

CABAN

MARCH, 1956



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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.

● *Front Cover :* A motorist's view of the Oakeley Quarry on a wintry day. Lowering clouds almost touch the white-capped summit of Allt Fawr.

● *Below :* Caban I. (See page 23).



Minister of Works at Oakeley

ON a somewhat cheerless day in October, when the mist swirled around the mountain and the slate glistened in the rain, there was a cordial welcome at the Oakeley Quarry for Mr. Nigel Birch, the Minister of Works*, when he arrived on an official visit to see for himself one of the country's principal sources of natural roofing material.

As Member of Parliament for West Flintshire Mr. Birch was, of course, no stranger to the mountainous topography of this part of North Wales but, as he admitted, it was the first time for him to venture down a slate mine.

Mr. Birch was taking the opportunity as head of the sponsoring Ministry for all building materials of getting some background in-

** Now Secretary of State for Air*



Outside the quarry offices are (from the left,) Mr. T. W. Jones, Mr. Walters, Mr. Humphreys, Mr. Nigel Birch and Mr. Cutts.



The technique of channelling is explained to the Minister.

formation about the building industries—"keeping in touch, so as to help wherever possible," as he put it.

To the depths!

Earlier the same day, Mr. Birch had been to inspect the Dinorwic quarry, the galleries of which are cut into the mountainside in a series of ascending levels. In striking contrast, therefore, was his descent to the depths of the Oakeley mine, and his walk through subterranean passages a thousand feet down to see the methods by which the hard-won slate is quarried by the rockmen.

On his arrival at Oakeley the Minister, who was accompanied by Mr. Geraint Walters, Director for Wales of the Ministry of Works, was met at the quarry offices by Mr. Harry Cutts, our Managing Director, and Mr. Gwilym Humphreys, manager of Oakeley. Mr. T. W. Jones, M.P. for Merioneth, was also present to receive the Minister.

After chatting for a few moments the Minister donned oil-skin garments, and the regulation safety helmet for the journey into the mine, which was made swiftly by way of the surface incline, K

balance and the K2 incline down to P floor, only two levels from the bottom of the mine.

Time did not allow the Minister to gain more than a fleeting impression of the ramifications of the mine workings with their many miles of tunnels and compressed air lines.

In B.1.

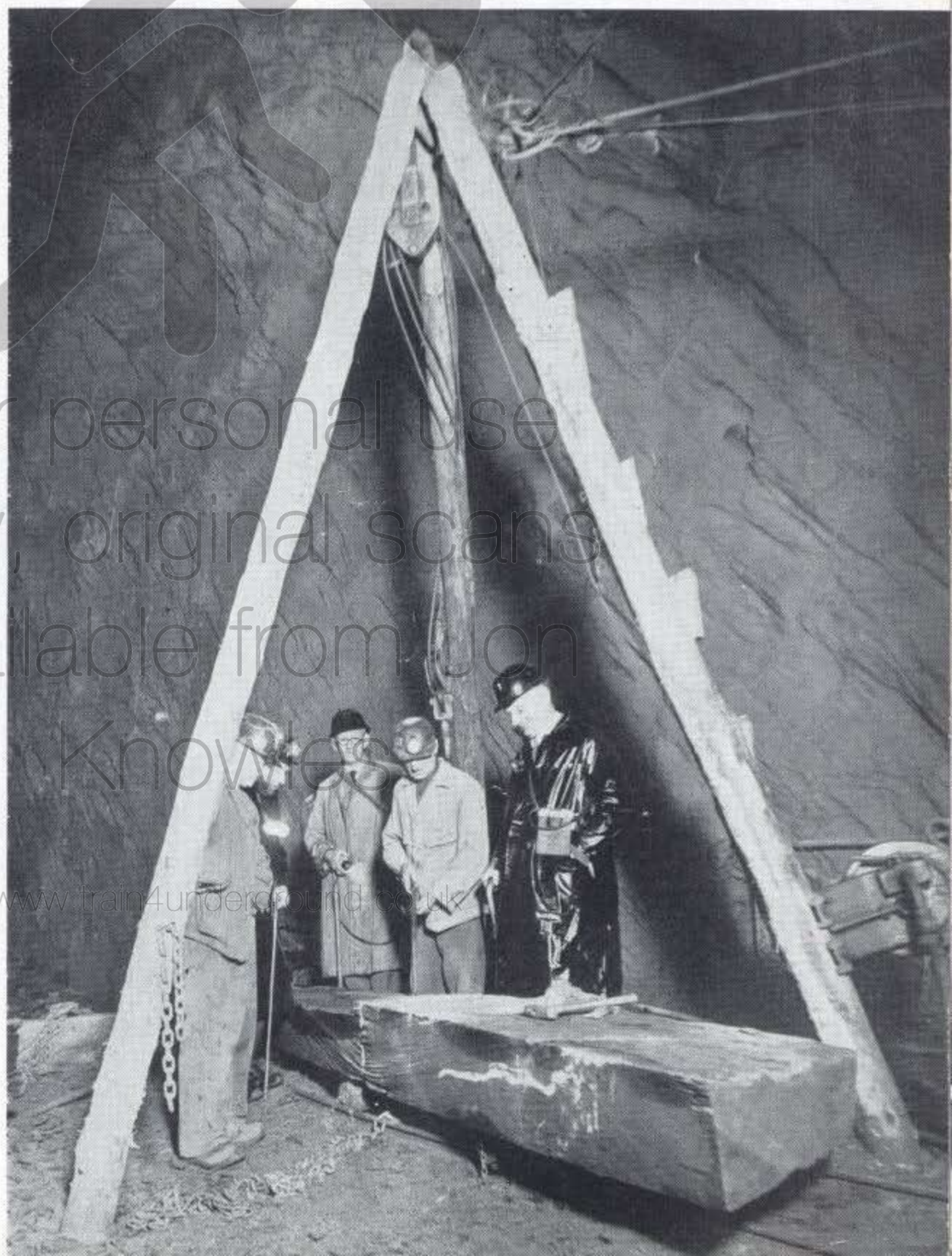
Alighting from the truck, the Minister was taken straight away through the tunnels to B1, which afforded a typical example of the operations associated with the opening up and development of a slate chamber.

B1 has been worked for some years and the chamber quarried to such an extent that its roof is some sixty feet above the floor. After some introductory explanations, it was left chiefly to the rockmen working the chamber to go into more detail in response to the Minister's numerous questions. And

Robert Williams and Iorwerth Jones, a skilled partnership, were pleased to undertake the responsibility.

Mr. Williams, who served with the R.A.F. at home and overseas in the last war, has worked as a rockman in the quarry for 32 years, while Mr. Jones has 36 years' experience of quarrying. He was a channeller before becoming a rockman.

In B 1, Robert Williams demonstrates how he proposes to deal with a newly-quarried block of slate.



Centre-piece of attention was a huge block of slate resting on the floor of the chamber underneath a crane, and the two men enlightened the Minister as to the characteristics of the slate and how they applied the knowledge born of experience to the reduction of the block to convenient pieces for treatment in the mill.

This particular block was destined for the production of "duchesses" for roofing, and it was explained to the Minister how essential it was to drill the block in exactly the right places for splitting up if it were not to be spoiled.

Deft manipulation

This was competently demonstrated by Robert Williams and his partner, and the Minister was obviously intrigued by what must appear to the uninitiated to be a rough and ready method employed to measure out the block with that simplest of tools, the hammer.

He was informed that the shaft of the rockman's hammer was precisely twelve inches long and the head two inches wide, and it was thus the easiest thing in the world to measure for a "duchess" or a "princess." Smilingly the Minister nodded his understanding as the men deftly manipulated their hammers and demonstrated exactly how they made their measurements.

At the forebreast of the chamber, where an artificial foot joint had been cut by a channelling machine, Mr. Humphreys explained to the Minister how the

operation was carried out with heavy drilling equipment and its purpose.

Glancing upwards towards the roof of the chamber, vaguely discernible in the glow of the lamps, the Minister enquired how the men went about their task of hewing the slate from the precipitous mass. It was Robert Williams who demonstrated the rockman's function. He swarmed up the rock face with an agility that drew a spontaneous compliment from the distinguished onlooker.

After exchanging a few more words with the two men, Mr. Birch warmly thanked them, shook hands, and left the chamber to retrace his steps to the foot of the incline.

Here, some men were waiting for transport to the surface after their day's work, and the Minister cheerfully beckoned them to join him and the other members of the party on the truck. The men needed no second invitation. They climbed aboard and after a brief pause for the photograph which appears opposite, the party travelled swiftly upwards once again.

Appreciative word

Back at the quarry offices, the Minister discussed privately with Mr. Cutts, Mr. T. W. Jones and Mr. Humphreys the problems of the slate quarrying industry of Ffestiniog. The Minister was informed that the demand for Ffestiniog slates in practically all sizes was such that some 200 additional men could be taken on



Among those who travelled on the truck with the Minister as he left P floor were (from the top) William Thomas (undermanager), Iorwerth Jones, Bleddyn Williams, Gwilym Williams, Robert Williams and Leslie Moore.

between the Oakeley and Votty quarries immediately.

Afterwards the Minister made it known how impressed he had been with the working conditions at the Oakeley. "How good the air is below ground, and how clean it is," he remarked. He also had an appreciative word to say about the "very fine quality" of the slate. He appreciated that the worry was to produce the slate, not to find markets for it, and that the real difficulty was to get the men.

Mr. T. W. Jones took the opportunity of expressing his pleasure at seeing a Minister of the Crown making it his business to study the condition of the industry on the spot. The Minister, he suggested, could impress upon his colleagues the need for supporting what was one of the oldest staple industries of North Wales.

The Minister departed punctually, pausing just long enough outside the offices for the photograph in page 3 to be taken before he drove away.



About to leave B I, the Minister pauses to thank Robert Williams.

Fishing Ways in Cambrian Waters

IT was Izaak Walton who observed that there never was made a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling, and that sentiment is cordially shared by the numerous disciples of the author of *The Compleat Angler* who are to be found working in our quarries.

Such is the popularity of angling that much of the strength of the Cambrian Angling Association is drawn from among quarrymen, living within a 20-miles radius of Oakeley. Every year some 80 permits to fish the River Dwyryd down to the Maentwrog bridge are granted by Mrs. Inge, and it is a privilege which is greatly valued, for salmon and sea trout run in those waters and what angler does not anticipate the thrill of a weighty fish on a tight line?

Expert fly-dresser

One of the keenest "brethren of the angle" is Robert Thomas Jones, a slate maker at Bone Shaft, Oakeley, and secretary of the association. He is much sought after, not only in his official capacity but as an expert fly-dresser.

Some of his artificial flies are specially dressed for local waters and a great deal of experience goes into their design and making. The paraphernalia of the fly-dresser's art is astonishing in its variety, and must be so to create the numerous and colourful types of artificial flies which are to be found in the angler's box.

Silks, tinsels, feathers from native and tropical birds, fur from the seal, the mole and other creatures, hare's ear and badger's hair, are utilised in tying flies and one might even require a bit of dirty yellow wool from an old sheep!

Like other fishermen adept in the art, Robert Thomas Jones is constantly on the look-out for material to add to his stock. He is never without scissors and, let it be whispered, it has been known for him surreptitiously to snip a bit off a green table-cloth for a particular fly dressing.

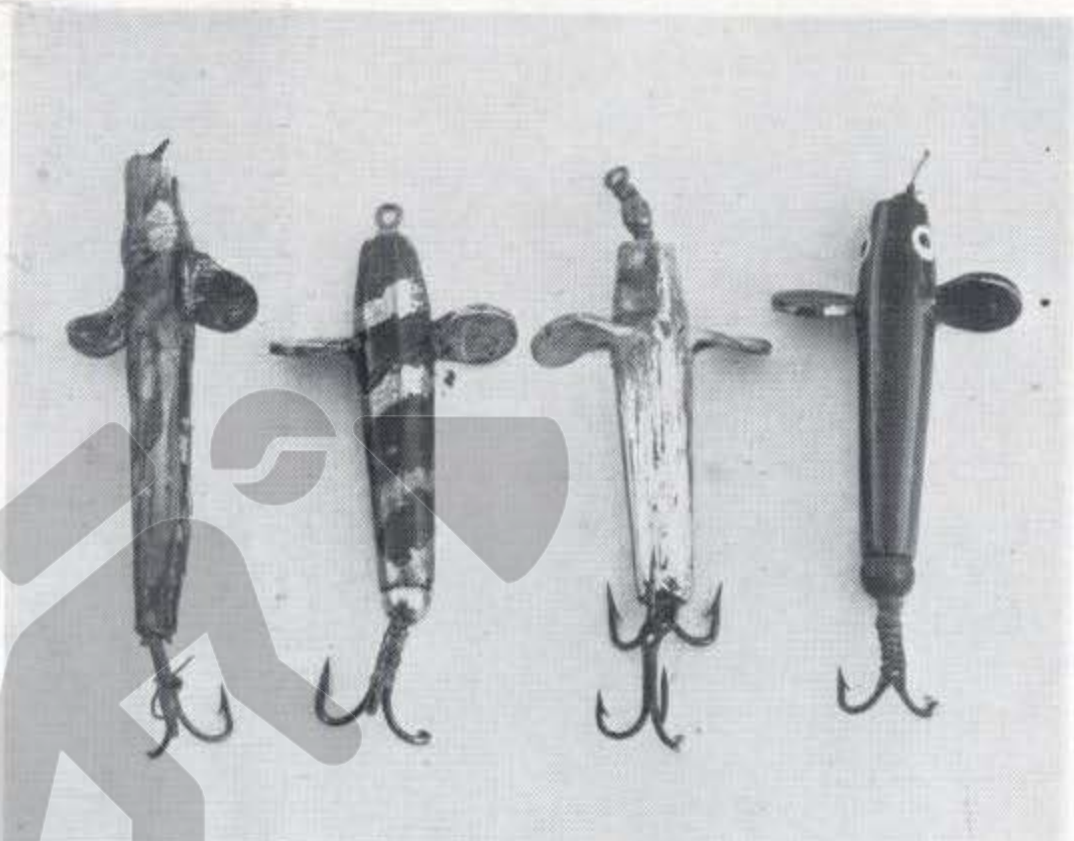
Robert Thomas Jones



He learned fly-tying when a boy from an old quarryman, John Owen, whom he watched at work in the back room of his home.

Some old and well-tried patterns still popular in local waters are known by the names of their "inventors." There is, for example, "Rhwyfwr Rhen Hafod," after John Owen; "Regan Rug Dafydd Owen," of which there is more than one variety, and "Cogyn Ifan John," a small mayfly.

And there has to be, of course, a "Rhwyfwr Bob John," Robert Thomas Jones' own "fancy," and a popular one at that. It is reputed to be a "killer" on the lakes from June onwards. Quarry-



Resembling a page from a professional fly-maker's catalogue, this collection of artificial flies is a selection made by the skilful fingers of a slate maker. Unusual specimens are the nymph, with reversed hackle (top, second from the right), and an imitation shrimp for salmon (bottom, third from left). Above are some of the lures made by Evan Morris.

men-anglers might be interested to know that "Rhwyfwr Bob John" is dressed, usually on a No. 10 hook, with a body of hare's ear ribbed with gold tinsel, a hackle of partridge and red intermixed and a cinnamon wing topped with a partridge tail feather.

But don't condemn Mr. Jones if the trout fail to rise to it. "I am often blamed if the flies I make don't get results," said Mr. Jones. "Much depends on the way the fly is fished. It's a good idea to try sinking the fly when the trout are not rising."

"Fly for the water"

Dressing a salmon fly demands a finer technique than the easier-to-make trout flies. And the specimens pictured opposite, illustrate how well Robert Jones has mastered the art. A firm believer in the axiom "the fly for the water," he dresses salmon flies for calm and rough conditions, choosing a heavier design for broken water. It depends, he says, on how the fly is to "swim."

A popular salmon fly of his making is a variant of the well-known silver grey and is reputed to give better results on the Dwyryd than the orthodox type. Yet it seems the variation is only a little more green in the wing assembly. We often wonder how the salmon or sea-trout can discern the slight difference in these patterns!

But the final test is whether the flies catch fish, and Robert Jones's specimens evidently do that. From Llyn Morwynion one day he returned with a basket of 23 trout,



Evan Morris shows one of his minnows to Robert Thomas Jones, who is holding the mould in which they are cast.

averaging a quarter of a pound in weight, and he once won a rod with a $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb. trout caught in Llyn Gamallt where the fish run bigger.

An enthusiastic angler with an eye for bigger game is Evan L. Morris, slate inspector at Bonc Shafft, Oakeley. He fishes for salmon and sea-trout in the Glaslyn River and relies, not on artificial flies, but on artificial minnows, lures usually known as "devons." He makes them himself, his equipment comprising a small mould, solder, hooks, swivels and beads.

The bodies of the minnows are cast in the mould and Evan Morris then paints them in various colours, copper-plating an occasional one. Proof of his success in spinning the minnows is ample, for he accounted for 90 sea-trout

during the 1954 season, the heaviest being 3½ lbs. Last season, which was not a very good one, he grassed six salmon, including a nine-pounder, as well as several sea-trout up to 2 lbs. in weight.

Evan Morris and Robert Thomas Jones, like any other angler who ties his own flies or makes his own minnows, have no hesitation in saying that it is far more thrilling and satisfying to catch fish with one's own handiwork.

Prevention of poaching

It is interesting to note that the Cambrian Angling Association was formed in 1885 at a time when illegal fishing was rampant in local lakes and rivers. Quarrymen brought it into being under the leadership of the late Dr. Robert Roberts, of Ffestiniog.

With the assistance of Tom Ellis, then M.P. for Merioneth, they acquired the fishing rights in five lakes, Cwm Orthin, Manod, Dubach, Morwynion (the source of the town's water supply) and Gamallt, as well as in smaller streams in the area.

David Hughes, a saw sharpener at Oakeley, is the association's treasurer and, incidentally, a surviving founder member is John Owen Davies, of Manod.

The association has put an end to much of the poaching that went on, and the fisheries are well protected and controlled. Restocking of the lakes is undertaken—10,000 eyed ova were distributed last year—and the association have their own hatchery at Cae Clyd, which it is hoped to revive in the autumn.

“Bone Shafft” — A Glance Back



This interesting and exceedingly well-preserved picture comes to us from Mr. Owen Arthog Jones, himself a retired veteran of Oakeley Slate Mills.

Happy New Year Parties

LOOKING at the pictures in this and the following pages, it is almost superfluous to describe in words the jolly atmosphere which prevailed at the New Year party, or rather parties, arranged for the children of our quarrymen by the Oakeley and Votty Club.

Altogether, some 140 children, divided into two groups, were entertained on successive days in the cheerfully decorated dining-room of the Queen's Hotel, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Mr. Harry Cutts, our Managing Director, was, unfortunately, unable to be present, but we had the pleasure of welcoming his

daughter, Mrs. Havard Williams. Mr. Cutts sent a telegram conveying his good wishes for the success of the parties.

A sumptuous tea, with a variety of good things, was prepared by Mrs. Wale, manageress of the hotel, and the children did full justice to it. Mrs. Wale made and presented an iced cake to each party. The first was cut by Mrs. Havard Williams, and the second by Olwen Jones, the Oakeley and Votty "Sports Queen," who also distributed gifts to the children.

Mr. Humphrey Lewis was master of ceremonies and his lively participation contributed much to the gaiety of the occasion.

All eyes are on the New Year cake as Mrs. Havard Williams ceremoniously cuts it. Seated (from the left) are Olwen Jones, Oakeley and Votty "Sports Queen," Mrs. D. Roberts and Mr. Humphrey Lewis. Standing are Mrs. R. D. Williams, Mrs. J. J. Williams, Mr. D. Roberts, Mrs. Wale, Mrs. Woolford and Mr. George Woolford.



*This happy group reflects the
joyous spirit of the occasion.*



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Four-years-old Wynn Jones chooses a cake and his sister, Menna, aged 10, smiles her approval. Their father works at Oakeley.



Orangeade was the favourite drink. These two children wonder if they can really manage any more.



William Jones, in the centre, has made up his mind as to which cream cake he is going to have. Richard Jones and Glenydd Jones seem undecided.



"Queen" Olwen distributes the gifts.



Mr. Humphrey Lewis reads the "good wishes" telegram from Mr. Cutts. Three-years-old Patricia wonders when the party is going to start.

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All set for the first party in the brightly-decorated dining-room of the Queen's Hotel.

GYRRU GAIR O GORWEN

FEL y gŵyr y cyfarwydd fe anfonnir pensiwn misol am-bell un hefo'r post gan fod rhai o'r derbynwyr yn byw y tuallan i'r cylch. Am bob taliad fe ofynnir am dderbyneb ac yn aml fe ddaw gair o ddiolch a chofion oddiwrth y pensiynwyr— weithiau bwt o lythyr—ac felly ymlaen.

Un o'r pensiynwyr ydyw Edward Lloyd sydd yn byw yn awr ger Corwen. Wrth anfon ei dderbyneb fe ddaw rhyw bwt neu gilydd oddiwrtho yn ddi-feth. Am gyfnod bu'n prydyddu tipyn ac fe ddaeth i swyddfa'r chwarel aml i bennill. O'u darllen fe welir "mood" yr hen gyfaill yn eglur iawn a pha mor hoff o gân aderyn y mae.

Dyma rai ohonynt—cyfeiriad at *Caban* sydd yn y linnell gyntaf wrth gwrs—

Diddorol iawn yw'r "magazine"
I hen bererin wrtho'i hun;
Rwy'n gweld fod rhai'n cael uchelfrains
O siglo llaw a'r Dduges Caint.

Yn yr hydref y daeth hwn—
Tawel ydyw a di-gyffro
Yn y dyffryn yma drwyddo,
Tarth a niwl yn hofran trosto
Dal i ganu doed a ddelo.

A dyma un ynghanol gaeaf—
Cawsom yma storm i'w chofio
Deri cedyrn yn dadwreiddio,
Llechi'r tai yn cael eu 'sgubo,
Dal i ganu doed a ddelo.

Dyna ei thema yn aml—dal i ganu—ond mae'n newid weithiau;
ar ôl derbyn *Caban* un tro meddai—

Darlun gwych gaed o'r dyfnderau
O Sergeant Young a'i holl gyffuriau.
Ar lawr y "P" mae e'n parhau
Yn fedrus i rwymo briwiau.

Dyma swm digalon y tro hwn—
Gwynt y gogledd oer sy'n curo
Ar y bwthyn yma heno;
Cnwd o grinddail dan y llwyni
Cân aderyn wedi tewi.

O Swyddfa'r chwarel

Ar ôl derbyn y pennill trwm
yna ysbrydolwyd yr awen yn
swyddfa'r chwarel—

Ai digalon ydyw'r prydydd
Yn ei fwthyn ger y dolydd?
Os mai oer yw'r gwynt sy'n curo
Ar y bwthyn yna heno
Cofia gysur dy aelwyd lân
A'r croeso gwresog ger dy dân.

Ac os distaw yw'r aderyn
Ar ei glwyd gerllaw dy fwthyn,
Onid melus ydyw cofio
Fel y canai iti rhywdro?
Ac fe gana iti eto
Pan ddaw'r gwanwyn i'th gofleidio.

Dyma'r ateb—
Os y deryn aeth i glwydo
Cân y prydydd ddaeth i'm swyno;
Diolch i chwi am eich canig
I hen gr'adur tlawd ac unig.

Os y caf fy nghadw ganddo
Rhag un niwed i'm caethiwo,
Yn y plygain daw y 'deryn
Eto i ganu ger fy mwthyn.

Ac i orffen dyma bennill ar ôl
y gaeaf—

Wedi'r storm a'r lluwchfeydd eira
Heulwen gawn y dyddiau yma
Daeth y 'deryn du a'r fronfraith
Eto i ganu yn eu hafiaeth.

Yn awr 'te, Llwyd, beth am
'chwaneg?

Slate pipe with totem carvings



WE are familiar enough with examples of the quarryman's art such as slate fans, ink stands and ash trays, but has anyone seen anything so elaborately carved in slate as the pipe here illustrated?

The photograph appears in the book "The Gentle Art of Smoking," written by Mr. Alfred H. Dunhill, head of the well-known firm of pipe makers and tobacco manufacturers.

Caban is indebted to Mr. Dunhill for permission to reproduce the picture and also for kindly supplying us with such information as he has in his possession about slate pipes.

American Indian art

As Mr. Dunhill points out in his book, the American Indian fishing tribes of the North West coast were well known for their carvings in wood and slate, the figures and animals which they depicted being similar to those illustrated on their totem poles.

"They made smoking pipes of wood, horn and slate, and I believe that the slate was obtainable from Queen Charlotte Island," writes Mr. Dunhill. "I also understand that it was the material used for some primitive pipes found in the grave mounds in Ohio, as illustrated in my book."

Smoker's viewpoint

Mr. Dunhill says that he had not had the opportunity of making original research into the subject in the United States, and his first-hand knowledge was largely limited to the actual slate pipes in the Dunhill Collection. "I think it unlikely," he adds, "that slate was ever used for pipe making in this country. From a smoker's viewpoint it is, of course, a most unsuitable material."

It would be very interesting if any of our readers could add something to this story of pipe making. If anybody has heard of slate being used for making pipes, whether for use or ornament, we should be pleased to hear about it.

Votty's 'Janet Jones'

continued from next column

Master of several instruments

Last year, at the senior contest at Belle Vue, Manchester, his band was placed fifth.

Robert Morgan hails from a family of bandmen. His father, David Morgan, of Oakeley, played the "G" trombone. A brother, Hugh Morgan, of the Denbighshire Police Force, is also a bandman. The conductor himself is master of several instruments including the trumpet, clarinet and saxophone. He says the band has twenty-six members; all instruments have been reconditioned, several new instruments have been purchased.

An appeal for funds for a completely new set of instruments has gone forth, and, says Robert Morgan, is being well received.

Robert Morgan has now relinquished the locomotive to become a rockman on L floor at Votty.

Votty's 'Janet Jones'



Named after the Welsh Tourist Board's world travelling hostess, the Votty electric loco., "Janet Jones," is back in service after a mishap, operating the long haul on Floor L with Robert D. Morgan, conductor of Royal Oakeley Silver Band, at the controls.

The loco. was completely renovated by the Votty engineering staff.

Robert Morgan has been associated with the band since boyhood, and with quarry locos. since he entered the Oakeley employ after leaving school.

There was an interlude at Barrow after service with the Royal Engineers during the war, during which he played in the Vickers' shipyard championship band. With experience of championship contests and successes he returned to Blaenau Ffestiniog in October, 1951, and was appointed conductor of the "Royal Oakeley." Since that date the band has figured at several National Eisteddfodau, including the recent festival at Pwllheli and has gained a number of successes, notably the North Wales Association championship.

continued in previous column

Between Ourselves

Making a name in football

ONE of our Oakeley slate-makers, D. W. (Dai) Thomas, is making a name for himself in the soccer world, and has all but captured his amateur "cap" for Wales. Mainstay of the Blaenau Ffestiniog team of which he is captain and centre-half, Dai Thomas travelled as reserve with the Welsh amateur side to Cliftonville, Ireland, in January, but did not have the luck to be called upon to play. (The Irish won 2—1.)

The Welsh selectors again chose him as reserve for the amateur international game against England at Swansea on February 11th.

In the Welsh team, by the way, is a player from Holywell who, in a certain match, it was Dai Thomas's duty as centre-half, to "mark." We are told that a "scout" of Liverpool Football Club travelled specially to watch the Holywell man, but that it was Dai Thomas who impressed him! The outcome was that Dai had a trial with Liverpool and was subsequently offered terms to turn professional. When we talked with Dai about this he was undecided whether to accept or not.



Sportsman

Family record

Dai Thomas, who has been making slates at Oakeley for seven years, comes from a family of sportsmen. His grandfather, David Jones, was a champion cyclist in his day, and the winner of many trophies, while his father, Hywel Thomas, used to keep goal for the Ffestiniog football team.

A follower of the side described Dai Thomas as a steady and sportsmanlike player, and one who could perform the "John Charles act"—switching to centre-forward when things were not going too well, and thus doing much to retrieve the situation. Dai, who is 22, has played with Ffestiniog for four seasons.

Oakeley veteran

WHEN a boy of sixteen, Owen Griffith left Oakeley to work down a coal mine in South Wales, but he did not find it to his liking. Within twelve months he was back at the quarry and except for a period during the 1914-18 war he has been there ever since.

Now aged, 75 Owen Griffith is the oldest slate-maker at Oakeley, but he still turns up at 6 o'clock in the morning after a mile walk from his home, although the normal working day does not start until 7.30 a.m.

Owen Griffith attended the Glan Pwll School when the headmaster was Griffith John Williams, who became an inspector of mines and was the author of "Hanes Plwyf Ffestiniog," a National Eisteddfod prize essay published in the 1890's.

For many years Owen Griffith worked in the mill at the upper Holland quarry and has pleasant memories of those earlier days. Even though his working day extended from 7 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.,

he thought working conditions were very good. Often it was necessary for him to do an extra turn dressing slates for some young apprentice who was not then permitted to operate the machine.

For about two hours he would work by candlelight while the dressing machine was operated by hand as the engines were stopped at the end of the normal day.

Earliest arrival

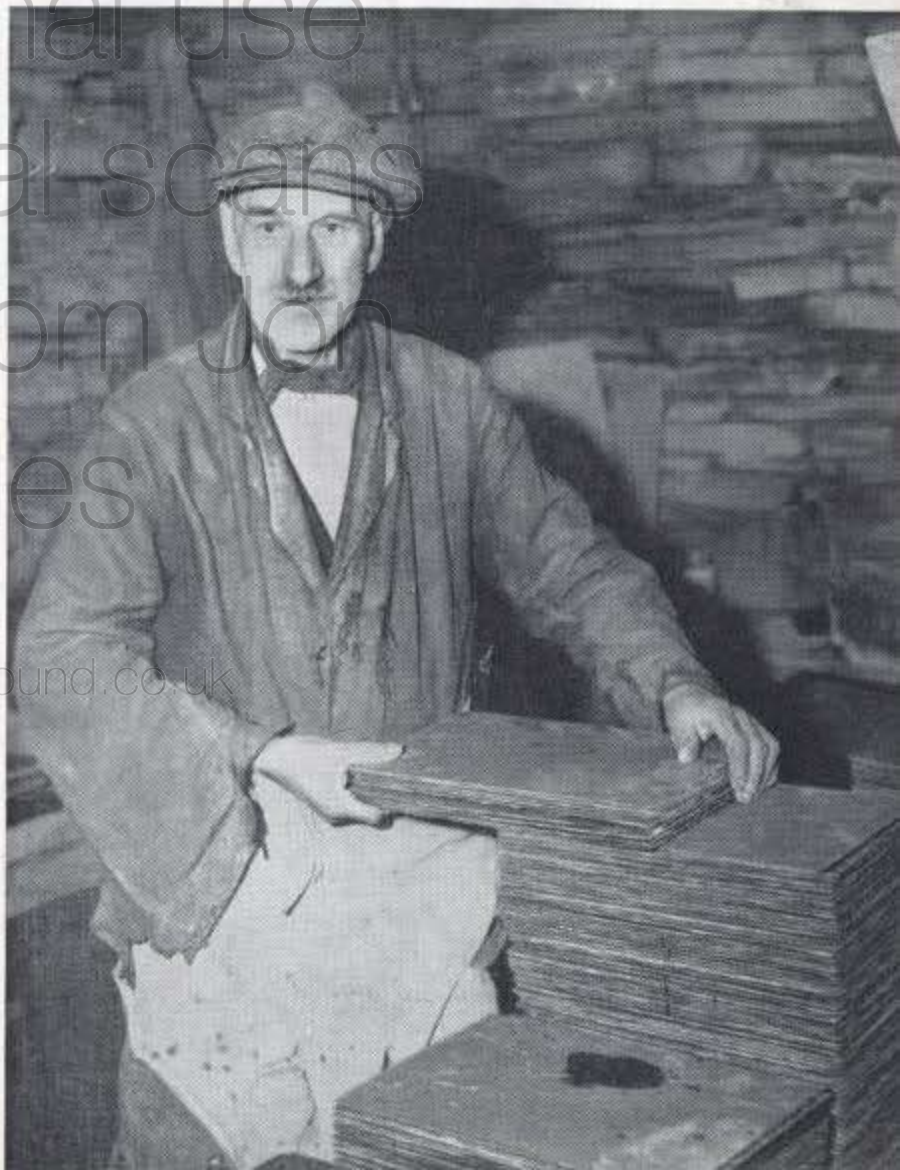
Owen Griffith, who had his brief experience of coal mining at the time of the Boer War, served with the Pioneers in World War 1 and was in France when hostilities ended.

To-day, as the earliest arrival, our veteran quarryman lights the fire in the caban to which he belongs before turning to his slate-making in the far corner of the mill.

Veteran

Caban I at Votty

In our Page 2 picture members of Caban I at Votty gather round the stove for a warm before resuming work after the dinner break. They are David Rees Roberts (chairman), Trevor Roberts, Eric Hughes, Richard W. Jones, Robert Edwards and his brother David, Robert A. Williams, David Evans and Egon Majerski.



HOLIDAY

WE announced in our last issue, the winners of *Caban's* holiday snaps competition and in the opposite page are reproduced their pictures. It is fairly obvious that quarrymen and their families favour the seaside for their holidays, but we are sure, too, that some of our people, anglers for instance, have a thoroughly good time pursuing the salmon or the trout whether holidaying near or far from home.

a standard lamp are among the products of his handiwork. His wife, who was a shorthand typist with the London County Council, painted and polished some of the pieces. By the way, Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn Jones celebrate their birthdays on the same day.

Votty Blacksmith

HAVING taken over the job of blacksmith at Votty some two years ago, Selwyn Jones is now well established in his workshop, and he is also well settled in his new home in Towy Road, Blaenau Ffestiniog, with his wife, *nee* Miss Betty Owen, the daughter of a local quarryman. They were married at the Ebenezer Welsh Methodist Chapel, Blaenau Ffestiniog, and we give a wedding day picture of them.

In their home are many attractive pieces of furniture of which Selwyn Jones is justifiably proud, for he made them himself, after learning about the finer points of woodwork at an evening class in Ffestiniog. A bookcase, tea trolley, polished coffee table and



Selwyn Jones and his bride

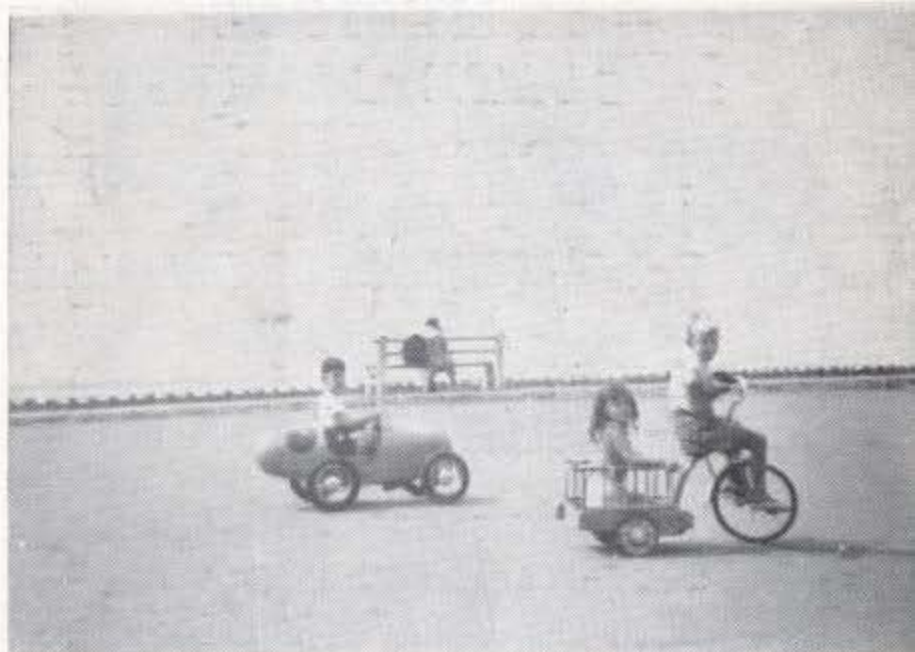
MEMORIES

Here is an opportunity to challenge the seaside snap. How delightful it is to recapture the pleasures of a happy holiday through the medium of the camera and how easy it is !

After this, we hope, encouraging introduction, we invite our readers to participate in a holiday snaps contest again this year, and offer prizes of £1, 15s. and 10s., as usual, for the three best pictures received.



The Competition will be open throughout the summer, but entries should be sent in to the Quarry Office by September 15th.



Top Right: Children 'racing' on the promenade at Barmouth made the holiday snapshot for the second prize-winner, John Barlow.

Centre: The west coast of the Isle of Man provided this seascape picture which won first prize for Anarawd Jones.

Left: Shy or mischievous? A happy picture snapped at Aberdaron by John J. Williams, who secured the third prize,

MUSICAL SLATE MAKERS

MOST of our quarrymen are musical, but surely none are more enthusiastic about it than Gwynross Thomas and Alwyn Parry, two young slate makers at Votty.

A year or so ago, Gwynross bought a record player and has since amassed a remarkably large collection of records. He cannot tell you exactly how much he has spent on his cultural hobby, but it is quite a considerable sum.

Both aged 19, these young men spend many a musical evening together, enjoying the classics and opera, which is their favourite music. And Gwynross sometimes visits Alwyn's home to listen to his radiogram.

When the Carl Rosa Opera Company were in Llandudno last year, the two enthusiasts travelled down specially to attend two performances, and heard "Il Trovatore" and "The Barber of Seville."

Three-hour programme

Gwynross's collection of records, which he keeps in a special cabinet and adds to them from time to time, includes four of the long-playing kind, each giving a three-hour programme.

Incidentally, Gwynross's father and two brothers work at Votty. Ivor Thomas, his father, and



Alwyn Parry and Gwynross Thomas.

Evan Ellis Thomas are rockmen partners, and John Ivor Thomas drives a locomotive.

Musical though he is, Gwynross is an appreciative listener rather than a performer, for he has not yet ventured to take up any instrument.

He sometimes sings at his work in the mill, and on these occasions the other men know that Gwynross is working on a good piece of slate !

With the R.W.F.

AFTER completing his apprenticeship as a slate-maker at Votty, Ronald Humphreys has been called up for National Service and is serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

News Exchange . . .

Souvenirs for Australia

AN interesting visitor to the Oakeley quarry since our last issue was an Australian scientist, Mr. Hitchcock, who was one of his country's representatives at the international conference on atomic energy at Geneva.

Touring this country with his wife while looking round Europe, Mr. Hitchcock had apparently heard of "the deepest slate mine in the world," and made a special visit to Ffestiniog to see it. He and his wife were shown over the Oakeley workings by Idris Jones, one of our slate inspectors, and they enjoyed the experience.

They were most anxious to have a slate fan and a slate paper-knife as souvenirs of their visit, and these are now on their way to Australia, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock of Melbourne.

Now for a Hobbies Exhibition

WE have artists who paint in oils and water-colours, whose work made such an attractive exhibition last year, but there is surely a wealth of talent in other fields among our quarrymen and their families.

Following upon the success of our art exhibition, Humphrey Lewis and D. G. Owen have undertaken for the Oakeley and Votty Club the task of organising a "hobbies exhibition," and the search is on for the men who make model engines, useful or ornamental articles in slate, wood or metal, or for the products of any other hobby in which they indulge.

The invitation to exhibit, of course, goes out to the wives and families of our quarrymen and the ladies will have the opportunity of displaying art needlework, leather work, or whatever else they may do in their spare time.

This exhibition is intended to be a "family affair," and the organisers ask us to express the hope that our people

will not be diffident about showing their handiwork. Here is a chance to display your talents and thus help to make the exhibition worth while.

No date for the event had been fixed at the time this issue of *Caban* went to press, but it was planned to stage it at the end of March or the beginning of April.

Memento of a Great Occasion

IN the year 1897, the Royal Oakeley Silver Band won outright the cup for the Welsh championship, having previously won it in the two previous years.

The cup was presented to Mr. William E. Oakeley, and kept by him at his home, Y Plas, Tanybwllch, Maentwrog. Mr. Oakeley's daughter, Mrs. Inge, has now kindly returned the trophy to the present Band Committee along with a photograph of the Oakeley band who were the winners of the championship.

Now, says Robert Morgan, the bandmaster, the cup has been deposited at the bank with the documentary and other records which tell the story and the triumphs of a band which bears a famous name in the annals of brass band music.

OUR BACK COVER PICTURE

Securer's Ladders

Making final adjustments to his "nest" of 27-ft. ladders, trucked ready for haulage up from R floor, Oakeley, is Thomas Roberts, one of the Oakeley securers. The ladders had been used in the job of "scribing off" a pillar, or wall, in R.7 chamber.

When erected the ladders are balanced by rope and tackle almost vertically from floor to roof. In the picture twin sections have been dismantled and manhandled on to the trolleys for removal to an upper floor. The complete outfit of ladder equipment with its two sliding middle sections, is capable at full extension, of giving the securers a "reach" of 90 feet.



Securer's ladders

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