

CABAN

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE OAKELEY AND VOTTY SLATE QUARRIES

CABAN

THE OAKELEY SLATE QUARRIES CO. LTD.,
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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.

- *Front cover: From underground chamber to roof—a composite illustration of our slate industry.*
- *Below: Festival of Wales link. The Oakeley Quarry "stand" at the two-day Celtic Folklore Festival at Dolgelley in June attracted much attention. Slate splitting and dressing were demonstrated there by Oakeley quarrymen David Lloyd Jones and Arwyn Williams.*



Welcome to Wales

PEOPLE from many lands will be in Wales in this Festival Year. Many will be coming for the first time to see the British Empire and Commonwealth Games at Cardiff or to participate in them.

While the main events are being staged in the capital of the smallest country ever to enjoy the privilege of being host to the Games, the rowing competitions take place in the heart of North Wales at Llyn Padarn in the Llanberis Valley.

There is always a warm welcome in Wales for those who come to see its beautiful countryside, its mountains, valleys and lakes, and become acquainted with its people and their ways of life and work.

In this atomic age when tremendous developments are taking place or are foreshadowed, in Wales as elsewhere, slate quarrying remains one of its oldest basic industries, the products of which command a world-wide reputation as effective and durable roofing materials.

Many overseas visitors have from time to time paused at Blaenau Ffestiniog specially to see our Oakeley quarry where are to be found the deepest slate-mine workings in the world.

Caban, which reflects activities in the slate industry and of men who work in it and represent so much that is Welsh in character and culture, takes this opportunity of joining in the nationwide welcome extended in this Festival Year to visitors in Wales from home and overseas.

Obituary

Ralph Mosley Curtois Howard



This photograph of Mr. Howard was taken during a visit he made to the Oakeley Quarry some three years ago

EVERYONE at the Oakeley and Votty Quarries will have heard with much sorrow of the sudden death of Captain R. M. C. Howard.

They will remember his charming personality and particularly will they remember his determination as a director of both companies to visit the depths of the mines despite his severe disability, and his keen interest in the quarrymen and their work.

Mr. Howard served with the Grenadier Guards in various fields in the war and it was in Italy, during the battle of Monte Camino where he earned the D.S.O. by his courage, that he received the wounds that were to cost him the loss of both legs.

Undoubtedly he will be greatly missed, both on the Board and on the occasions of the directors' visits to North Wales.

LORD BRECON IN THE SLATE COUNTRY

A DISTINGUISHED visitor to Oakeley in February was Lord Brecon, the Minister of State for Welsh Affairs, who was spending two days in North Wales meeting slate quarry managements and officials and talking over the problems and prospects of the industry.

Lord Brecon had a personal as well as a ministerial interest in slate production methods. He has a family limestone quarry business in Breconshire and it was with a knowledgeable eye that he observed the rock formation in the vast underground chambers at Oakeley and the techniques employed in winning the slate.

Insatiable

But the marked difference in the ways of quarrying stone in the open and extracting slate underground drew from him the comment: "All I need do is to break it up by blasting it, which is a much easier job than you have to do".

The Minister's tour was brief but thorough and characterised by an insatiable demand for information and explanation. Photographs reproduced in these pages pinpoint the highlights of the visit and illustrate its cheerful and friendly informality.

Lord Brecon was accompanied by Mr. Geraint Walters, Director

for Wales of the Ministry of Works, who has visited Oakeley on previous occasions, and they were welcomed by Mr. A. D. Fordham. No time was lost in going underground. The Oakeley quarry manager, Mr. Gwilym Humphreys, conducted Lord Brecon down to Q Floor, some 900 ft. underground.

Effective

In Q7, rockmen David Roberts and Richard Owen Thomas put on a very effective demonstration of the method of reducing a massive slate block by pillaring it from

Standing on a huge block of slate, Lord Brecon takes a closer look at the rock face in Q7 chamber



end to end. The block was a tough specimen and required much hammering of the plug inserted into the pillaring hole before it finally split with a distinctive, muffled bang. "I thought it might have gone the other way", remarked the Minister.

The next operation demonstrated was that of cleaving, i.e., splitting a block along the vein. A 4-ton block was dealt with in this way, the rockmen skilfully initiating the cleaving action by smart blows with hammer and chisel at strategic points along the line of the cleavage. "Very good indeed", commented Lord Brecon as the thickness of the block was neatly parted in two.

Lord Brecon closely inspected the slate formation in the chamber, Mr. Humphreys and the rockmen answering many questions, and afterwards he walked through the



The pillaring operation demonstrated by rockmen David Roberts and Richard Owen Thomas.

tunnel to Q4, where he stood among a jumble of blocks brought down not long previously.

By this time the rockmen had left for the surface at the end of their day's work, and a brief inspection of Q2, where the Minister saw the beginning of a new chamber, terminated the underground tour.

On the way back Lord Brecon was shown



A handshake and a word of thanks on leaving Q7.



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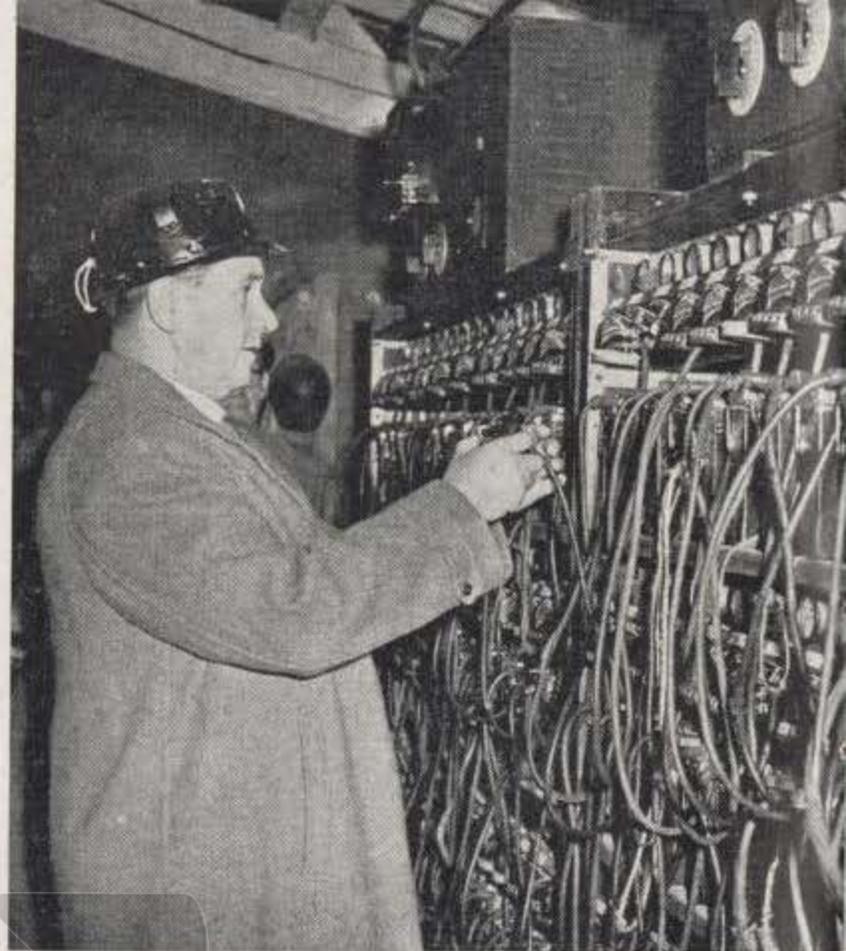
www.train4underground.co.uk

A cheerful interlude in Q Floor caban.



More smiles as the party get set for the haul up the incline back to daylight.

the rock-walled caban where Q Floor men gather for the mid-day meal and there he sat for a



The Minister replaces his electric lamp on the charging rack in the lamproom.

few moments before boarding the truck which took him up the incline on the first stage of the ascent to the surface.

Above ground again, Lord Brecon followed the quarrymen's practice of plugging the electric



The party leaving the K balance after an hour underground.



A serious moment as Lord Brecon, declining assistance, takes the place of the slate-maker and . . .



Delight as the slate - splitting operation is successfully accomplished.

lamp he had carried in its numbered position on the charging rack in the lamproom, and later went to Bonc Goeden Mill where slate-makers John Griffith Hughes and R. T. Goodman demonstrated slate splitting and dressing.

There, sitting on the slate-maker's stool, Lord Brecon tried slate-splitting, but his first effort was not very successful and evoked the remark: "I would not do very well on piecework!" But on his next attempt he produced a per-

Farewell handshake with Mr. Fordham before Lord Brecon leaves, taking with him copies of "Caban."



fectly good slate, an achievement with which he was greatly pleased.

The Minister was also accompanied by Mr. B. H. Evans, of the Welsh Affairs Office of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and Mr. Herbert Davies, press

officer of the Welsh department of the Central Office of Information.

Incidentally, Mr. Davies' grandfather, David Davies, was a steward at the Oakeley quarry about 50 years ago, and his father, John Davies, started working as a slate-maker at Oakeley.

Ringing the changes (Continued from next page)

Peals of bells vary both in numbers — from six to twelve — and also in weight, ranging from the smallest, the treble, which sounds the highest note, down to the largest and heaviest, the tenor.

The heaviest ringing peal is at Liverpool Cathedral, where the tenor weighs four tons, yet due to the skill and sound engineering principles employed by the bell-founders a bell even of this exceptional weight can be rung by one person with comparative ease.

It may be of interest to mention that while the maximum number of changes possible on four bells is 24 changes, taking about one minute to accomplish, the mathematical progression is such that on eight bells the maximum possible is 40,320, which would take 24 hours to accomplish, while the number on 12 bells is astronomical, being in the region of 47,000,000.

For obvious reasons service ringing is usually limited to about 700 changes, rung in half an hour. Each tower has its own band of ringers who are also members of their respective associations. In North Wales there is the North Wales Association, while in England every county has its association or guild of ringers.

In London there is a very old society, "The Ancient Society of College Youths" whose members ring the bells of St. Paul's Cathedral. There are also several non-territorial associations, such as the National Police Guild, the Ladies' Guild and the Railwaymen's Guild. Most of the universities have their own associations of ringers.

The main object is to foster and maintain interest in this centuries-old art of change-ringing and so ensure a continuity of ringing in the churches throughout our land.

Ringing the changes

A practitioner of the art of change-ringing for a quarter of a century, Pierce Roberts, our despatch manager, who is secretary of the Bellringers of St. John's Church, Portmadoc, contributes this article.

THERE are three ways of ringing church bells, chiming, tune playing and change-ringing.

"Chiming" calls for no special skill and is done when there is only one bell; it simply means pulling a rope attached to the bell, causing it to swing gently, the clapper striking at each pull. "Tune playing" is possible on a peal of six bells or more, but is limited in its scope by the number of bells available.

"Change-ringing" is the most popular form of ringing. It is a science in itself, and may be said to be "something out of this world" by reason of its many intricacies; it demands intensive study and practice. Textbooks are available as also is a weekly magazine entitled the *Ringing World*, detailing items of interest to bell-ringers.

Change-ringing is peculiarly a British art and apart from a limited amount in the Dominions is confined mainly to the British Isles. A detailed description of

the art is beyond the scope of this article, but it may be said briefly that a ringer is required for each bell, and each bell is made to swing very nearly, but not quite, the full circle.

But before a would-be ringer attempts to ring a bell in this way it is of vital importance that he should receive instruction from a qualified ringer on the spot in the handling of the rope, for unless this is done he is in danger of being carried upwards by the momentum of the revolving bell!

Basic principle

The basic principle of change-ringing is that each bell is sounded in a different order in relation to the others at each pull on the rope, and in conformity with the rules applicable to the method being rung.

In this way a great variety of changes can be rung without repetition and the many methods are known by quaintly

sounding names, of which "Grandsire Triples", "Superlative Surprise" and "Double Norwich" are examples.

Continued on previous page



Pierce Roberts pictured with some of his fellow bellringers in the belfry of St. John's Church. From left, G. C. Williams, Colin Gabriel, Herbert Roberts (the conductor), Allan Roberts, Pierce Roberts and John Roberts

FLEXIBILITY AND . . .

The flexibility of Oakeley slate is demonstrated by D. J. Jones, clerk in the quarry office.



ANGLER'S NIGHTMARE!



Each of the divisions at the bottom of the picture is one-tenth of an inch.

NOT two-headed monsters of an angler's nightmare but a picture of freak trout in the hatchery run by Robert Thomas Jones, Bone Shaft slatemaker, for the Cambrian Angling Association, of which he is secretary.

Caban photographer has applied his technique to striking effect, but these specimens are, in reality, small fry which grew from a single "egg" with two

joined bodies and two separate heads. Such freaks are, however, not rare and they do not survive to grow to any size.

These were among 60,000 trout fry hatched out under the care of Robert Thomas Jones and subsequently "planted" out to replenish the stocks in the various lakes in the association's area which are frequented by many of our quarrymen.

THE GENTLE TOUCH



WHEN slates are moved by rail or road they must be tightly packed to avoid damage or breakage. As a load is built up the slate packer—in this picture David Hughes, Votty,—uses a mallet to tap in single slates to take up every bit of space so that finally the slates are as close as the leaves of a new book. The mallet may be large, but the technique of slate packing demands that it be wielded with a gentle touch! In this truckload, one of a train ready to leave for the wharf, are slates of four sizes ranging from 24 by 12 inches to 16 by 8 inches.

HIS OWN BOSS!

GEORGE Breckon, seen putting away his lamp after a day's stint underground at Votty, started work at the quarry three years ago as a labourer. Then followed a spell driving a locomotive, but George Breckon, a native of Whitby, Yorkshire, and new to slate quarrying, wanted to be a rockman. He rapidly acquired the skill and "know-how" and now takes charge of his own chamber. "A rockman's work gives you a chance to use your own initiative and you are more or less your own boss," he told *Caban*.

His way to the quarry lay through service in the Army at Trawsfynydd and an eventual meeting with the Blaenau Ffestiniog girl who is now his wife. George Breckon is happy in his new life, particularly now that he and Mrs. Breckon own the house in which they live.



QUARRYMEN-COUNCILLORS



E. Jarrett Jones



Evan R. Jones



Austin Lewis

IN the triennial elections of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Urban Council in May the Oakeley Quarry's tradition of local government service was strengthened by the return of three new members, bringing to five the number of Oakeley men serving on the council of 23.

After having been a councillor for 21 years, E. Jarrett Jones, clerk in the quarry office, and "father" of the Ffestiniog Council, was returned unopposed for a further three years, and also unopposed were J. Austin Lewis, Oakeley carpenter, and Alwyn Jones, slatemaker, both of whom sit on the council for the first time.

Evan R. Jones, slatemaker, who had served on the council for twelve years, had to fight the election in his ward but retained his seat with a substantial margin of votes, while Henry Parry, also a slatemaker, won his seat at his first attempt in a ward in which the three seats were contested by five candidates.

Holding the confidence of the electors since he first won his seat on the council in 1937, E. Jarrett Jones has since fought

only two elections and on both occasions topped the poll. Senior member of the authority in point of service, he has been twice chairman and had the honour of being in office when in 1951 the Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, and the Duke of Edinburgh, visited Blaenau Ffestiniog during their tour of North Wales. The town's welcome was extended to the Royal visitors by E. Jarrett Jones.

A Justice of the Peace for Merionethshire, E. Jarrett Jones represents the council on various other bodies and is associated with a number of local organisations, among them the Ffestiniog Jubilee Eisteddfod of which he has been treasurer since its inception in 1935.

Austin Lewis, Oakeley carpenter, who had the support of Plaid Cymru, and Alwyn Jones, slatemaker at Bonc Shafft, a Labour candidate, were nominees in the same ward, Maenofferen, but were spared the embarrassment of having to fight each other at the poll!

Austin Lewis is secretary of Aelwyd yr Urdd at Blaenau Ffestiniog and a deacon at Seion Baptist Chapel, while Alwyn Jones is a member of the central

ORS OF OAKELEY



Henry Parry.



Alwyn Jones.

committee of the local Labour Party and a former secretary of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Football Club. He has worked at Oakeley for 22 years with the exception of five years during the last war when he served with the R.A.F. as an armourer, for part of the time in India.

contested three seats. Evan R. Jones is also a former chairman of the council. He held the office in 1952 and his public work includes membership of the county industrial committee for Merionethshire and of the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Consultative Council.

Of the trio of new councillors who gained seats at their first attempt, Henry Parry, slate packer, was elected a member for the largest ward in the town, Bowydd, of which he is ward committee secretary for the Local Labour Party. Henry Parry started work at Oakeley 33 years ago. He served in the Army during the second world war and was wounded in the Ardennes in 1944. He is chairman of the Blaenau Ffestiniog branch of the British Legion.

With twelve years service on the council to his credit, Evan R. Jones, slate-maker at Bonc Goed-an, was re-elected for a further three years in the Diphwys ward election in which five candidates

only, original scaris

OVERSEAS VISITORS TO OAKELEY

SUCH is the fame of the Oakeley Quarry and the fascination of its deep underground workings, that in the first six months of this year close on 200 visitors were received from many parts of Britain and overseas.

Among the people from abroad were three girls from Bergen, Norway, on a hitch-hiking holiday, and a party of

young farmers from Germany on an "exchange visit" with young farmers in Wales, by some of whom they were accompanied.

Other overseas visitors came from New Zealand and Rhodesia, and all were most interested to learn how slate was extracted in blocks from the mine and dealt with in the mills on the surface.

Hunangofiant Creigiwr

gan IFOR JONES

RHWNG pymtheg ac ugain oed gallwn innau ganu y llinell honno "Mi fum yn gweini tymor." Treuliais y cyfnod hwn fel gwas ffarm a chefais gychwyn da. Yn y chwarel y gweithiai fy nhad a'm brawd a chenfigenus oeddwn o'u gweld yn gorffen am bedwar, dod adref bob nos, cyflog bob wythnos, a gorffen ganol dydd Sadwrn. Dechreuais swnio am fynd i'r chwarel ac yn chwarel yr Oakeley y dechreuais.

Cefais flynyddoedd lawer o fwyniant a diwylliant a chynorthwy i ddatblygu fy hun gyda hen gymeriadau gwreiddiol a diwylliedig yr hen dai cinio. Cof da am y swydd gyntaf a gefais yn y caban yn Gloddfa Ganol fel ysgrifennydd. Yr ail ddiwrnod daeth llythyr i'm llaw ac wedi ei ddarllen dechreuais ei amau, gan ei fod y tryblith rhyfeddaf. Pan agorodd y llywydd y tŷ gofynodd fel arfer a oedd rhywbeth i'w hysbysu. Atebais innau nad oedd. Gwaeddodd rhywun fod gennyf lythyr, neb llai na'r person a roddodd y llythyr yn fy llaw. Ar amrantiad gwelais trwy y cynllyn. Codais ar fy nhraed yn gyhoeddus am y tro cyntaf. "Oes, Mr. Llywydd, mae gennyf lythyr, ond nid yw ei gynnwys yn fuddiol i'w ddarllen." Gwelodd pawb drwy'r peth, a chefais gymeradwyaeth y potia jam.

"Dechreu gweld"

Daeth dechreu bywyd cyhoeddus yn gynorthwy i mi yn y byd cymdeithasol ac eglwysig yn y cylch. Yn rhyfedd nid hyn roddodd symbyliad i mi ddechrau darllen, ond y ffaith i mi gael clefyd ysgyfaint. Bum adref am dri mis, a dechreuais gael blas ar ddarllen. Cof da am gyfaill pan ddywedais wrtho: "Wyddost ti beth, mwyaf yn y byd yr wyf yn ddarllen, mwyaf twb yr wyf yn gweld fy hun yn mynd." "Ie," meddai yntau, "dechreu gweld wyt ti."

Diddorol dros ben fyddai diwrnod dewis swyddogion yn y tai cinio. Enwir

tua chwe person. Wedi pleidleisio a'u tynnu i lawr i ddau, yna ail bleidleisio a dewis yr un. Yna gofynai'r llywydd: "Beth am y swyddogion eraill?" Os byddai storm wedi bod ynglyn â'r trysorydd, &c., yna byddai newid, ond os oedd yr hen long wedi hwylio ar hyd y



Yr Awdur

mis i'r hafan ddymunol, yna eu hail ethol. Y swyddogion eraill oedd ysgrifennydd, trysorydd, amserydd, plisman, &c. Gwaith yr amserydd fyddai rhoi tair cnoc ar y bwrdd gyda morthwyl wedi ei wneud o ddarn o goes rhaw i rybuddio amser smocio.

Ambell i fis digwyddai y llywydd bwdu. Yn dilyn hyn byddai storm enbyd a churo'r byrddau gyda'r potia jam, a gwaeddi fod yr hen long wedi mynd i'r creigiau. Gwaith cyntaf y llywydd ar ôl agor y tŷ fyddai gofyn i'r ysgrifennydd a oedd rhywbeth i'w hysbysu. Yna croesawu dieithriaid, rhai yn symud o bonc i bonc, ac yn eu hannog i fod yn gartrefol, ac yn disgwyl clywed eu llais ac, yn olaf, eu hatgoffa i dalu am eu te cyn ymadael.

Yna gofyn a oedd gan rhywun rhywbeth ar ei feddwl fod cyfle iddo ei ddatgan yn rhydd.

Weithiau byddai dadleuon gwych, dro arall dim ond y ceffyl main, sef hwyl, a byddai ambell un yn arbenigwr ar farchogaeth hwn. Parhai ambell ddadl am bythefnos neu dair wythnos. Cof da am un gan hen wág : "A oedd y Cymry yn genedl gerddorol." Dylid egluro y gelwid y rhai mewn oed yn hoelion wyth, a'r rhai ifanc fel tintacs. Yn y ddadl hon yr oedd un o'r tintacs yn gadarn nad oedd y Cymry yn genedl gerddorol. Pe bae cyngerdd gan gerddorfa yn y Blaenau faint fuasai yno tybed? Ychydig iawn, ond buasai y lle yn orlawn gyda chôr meibion neu gymysg.

Yna aeth ymlaen i ddadleu fod dwy fath ar gerddoriaeth. Un heb eiriau ac un a geiriau iddi. Rhaid cael cerddoriaeth a geiriau iddi cyn y gall y Cymry ei mwynhau, ond y wir gerddoriaeth oedd un heb eiriau iddi. Yna adroddodd ei hanes yn Llandudno mewn cyngerdd. Ar y llwyfan yr oedd cerddorfa gyda llen fawr tu ôl iddi yn llawn golygfeydd o wlad yn y Dwyrain a'r goleuadau yn cael eu gweithio yn effeithiol dros ben arnynt. Y darn cerddorol, os cofiaf yn iawn, oedd "William Tell."

Darlun

Cychwynai gyda darluniad o'r gyrrwr gwartheg yn dringo'r mynydd ar ddiwrnod teg. Yna ar gopa'r mynydd yn sylwi ar gwmwl bychan du yn y pellter, ond yn nesu yn araf a mynd yn fwy. Yna darluniai'r darn y storm o fellt a tharanau, a'r effaith rhwng y gerddorfa, y llen a'r goleuadau yn ddigon i godi gwallt pen dyn. Arafai'r storm a deuai'r gyrrwr i lawr i'r gwastadedd a heulwen tesog braf a dail y palmwydd prin yn symud gan yr awel felfedaidd. Gorffennai'r darn mewn tawelwch godidog, tebyg i'r tawelwch hwnnw fydd dyn yn ei fwynhau ar ôl diwrnod caled o waith mewn gwresgred llethol.

Pwy yn y caban hwn welai'r darlun yna wrth wrando ar gerddorfa?. Neb. Gorffennodd trwy egluro y rheswm nad oeddym yn gerddorol. Darllennaiis ryw dro am hynafiaid y Saeson yn byw ar y

gwastadeddau gyda'r canlyniad eu bod yn rhwyddach iddynt ymgynnull ynghyd gyda'r nosau, ac felly dechreu cymeryd diddordeb yn y celfyddydau cain. Erbyn heddiw gwelir yr Albert Hall a lleoedd eraill yn orlawn yn gwrando yn dawel a di-stwr am ryw ddwy awr ar y wir gerddoriaeth. O'r ochr arall 'roedd hynafiaid y Cymry wedi eu herlid i'r mynyddoedd, ac i ffermydd anghysbell, ac ni chyfarfyddent ond anaml iawn, felly ni fu iddynt fagu hoffter at y wir gerddoriaeth. I mi, Mr. Llywydd, yn bendifaddau, credaf yn gydwybodol nad ydym yn genedl gerddorol.

Ymfflachol

Ar ôl yr araith ymfflachol hon, ac ar ôl i'r potia jam dawelu, clywn rhyw lais egwan : "Wel, rwan am dân." Cododd dau o'r hoelion wyth ar unwaith ac enwodd y llywydd pwy oedd i siarad. Un a gyfrifid yn gerddor da, ac wedi dysgu ac arwain llawer o gorau yn ei ddydd. Siom garw iddo oedd gwrando ar y siaradwr blaenorol, yn meiddio tynnu ei genedl ei hun i lawr. Meddyliwch, gyfeillion, meddai, am ein cerddorion o fri sydd erbyn hyn wedi ymuno â'r Cyfansoddwr Mawr a'r Nefol Gôr. Dr. Joseph Parry a'i dôn anfarwol "Aberystwyth," a Tany Marian, &c., a beth am y llu sydd yn cyd-oesi â ni. Beth am ein heisteddfod genedlaethol a'r mân eisteddfodau? Ni chlywais a'm clustiau erioed y fath gyhuddiadau mor ddi-sail. I orffen adroddodd a hanner ganu y darn olaf o'r gân wladgarol honno "Unwaith eto'n Nghymru annwyl." Yna banllefau a'r potia jam.

"Lwmp o sentiment"

Ar ei ôl cododd yr ail o'r tintacs. Mr. Llywydd, nid oedd yr araith ddiwethaf ond lwmp o sentiment i gyd. Sylwch ar y gwahaniaeth rhwng y ddwy. Y gyntaf wedi ei gweithio o ris i ris yn hamddenol, ac yn profi ei bwnc bob tro ac yn taro'r hoelen ar ei phen. Yr ail ychydig o reswm ond yn llawn teimlad. Teimlad y brawd hwn sydd yn ei reoli. Y rhan anifeilaidd yn lle yr *homo sapiens*, chwedl y gwyddonwyr—swn anaearol drwy'r cab-

an. Sôn am ein ychydig gerddorion nad ydynt yn gymwys i ddatod carai esgidiau rhai fel Beethoven, &c.

Nid a oes cerddorion ymhlith y genedl ydyw'r cwestiwn, ond a ydyw y genedl yn gerddorol. Sôn am yr eisteddfod wedyn. Nid oes ond rhyw un o bob deg yn mynychu honno, a mwy nai hanner heb fod yn gerddorol. Sôn am wlad y gân. Ie, gwlad y gân ond nid gwlad gerddorol.

Cododd un arall o'r hoelion wyth. Un wedi dilyn hen fand y Llan ers blynyddoedd ac wedi bod trwy lawer ysgarmes a dwr poeth chwedl yntau. Hoffai ef yn fawr araith y cyntaf. Gyda'i ddarlun gwych a'i resymau teg a'i ddychymyg byw bu bron i mi anghofio fy hun a mynd gyda'r lli. Deffroais o'r hud a'r lledrith a chofiais am ein llyfr tonau annwyl sydd wedi bod cymaint cysur i'n cenedl ac wedi achub aml i enaid. Cofiais nad oes genedl dan haul Duw a chymaint o donau, a beth am ein halawon hefyd. Na, Mr. Llywydd, nid yn hawdd y medraf gredu nad yw ein cenedl yn gerddorol. Diweddodd y ddadl hon fel pob dadl heb ei phenderfynu.

Eisteddfodau

Bob Nadolig byddai eisteddfod yn y ciniawdai, a rhai yn parhau am ryw dair wythnos. Byddai dwy brif gystadleuaeth — unrhyw alaw dan 40 oed, a thros 40 oed. Cof da am un hen gyfaill direidus wedi cystadlu dan 40 ac ymhen tridiau yn cystadlu dros 40. Cododd helynt mawr ond 'roedd Joe yn barod gyda'i eglurhad. Echdoe roeddwn dan 40 a ddoe cefais fy mhen blwydd yn 40 a thê a cremnog, felly heddiw 'rwyf dros 40 oed. Rhoddwyd caniatad iddo a chanodd ar yr alaw "So early in the morning," gan ail-ddweud y llinell hon i'r diwedd, "Ceiliog Coch ydi'r ceiliog," a gorffen yn eglwysaidd gydag Amen ynghanol swm aflafar y potia jam.

Cof da am y siarad fu ar ôl un cwestiwn yn y gystadleuaeth gwybodaeth gyffredinol. Y cwestiwn oedd "Beth oedd enw iawn Bryfdir?" a neb yn medru ei ateb o dŷ cinio yn rhifo 80.

Byddai llawer o driciau direidus yn mynd ymlaen o dro i dro. Deuai ambell un ag afalau i'w ffrind i'w rhoi iddo

STUDIES IN EXPRESSION

Individual snapshots in the opposite page feature the men attached to the "Machine" caban at Votty whose jobs are many and varied and are chiefly concerned with engineering and maintenance.

Top : T. J. Evans and D. Lloyd Jones.

Second row : Eryl Davies, Selwyn Jones, W. O. Hughes.

Third row : J. E. Jones, J. E. Ellis, Gareth Williams.

Fourth row : David Evans, J. I. Thomas, J. E. Roberts.

gyda'r nos. Rhoddai hwynt yn y gist bowdwr i'w cadw. Cyn canol y boreu byddai rhyw hen wag wedi ei synhwyro a diffodd ei ganwyll ac ar ei liniau at y gist. Amser cinio afal gan lawer. Ychydig feddyliai yr hen gymêr mai ei afalau ef oeddynt hyd gyda'r nos. Dro arall newid yr afalau am gerrig.

Ychydig wyr fod y rhai sy'n gweithio dan y ddaear yn cerdded ymhell dros fil o risiau i gyraedd eu hagor. Wedi cyraedd rhaid cael "pum munud llygad." Ystyr hyn oedd gan mor anghynefin oedd y llygaid i dywyllwch ar ôl golau dydd rhaid oedd eistedd ychydig i ymgynefino. Lle hapus yw chwarel i weithio, a'r gweithwyr y rhai hapusaf erioed yn llawn direidi a diwenwyn.

Cefais y fraint o fod ar bwyllgor Undeb y Chwarelwyr am gyfnod da i hyrwyddo amryw o'r gwelliannau y sonia "J.G.M." am danynt yn ei ysgrif dda, a gallaf dystio fel yntau fod y diwylliant oedd yn y cabanau wedi bod yn arddeliad, addurn ac anrhydedd i minnau, ac wedi gwneud fy mywyd yn llawer hapusach o'r herwydd. Diolch o galon i'r hen hoelion wyth i gyd. Gwyn eu byd.



**VOTTY'S
'MACHINE
CABAN'
SNAPSHOTS**



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LONG SERVICE AT VOTTY

LONG service is a characteristic of the men who work in the slate quarrying industry and it is worthy of note that among the long-serving quarrymen in our Votty quarry are fourteen who have given between them a total of 536 years' service. They are representative of all sections of quarry activity, below and above ground, and every one of them has been at Votty for 36 years or more.

Most of them entered the industry straight from school, and in this note we may single out for mention the senior in point of service, though not in age, Owen Rowlands, rockman, who is nearing his half-century at Votty, having worked there for 47 years. He is now 61 and is a grandson of a former Votty manager.



"GUTO MYNYDD"

DIOLCH i J.G.M. am ei ysgrif lân a threfnus yn y *Caban* am Ionawr 1958. Derbyniaf y gwahoddiad sydd ar waclod ei lith ac mae yn bleser gennyf nodi ychydig o'r gwelliannau y mae y brawd wedi eu gadael heb iddynt weld goleuni dydd.

Pa le yr oedd ei feddwl pan beidiodd a sôn am Glwb yr Oakeley ac yntau wedi ei benodi yn geidwad iddo? A beth am y Côr Meibion sydd yn ymarfer yn y clwb?

Gwelliant arall ydoedd ffarwelio â'r gannwyll wêr flynyddoedd yn ôl. Pan oedd J.G.M. yma o'r blaen nid oedd sôn am "lamproom" nac am y cabannau newydd yn Bonc Goedan a Bonc Shafft. Ydynt, mae'r gwelliannau hyn yn werthfawr iawn i'r gweithwyr yn gyffredinol,

These Votty "veterans" were photographed outside the quarry's offices. Their terms of service are given in parentheses. From left:

Back row: R. J. Pritchard (36), Howell Daniels (38), J. E. Jones (39), R. D. Jones (36), Owen Rowlands (47), J. B. Williams (38), G. J. Williams (37).

Front: W. O. Hughes (40), Robert Thomas (38), T. A. Owen (36), Tom Jones (40), W. D. Jones (38), Harry Williams (37), R. H. Williams (36).



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YN ATEB "J.G.M."

ond cytunaf ag ef fod llawer o le i wella eto.

'Roeddwn yn meddwl yn wir y buasai J.G.M. wedi son am y cylchgrawn *Caban*. Dyma yn wir un o'r llyfrau taclusaf a mwyaf diddorol a ddaeth i'n rhan. Credaf nad wyf yn cyfeiliorni llawer trwy ddweud ei fod yn dathlu ei ddeng mlwydd oed y flwyddyn hon, ac mae gennyf y parch mwyaf i'r sawl a'i cychwynodd.

Mae y rhifyn cyntaf yn fy meddiant hyd heddiw, a phob un arall yr un modd. Credaf y gellir dweud yn ddibetrus fod cannoedd y tu allan i'r chwarel yn cael mwynhad wrth ei ddarllen ac yn sicr wrth edrych ar y darluniau sydd ynddo.

Erbyn heddiw mae y llyfr hwn wedi mynd ar hyd a lled y byd—fel llechi y chwarel—a rhwydd hynt iddo a ddywedaf fi i drafaelio eto am lawer blwyddyn.

Pwy a wyr ynte na fydd ar J.G.M. awydd codi ei goes eto, hwyrach i geisio gloewach nen, ac fe allai y pryd hwnnw ymhell dros y môr, ac o bosibl yn cael ei hun rhyw noswaith yn eistedd wrth ei dân a phwl o hiraeth arno am fro ei febyd. Yntau yn gafael mewn *Caban*, hwyrach, ac yn gweld llun hwn-a-hwn; yr hiraeth yn cryfhau ai orfodi i droi yn ôl! Cyn i hynny ddigwydd, 'rwyf am ofyn i J.G.M. beidio a rhoi ei bin sgwennu o'r neilltu, a dal ati i anfon llithoedd eraill i'r *Caban*.

Dymunaf rwydd hynt i *Caban* i'r dyfodol.

LLONGYFARCHIADAU AR GÂN

CYFANSODDWDYD y caneuon canlynol i ddathlu digwyddiad neilltuol yn y Caban K—sef cyrraedd oed yr addewid gan un o'r ffyddloniaid, John Roberts. Yntau er y gwth o oedran yn parhau yn ieuanc ei aspri a'i feddwl. Dau sydd yma yn dymuno, ar gân, bob peth gorau i'w hen ffrind, ac yn gwneud hynny yn rhagorol o gampus.

*Ein John, ni gurwn ddwylo
Yn llawen iawn i ti,
A brysiwn i dy gyfarch
Ar ddydd mor fawr ei fri.*

*Hyfrydwch yr "Addewid"
A ddaeth yn bêr i John,
A'i galon fel y Gwanwyn
Yn dawnsio dan ei fron.*

*Bu'n ffeffryn hoff ein caban
Am ddedwydd amser maith,
A siriol wên ei galon
Yn ysgafnbau ein gwaith.*

*Er treiglo o'r blynyddoedd
Mae John o hyd mor glên.
Deallodd y gyfrinach
O wrthod mynd yn hen.*

*Medd lais a bery i swyno
A'i gân yn wefr i gyd,
Di-gryndod wedi'i diwnio,
Boed lym neu law'n ei fyd.
Ac fel rhyw dwymyn felys,
Hapusrwydd o'r iawn ryw
A wasgar John yn gyson,
Ni wyddom, drwy gyd-fyn.*

*Doed llawer Mai a'i fivsig
A'i fwynder fel erioed,
A John o hyd yn canu
A gwrthod mynd i oed.*

*Dy adlais lond y creigiau
I'r cenedlaethau ddaw,
A bery o hyd i swyno,
Boed wynt, neu wres, neu law.*

*Fe aeth y Llungwyn heibio
A phawb sydd yn eu lle,
Yn eistedd unwaith eto
Wrth fwrdd'rben Gaban K.
Gwrandawed pawb yn astud,
Heb symud llaw na throed,
"Mae'n brawd John Robas heddiw
Yn ddeg a thrigain oed."*

*Nid yw y blwyddi, bogia,
Yn dywedyd dim ar John,
Wrth ganu'i ffordd trwy fywyd
Mae'n dal yn îr a llon;
Mae heddiw'n sionc a beini,
Fel ewig yn y coed,
Er ei fod wedi cyrraedd
Ei ddeg a thrigain oed.*

*Os bydd cystadlu canu
Yn Caban K bid siwr,
Bydd William Tyddyn Cowpar
Yn codi'n fawr ei stêr;
Ond er y style a'r osgo,
A'i sôla "second grade,"
Pan gysyd John i ganu
Rhydd William yn y "shade."*

*Gobeithio'n wir, rben bogia,
Gwna Lizzie de i John,
A rhoi ei ffedog grandia
I'w ddisgwyl adre'n llon,
Ac estyn y danteithion,
A'n "servio" yn ddiwed,
Am fod ei phriod annwyl
Yn ddeg a thrigain oed.*

*Wel, pob dymuniad hapus
Ddymunwn yma'n rhwydd,
Boed pob llawenydd iddo
Ar ddiwrnod pen ei flwydd.
A llawer pen blwydd eto
Heb ofid dan ei fron
Yng nghwmni'i briod Lizzie
Ddymunwn i'r hên John.*

BOB WILLIAMS

RICHARD OWEN.

Learning the craft

Recent entrants to the slate quarrying industry from the Ffestiniog County School include the three pictured here — Gwyndaf Evans (left), apprentice slatemaker; Ian Stuart Campbell Lewis (centre), apprentice fitter, and Arwyn Evans (right), apprentice slatemaker. All are aged 15.



★



Another apprentice slatemaker at Oakeley is Jackie Hughes, aged 16, also a former pupil of the Ffestiniog County School.



A newcomer to Votty from the same school is Richard Lloyd Hughes, aged 15. He is an apprentice slatemaker.



Among the young workers at Oakeley is Leonard Roberts, aged 17, a locomotive attendant.

Bridegrooms from Votty



Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Hughes.



Mr. and Mrs. Trevor Roberts.



Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Jones.

OUR NEWS

Top left. Hugh Hughes, Votty rockman, and his bride, *nee* Miss Betty Lloyd Jones, of Blaenau Ffestiniog, daughter of an Oakeley rockman, David Lloyd Jones, after their wedding at Maenofferen Methodist Chapel, Blaenau Ffestiniog, on March 22, 1958.

Below left. In a ceremony at Bethania Welsh Congregational Chapel, Blaenau Ffestiniog, on February 15, 1958, Robert David Jones, a Votty man, was married to Miss Dorothy Preston, daughter of a Yorkshireman now living at Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Above. Votty rockman Trevor Roberts, and his bride, *nee* Miss Jane Lloyd, of Blaenau Ffestiniog. They were married at Jerusalem Welsh Congregational Church, Blaenau Ffestiniog, on March 29, 1958.

EXCHANGE



Robert Morgan stands under a girder in the Votty Mill on which is recorded the year when the Royal Oakeley Silver Band won the brass bands championship of Wales.



Anarawd Jones

Playing in Wales's Brass Band

BOTH our quarries are represented this year among the instrumentalists of the National Brass Band of Wales which, among other engagements, will be contributing to the Monday evening concert of the National Eisteddfod at Ebbw Vale.

Robert Morgan, of Votty, who is well known as the conductor of the Royal Oakeley Silver Band, will be playing the trombone in the "national" band for the second year in succession.

One of his bandsmen, Anarawd Jones, of Oakeley, appears with the National Band for the first time. His instrument is the B Flat bass tuba, his mastery of which is such that he holds two gold medals for solo performances gained at championship competitions of the North Wales Brass Bands Association.

Anarawd has been a member of the Royal Oakeley Band for sixteen years, exactly his length of service at the Oakeley quarry which he entered straight from school.

Robert Morgan is proud of the fact that four other members of his band have also been chosen to play in the Brass Band of Wales.

THE BACK COVER PICTURE

Wild Wales in wild mood. The River Lledr, which has its source in a lake in the hills above the Oakeley Quarry, transformed into a foaming torrent after heavy rain.

FAREWELL GIFT

RETIRING at the age of 67 after working as a slatemaker at the Votty and Oakeley quarries for 30 years, Owen R. Owen received a parting gift from his colleagues at Votty in February.

Howell Williams, who presided at the ceremony, read verses he had composed for the occasion, and the gift, subscribed to by the staff and quarrymen, was presented to Owen R. Owen on their behalf by Trefor Davies.

There was also a box of chocolates for Mrs. Owen, which was handed to her by Robert John Pritchard.

Those who took part in the ceremony extended good wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Owen and their remarks



Picture by courtesy of "Y Cymro"

were supplemented by a number of other quarrymen present.



GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

ONE of our retired Oakeley slatemakers, Robert Williams, aged 72, of 2 Ty'nllwyn, Tanygrisiau, and his wife, Elizabeth, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in May. They were married at Bethel Chapel, Tanygrisiau, on May 15, 1908, and have four sons, a daughter and eight grandchildren.

Mr. Williams worked in Bonc Shafft Mill for 51 years from the age of 14. His father and three brothers were all employees at Oakeley and two of his sons continue the family link with the quarry—W. O. Williams, who is an under-manager, and Emlyn Williams, a fitter.

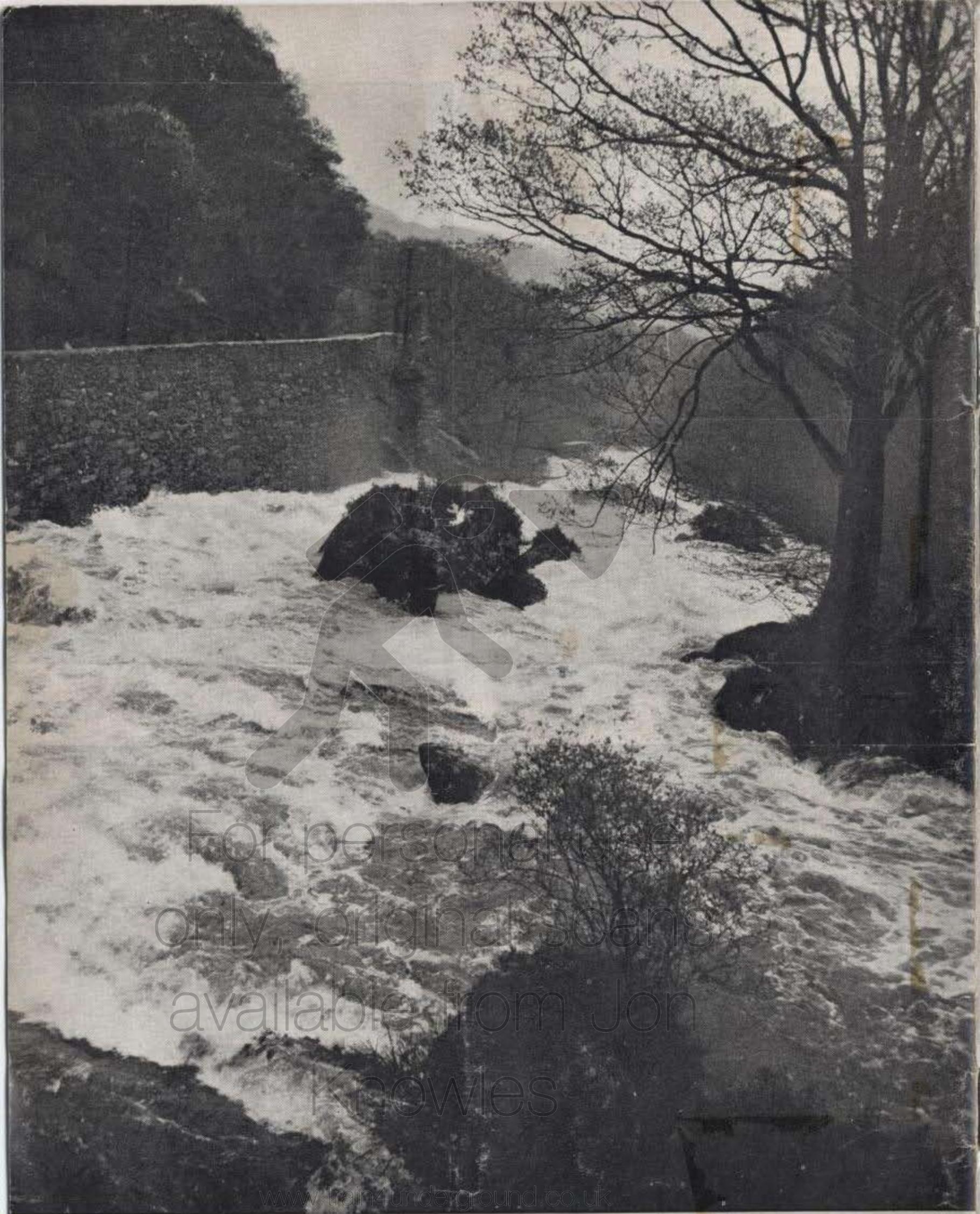
PARTY MEMORIES

*I*T seems a long time since the Oakeley parties, but below is a happy reminder of the prevailing spirit—one of the groups of children entertained.

Singing at the party were (below from left): Rhiam Williams, Glesni Evans, Glenys Lloyd and Eleri Evans.

Right, The big blow! But the balloon just wouldn't go bang and Lorna May Jones did not win the balloon bursting contest.





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River Lledr in flood

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