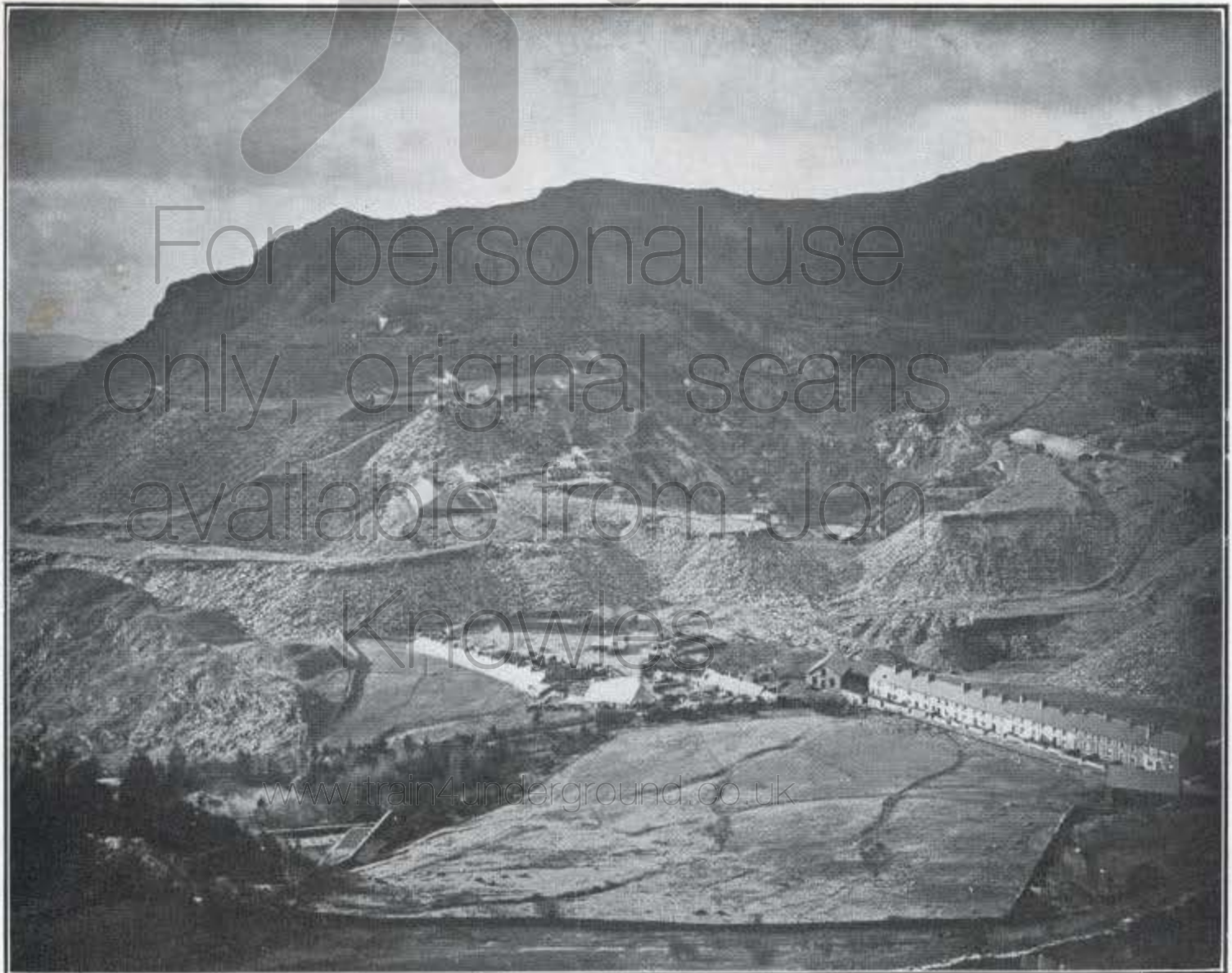
*This is the second article of a feature based upon extracts from the diary of Samuel Holland, who operated a Quarry at Blaenau over 100 years ago. The first article, published in our last issue, told how he was sent for by his father, Samuel Holland, senior, to take over the management of the Quarry; how he rented a cottage from Mr. Oakeley; and how he engaged a housekeeper.*

Having arrived at a satisfactory solution to the problem of establishing himself in the district, it is not surprising that young Samuel Holland should, at this period, be visited by members of his family.

An unfortunate accident befell Mrs. Holland and her servant Mary Richardson when they came to stay with him. It occurred just at the back of the Hotel and Mr. Oakeley's woods, and is described thus :

“ They came from Carnarvon in a car to Beddgelert—then in a fresh car (one horse) from Beddgelert—and when coming down the last hill, the horse fell, the driver was thrown from his seat, the horse in struggling to get up, broke the shafts, and so set the car with its occupants rolling, and there being no wall between the road and the wood, they (my Mother and Mary) were bowled over into the wood.

“ The horse galloped down to the hotel yard.



OLD-TIME OAKELEY. *The Quarry in the 'nineties.*



This informed the ostler and people about that an accident had happened and some immediately ran up the hill—found the driver just recovering on one side of the road, from unconsciousness—found the car bowled over into the wood and observed one lady, my mother, much bruised and stopped by a tree from rolling to the bottom of the wood ; but Mary was lower down, against another tree, very much cut and bruised, particularly about the face.”

That doctors in those times had not achieved their present high level of professional integrity is shown by the fact that when, having got the victims to his cottage, Samuel sent for a doctor, the latter arrived tipsy, and “When he was taken to see my mother, very nearly fell over the bed.”

### *Distance no Object*

It is evident from his diary that Samuel Holland was an active person and a very good walker. He describes in the most matter-of-fact way how he walked from Blaenau to Liverpool.

“The first time I went, I walked up to the Quarry—that was between 5 and 6 miles. After giving some direction to my foreman I walked on over the mountain to Dolyddelan thence to Llanrwst, from there to St. Asaph and on to Holywell and Bagilt. I got some bread and milk for supper and then went to bed after a walk of 54 miles.—

“I got a boat to cross the Dee early (6 o'clock) in the morning to Parkgate, walked from there to the New Ferry, and got a boat (with Will Chatterton) to cross the Mersey to the Herculean Pottery and to my father's house near there between eight and nine o'clock, for breakfast. The cost of my journey was 3s. 4d.”

### *Waggons Replace Carts*

While entries of a personal or domestic nature naturally take up a large part of the diary, it must not be thought that Samuel Holland neglected to set down developments at the Quarry. Both he and his father were concerned about this time with the problem of providing adequate transport for the slates from their Quarry.

He writes : “I had the Quarry roads improved, and got some of the farmers to get waggons instead of carts, to carry the slates from the Quarry to the wharf (Pentrwyn y garnedd), that was near my cottage, from where they were boated to Port Madoc or to the vessels lying

afloat in the river at Port Madoc. (No quays were built at the Port then.)

“My father did not consider the boats then in use of a good construction, so he had two built in Liverpool, to carry more tonnage and these he sent round from L'pool.”

“The boats employed to carry the slates down to Portmadoc from the slate wharves could only be employed or worked during the spring tides. My wharfman was frequently (almost daily during the spring tides) down at Portmadoc, seeing to the boatmen properly discharging the slates from their boats into the vessels and properly stowing them. I had to see to the loading of the boats and that the slates were counted properly and correctly into them.”

Our diarist has now come to the year 1825, which he describes as “a very speculative year.” Many companies were formed, he recounts, for working mines and quarries everywhere ; not only in Great Britain, but all over the world. One such company, formed in London with the title of the Welsh Slate and Copper Mining Co., had as its chairman that great British statesman, Lord Palmerston.

### *A Fruitless Visit*

Samuel Holland relates how he encountered a group of gentlemen who were investigating various mining properties in Wales at this period. When they heard that he was looking after and working a slate quarry for his father, they became interested, and it was arranged that they should have a look at it.

“I rode to Tan y Bwlch the day appointed and met there Mr. Homfray, Mr. Grey, Mr. Caldicott and Mr. M. Bennett all mounted on horses belonging to the Hotel, and a Mr. Wilks and a Mr. Peter Moore (M.P. for Coventry) in a Chaise.

“We all rode or went up to Rhiwbryfdir, where the slate quarry was, and as it was late—say after luncheon—and the roads for the latter part of the way were very bad, it was late before we reached the Quarry ; indeed the men were breaking off work. The gentlemen in the chaise never reached the banks, so as to get a proper view of the Quarry, but those who had ridden up looked at the Quarry but did not go into it, and never understood it or knew anything about it. We therefore made what haste we could to get back to Tan y Bwlch Hotel, where we were to dine.





Some Blaenau youngsters look with interest (and maybe with envy?) as a consignment of packages arrives at the Station.

## GIFTS FROM OVERSEAS

Oakeley and Votty Pensioners receive Food Gift Parcels from Overseas.

representative group of old age pensioners assembled on the same day at 2 p.m. in the Club premises. Mr. H. Cutts was present to hand over the gifts, while Mr. G. H. Humphreys gave a helping hand.

Altogether some thirty-five former employees were present at the little ceremony and their expressions of pleased surprise as they entered the hall and were confronted by a wide table piled high with food parcels, told a story in themselves.

Mr. Cutts explained that those in outlying districts would receive their parcels by carrier, and it was hoped that all deliveries would be completed at this very appropriate time of the year!

He went on to say that the parcels had been sent to Britain by our good friends in Australia and read the message printed on them which said:—

“A LETTER TO SOMEONE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

*Dear Friend,*

*Please accept this gift of food as a token of our admiration for your courage and fortitude, and the sacrifices you are still making ; sacrifices which show you are an example to the world in peace as well as in war. We are grateful for the opportunity and honour of being able to help you.*

*With best wishes and greetings,*

*Your friend in Australia.”*

Amongst those present (some of whom are nearly 80 years old) were: Evan Williams, John Thomas, Evan Hughes, Thomas Hughes, Owen Owens, G. C. Jones, R. H. Roberts, Robert Hughes and R. L. Powell. Several wives accompanied their husbands and R. L. Powell brought his little grandchild, Gerinit Williams, who was determined to open her grandpa's parcel before she left.

Our readers will recognise most of these names—and also the other pensioners whom CABAN was unable to photograph at the Club, but whose pictures (as they looked at the contents of their parcels in their own homes) appear alongside this article.

Slate Quarrying is an industry that's very personal to North Wales—and particularly so, of course, to our own town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. Yet, at the same time, it is one of world-wide connections.

Before the war, for instance, Ffestiniog slates used to go out from Portmadoc for use in many foreign countries. The fact that, today, our exports are limited is due only to present-day conditions and to the amount of new housing and war-damage repair which is so urgently needed, here in our own country. But, overseas, Welsh slate is still known and respected as one of the finest roofing materials in the world.

With links so close to so many parts of the world, it was appropriate that the Quarries should have been the object of a gift of food parcels from our friends overseas—a welcome demonstration of those links in their most concrete and acceptable form! And it was with the very greatest pleasure that the Oakeley and Votty Companies accepted the offer of the parcels . . . of which it was decided to distribute one to each of the Quarries' pensioners.

The first batch of overseas gifts arrived at Blaenau on the morning of the 15th December, 1949—nicely in time for Christmas—and a





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There's Cornelius Roberts, for instance—now aged 73, who worked in and around slate quarries for some 54½ years before he retired. Most of his life has been spent in Blaenau, except for a few years round about 1910, when he and Mrs. Roberts set sail and spent three years across the Atlantic. His job there, too, was slate-quarrying; but ultimately a depression in the industry there brought him back to his own town again, where one of his sons carries on the tradition and still works in the quarries.

Or (seen with Mrs. Jane Thomas and their 12-year-old grand-daughter) John Thomas—who clocked up 49 years as a rockman, 37½ of them with Votty, before he retired at the age of 67. When not in the quarry, Mr. Thomas is a distinguished member of the Church; for 30 years he has been a deacon, and is a past-moderator of the West Merioneth Presbytery (Calvinistic Methodists). This is an honour reserved only for the Presbytery's most distinguished members. His son, Mr. G. Owen Thomas, is also a well-known figure in Wales, being now Senior Resident Medical Officer at the North Wales Sanatorium at Llangwynan.

Then, again, is Mr. Robert Edwards—who worked in the quarries all his life, from 1899 to his retirement. He is a link between Oakeley and Votty—for though a Votty man himself, he was born near the Oakeley, where his father worked for 67 years and his brother (Edward Edwards) for 50.

Then see Llewellyn Owen, whom we photographed with Mrs. Owen, flanked by "Kitchener" and "Roberts" from their collection of china. Mr. Owen was in the Votty Mill all his working life, and was one of the lucky ones chosen to represent slate making in the Palace of Industry at the Wembley Exhibition.

CABAN is pleased to be able to print these pictures, which symbolise the overseas aid which is being so generously passed to this country during the difficult period of Britain's reconstruction after years of total war. And, we feel, it is appropriate that the presentation should have been made to veteran workers of one of North Wales' oldest and most important industries.

Many letters of thanks have been received from the Oakeley and Votty pensioners in appreciation of their parcels, of which the following, in Welsh, is typical:—

"Nis gallaf mewn geiriau ddatgan fy niolchgarwch i chwi am anfon yr anrheg werthfawr i mi. Hir y parhau yr ysbryd brawdol hwn, fel y caiff y rhai a ddel eto fwynhau yr un peth.

Dymunaf i chwi oll Flwyddyn Newydd Dda."

We are sure that all the recipients, even although they may have written direct, would like us to express on their behalf their heartfelt thanks for these generous gifts, which the senders can be sure were indeed welcome and deeply appreciated.

DIOLCH O GALON, A BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA !







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**PRESENTING THE PARCELS TO THE PENSIONERS**

**15th December, 1949**



# NEWS EXCHANGE

*Under this heading we print in Welsh a selection of the latest news items about Oakeley and Votty employees, and describe some of the things that happen at the Oakeley Club where many of them like to spend their off-duty moments. The variety of recreations they enjoy may be judged from the fact that mention is made of billiards, darts, football, whist, the choir, the library, and a list of events in the coming eisteddfod is set out.*

## BILIARDS—CYSTADLU BRWD

Prin y mae'r un o ddiddordebion y Clwb yn cario mwy o gefnogaeth fflamboeth na'r biliards. Gan hynny ni phair syndod i'r un o'r darllenwyr glywed inni weld misoedd o gystadlu brwd ymysg dewiniaid y ciw a'r cannon. Rownd ar ôl rownd yn y twrnament presennol gwelwyd chwarae cyfrwys a dyheig, nes cyrraedd chwarae gwir feistraidd yn y semi-ffeinal. Yna, ar Ragfyr 16eg. bu'r ffeinal. Daeth John Hughes allan o honno'n bencampwr gyda John Joseph Williams yn ail-orau.

Diau bod gornest arall eisoes yn nyddiadur y rhai selog, sef yw hwnnw, twrnament Cwpan Handicap Mrs. Inge. At ddiwedd Mawrth y bydd y ffeinal.

## Y LLAFNAU HEFYD

Ni chyfyngir na diddordeb na medr mewn biliards i aelodau hynaf y Clwb; rhoddir digon o gyfle i'r llafnau hefyd i ddatblygu eu talent. Y mae iddynt handicapiau biliards a snwcer er chwythu'r fflam ac ymarfer y gallu.

Ond nac anghofier bod i'r bwrdd darts a'r bwrdd tenis eu ffyddloniaid hefyd ymysg y rhai tan 21ain oed.

## UN O CHWARAEWYR PELDROED CYMRU I DDANGOS SUT

Boed chwaraewr, boed ddilynwr, nid oes sel tebyg i sel y peldroediwr. Nid oes flinder nac anghysur nad yw'r ffyddlon yn fodlon ei ddioddef dros ei ochr. Ac am y chwaraewr, pwy a wŷr derfynnau yr hyn a wna'i er gwella ei gêm. Ond ni raid i chwaraewyr ifanc Oakeley a Votty grwydro ymhell am wybodaeth, canys ar ei ffordd tuag atynt y mae Tommy Jones (Cymru ac Everton). Bydd yma cyn gynted ag y caiff ddyddiad yn rhydd.

I'r rhai dan ugain, trefnwyd dwy gêm sydd yn debyg o ennyn diddordeb lleol eirias. Yn erbyn yr Ysgol Ramadeg ac yn erbyn yr Ysgol Fodern y bydd y rhain.

## O'R CHWAREL I'R LLU AWYR

Galwyd Wilfred Williams, o Swyddfa'r Oakeley, i'r Llu Awyr. I Padgate ger Warrington yr aeth i gychwyn. Dymuna'r Caban a'i ddarllenwyr bob lwc iddo.



*Wilfred Williams, snapped at work before he left for the R.A.F.*

## Y LLYFRGELL AR GYNNYDD

Megis yn y rhifyn diwethaf, rhoesom adolygiad ar y llyfrau a ychwanegwyd at y casgliad yn ein llyfrgell. Ond na feddylid neb mai'r llyfrau a grybwyllid yw'r unig rai newydd a roddwyd ar y silffoedd. Yn wir, prynnodd Pwyllgor y Clwb nifer helaeth o lyfrau newydd. Boed i'r sawl sydd a diddordeb ganddo fynd at William J. Morgan, y Llyfreglydd.

## WHIST WYTHNOSOL

Haws cadw'n sych yn 'Stiniog na chadw i lawr wŷr y whist—a'r gwagedd wrth gwrs. Nid oes nos Iau heb ei brwydr iddynt a threfnwyd hefyd trwydro yn erbyn clybiau eraill y dref. Ar 22ain o Ragfyr cafwyd brwydr fawr y Nadolig.

## Y NEWYDD AM WIL JONES

Drwg gan y Caban glywed for Wil Jones mewn ysbyty yn Lerpwl. Efo yw gŵr Mrs. Jones, gofalydd siriol Clwb yr Oakeley. Dioddefodd Mr. Jones yn hir gan y crudcymalau ac yn ei gadair y bu, fwy neu lai, ers cryn ddwy flynedd. Digwyddodd hen gyfaill iddo, o ryfel 1914-18, alw yn y Blaenau a rhoi tro heibio iddo, a'r cyfaill hwnnw, a achosodd drefnu iddo



gael triniaeth arbenigwr yn Lerpwl. Deallwn fod eisoes arwyddion gwella, a'n gobiath yw y daw Mr. Jones yn fuan yn iach ac y cawn ei weld gartref yn ddi-oed.

### PARATOI AM YR EISTEDDFOD

Heb os nac onibae, un o ddigwyddiadau mwyaf y llynedd oedd yr Eisteddfod. Hi hefyd oedd y peth gyda'r mwyaf poblogaidd. Er mai fel arbraw yr edrychid arni, cymaint y llwyddiant fel y penderfynwyd ei gwneud yn wyl flynyddol.

Yn y Guild Hall, Blaenau, ar 13eg o Fawrth y cynhelir yr Eisteddfod eleni. Mr. Howell Williams a'i harwain eto a bydd y beirniadu yng ngofal Mr. William Morris Williams (cerdd) a'r Parch Herman Jones (adrodd a llên).

### EISTEDDFOD CLWB YR OAKELEY

Mawrth 13eg. 1950

ARWEINYDD : Mr. Howell Williams

BEIRNIAID. Cerdd : Mr. William Morris Williams, Tanygrisiau  
Llên ac Adrodd : Parch Herman Jones, Portmadoc  
Celf : Mri. R. L. Morgan a J. E. Williams

### CERDD

Cystadleuaeth dan 18 oed. Unrhyw Alaw Gymraeg. Gwobr 5/-.

Cystadleuaeth dan 21ain. oed. Hun-Gan. (Brahms) allan o ddeholiad Methodistiaid 1949-50. neu :—Picardy—Tôn 215 o Lyfr Emynuau Methodistiaid (Eryn 262).

neu :—Schubert—Tôn 498 o Lyfr Emynuau Annibynwyr. Gwobr 5/-.

Cystadleuaeth dan 25ain. oed. Unrhyw Unawd o waith Cynfansoddwr Cymreig. Gwobr 5/-.

Cystadleuaeth dros 25ain. oed. Unrhyw Unawd. Gwobr 5/-.

Unawd dros 50. Unrhyw Hen Alaw. Gwobr 5/-.

Unawd ar y Bêrdoneg. Tôn 624 (Schoenberg) allan o Lyfr Emynuau Methodistiaid. Gwobr 5/-.

Unawd i rai heb enill o'r blaen. Unrhyw Unawd. Gwobr 5/-.

Deuawd i rai heb enill o'r blaen. Unrhyw Ddeuawd. Gwobr 5/-.

Her Unawd. Unrhyw Unawd o waith R. S. Hughes, neu : Dr. J. Parry. Gwobr 5/-.

Her Ddeuawd. Hunan Ddewisiad. Gwobr 5/-.

Pedwarawd. Hunan Ddewisiad. Gwobr 10/-.

Parti Meibion neu : Gymysg. Hunan ddewisiad, heb fod dros 16. Gwobr Rhodd i'r Arweinydd.

### ADRODD

Adroddiad i rai dan 18 oed. Hunan Ddewisiad. Gwobr 5/-.

Parti Cyd-Adrodd. Hunan Ddewisiad. (dim llai na thr i mewn nifer ymhob parti). Gwobr 5/-.

Prif Adroddiad. Hunan Ddewisiad. Gwobr 5/-.

Dweud unrhyw stori chwaethus ar y pryd. Gwobr 5/-.

### LLÊN

Ysgrifennu llythyr o'r chwarel at gyfaill oddicartref. Gwobr 5/-.

### BARDDONIAETH

Cân ar un o'r testynau canlynol :—

(a) Diwedd Mis.

(b) Breuddwyd. Gwobr 5/-.

Cystadleuaeth ateb cwestynnau ar wybodaeth gyffredinol i gymeryd lle yn yr Eisteddfod.

Parti o chwech o'r Oakeley.

Parti o chwech o'r Votty.

### CELF

#### SLATEWORK

Picture Frames, Assorted decorated Slate Discs for Jugs, Bowls etc. 5/- in each class.

#### LEATHER WORK

Design Belt for use of Rockmen to hold Battery, Hammer etc. also Shopping Bags, Purses, Wallets etc. 5/- in each class.

#### METAL WORK

Any work of Art in Beaten Copper, Brass or Alloy : Shovel, Poker, Tongs, etc. 5/- in each class.

#### WOODWORK

Any work in wood, such as Toys, etc. 5/- in each class.

### YMDDEOL CADEIRYDD Y CÔR

Y mae'r côr yn cael hwyl ysgubol ac y mae'n awr ymhell ymlaen yn rhaglen y gaeaf. Gan mor drwm galwadau eraill y dref arno, bu i Mr. D. H. Jones ymddeol o gadeiryddiaeth y côr. Gwnaeth waith mawr drosto o'i gychwyn ddwy flynedd yn ôl a dymunwn iddo bob llwyddiant yn y dyfodol, gan ddiolch yn gynnes iddo am ei wasanaeth yn y gorffennol.

Creigiwr yn Oakeley gynt ac yn awr Ysgrifennydd yr Undeb yn rhanbarth Ffestiniog yw'r cadeirydd newydd, Mr. W. M. Williams. Addunedodd y côr roddi iddo gefnogaeth llawn.

### DDOE YR "HOBS," HEDDIW'R "BWLSEI"

Aeth drosodd dymor y coit a throdd y rhai hynny sy'n hoffi taflu pethau at daflu arall—at y bwrdd dart. Ac nid hanner gwneud pethau ychwaith ond mynd ati o ddifrif a rhoi i mewn am gystadleuaeth y "News of the World."

Fe chwaraewyd ffeinal y Gystadleuaeth Darts y Clwb Ragfyr 14eg. a daeth Mr. Robert Williams allan yn orau

### COLLI A CHAEL

Clywsom dro'n ol am un o'n cydweithwyr o'r Foty yn cychwyn allan o'r ty ar gyda'r nos ar frys mawr a dipyn yn ffwdanllyd, a'i fryd ar fynd i sefydliad arbennig yn y dref. Pan tu allan i drothwy'r drws, sylwedolodd yn sydyn nad oedd ei getyn ganddo, ac wrth gwrs roedd hwn yn hanfodol. Cafodd gynorthwy'r wraig i chwilio am y trysor coll, ac aeth y ddau'n fanwl drwy bob ystafell ar y llawr, ond i ddim pwrpas. Toc, awgrymodd y wraig efallai mai yn y llofft yr oedd y cetyn dirgelaidd. Pan ar y ffordd yno, gwnaeth y gwr ddarganfyddiadd rhyfedd. Cafodd hyd i'w getyn—YN EI GEG! Anhygoel, hwyra'h, ond digon gwir serch hynny.

### "NODIADAU CYFFREDINOL"

Er fod llawer o gwyno o dro i dro, a dipyn o bryder yn aml ynghylch achos crefydd yn ein hardal, da gennym ddeall, serch hynny, fod yr eglwysi'n dal i chwarae rhan amlwg a phwysig yn ein bywyd. Deallwn fod gryn frwdfrydedd a sel ynglyn a'n cymdeithasau llenyddol, a digon o amrywiaeth ar gyfer pawb yn y rhaglenni. Gallwn ymfalchio, fe gredwn, yn y ffaith ein bod yn dal i fedru diddori a diwyllio ein gilydd o blith ein hadnoddau ein hunain. Clywsom hefyd fod mynd da iawn ar ddsbarthiadau y W.E.A. yn ein hardal, a gwyddom fod llawer o'n cydweithwyr yn mynychu'r cyfarfodydd hyn yn selog, a thrwy hynny'n manteisio ar yr addysg gyfrennir ynddynt.



## MARWOLAETH SYDYN CHWARELWR.

Drwg iawn genym hysbysu am farwolaeth disymwyth Richard Williams ar Rhagfyr 27 ain, 1949, tra wrth ei orchwyl.

Yr oedd yn 57 mlwydd oed, a gweithiodd gyda'r Oakeley am oddeutu naw mlynedd, a bu hefyd beth amser yn y Votty. Gŵr cymeradwy, siriol, llawn hiwmor ydoedd, ac mewn tymher dda pob amser. Yr oedd hefyd yn chwarelwr penigamp. Mawr fydd ein colled. Estynwn ein cydymdeimlad dwysaf a'r teulu yn eu galar.

## EISTEDDFOD Y NADOLIG YN CABAN "LAWR L" (VOTTY)

*Beirniaid*..... *Aelodau o'r Caban*  
*Arweinydd* ..... *Owen Roberts*  
*Trysorydd* ..... *John R. Williams*  
*Ysgrifenydd* ..... *William Lloyd*  
*Agorwyd yr Eisteddfod trwy gyd-ganu yr Emyn "Wele cawsom y Meseia."*

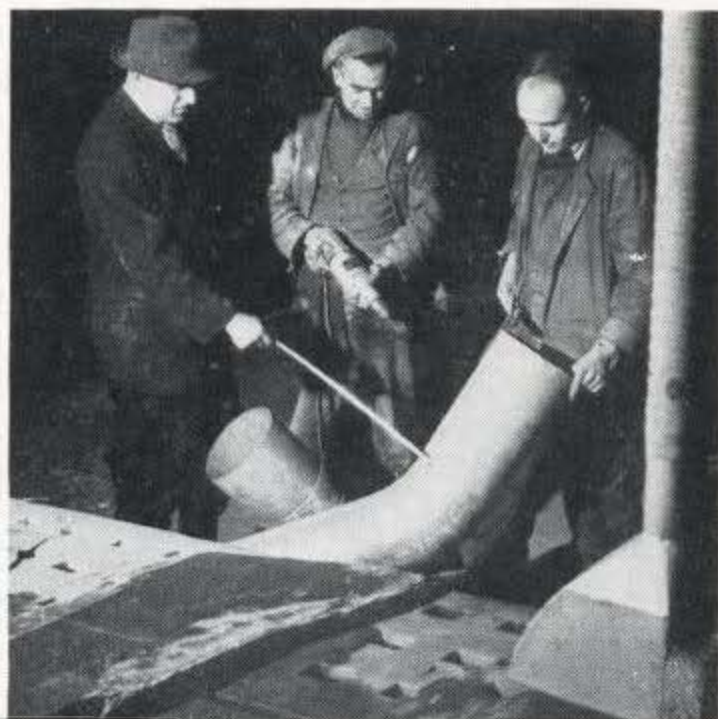
*Cystadleuaeth Canu Carol.* (1) *Owen Roberts.* (2) *Owen G. Hughes.*

- " *Stori Fer* (1) *John Llew Thomas.*  
 " *Traethu ar Destun a roddir ar y pryd.*  
 (1) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 " *Cân Gwerin i rai dan 40 oed.*  
 (1) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 (2) *Owen Roberts.*  
 " *Enwi mwyaf o Drefi Prydain.*  
 (1) *Owen Roberts.*  
 " *Tynu Darlun.* (1) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 (2) *John Thos. Jones.*  
 " *Canu offeryn chwyth.* (1) *John Llew Thomas.*  
 (2) *John Thos. Jones.*  
 " *Canu Emyn "Calon Lan"—agored i'r Caban.*  
 (1) *Owen Roberts.*  
 (2) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 (3) *Gwynfor Williams.*  
 " *Adrodd y Salm cyntaf.*  
 (1) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 " *Gwybodaeth gyffredinol.*  
 (1) *William Lloyd.*  
 (2) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 " *Llinell goll.* (1) *Morris Roberts.*  
 (2) *Owen G. Hughes.*  
 " *Canu Emyn i rai dros 40 oed.*  
 (1) *William D. Jones.*  
 (2) *Morris Roberts.*  
 " *Deuawd.* (1) *Thomas Jones a Owen G. Hughes.*  
 (2) *John R. Williams a John D. Roberts.*  
 " *Enwi Trefi a Phen-Trefi Cymru.*  
 (1) *William D. Jones.*  
 (2) *Owen Roberts.*  
 " *Enwi Stroedd Cymru yn Gymraeg.*  
 (1) *William Lloyd.*  
 " *Enwi mwyaf o Ddiarhebion Cymraeg.*  
 (1) *Owen Roberts.*  
 (2) *William D. Jones.*  
 " *Ugain cwestiwn.*  
 (1) *Tim—John Th. Jones.*  
 (2) " —*Gwynfor Williams.*  
 " *Jack-pot.* (1) *Owen Roberts.*  
 (2) *William Lloyd.*

## ANOTHER DUST-PLANT

In our last number, we illustrated the new dust-extractor plant at Votty, and the visit of Mr. Alfred Robens and a party of mining officials to inspect it. When our photographer last visited Oakeley, a similar plant there was nearly completed, and should be in operation before these words are published.

As at Votty, the plant is being installed by a leading firm of air-conditioning contractors, in



collaboration with our own engineers (who have carried out many experiments in dust suppression over a period of years).

Our picture caught an on-the-spot consultation about a technical point, between the Quarry engineer and two of the contractor's staff during the erection of the plant. In the foreground can be seen one of the completed dust-collectors over a sawing table, while the subject of discussion is a part of the great metal trunking which carries the dust clear of the building.

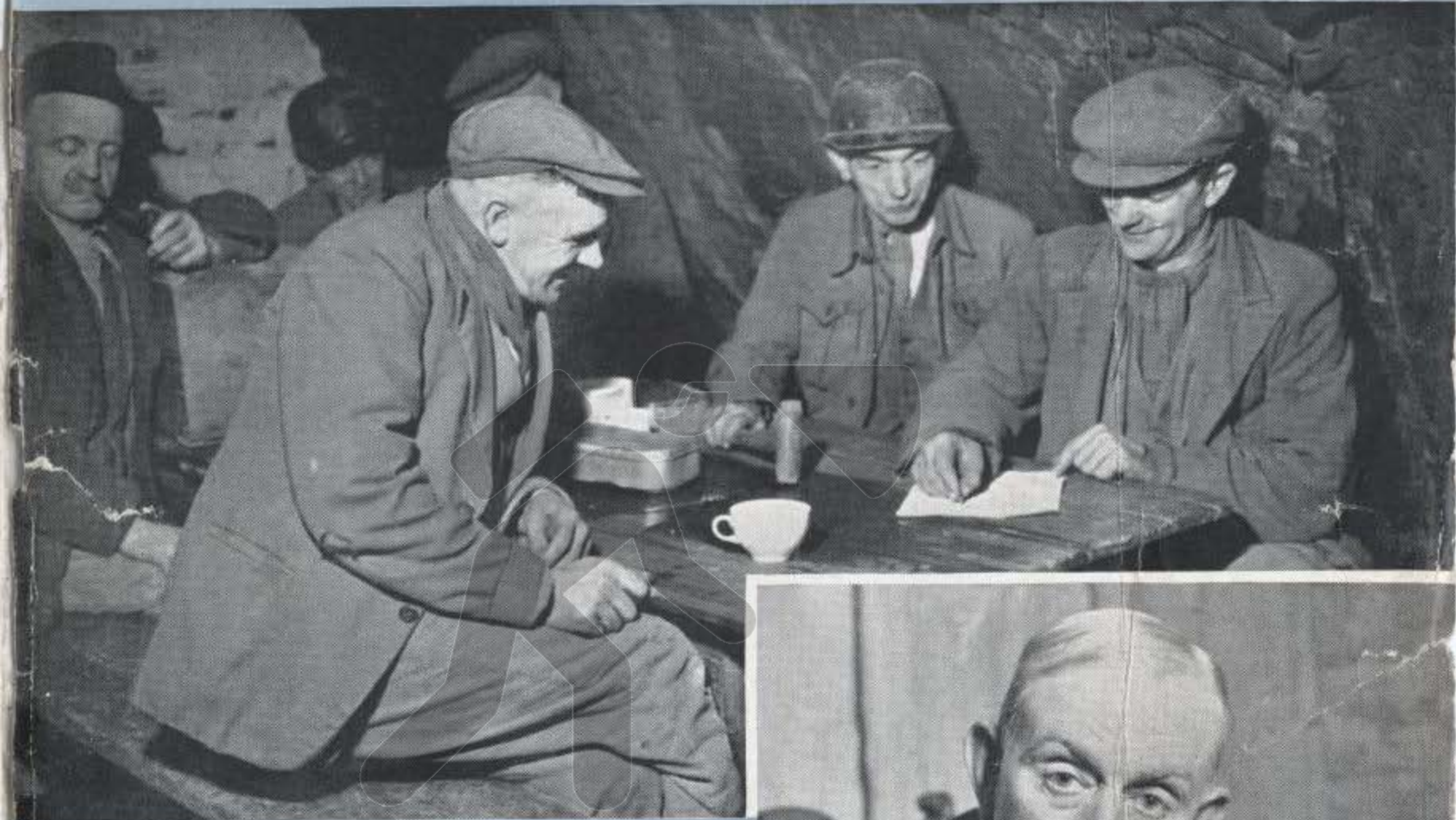


CABAN quite naturally takes a particular interest in Cabanau of the other kind, old or new, and wherever they may be in the Quarry. We print here a picture of the latest addition—the new Caban for the Bonc Shaft Mill, which on our last visit was just receiving the finishing touches at the hands of Hugh Owen Jones—Oakeley's slater and plasterer.



# From CABAN to "CABAN"

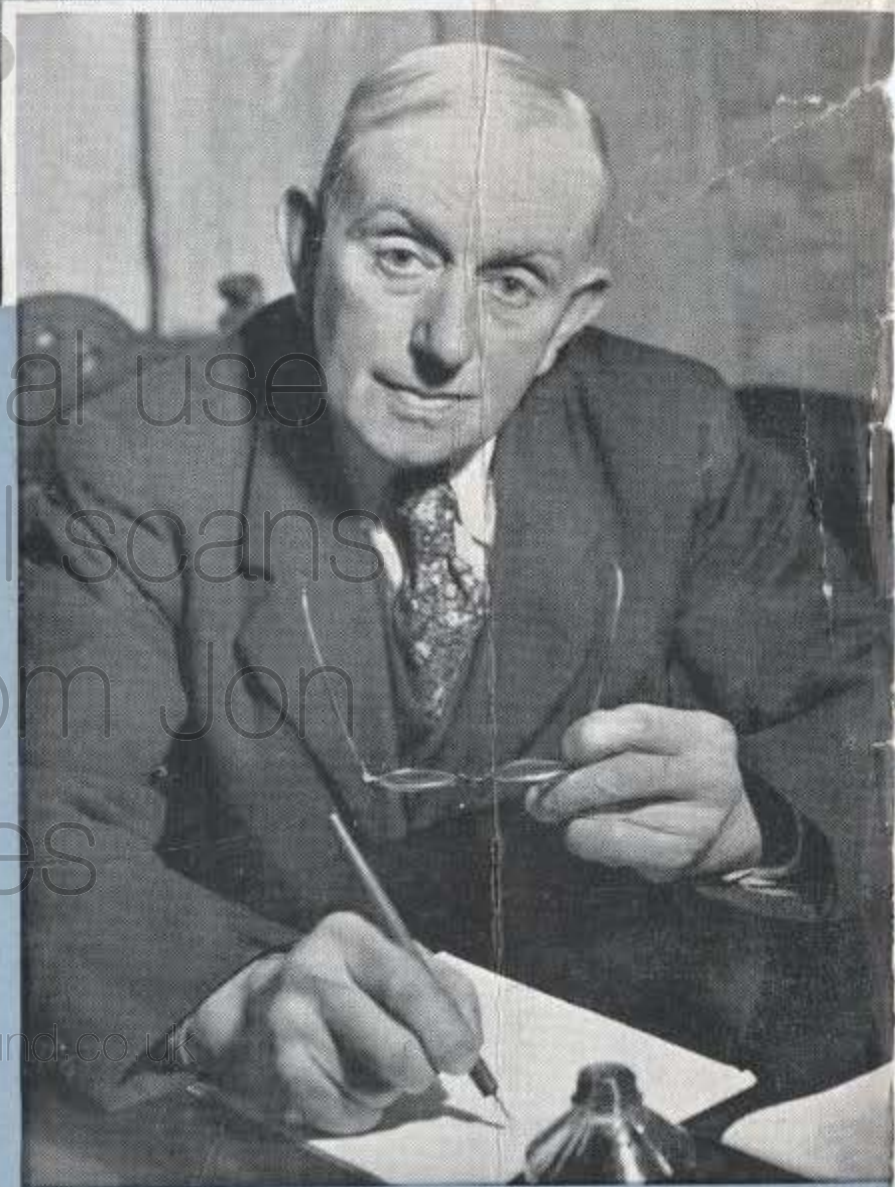
*How this magazine is produced*



IN THE CABAN far below ground on "Q" floor, Oakeley Quarry, WILLIAM JONES (Chairman), ROBERT WILLIAMS (Secretary) and RICHARD JONES (Club Representative) note down a news item for these pages.

The quarries have a number of Mess-rooms (called "Cabanau"). They are more than just a place in which to sit and eat your meal or drink a cup of tea. They are a meeting place . . . a centre for exchanging talk and ideas . . . and, incidentally, the channel through which information is passed all over the quarry.

This time the information system is working in reverse. Each Caban has a Chairman and a Secretary, whom we have asked to help us by collecting contributions from their fellows and passing them on to us; and, at the same time, by keeping us posted of any news or other items which they think would be of general interest. This is *our* magazine, and we want everyone to have a share in it. What is *your* Caban going to send us for the next number?



"CABAN" ACKNOWLEDGES THE HELP AND ADVICE ON WELSH CONTRIBUTIONS of John William Jones—who, when not working at Oakeley, is a Welsh author and historian.



# 70 FEET UP...



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The rockman works high up on a ledge in one of the great chambers of the quarry

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