

# CABAN

MARCH, 1960



For personal use  
only, original scans  
available from Jon  
Knowles

[www.train4underground.co.uk](http://www.train4underground.co.uk)

*THE MAGAZINE OF THE OAKELEY AND VOTTY SLATE QUARRIES*

# CABAN

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

● FRONT COVER : *Travellers' view on the Lledr Valley road to Blaenau Ffestiniog—the native Welsh castle of Dolwyddelan (Elan's Castle) and, by the wayside, a memorial to four brothers of the village who were eminent in the religious life of Wales*

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
Sir Charles Oakeley, Bart. . . . .	3
Seeing North Wales—by rail . . . . .	4
John Barlow's Cuckoo . . . . .	5
'A good piece of rock' . . . . .	6
Crwydro'r Cyfandir . . . . .	8
Studies in expression . . . . .	9
On the trail of the fox . . . . .	12
Things that grow in the dark! . . . . .	13
Oakeley slates in Shell's new London H.Q. . . . .	14
Nadolig yn y cabannau . . . . .	16
Christmas entertainment . . . . .	17
Between ourselves . . . . .	20
After the contest! . . . . .	24
News exchange . . . . .	26

## Sir Charles Oakeley, Bart.



**T**HE untimely death of Sir Charles Oakeley on 22nd November came as a sad shock to his many friends and associates. Sir Charles was chairman of the Oakeley and the Votty and Bowydd Companies for many years. His keen interest in both companies and all who work with them was particularly manifest during his periodic visits to the quarries, which he always so much enjoyed. This interest and his friendliness there will be as greatly missed as his presence in the chair at Board Meetings.

For myself, I have also lost indeed a great personal friend.—**Harry Cutts.**

# Seeing North Wales —by rail

By W. T. HUGHES.

*This contribution is by a motoring enthusiast who drives daily to the Oakeley Quarry from his home at Roman Bridge and who found a round trip on the railway a diverting relaxation*

WHEN the car — “old faithful” as Harry Garn calls it — went into the garage for new rings, I made a trip on the “Radio Cruise” as British Railways advertise it. From the booking office at Llandudno Junction I was fortunate to get the last of the ten tickets allowed to the station and joined the train to find that our guide was a thorough Welshman.

A Class 5 Stanier loco fast-hauled us to Rhyl through scenery which was not very exciting, caravan camps predominating! At Rhyl a Class 4 engine was substituted, its smaller wheels more suited to the gradients to come, and soon we were travelling through the Vale of Clwyd, which has as delightful a countryside as anywhere in the British Isles. Over the loudspeaker in the coach came a running commentary from our guide on the historical and other places of interest along the route.

### *Memorable scene*

In Corwen it was market day, and the pens in the cattle mart were full of cattle and sheep. Joining the old Great Western line from Wrexham to Bala our cruise train later took us alongside Bala Lake, a wonderful expanse of water five miles long and a mile wide, which presented a memorable picture from Llanuwchllyn. We were now approaching Garneddwen, and after our Class 4 had “coughed” its way up a stiff incline for about four miles came a descent to

Dolgellau, which was rather like sliding down a mountainside at speed.

Passing through Barmouth Junction — a big name for so small and deserted a place — we found ourselves on the old Cambrian line on the way to Aberdovey. From Llwyngwrl station the railway ran 50 yards above the sea and I was able to point out to my fellow-travellers the spot where on a Sunday morning nearly 30 years previously the mail train ran into a landslide, the engine fell to the seashore, and the driver and fireman were killed.

Near Towyn we caught a glimpse of the Talylyn railway on which run small steam engines similar to the old “Kidbrooke” now “preserved” in a shed at Oakeley. By the way, lunch in Aberdovey included a piece of meat as big as a 9 x 4½!

### *Along the coast*

From Aberdovey back to Barmouth Junction and over the mile-long narrow bridge across the Mawddach estuary and to Barmouth, running along the coast, where in places the sea foamed among the rocks. We cruised through Harlech, securing a grand view of the castle from the railway below, Portmadoc Criccieth and Pwllheli, keeping within sight of the sea, and then from Afonwen cut across the Lley Peninsula to Caernarvon, where attention was drawn at the right moment to the famous castle.

The tubular railway bridge and the Menai suspension bridge were the next objects to capture attention before a fast run to Llandudno Junction, where we arrived a minute ahead of time.

Was it worth it? Yes, if only to hear the English acclaim our little Wales on this interesting 189 mile trip.

*A Cuckoo in a nest located by a member of the Oakeley office staff is the subject of this article contributed by Mr. E. V. Breeze Jones, a school teacher in Blaenau Ffestiniog with a keen interest in ornithology. Mr. Breeze Jones also took the accompanying photographs of . . .*

## JOHN BARLOW'S CUCKOO

**A**LTHOUGH the Cuckoo is one of the most popular summer migrants to this country many people have never recognised the bird by sight.

It is about thirteen inches in length with blue-grey upper parts, and the whiteish underparts are barred with very dark brown. The tail is rather long and the Cuckoo has often been mistaken for the Sparrow Hawk. Indeed, they have been shot in error by over-zealous gamekeepers.

Cuckoo eggs have been found in the nests of over 50 different kinds of birds. It is believed that a hen' cuckoo reared by Robins usually lays her own eggs in nests belonging to these birds. In the same way there are probably *Wagtail* cuckoos, *Hedge Sparrow* cuckoos and *Meadow Pipit* cuckoos—hens which lay eggs mostly in nests belonging to these particular birds.

The Meadow Pipit (*Ehedydd Bach*) is one of the commonest small birds of our highlands; in the Ffestiniog district



*Feathers ruffled, beak agape—the young bird's reaction to a provoking finger*



*A fine study of the young cuckoo by Mr. Breeze Jones*

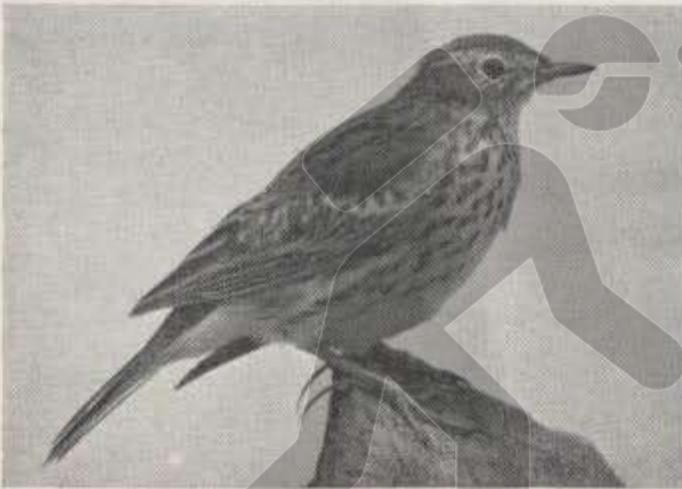
it is probably one of the commonest foster parents for local cuckoos. Yet one can easily find a few dozen Meadow Pipits' nests during the springtime and not one harbouring a cuckoo's egg.

Mr. John Barlow was particularly fortunate in this respect. When tramping over the moors for an evening's angling at one of the mountain tarns he flushed a Meadow Pipit from her nest in the heather. He was interested to discover that one of the four eggs was greyer and slightly larger than the other eggs in the nest.

Passing the same spot a few days later he was intrigued to discover that only the grey cuckoo egg had hatched. The Meadow Pipit's chocolate brown eggs had been cast out of the nest; obviously ejected by the nestling cuckoo. Blind and almost naked, the young cuckoo is not motivated by greed or cruelty; it is simply nature's way of ensuring that it has an adequate supply of food. The foster parents would never be able to feed their own young as well as the large foundling.

When we visited the nest with our camera a fortnight later, the young cuckoo was well grown and far too large for the small nest. The irritated fledgling made every effort to drive us away. With its bright orange mouth wide open, it puffed out its feathers and hissed furiously in its endeavours to frighten us.

After 24 days had passed the nest was empty and all being well our young cuckoo should now be basking in the African sunshine.



*The host—a Meadow Pipit*

During April the Cuckoos arrive from their winter quarters in Southern and Central Africa. The cock bird's monotonous music is familiar to town and country dweller alike, but the hen cuckoo's call is quite different. Hers is a water-bubbling cry that is rarely recognised by casual visitors to the countryside.

The Cuckoo is completely parasitic on small insectivorous birds such as the Robin, Hedge Sparrow and Meadow Pipit. After laying her egg in the chosen nest the hen cuckoo is cunning enough to remove one of the other eggs. The stolen egg is often carried away and eaten. On occasions the Cuckoo has been known to destroy the nests and young of some small birds, forcing them to lay a second time so that she could lay her own egg in the nest.



## “A GOOD PIECE OF ROCK”

**E**XTRACTION of “old vein” which yields slates of the finest quality, is the theme of the picture opposite—taken in N.5 at Oakeley, one of the chambers of the quarry where this vein continues to be worked.

For the past three or four years rockmen Robert Williams, aged 57, and Arthur Wyn Evans, aged 46, have been attacking the rock on which they are photographed and “slicing” off huge blocks of slate from what is in fact an unusually wide pillar separating N.5 from the adjacent chamber. This “particularly good piece of rock,” as the men describe it, contains thousands of tons in the mass and will provide first-class slates for years.

Both rockmen have been working at Oakeley for more than 30 years. They belong to N. caban, the subject of our “Studies in Expression” feature in this issue, Robert Williams being chairman, and Arthur Wyn Evans treasurer; the latter is fully qualified in first-aid and has been a member of the local St. John Ambulance Brigade for 25 years.



When April comes round again we'll all be listening expectantly for the first cuckoo call to echo in the hillsides. Your first cuckoo call this spring could easily be the voice of the young bird that we photographed on the shores of Llyn Dubach.



For personal use  
only, original scans  
available from Jon  
Knowles

[www.train4underground.co.uk/](http://www.train4underground.co.uk/)

# CRWYDRO'R CYFANDIR

gan IVOR JONES

**D**AETH y clwyf hwn droswyf rhai blynyddoedd yn ôl pan ymwelais â'r Swistir, "gwlad yn llifeirio o laeth a mel," ei golygfeydd yn odidog, ei mynyddoedd yn llawn rhamant, a'i phobl yn garedig a dymunol dros ben.

Treuliwyd pythefnos yn nyffryn y Rhone, ond i mi nid oedd yn harddach na dyffryn Maentwrog, ond fod dwy afon iddo yn hytrach nag un. Ymwelwyd ag aml i lecyn rhamantus fel y Trumellbach Falls oedd yng nghrombil y mynydd, gyda'i oleuadau llachar o liwiau amrylw. Hefyd y Staubach Falls, sydd a'i ddwr yn disgyn am naw can troedfedd.

## *Eryr yn hofran*

Un noson cyfarfum â nifer o efrydwyr Americanaidd oedd wedi trafaelio trwy saith o wledydd Ewrop, ac yn eu plith un ferch a'i rhieni o Bwllheli. Mor fawr yw'r byd, ac eto mor fach. Ymwelwyd â lle o'r enw Grundelwald, lle mae'r gwesty mwyaf yn Ewrop, sef y "Bear." Wrth fynd i ymweld a lle o'r enw Isenflu y gwelais eryr am y tro cyntaf yn hofran yn y wybren las, ac hefyd yr anifail bach cyflym hwnnw Chamois. Y lle uchaf i mi ddringo ar droed oedd Murren, 8,000 o droedfeddi, a chael profiad bythgofiadwy o storm o fellt a tharannau. Fel y gwibiai pob mellten deuai i'r golwg ochr draw i'r dyffryn odditanom, yr Eiger, Monk a'r Jungfrau gyda'r eira bythol wyn yn dod i'r golwg fel mantell drostynt. Treuliwyd un dydd i fynd i ben y Jungfrau (12,000) gyda'r tren. Yn y rhan diwethaf o'r siwrnai elai'r tren trwy dwnel ar hyd ochr y mynydd am bedair milltir, ac wedi cyraedd y stesion uchaf yr oedd "lift" am tua mil o droedfeddi ac allan ar ben y mynydd.

Treuliwyd un dydd yn Interlaken ac ymweld â'r Kursaal oedd yn llawn o

erddi blodeuog a'r cloc anferth wedi ei wneud o flodau. Wrth ddod adref treuliwyd diwrnod yn Lucerne ar lan y llyn gyda'i awel drymlyd, ond fod golygfeydd bendigedig i'w gweld.

Yr ail daith i'r cyfandir oedd i Geneva, dinas y bu'r byd yn edrych arni fel dinas heddwach. Buan y chwalwyd y ddelfryd odidog. Wrth fynd yno treuliwyd fwrw'r Sul ym Mharis. Yr oedd cwmpi o drigain ohonom, pob un fel minnau wedi cael ysgoloriaeth gan ein hundebau, oedd yn clirio y costau bron i gyd. Treuliam bob bore i wrando ar ddarlithoedd a grwpiau trafod ar broblemau rhyng - wladwriaethol yn adeilad gwych yr *International Labour Organisation*.

Cawsom un daith ddifyr odiaeth am drigain milltir o Geneva i dde Ffrainc, i Chamonix, wrth odrau Mont Blanc. Un o'r pethau mwyaf rhamantus fy mywyd oedd mynd yn y "Funicular Railway" i ben mynydd 7,000 o droedfeddi. Wedi cyraedd cael paned flasus ar dô fflat y tŷ bwyta a rhes mynyddoedd Mont Blanc gyda'r eira grisialaidd yn yr haul tanbaid yn ymddyrchafu fel cewri ochr arall i'r dyffryn. Roedd dwy afon rew yn dod i lawr Mont Blanc a'i ffurf ar lun arth anferth; roedd un afon rew yn hanner milltir ar draws. Yna mewn cerbyd arall yn hongian ar dair gwifren i grib mynydd arall (9,000). Ar y canol yr oedd gwagle o 3,000 troedfedd, bron i ychdwr yr Wyddfau.

## *Yn yr Almaen*

Yn y flwyddyn 1935 mentrodd tri ohonom i'r Almaen, gwlad yr oedd cymaint son amdani. Oherwydd y manteision ni chostiodd y daith hon ond rhyw ddeuddeg punt o Lundain ac yn ôl. Treuliasom ddiwrnod yn Brussels, dinas wedi ei hadeiladu ar fryn, ond o'r saith prif ddinas a welais, dyma y mwyaf ei

thrwst. Yn yr Almaen cawsom daith yn y tren am tua 400 o filltiroedd ar hyd glan yr afon Rhine. Cyrhaeddwyd Freiburg yn y de sydd wedi ei hadeiladu ar ororau pedair gwlad ac wedi dau ddiwrnod yno troi yn ôl trwy y Black Forest i dreulio tri diwrnod yn Heidelberg gyda'i gastell gwych a'i ddwy brif ysgol, yr hen a'r newydd. Yna yn ôl ar hyd glan yr afon Rhine, gyda'i golygfeydd godidog a'r castelli o feini coch, ond nid mor gadarn a rhai Cymru. Diddorol oedd sylwi ar y gerddi grawnsypiau ar ochr y bryniau.

Cychwynodd tri ohonom am Harwich i groesi mor y Gogledd. Ar y dec daeth llun i'm cof, yr hen gymeriad hwnnw o Dolwyddelan wedi bod yn 'Merica ac yn darlunio salwch y môr mewn tri gradd— yn gyntaf yn sal, yn ail yn sal iawn, yn drydydd rhy sal i farw! Sylwais fod y tir yn Denmarc yn cael ei drin yn wyddonol iawn fel yn yr Almaen—yr yd yn syth a glan oddiwrth chwyn, ac yn felyn fel aur coeth; dim tir gwair ond ambell gae o feillion, a'r gwartheg wrth gadwyn yn pori'r cae o'i gwr; y tai yn ddymunol a glan, a'r amaethdai wedi ei hamgylchynu â choed gwyrddion ynghanol yr yd melyn.

### *Cydweithrediad*

Trwy addysg a chydweithrediad mae Denmarc wedi ei hail eni. Gan mai gwlad amaethyddol ydyw maent wedi ymroi i drin y tir yn dda. Mae 90 y cant o'r boblogaeth yn aelodau o'r cymdeithasau cydweithredol; hyn yw calon bywyd economaidd y wlad.

Un gyda'r nos yr oeddym wedi cael gwadd i dŷ un o'r Danes a gyfarfyddais chwe blynedd ynghynt mewn ysgol haf ym Mangor, a chawsom swper nodweddiadol o fwyd y wlad a sgwrs a chanu alawon.

Treuliasom yr ail wythnos yn Sweden, dros y mor o Copenhagen i Malmo, yna taith tren o 500 o filltiroedd i Stockholm. Gellir darlunio Sweden mewn un llinell bron—gwlad y llynnoedd a'r coedwig-oedd. Cyfeirir at ei phrif ddinas fel Brenhines y Gogledd—dinas wedi ei hadeiladu ar ynysoedd. Nid oes fawr neb yn trafelio mewn ceir modur;

*(Continued on page 16)*

## STUDIES IN EXPRESSION

# N and O FLOORS at OAKELEY

**S**NAPSHOTS for our "Studies in Expression" series in the following two pages were taken in Oakeley's Caban N and Caban O. Some of the men are featured at their work on other pages, and the N Floor caban itself provided the back cover picture. Robert Williams is president of Caban N, William H. Edwards secretary, and Arthur Wynn Evans treasurer. William Edwards, rockman, serves as a part-time member of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Fire Brigade, but it so happens, he said, that most of the calls occur outside working hours. He is a baritone singer well-known on local concert platforms.

Caban O has John Roberts as president, Glyn Thomas secretary, and Reuben Williams treasurer.

### CABAN N.

*Top row: David Roberts, Arthur W. Evans.*

*2nd row: Gwynfor Rowlands, Eric Williams, William Thomas, Robert D. Price.*

*3rd row: William J. Jones, John Reginald Edwards, Robert Williams, William H. Edwards.*

*4th row: David W. Thomas, Gwynfor Edwards, John Jones, Robert J. Jones.*

### CABAN O.

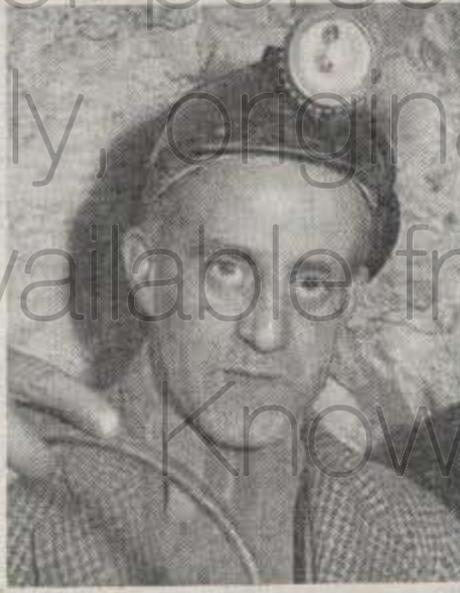
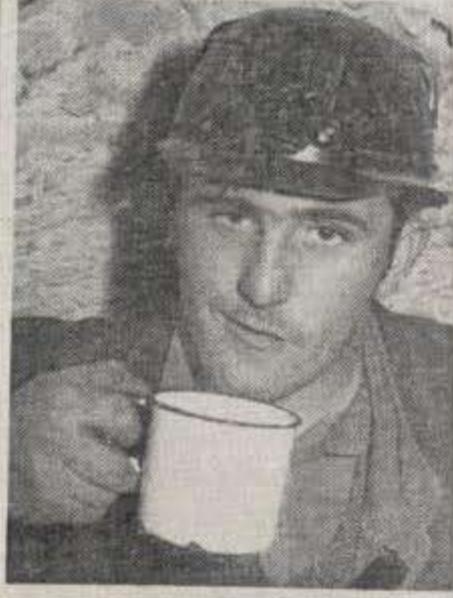
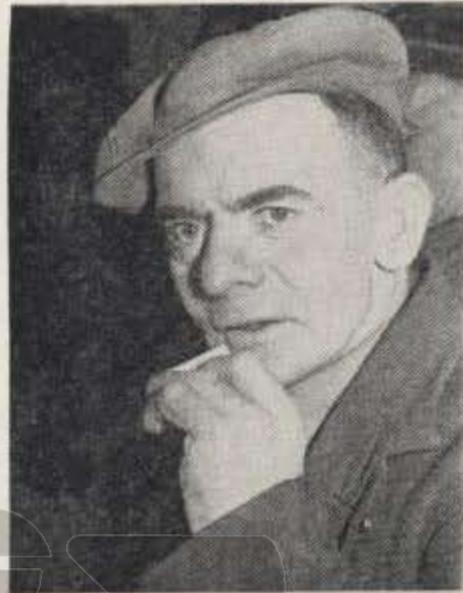
*Top row: John Roberts, David Morris Jones, Glyn Thomas.*

*2nd row: Evan Williams, Hugh D. Evans, Leonard Jones.*

*3rd row: Owen Evans, Reuben Williams, Gwyndaf J. Evans, Edward Carey Evans.*

# CABAN N

The photographs on this page were taken while the quarrymen were having their mid-day meal in the underground mess - room pictured on the back cover



For personal use only, original scans available from Jon Knowles

# CABAN O



For personal use only, original scans available from Jon Knowles

[www.train4underground.co.uk](http://www.train4underground.co.uk)

# On the trail of the fox

**B**LACKSMITH, huntsman, shepherd quarryman—these have been the diverse occupations of Evan Roberts, whom *Caban* found working the channelling machine by the light of his helmet lamp down on K.8—somewhere beneath Allt Fawr, the mountain on which he used to follow the hounds on the trail of the fox.

## *Family of blacksmiths*

Evan Roberts, who is 53, comes from a family of blacksmiths at Talsarnau. He, his father and two brothers worked at the craft until changing methods reduced the demand on the smithy's services and broke up the family partnership.

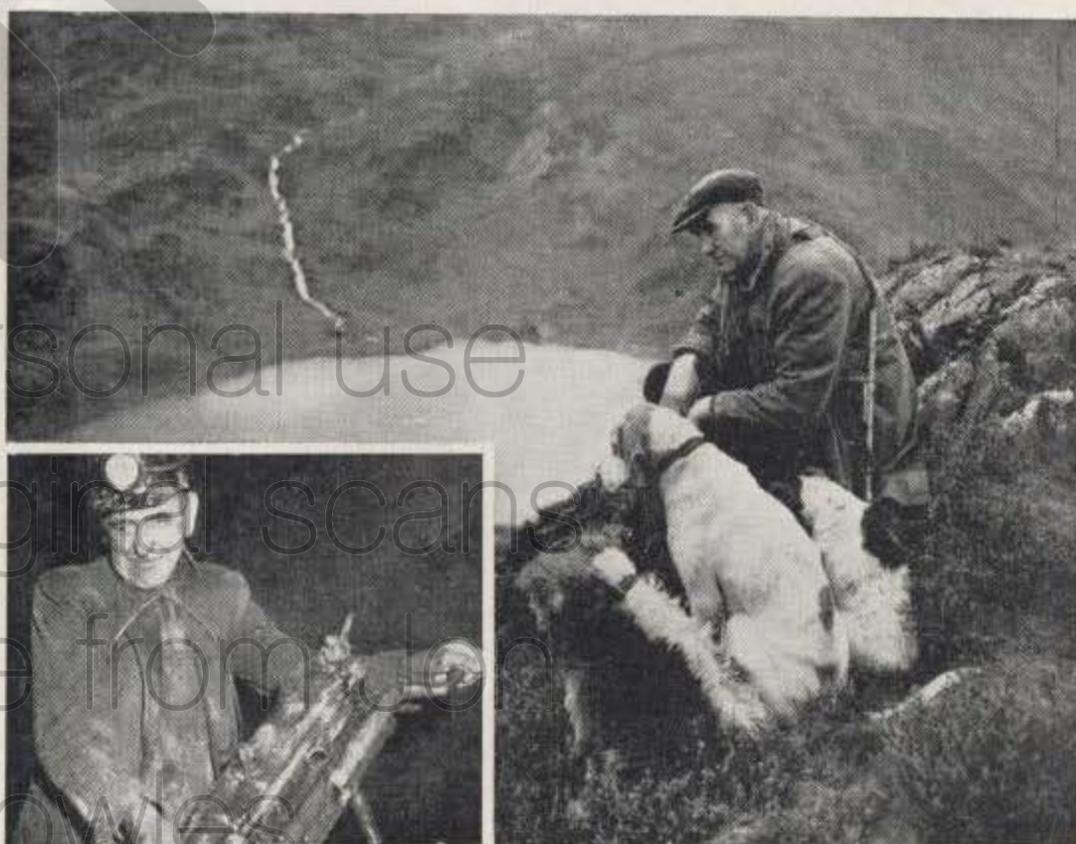
Evan's late brother, Griffith, became blacksmith at Oakeley, where he remained for the best part of 40 years, but the link between Oakeley and the Talsarnau smithy continues to be maintained by Griffith's son, Griffith H. Roberts, who is blacksmith at the quarry today.

Evan Roberts became huntsman with the well-known Ynysfor hounds, the only privately owned pack in Wales, and for six years he roamed the ranges of Snowdonia—in Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire—hunting the fox in winter and the otter in summer. He was usually out with the hounds—the Ynysfor breed were a Welsh type crossed with the fell-hound of Scotland—three days a week, and many a fox was killed on Allt Fawr, which rises from the floor of the Oakeley quarry.

While Evan Roberts was with them the Ynysfor Hounds, which usually

hunted at the invitation of farmers and forest officers, accounted for an average of 65 foxes each season. Five or six terriers accompanied the pack to pursue and kill the foxes when they ran to earth.

Two incidents recalled by Evan Roberts serve to illustrate the incalculable excitement of the chase. There was the day when a fox was started near Harlech at 10 o'clock in the morning, the hounds kept the scent throughout the day, and the quarry was not finally cornered and killed until 9.20 at night—nearly twelve hours later—at Dolgellau. Following the hounds on foot, of course, Evan Roberts reckoned he walked some 20 miles that day.



*Mr. Evan Roberts with hound and terriers on a high spot overlooking Llyn Dinas and, inset, below ground in K8 operating a rock-drilling machine*

Then there was the time when tragedy struck at the pack. On an icy day near Beddgelert a pursued fox, trying to escape across a frozen stream, slithered over a cliff hundreds of feet high. The first hound of the pack

## Things that grow in the dark!

THE dark, cool, stony depths of the mine hardly provide conditions to support any sort of growth, but here is evidence that even hundreds of feet below ground Nature finds a way to manifest herself.

The cluster of toadstool-like fungi was discovered by *Caban* photographer alongside the railway in a tunnel dimly lighted by an electric lamp.

Not so attractive is another sort of fungus which grows on timber in the darkest and most humid places in the mine and is at once a nuisance and a problem.

Startlingly white by torchlight, in contrast to its surroundings, this fungus resembles cotton wool and spreads quite rapidly in the summer time. It is one of the tasks of the timber men to keep it in check and burning has so far proved to be the most effective method.

Our picture shows John Arthur Jones, one of the timber men at Oakeley, attacking a section of affected timber with a flame gun—skilfully killing the fungus without damaging the wood.



\*\*\*\*\*

### ON THE TRAIL OF THE FOX—continued

halted by the ice, but not all the rest, rushing up behind, were able to do so, and six of them were pushed over the cliff to follow the fox to their deaths.

#### *On sheep range*

An accident in which he lost his left eye compelled Evan Roberts to leave the Ynysfor Hounds, and after about four years as a shepherd, living in a cottage

1,500 feet up on the sheep ranges of Talsarnau, he joined the quarrymen at Oakeley.

Yet, working underground after his open-air life holds no worries for him. He likes his job with the channelling machine—and there's always shooting and fishing to be enjoyed in his leisure time.

## OAKELEY SLATES IN SHELL'S NEW LONDON H.Q.

NIGHT scene in London . . . a great building ablaze with lights . . . but why, you may ask, does this photograph find a place in *Caban*?

If you were to look at the towering building in daylight you would probably not see a single slate, but there are slates there all the same, thousands of them, from the Oakeley Quarry.

The building is part of the new London headquarters of Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd., on the south bank of the Thames, and though still under construction is already adding its massive bulk to the skyline of the heart of London, where considerable building developments for industrial and commercial concerns have been undertaken in recent years.

Oakeley slates are principally used for roofing, but they serve a different purpose in the new Shell building, forming damp-proof courses for the protection of the special teak frames of the hundreds of windows lighting the offices.

We think this striking photograph, which was supplied by *The Times*, will appeal to the men who produced the slates even though their handiwork is invisible.

The architects for the new headquarters are Messrs. Easton & Robertson, FF.R.I.B.A., and the contractors Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons, Ltd.



# Nadolig yn y cabannau



**D**ATHLODD chwarelwyr Bonc Shafft y Nadolig gyda chyngerdd amrywiaethol a chystadleuthau dros bedwar diwrnod. Yn y darlun gwelir Hugh Idris Jones (chwith) yn siarad ar y testun "Priodas," a enillodd y wobwr yn y gystadleuaeth araith byrfyfyr. Robert Thomas oedd yn ail ac Alwyn Jones yn drydydd. Y beirniaid oedd Ben Thomas a John Morris Griffith.

Ben Thomas oedd yn gyfrifol am destunau yr araith byrfyfyr, a Thomas Hughes Jones yn rhoddi y gwobrwyon.

'Roedd un rhaglen yng ngofal Eric W. Jones a Gareth Jones. Canwyd carolau gan Hugh Idris Roberts a Ieuan Davies ac hefyd aelodau y caban. Cafwyd detholiad o recordiau dan ofal Mr. Alwyn Jones. Llywyddwyd y gwahanol gyfarfodydd gan Ben Thomas, Thomas Hughes Jones, John Gwilym Jones a John M. Griffiths.

## Caban DE.

Dathlwyd yr ŵyl hefyd yng nghaban DE Oakeley gyda chyfarfod llenyddol hwyliog. Y buddugwyr oedd William Llewelyn Jones, gwybodaeth gyffredinol; James Parry, araith byrfyfyr, a Robert Hughes, limeric. Trefnwyd y rhaglen gan John Roberts, David Williams oedd yn cloriannu yr areithio, a David Owen Williams y llinell unlythyren. Llywyddwyd gan William Llewelyn Jones.

## CRWYDRO'R CYFANDIR

*(Continued from page 9)*

'roedd gan y rhelyw o'r teuluoedd eu "motor boats" eu hunain, a rheini o goed ffawydd melyn tlws. Clywais ddweud fod 60,000 ohonynt. Gyda'r rhain yr aethant ar hyd y canals i'r theatr a'r pictiwrs, &c.

Cawsom wibdaith o gylch y ddinas mewn "motor boat" a gweld llawer o'i hadeiladau gwych. 'Roedd y "guide" yn egluro mewn dwy iaith, a phan ddarganfu mai Cymru oeddym dywedodd ei fod wedi bod yn chwarel yr Oakeley yn prynnu llechi gan eu bod yn llawer gwell na'r rhai yn eu gwlad hwy.

Treuliasom un prynhawn mewn lle o'r enw Skansen, ynys eang ynghanol Stockholm ac arni amgueddfa awyr agored fel Saint Fagan. Cynrychiolid diwylliant gwerin Sweden o bob cwr o'r wlad, ac yr oedd yno bentref cyfan o "Laps." Melus yw'r atgof am dŷ fferm yn cynrychioli de Sweden gyda'r ferch dlos mewn dillad cenedlaethol lliwgar wrth y droell yn nyddu. Buan y cododd yr hen ysbryd Cymreig a dechreu canu'r gân i'r droell.

Amser troi adref a ddaeth—ar draws Denmarc a thros môr y Gogledd heb fynd yn sal. Mae Dafydd Jones yn fendigedig ond iddo beidio ysgwyd gormod ar gyfansoddiad dyn.

# Christmas entertainment



Jarrett Jones, chief clerk at Oakeley, was at hand to encourage children who were shy of Father Christmas

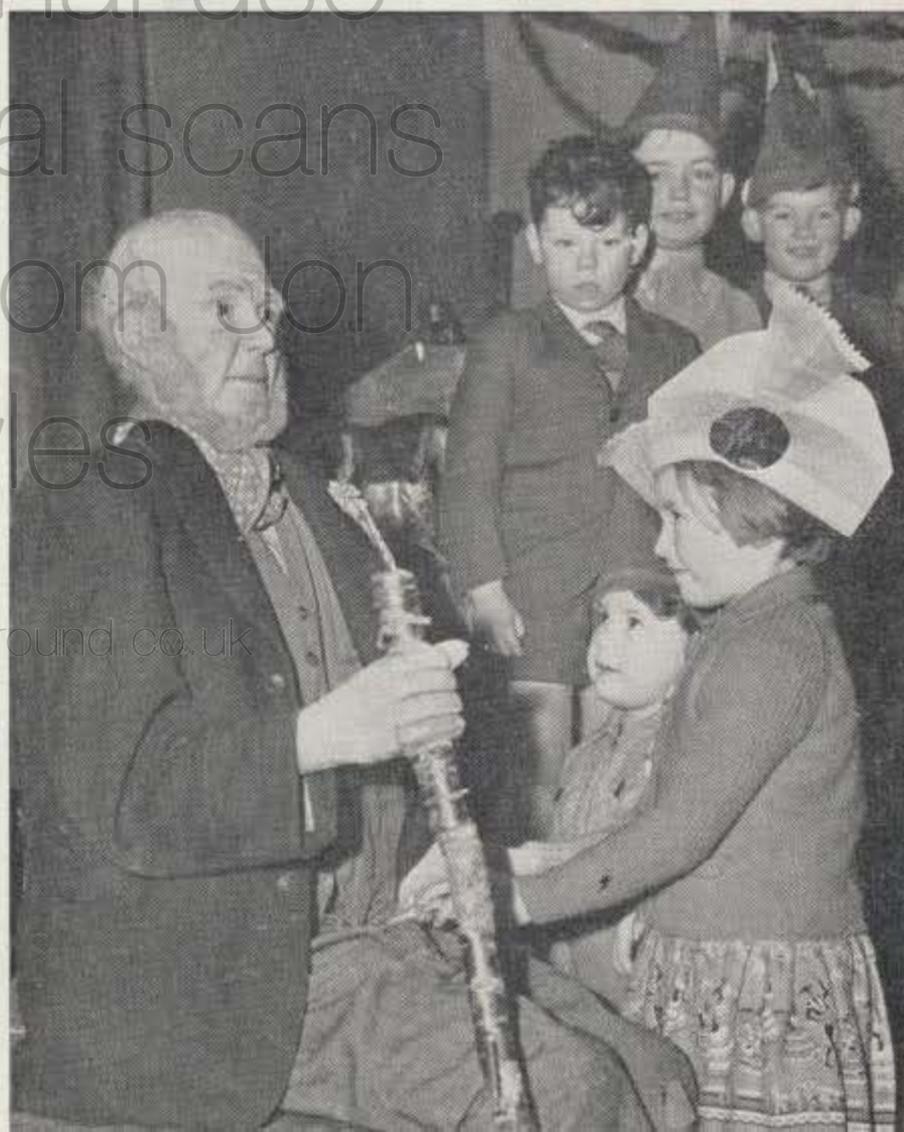
AS a change from a tea party the Oakeley Club's treat for the children took the form of an entertainment at the hall of Aelwyd yr Urdd on December 29, to which mothers and quarry pensioners were also invited. That popular entertainer on Welsh television, Glyn Foulkes Williams, delighted an audience of nearly 100 with his amusing demonstration of ventriloquism, with "Taid," his dummy, and also mystified them with conjuring tricks. All the children received gifts and these were distributed by Father Christmas (Austin Jones). It is hardly necessary to say that a good time was had by all, as our selection of photographs on this and the next two pages show.

"Taid," the ventriloquist's dummy, fascinated the children

\*\*\*\*\*

## 1960 HOLIDAY SNAPS COMPETITION

Even if we are not favoured with as fine a summer as we enjoyed last year there is always scope for attractive holiday photographs — whatever the weather or wherever you go. So do not forget to send in for our 1960 Holiday Snaps Competition any happy or interesting pictures you may take. You could win a prize and see your camera study in *Caban* !



# Party time for

---



*Pensioners sang carols as their contribution to the entertainment*



*Rapt attention for the "magician's" performance*

*Opposite: A sea of happy faces at the party*

# young and old



For personal use  
only, original scans  
available from Jon  
Knowles

[www.train4underground.co.uk](http://www.train4underground.co.uk)



## BETWEEN

## OURSELVES

important branch of underground work and is proud to have his son with him. Working conditions, he told *Caban*, had improved considerably since he first started, and he has high praise for the effectiveness in dust prevention of the Dustfoe respirator which he described as 100 per cent. efficient.

John Edwards is a keen fisherman, but Gwynfor's interests are mechanical. He told *Caban* he was hoping to "graduate" from a motor-cycle to a car.

### Rockmen

**I**N another father-and-son partnership at Oakeley rockmen John and Glyn Roberts (left) prepare to send out a newly-won block of slate from chamber GB.6 in the picture below.

Although John Roberts, who is 60, has been at Oakeley for 32 years, and Glyn, aged 26, entered the quarry on leaving school, both have experiences other than quarrying. Glyn spent a short period in the police force, and his father three years in America working in a typewriter factory and operating a screw-cutting machine.

He emigrated in 1923 with a number of Blaenau Ffestiniog men, but with the worsening of economic conditions, which ultimately led to the Wall Street crash, he decided to return home. John Roberts looks back with pleasure to his visit to the U.S.A., but he would not particularly like to go back there today. With father and son in the picture is (right) William Llewelyn Jones.

*His hobby is music*



**A**WAY from his job as haulage driver at our Votty Quarry's Tuxford incline, William Jones' absorbing interest is music and he finds scope for expressing his musical feeling as deputy conductor of the Oakeley Male Voice Choir.

Perhaps his one regret is that he cannot play the piano as he used to because of the loss in an accident some years ago of the two middle fingers of his left hand. But William Jones had started to familiarise himself with the organ manual when he was about 17 years of age, and his proficiency eventually earned him the post of organist at the Maenofferen Welsh Presbyterian Chapel, which he held for some years.

He has also tried his hand at composing, and a few years ago two of his hymn tunes were accepted for inclusion in the hymn book of the district Congregational singing festival; they were called "Pencoed," after the name of his house, and "Jerusalem."

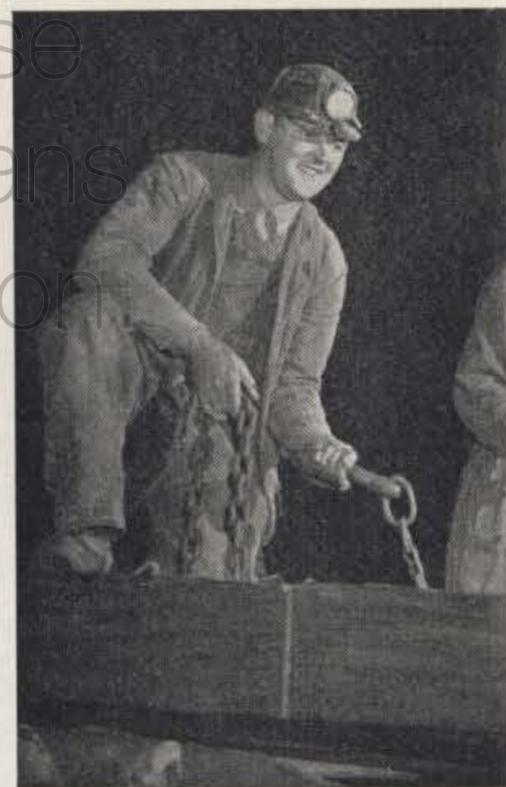
William Jones, who is 56, has been employed at Votty for three years, but he has in the past worked at the Oakeley Quarry.

### Family partnerships

**T**HAT slate quarrying continues to be very much a family pursuit is demonstrated by father-and-son partnerships at Oakeley. Pictured above, tunnelling on Floor N, high up on the rock wall, are John Reginald Edwards and his son, Gwynfor, aged 18, who had joined him a month or two previously to learn the skills of mining after having been originally apprenticed to slate dressing.

John Edwards, who is 45, started work at Oakeley 27 years ago. He left school at 13 to work in the gardens of the Tanybwllch Estate, and he likes to recall the manner in which his wish to enter the quarry was fulfilled two years later. Those were difficult times, jobs in the quarry being so much sought after that when he went to the office he found 23 other applicants waiting. He was the only one successful.

An expert miner now, John Reginald Edwards has instructed many in this



# Between Ourselves (continued)

## Soccer fan

CHAT with Richard Jones, one of Oakeley's "characters"—he is hooker on P-K inclines—and there is no escaping the subject of football! Memories of early days crowd in, for instance when he used to play with the "Jolly Millers," a youthful quarry team, at about the same time as he was making



school slates in an old mill in Blaenau Ffestiniog a little more than 40 years ago.

Afterwards there was the team rejoicing in the name "Black Stars," which had two of the present members of the Oakeley office staff in the forward line—Hugh Gwilym Jones and Edward Jarrett Jones. This team won many cups and medals before Richard Jones joined a new side, "Offeren City," and played in the district league.

Now 56, Richard Jones entered the Oakeley quarry in 1923, first to work with a horse on haulage operations and subsequently for years as a miner. There can surely be no keener supporter and follower of the town's football team than he.

One of the founder-members of the Supporters' Club, he has worked enthusiastically to help raise money to help keep the team going along the years, is still active as a linesman, and has rarely missed a match, home or away. Six visits to Wembley to see the English cup final are among his football memories.

His greatest pride, however, is the achievement of his 22 years old daughter, Rhiannon, in graduating with the degree of B.A. at the University College, Bangor.

## Octogenarian now!

EVERYONE in the Oakeley Quarry and for miles around knows him affectionately as "Bob Polion" and although he has never been a quarryman he deserves a place in our "pensioners' gallery" because of his long and close association with the quarry.



Mr. Robert Williams, of 6 Talwaenydd, who celebrated his eightieth birthday in August, was for 30 years until his retirement in 1946 in charge of the electricity sub-station at Oakeley, and he has a claim to fame as the first linesman on the



\*\*\*\*\*

payroll of the old North Wales Power Company, which he joined in 1905.

One of his duties was to make a weekly inspection of the high tension line crossing the mountains from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Cwm Dyli at the foot of Snowdon, and later on to Llanberis, and he estimates that over the years he walked some 42,000 miles altogether on this job.

Mist, snow and ice added their hazards in winter, but Mr. Williams knew the route over the mountains so well that he could even find his way in the dark. He will say that if in difficulty the surest way of getting down safely from the tops would be to follow a stream or a river.

Identified as he is with the early days of electricity development in North Wales, Mr. Williams is held in high regard in M.A.N.W.E.B. circles and he continues to be a frequent and popular visitor to the Oakeley Quarry. Should you ask him about the sub-station, he will say smilingly that he "lost" his job and his daughter to his son-in-law, Mr. Jim Jeffrey, who is now in charge of it!

## A GLANCE BACK

THIS 1927 photograph of men who worked in the Penybont Mill on Oakeley's DE Floor was lent to Caban by J. O. Williams, Gloddfa Ganol, who also supplied their names. The mill has not been in use for some 20 years, but a number of the quarrymen pictured are still in the company's service.

Top row: *William Owen (Dolwyddelan), Ernest Brown, R. Ll. Humphreys, Idwal Davies, Lewis Wood, J. W. Jones, R. Roberts (hogwr).*

Middle row: *Haydn Hughes, R. Hughes, William Jones (fitter), Evan Owen (Penmachno), J. O. Williams, David Williams, David Morgan (Penmachno).*

First row: *William Edwards, John Roberts (Crimei), William Roberts (Talwaenydd) Hugh Williams (Llew), Robert Evan Edwards.*

# AFTER THE CONTEST!



*At the Kensington Town Hall*

**A**FTER winning second place against the challenge of 18 other bands in the area qualifying round at Bolton of the national brass bands championship, the Royal Oakeley Band travelled hopefully to London in October to appear in the third division final at the

Kensington Town Hall. They were disappointed but by no means discouraged.

It was the band's first essay into the all-British championship contest promoted by the *Daily Herald*, and their final placing of twelfth in the list of 24



"Father" of the band, John Roberts, with the youngest members, James Alan Roberts and David Brynmor Williams



in their section was no mean achievement in a national contest.

Bob Morgan, Votty rockman and conductor of the band since 1951, told *Caban* that his impression was that the band had given a better performance in London than they did at Bolton, but their interpretation of the test pieces, which satisfied the adjudicators in the qualifying stage, was evidently not quite what was required by the different judges in the final.

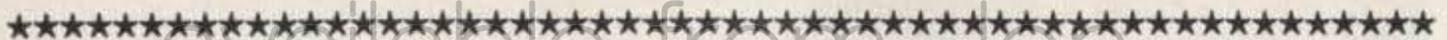
However, the band emerged from the contest with a useful cheque and could look back upon the 1959 competitive season with a great deal of satisfaction, having won three seconds in the four competitions entered. The band were placed second in the first class contest at the Caernarvon National Eisteddfod

and second in the North Wales Brass Bands Association meeting at Old Colwyn.

**Bandsman for 40 years**

PLAYING with the Royal Oakeley Band in London were the longest serving member and the two youngest members, all from the Oakeley Quarry—John Roberts, rockman, and apprentices James Alan Roberts and David Brynmor Williams.

This year John Roberts "celebrates" the completion of 40 years' service with the band. He joined when he was 10, starting with the cornet, but for a long time now his instrument has been the euphonium. Such is his enthusiasm for band music and the band that he rarely misses the practice night held three times a week.



available from Jon

**BLACK AND WHITE**

*Caban* photographer could not resist a second chance to photograph the wild goats of Allt Fawr when he "cornered" these two as they sheltered from the weather in the cave-like entrance of an old level at Oakeley, near K balance. A first picture of these elusive animals appeared in the January 1959 issue of *Caban* and to get that our photographer had to stalk a small herd of them on the mountainside.



# NEWS EXCHANGE

## *Brothers retire*

Two brothers have retired from the Votty Quarry, John B. Williams, plate-layer, who worked in the quarry for 40 years altogether in various capacities,



*Howell (left) and John B. Williams*

and Howell Williams, slate maker, who had served for 25 years. The staff and quarrymen made parting gifts to both, the presentations being made by Owen G. Lloyd and Ieuan Jones.

## *Arrivals at Votty*



A group of six quarrymen who joined the Votty Quarry early in the year (from left) J. R. Williams, Idris W. Jones, W. T. Williams, R. E. Davies, J. R. Hughes and E. J. Davies.

## *For the record*

**A**FTER the note in our previous issue about the dry and gloriously sunny summer of 1959, back to the rainy normal! The wettest of the many wet spells experienced in Blaenau Ffestiniog during the winter occurred between mid-day on January 29th and the following evening when, in approximately 36 hours, 5.8 inches of rain was registered on the Oakeley Quarry gauge. This cannot be claimed as a "record," the gauge readings having been specially taken because it seemed to be wetter than usual!

## *Obituary*

After living and working at the Oakeley Quarry for close on half a century, John Edward Jones has died at the age of 72. Until his retirement, owing to ill-health, he had been employed as a fitter and had lived all his life in one of the



Middle Quarry cottages at Oakeley.



Oakeley quarryman Robert O. (Trebor) Roberts and Miss Rhiannon Lewis, of Corwen, after their marriage.



Thomas Ellis Jones, Oakeley rockman, and Miss Kathleen Morgan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morgan, of Blaenau Ffestiniog, who were married at Maenofferen Chapel.

A Votty miner, John Gerald Griffiths, was married at St. John's Church, Portmadoc, in February to Miss Lowri Foulkes, daughter of Mrs. Foulkes and the late Mr. E. C. Foulkes, of Dora Street, Portmadoc.

Vincent Jones, Votty slate maker, married in January Miss Jean Caroline Seel, daughter of Mrs. Roberts, of Blaenau Ffestiniog, and the late Mr. Robert Seel.

*Angling association officials*

**O**AKELEY anglers play a considerable part in the control of the affairs of the Cambrian Angling Association. This year again the association have re-elected Robert Thomas Jones, slate maker, as their secretary, and David Hughes, saw sharpener, their treasurer. Both have held their respective offices for eleven years.

The Oakeley Quarry also has four representatives on the committee—Idris Williams, the engineer, John Barlow, clerk, Hugh Owen Jones, slater, and Gwilym Brookes, K incline.

Incidentally the trout hatchery, which Robert Thomas Jones manages for the association, is expected this year to produce some 50,000 young fish for restocking the eight lakes which the association hold for their members.

\*\*\*\*\*

**BACK COVER**

The subject of our back cover picture is the grotto-like caban on Oakeley's N Floor in which the men whose snapshots appear on page 10 in the "Studies in Expression" series meet for about half-an-hour around mid-day for a meal and a chat.



For personal use  
only, original scans  
available from Jon  
Knowles

[www.train4underground.co.uk](http://www.train4underground.co.uk)

*Caban N, Oakeley*

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

Printed by R. E. Jones & Bros. Ltd., The Quay, Conway—25712