

# CABAN

MAY 1950



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THE MAGAZINE OF THE OAKELEY AND VOTTY SLATE QUARRIES



# CABAN

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

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"CABAN" is the name of the type of restaurant in which the men of Oakeley and Votty meet for their meals ... and which is also the centre of social life and passing of information throughout the quarries. Below the title of this magazine, our cover picture shows the native from Votty Quarry looking down towards the train and railway station. The picture below it is of the cabin at the railway wharf.



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*Off they go!*

Checking and loading slates on to a narrow gauge truck up at the quarry.



**WE** have seen how the skill of the rockman and slate-maker has won from the heart of the mountain and fashioned from the first rough slabs a refined material that will last at least as long as the building that it will cover. But the slates have to get to the job, and they have to get there sound and whole. Here is another skill; the packing for transport. It is admittedly not so spec-

tacular as the work of the slatemens; not thought of as often perhaps as the adeptness of the men in the auxiliary trades shown last time, but what would be the use of making the slates if they were only to be broken in the surge—and crashing—of shunted trucks?

Let us go back a bit first. Day after day slates of all sizes and qualities are lifted

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by the quarry loaders from the stacking grounds outside the slate-making sheds and sent in trains of narrow-gauge wagons along the tramways and inclines down the many hundreds of feet to the wharves in the town below. Our cover picture, for instance, shows the incline from the Votty quarry, with a few loaded trucks ready to go down. Their weight will haul up empties on the other track. At the foot of the incline can just be seen other trucks waiting to be built up into a train and hauled to the sidings. A familiar early morning sight is the diesel loco. rounding the bend on to the wharf, tugging a clanking line of trucks laden with slates for the waiting broad-gauge wagons.

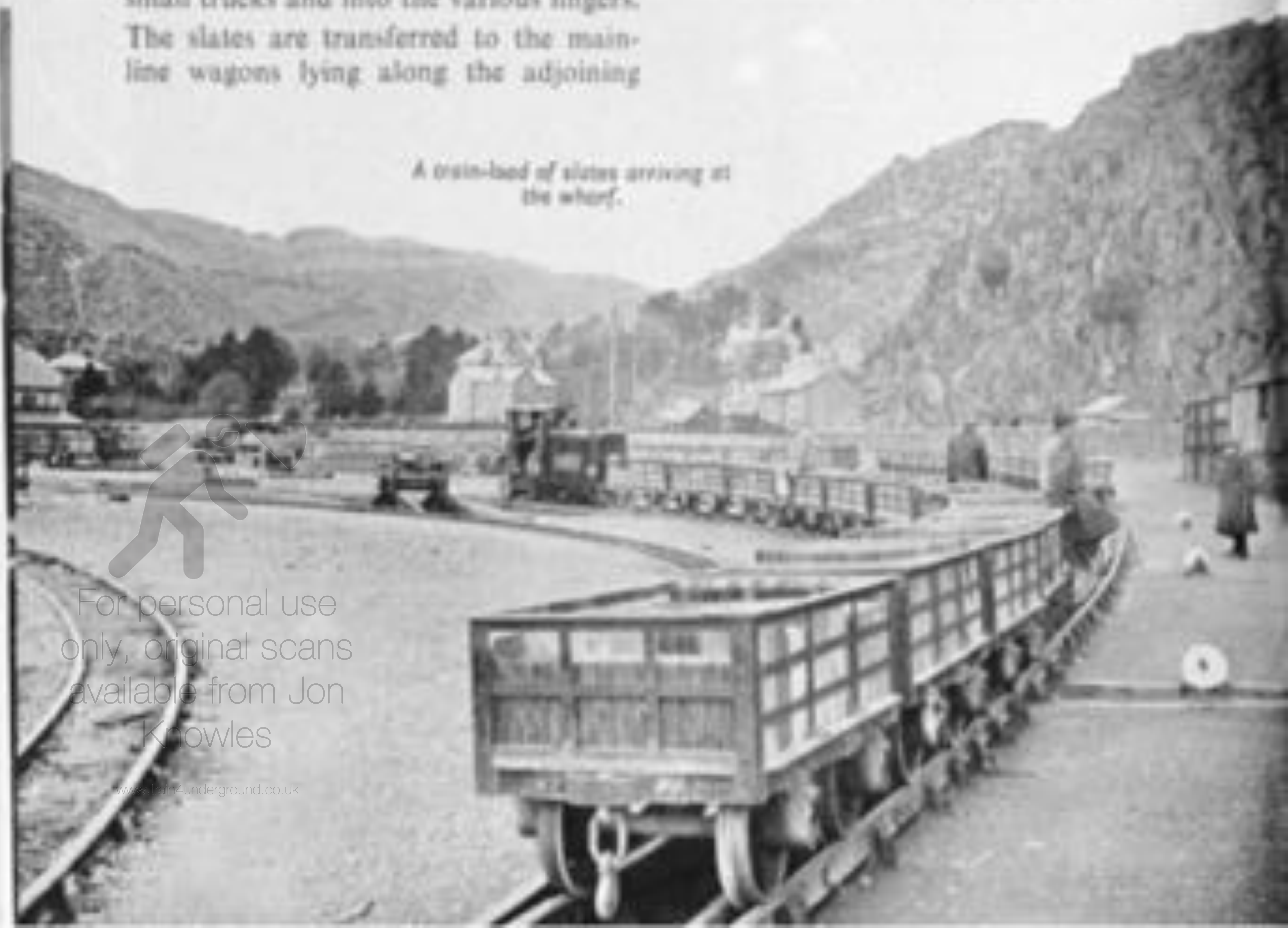
For those who do not know them our main sidings may be likened roughly to two outspread hands with the fingers interlaced. Through one wrist feed these small trucks and into the various fingers. The slates are transferred to the main-line wagons lying along the adjoining

fingers of the other hand, and these wagons move out through the other wrist on to the main-line system. That is a simplified picture of course. For instance, during the day you will see the wharf loco, fusing to and fro sorting out the trucks and pushing them here and there alongside the big wagons to suit the make-up of the orders to be sent off. There is ample stacking ground but no time now for the leisurely unloading and reloading of memory.

Now back to the packing. Slates are pretty tough—they have to be. They have to be holed for nailing on the roof. They must last for generations and men must clamber across the roofs from time to time. But they are not unbreakable and many will split if they are thrown about in transit.

*Continued on page 8*

*A train-load of slates arriving at the wharf.*



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(Above) Using the "matless" in a low-sided railway wagon. It is better in the long run to handle only a few slates at a time.

(Below) High-sided wagons have to be loaded through the door. The carrying of slates is avoided as far as possible.



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The loaders on the wharves are past-masters of the art of packing slates. They ought to be; most of them have been at the game for many years. One or two can tell you how they used to load the old ships at Portmadoc, which was not at all the same thing as loading a comparatively small rectangular wagon. (By the way, they count by the "mwrw"—that is three slates—with fingers skipping rapidly along the rows.)

Loaders work in small gangs, setting the slates on edge in rows from side to side of the wagons with quickly but expertly fashioned ropes of straw between the rows. Each row must fit tightly; not wedged so tightly as to break the slates by pressure, but sufficiently tightly to prevent any movement. The instrument is a formidable-looking wooden mallet, but it is wielded in fitting in the last slates with a feeling born of long experience. Sometimes slates are crated, especially for overseas, but in general they go in this fashion in open trucks. While of course accidents will happen we think our merchant friends will agree that serious breakage seldom occurs.

Loaders have their difficulties. The weather means a lot. How the icy wind can whistle across that wharf and how the rain can sweep across in sheets! Slates may be tightly bound together by ice, snow may have to be cleared. Small wonder that the drying room caught fire one day. (Not much harm done—the fire station is just across the road). But whatever the weather—almost—the trucks of slates steadily roll out. The hands of the wharfmen keep up the steady flow of Oakeley and Votty slates,

diverging from Blaenau Ffestiniog in all directions—to the industrial centres, to the quiet market towns, to the north, the extreme south-west, across to the east. Some cross the narrow seas, a few go farther across the broad oceans.

But before they get clear of their native town they have to visit just once again, fleetingly, the heart of a mountain. The London Midland Region line drives deeply through the hills to the north of Blaenau in a long, long tunnel before emerging on the other side in the tranquil Lledr Valley.

One more vital job; another link in the chain.



The wharf manager checks a consignment from the quarry.

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# A FAMOUS WELSHMAN GREET'S *Caban*

**Sir LEWIS  
CASSON**  
writes :

THE extracts from Sam Holland's Diary in the October number of *Caban* have prompted me to tell you something of the still earlier days of the Slate Quarries, recorded in our family history. It was the rebellion of 1795 that drove a prospector called Turner, the ancestor of Sir Llewellyn, to leave Ireland, where he had been working, and to try his luck in Wales. He asked Thomas Casson, my great-grandfather, who was farming and quarrying in the Duddon Valley in the Lake District, to join in the enterprise. He agreed, and came south on horseback, with his wife Esther riding pillion, and they started work, first on Llanywst side of the mountains, without much success, and then at Ffestiniog, where William Casson, a brother,



joined them, and all went well. Thomas' wife Esther, the granddaughter of the famous parson of Seathwaite—Wonderful Walker—was herself a remarkable woman. When the slate trade slumped during the Napoleonic Wars, and most of the quarries shut down, she kept the Casson quarries going by rigid economics and by organising the whole community including the family and the workpeople, on some sort of communal basis. As a result the return of prosperity found Casson slates piled by the roadside from the quarries right down to the wharves at Penrhyndeudraeth! So the firm got well ahead of its rivals.

All three of her sons went into the Quarries. The eldest, George, became a great and well-known figure in Ffestiniog. He and his brother, John, founded Casson's Bank, later taken over by the Midland firm of the N. & S. Wales Bank. My father and his brother once managed the Port Madoc and Blaenau Branches respectively. My grandfather, William, branched out into enterprises in Liverpool, and also founded the Gunpowder Works at Porton, now an explosives factory run by I.C.I. He installed, 150 years ago, the big engine which still powers the Blaenau woollen mills.

My brother and I often opened our holidays with my uncle in the Bank House at Blaenau; I visited him all over the Oakeley Quarries in the eighties; and it was a great joy during the war to revisit the town when we were acting for C.E.M.A. in "Macbeth" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream", to meet so many old friends—the quarrymen, and to find the name of Casson still remembered with the affection inspired by my ancestors.

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# The Oakeley Club

**B**ELOW we print a list of the officials of the Club, as this has not been published in full before. It includes the Eisteddfod Committees, and the winners in the recent Club eisteddfod will be found on page 10.

**President:** Sir Charles Oakeley, Bt.

**Vice-Presidents:** H. Cutts and H. Griffith Hughes.

**Secretaries:**

John O. Williams and John D. Barlow.

**Treasurer:**

Dennis Roberts.

**Committee:**

Humphrey Lewis (Chairman), Thomas Williams, William H. Thomas, Humphrey Morris, David G. Owen, John G. Hughes, Harry Parry, Hugh G. Jones, David Lewis, John J. Williams, David G. Jones, Edward Jones, Richard Jones, Iorwerth Roberts, Gwilym W. Humphreys, Richard D. Jones, John Evans, Handel Roberts and William L. Owen.

**Librarian:**

William J. Morgan.

**Literary Committee:**

Humphrey Lewis (Chairman), John D. Jones (Secretary), John W. Jones, Gwilym W. Humphreys, Richard D. Jones, William J. Morgan, Hugh G. Jones, William Thomas and Humphrey Morris.

**Finance Committee:**

Hugh G. Hughes, Dennis Roberts,

John Evans.

**Sports Committee:**

William H. Thomas (Chairman),

William L. Owen, John G. Parry (Secretary), John Evans (Treasurer), Thomas H. Jones, Maldwyn Thomas, Humphrey Morris, David G. Jones, Thomas Hughes, John O. Williams, John O. Davies, Handel Roberts, Dewi Lewis, Richard Jones, Austin Jones, Oswald Evans, Thomas J. Jones and Gordon T. Hughes.

**Whist Drive Committee:**

Thomas H. Jones (Chairman), Dewi G. Lewis (Secretary), Thomas Hughes (Treasurer), Richard Jones, John O. Davies, Humphrey Morris and John O. Williams.

**Eisteddfod Committee:**

Chairman: Humphrey Lewis.

Secretary: George E. Woolford.

Treasurer: William H. Thomas.

**Vocal—**

Humphrey Lewis, William Jones, Thomas Roberts, Richard Thomas, Iorwerth Jones, Hugh Idris Roberts, David Lewis, William J. Morris, George Woolford, Arthur Wyn Evans, Robert Ifor Williams and John Joseph Williams.

**Literary—**

Gwilym W. Humphreys, Hugh Gwilym

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Jones, William Thomas, John William Jones and Hugh Griffith Hughes.

*Arts and crafts—*

Evan G. Jones, John Ed Jones, Idris Williams, Iorweth Jones, Idris Jones and John D. Barlow.

## DIDDORDEBAU Y CLWB

**M**AE diddordeb y Clwb yn cael ei gadw i fyny gyda'r gwahanol Chwateuon. Er enghraifft, crewyd diddordeb mawr yn y "Billiards a Snooker League" flurfiwyd yn yr ardal ddechreu tymor y gaeaf. Dyma safle Clwb yr Oakeley yn y Snooker League—y trydydd o'r top gyda 16 points.

**Billiards.** Mae ganddynt ddwy gêm i chwateu eto, a'u safle ar hyn o bryd ydyw pumed gyda 15 points. Cafwyd aml i noson a'r chwateu o safon uchel,

gan fod y goteuon wedi eu dewis i chwateu gan y gwahanol Glybiau.

Ennillwr y Darts Tournament oedd Mr. Robert Jones, sydd yn gweithio yn y P.

Terfynwyd y dosbarth W.E.A. nos Fawrth, Chwefror 14 eg wedi tymor llwyddianus, pryd y cafwyd darlith ddiddorol iawn gan Mr. Cadfan Jones ar "Ddirgelwch y glust a'r llygad".

Bu i'r Côr a'r unawdwyr wneud eu gwaith yn ganmoladwy iawn mewn cyngherdd yn Ysgoldy Seion er budd y W.E.A. Cymerwyd rhan gan Mri. Trebor Jones, William Jones Morris, Ieuan Davies, William Ll. Jones a William Roberts (Llan). Yr oedd yr arweiniad yn nwylaw medrus Mr. Howell Williams y Votty (Llan.). Mae y Côr yn dal yn selog i'w hymarferiadau.

Mwynheir y noweithiau Whist sydd yng ofal Mri. Thomas H. Jones a Thomas Hughes a'r Ysgrifennydd, Dewi Lewis.



Humphrey Jones is Chairman of the Llanidloes Committee of the Club—apparently enough he has worked at both corners. He was at Oakley for many years, at Votts for many years, he is a character of the lot.

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# EISTEDDFOD CLWB YR OAKELEY

GYNHALIWDYD YN YSGOLDY SEION, NOS LUN MAWRTH 13eg 1950

Arweinydd: Mr. Howell Williams, Cwward Foty

Beirniad: Cerdd—Mr. Wm. Morris Williams, Tanygrisiau.

Llan ac Adrodd—Parch. Herman Jones, B.A., Penrhynadog

## Buddugwyr—Cerdd

Alaw Gymraeg dan 18 oed	Wm. Lloyd Jones
Unawd dan 25 oed	Selwyn Davies
— drws —	Robert Jones (Llan.)
— i rat heb strall o'r blaen	Dd. J. Russell
Prif Unawd	Robert Jones (Llan.)
Deuawd	James Parry a Robert Jones
Podwawd	Parti Richard Thomas
Unawd drws 30 oed	William Roberts (Llan.)
Parti Meibion	Parti Joseph Thomas

## Adrodd a Barddoniaeth

Prif Adroddiad	Harri Hughes
Adrodd Sori	John G. Edwards (79 oed) (Penyryn)
Ysgrifennu Iythur	"Wil"
Can-Diwedd Min	Harri Hughes
Cefn, Beirniad—	Mr. Glynor Williams a Mr. R. L. Morgan.
Gwaith Coed	
— "Rocking Horse"	Philip Owen
— "Fretwork"	
— "Picture-frame"	Wm. R. Hughes
Luchlan	
— "Thermometer"	Philip Owen
— "Photo frame"	Robert Roberts

# PLACE FOR YOUTH

George Hughes, photo below, not quite 17, is working to become as good a slatemaker as his father, John Hughes, also at Oakeley.



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 We are pleased to reproduce the drawing above by Leslie Daniels. Leslie, who is 17 started as an apprentice slatemaker at Oakeley in August last.

—Following in Father's Footsteps—



*Preliminary Schedule of*  
**OAKELEY & VOTTY EXHIBITION**

To be held at the OLD HOSPITAL, Saturday, 2nd September, 1950.  
 Show open to the Public at 3 p.m. till 6 p.m. ALL COMPETITIONS  
 OPEN TO EMPLOYEES of the OAKELEY and VOTTY SLATE  
 QUARRIES.

Class	Prizes	
	1st	2nd
1. The most attractive dog, suitable as pet or companion	3/-	2/-
2. Best Rabbit	2/6	
3. Best Cage-bird	1/-	2/-
4. Best Table Fowl	2/-	
5. Best Fancy Fowl (Any Variety)	2/-	
6. Best half dozen Eggs	1/-	
7. Best half dozen Duck Eggs	1/-	
8. Best Exhibit of Cut Flowers	3/-	2/-
9. Best Exhibit of Pot Plant	2/-	
10. Best Collection of Wild Flowers (No Entrance Fee)	2/-	1/-
11. Best Collection of half dozen Roses	2/-	1/-
12. Best Truss of Tomatoes	2/-	
13. Best Collection of Vegetables	3/-	2/-
14. Best Plate of half dozen Potatoes (Any Variety)	1/-	
15. Best Kept Flower Garden	6/-	3/-
16. Best Kitchen Garden or Allotment	6/-	3/-
17. Best Pot of Honey	2/-	
18. Best Exhibit in Woodwork	3/-	2/-
19. Best Exhibit in Metal	3/-	2/-
20. Best Exhibit in Slate-work	3/-	2/-
21. Best Exhibit in Pottery	3/-	
22. Best Exhibit in Water-colour	3/-	
23. Best Exhibit in Black and White	3/-	
24. Best Pot of Home-made Jam	2/-	
25. Best Sandwich Cake	2/-	
26. Best half dozen Welsh Cakes	2/-	
27. Best Fruit Cake	2/-	
28. Best Article made from any discarded clothing	2/-	
29. Best Hearth-rug	3/-	
30. Best Knitted Article	2/-	
31. Best Crochet Work	2/-	
32. Best Home-made Rag Doll (No Entrance Fee)	2/-	1/-

**Entrance Fee in each Class—2d.**

The Committee intends to stage a Grand Display of ANTIQUES and Old Relics and they would appreciate any support from Members or Non-Members of any such articles they could lend. An official receipt will be given, and the Committee will be responsible for all Articles lent. The following are the Committee Members who will accept such articles.

- Mrs. Jones, Old Hospital.
- Mr. David G. Owen, Oakeley Bone Coedem.
- Mr. Wm. O. Williams, Oakeley Floor P.
- Mr. Phillip Owen, Oakeley Bone Coedem.
- Mr. Trefor Davies, Peshrynlwyd Votty.
- Mr. Wm. L. Owen, Dolrhedyn, Votty.
- Mr. Idris Jones, Bryngwynodd, Oakley Bone Coedem.

*The DOG Class will be judged and on view to the Public from 3 to 4 p.m.*

All entries, together with entrance fee, must be forwarded to the Secretary—  
 Mr. Philip Owen, 24 Jones Street, B. Fferning—by 31st August, 1950 (Post Mark).  
 All entries (except dogs) must be handed in not later than 1 p.m. on the day of  
 Exhibition.

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS will be served on the premises.**

**ADMISSION 3d.**



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# A Visit to-

## OAKELEY QUARRIES

*MR. C. B. STAFFORD of Brynbach Scout Camp, near Denbigh, writes of a visit by a party from the camp to Blaenau Ffestiniog and the Oakeley Quarries.*

**F**OR fifty senior scouts (15-18 year age group) the visit to Blaenau Ffestiniog and the Oakeley Quarry was the climax of a week's stay in North Wales. These boys represented most areas of the British Isles, although it so happened that the majority came from the South of England. They were taking part in the annual Midwinter Expedition at Brynbach, a permanent scout camp near Denbigh, the special theme this year being a study of life in North Wales.

Prior to their visit to Oakeley they had taken part in forestry work—lifting and lining out 8,000 seedlings, brashing and thinning in our own plantations—visited foxhound kennels, castles, places of interest, water works and, of course, climbed and hiked in the mountainous countryside. Talks and demonstrations had been given by a hill shepherd, a farmer, a forestry officer and a harpist. The social side was taken care of with a New Year's Eve party to which neighbours and friends of the camp were invited.

Having briefly explained the idea behind the invasion of Blaenau and Oakeley, let me come to the results of this visit. It would be pointless for me to describe what we saw. To you, the readers of CABAN, all that we saw and found awe-inspiring, surprising or nerve-racking, are everyday occurrences. Permit me, therefore, to try to prevent the impression that the scouts took away with them.

The first is what every stranger must feel when he comes over the Crimea and

looks down on to Blaenau—the tips of slate, which together with the next most plentiful thing, the rain, create such an air of forlornness, as though the town were an orphan lost in the happy families of the surrounding hills. "Can't they do anything with it?" was the general cry, and who knows, one of those lads, later becoming a budding scientist or engineer, may be inspired to return to the slate industry to solve this problem. After this, the brightness and spotless cleanliness of the small surface canteen in which we followed the men with lunch was a warming and pleasing experience, and it was noticeable in the boys, who are very responsive to atmosphere, that they went to great pains, not only to leave the canteen as clean as they found it, but also "preened their own feathers" before leaving.

The descent into the mine was rather nerve-racking to some; the labyrinth of passages bewildering; the huge caverns awe-inspiring; the method of work intriguing and interesting. We were surprised at what appeared to be so few men working below ground (owing to their being so dispersed) and the comparative lack of noise and machinery. In these days when so much is mechanised it is refreshing to find some jobs which still require the skill of the individual workman.

With any thought of mines in the layman's mind always goes the fear of gas, and it was a great relief to know that there was no trace nor likelihood of any in slate mines. One boy, standing too

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close to a carbide lamp, feared we had descended too far!—but his friends, beating the hole in his pants with relish, soon assured him otherwise.

Perhaps the most staggering observation was the amount of material which becomes scrap before a piece of slate is blue-blooded and enters the peelage.

We were impressed with the health precautions and social activities provided. One hears and talks a lot of the wicked old days before dust control, but it seemed to us that no one, until experience showed otherwise, could conceive that the apparently small wisp of dust could wreak such havoc with the health of man.

In the evening there was an open discussion in the Church Hall conducted by the Vicar and Mr. William Williams, the Union Secretary. Much was learnt here of the more personal side of the industry. It reflects great credit on a community which can overcome its difficulties and work together without constant recourse to strikes and similar disruptions.

Many of the Scouts spent that night in the homes of residents and spoke

highly of the kindness and hospitality of their hosts.

Was the venture worthwhile? From our point of view, undoubtedly. We learned a great deal about an important industry which is not often in the news; but above all we met the people—and what grand people they proved to be. Rumour is common amongst those who live away from Wales that the Welsh are unfriendly to strangers. The enthusiasm of those scouts about their experiences and the fact that everyone went away determined to lay the ghost of that rumour is in itself more than justification for the trouble that everyone went to make our visit so memorable.

In conclusion, our grateful thanks are due to the management of Oakeley and the Union Secretary for making the whole thing possible; to our guides and the workmen who so willingly stopped what they were doing to demonstrate and answer questions, and to the Vicar and our many hosts for their help and generous spirit. We, the organisers at Brynbach, look forward to the time, a few years hence, when we hope to bring another generation of scouts and to renew our acquaintanceships.



A general view of the Brynbach Scouts' Camp. By courtesy of the Boy Scouts' Association.



# ON DUTY-OFF DUTY

**O** ARTURO JONES of New York has been at the Dulby Quarry for nearly 27 years. Not that he has found other equally hospitable surroundings as shown by his having been a proud member of the 100th Maine, Maine Volunteer Choir which toured the United States a year ago, Chairman of the Council in 1914-1915, and now Vice-President of the Massachusetts Liberal Association.

He delights in telling a story of his mission when the Choir sang for King Edward VII on the royal yacht off Halifax. He and two other high boys of the choir were among the first on board and directed some of the company by starting a conversation with a British stranger whom they subsequently found to be King Edward.

Our "off-duty" photograph shows him with his wife from the United States.



**H**ERE is JAMES PAERY, the great Dulby master of agriculture. It does not look as if he is, but he is quite happy as there really is no one else like him in the world. He is a man of many accomplishments, and if necessary he will be a very good farmer. He has been a member of the United States Navy, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Army, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier. He has been a member of the United States Air Force, and if necessary he will be a very good pilot. He has been a member of the United States Coast Guard, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Marine Corps, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier. He has been a member of the United States Navy, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Army, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier. He has been a member of the United States Air Force, and if necessary he will be a very good pilot. He has been a member of the United States Coast Guard, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Marine Corps, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier.



**T**HE man in the shop is JOHN EDWARD JONES operating the traveling crane at the distant world of Yaffy. He has been at the quarry since he started work. His relaxation is watch-repairing which he does with devoted desire. He has been a member of the United States Navy, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Army, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier. He has been a member of the United States Air Force, and if necessary he will be a very good pilot. He has been a member of the United States Coast Guard, and if necessary he will be a very good sailor. He has been a member of the United States Marine Corps, and if necessary he will be a very good soldier.

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# Cofio Morgan Llwyd o Wynedd

*Dyn a Galled*  
**MORCAN LLWYD o WYNEDD**  
(1619 – 1659).

**PIWRITAN, LLENOR, CYFRINYDD,**  
**AWDUR**

**“LLYFR Y TRI ADERYN.”**

**“CORAU I BLENTYN FOD CYDA'I RIENI;  
CORAU I DDYN FOD CYDA'I DDUW.”**



*Photograph by courtesy of "Y CIMRO."*

The quotation on the tablet may be freely translated:—

*'Tis best for the child to be with its family;*

*'Tis best for man to be with God.*

**“UN** o'r dig yddiadau llynetaf yn hanes Cymru ar Gorffennaf 23, 1949, oedd y cyfarfod i ddadorchuddio Maen Coffa i Forgan Llwyd O Wynedd ym mur ffrynt

ei hen gartref, Cynfal. Daeth yno dorf fawr o bell ac agos ar un o'r dyddiau mwyaf tesog. Gwarchodwyd drostynt gan y ddau Foelwyn, y Manod, y Migneint, ar lethrau Cynfal yr oedd yr olygfa yn 'amphitheatre' perffaith; y coplon yn danllyd glir. Cwm Cynfal yn ddarn o haradwys; hen ac ifanc wedi eir syfrdanu gan yr amgylchiad ac usbryd Morgan Llwyd ynghanol ei bobl. Hawdd iawn oedd cael cip ar nefolion fydoedd Morgan Llwyd yn yr "eang dangnef" a ddewinau pob meddwl defosiynol, ac yn wir, defosiwn oedd cymeriad y cynnulliad, ac awyrglych y Dadorchuddio yn wylaidd a diymbongar gan Lady Olwen Carey Evans.”

*Thus Dyfnallt described the scene at the unveiling of the tablet to Morgan Llwyd of Gwynedd at his old house, Cynfal, near Ffestiniog. The Company had with pleasure given the tablet, and Mr. R. L. Morgan of Blaenau Ffestiniog had cut the inscriptions.*

Mr. J. W. Jones (shown speaking at the ceremony) provides the following note on Morgan Llwyd:—

Morgan Llwyd O Wynedd lived in the time of Cromwell, and his name is a household word in Wales. He is the author of the Welsh classic "Llyfr y Tri Aderyn". He wrote the proverb "A man's time is his dower". He worked hard and died a young man, 40 years of age. "He sowed the good seed in the teeth of the whirlwind", and Wales has reaped therefrom. The burden of his urgent appeal was—  
"On Wales, be still, be quiet and listen to what the Lord says".

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# Samuel Holland's Diary

## Part 3: LAWSUITS, RAILWAYS and A WEDDING

**A**PPARENTLY negotiations for the sale of the quarry dragged on and eventually it was taken over by the Welsh Slate Company in 1825. The Hollands, however, kept "the Upper part of the mountain (at Rhiwbryfdir) where I was informed by my Foreman and others that there was a good prospect of a slate quarry."

Writing of about this time Samuel Holland records:—

"There was a heavy duty on Slates from Wales into any part of England and this duty had to be paid by the Slate Merchant at the port of discharge upon the value of the slates at that port, the freight being added to the cost. I got Meetings up at Carnarvon, calling attention to this injustice and agitated the subject, only some quarry workers were alive to it, and sent up petitions to Parli on the subject and so got eventually the Duty repealed and the sale of Welsh slates was very much increased in consequence."

Holland then moved to Plas-y-Penrhyn where he lived for many years.

"I took a slate quarry at Cedrun situated between Capel Curig and Conway but on the mountain. I went over there several times, riding from Plas-y-Penrhyn to Capel Curig and then walking up to the quarry about five miles off and returning home in the afternoon. I did this for about a year and a half, but finding it took up too much time and attention I sold it to a Gentleman from Ruthin."

It was after this that Samuel Holland turned his attention again to the ground reserved above Rhiwbryfdir. His father assigned the area to him, and Sam. Holland borrowed money and struggled on with the new quarry.

"I began to drive a level or tunnel in May, 1827, within what I considered was my ground. The Welsh Slate Co. tried to stop me, stating that where I commenced my Tunnel was their ground tho' it was all mapp'd out."

Samuel Holland decided to bring an action which was eventually heard at Assizes at Dolgelly, the verdict being in his favour. However, the Welsh Slate Company returned to the charge.

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## SAMUEL HOLLAND'S DIARY (Contd.)

"The Case was set down to be tried again in London and tho' it came on before three Lord Chancellors, each was displaced so soon after one another, till at last a decision was given in my favour; but costs of part was given against me. After that decision I ceased to be troubled."

"I worked my quarries until the end of the term which was 1877."

"I used to go monthly, regularly, until the year 1870 to Carnarvon for money, and scarcely ever missed the day, be the weather ever so bad. I frequently drove to Pen y groes (Llanlyfni) from there went in a tram car, drawn by one horse to and from Carnarvon, sometimes getting a cup of tea or a little bread and cheese, at the Pen y groes Inn."

It was at this Inn that Samuel Holland became acquainted with Mr. Henry Archer who "was thinking of renting the little horse railway that was between the quarries (Talysarn and others) and Carnarvon . . . I advised him . . . that if he really wished to undertake a railway, he had better come over to my neighbourhood and plan a railway from the Festiniog Quarries to Port Madoc."

Archer was invited to stay at Plas yn Pentsyn. He gave Mary Wynne (whom we met at the end of our first article) rather a shock.

"Mary Wynne came to me in my study and said there was a big Irishman at the back door who had knocked loudly, and when she went to the door asked loudly, was I at home . . . She told him to wait and shut the door

and locked it, not liking this Irishman and the loud way he spoke."

Archer stayed for some time, studying the line that Holland suggested for the railway and proposing that "it must be a single line about 2 feet wide, that it would cost much less, and less to pay for land taken". They called in Jas. Spooner, then living at Tanyrallt Isa near Tremadoc, to assist in laying out the line. He "was in very low spirits, having so lately lost his eldest daughter, the eldest son, Mathew, having accidentally shot her on the last day of the last year". They also obtained the help of Thomas Pritchard, who had worked under Robert Stevenson, on the Chester and Holyhead line.

Samuel Holland then goes on to tell of the difficulties of getting the necessary Bill through Parliament and how the work was carried through and the first train eventually run. However, we can pass rapidly over this part of the diary, as members of the Club can read the excellent book on the subject by Mr. J. L. C. Boyd, reviewed in our October issue. Holland mentions, however, "I used the railway for carrying my slates to Port Madoc for two years nearly before the other companies came upon it, having fixed upon a wharf at Port Madoc."

Our diarist next records at some length "a curious circumstance"—one of those little coincidences that occur from time to time to all of us. Let us shorten it a little.

"At the farther end of the Embankment (at Portmadoc) there was a turn-

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pike, and all who passed through it paid 1d. . . . a young gentleman with a knapsack on his shoulder walking about . . . came up to me . . . He told me that the man at the gate would not let him thro' without his paying 1d., that he had been walking about for sometime and once thought of swimming the river, only that by doing so he knew he should wet his knapsack. I told him that if that was all he wanted I would pass him thro' and so did. He then told me how he had not a penny. He said that three of them were making a walking tour thro' Wales, that they all staid at Tan y Bwlch Hotel last night." This young man had walked down to see the Embankment while the others went direct to Beddgelert where they were to meet. "One acted as treasurer, paid all bills, etc. He, not

thinking he should want any money, not even a penny, before they all met at Beddgelert could not get thro' the gate consequently . . . Neither of us gave our names."

Some years later Samuel Holland's brother, Charles, married Miss Eliza Gaskell ("It was on one of Charles's visits that he fell in love with her"), and after the wedding breakfast at Warrington, Samuel Holland was approached by a young man who recalled the above incident and "stated that he was the young man and not knowing me or who I was, thought so soon as he saw me, that I was the person who freed him thro' the gate and that he was a cousin of the Miss Gaskell that my brother had married."

The picture below is the oldest photograph we have. Its exact date is not known but it is at least 80 years since this group of quarrymen assembled on the hillside. No doubt many of them knew Sam. Holland.



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## Competitions Again

**I**N October last we were able to show some excellent holiday photographs sent in for the Caban competition. This year again we offer prizes for the best three photographs received.

£1 for the first; 15s. for the second; 10s. for the third.

The photographs can be of any subject, but as before general interest and holiday atmosphere, pictorial merit and suitability for reproduction will count.

It is worth while looking at the winning pictures in the October issue again, and reading the comments on them. There is David Owen's "good composition and well-chosen background", T. E. Roberts's "reminiscence of typical holiday spots", Percy Jones's excellent study of an angler. All include a figure, but each is doing something suitable to the surroundings—not just standing in front of a camera. That is only a hint. It does not mean that there must be someone in the picture. For instance, where could you find finer opportunities for pictorial photography than in Wales?

So keep the competition in mind during the summer and see whether you cannot take that photograph that is just that much better than the rest!

You can send in as many entries as you wish. Please write your name and address on the back of each print—clearly but lightly. They should be handed in at the quarry offices by Friday, 25th August.

Again, also, we will offer a prize of £1 for the best holiday essay or story. It can be in Welsh or English on any suitable subject, and it can be of any length up to 500-600 words. We must admit that nobody entered for this last year, but you are not expected to write in a polished professional style as long as you are honest. Why not try this time—and possibly see your effort in print?

The closing date is the same as for the photographs, Friday, 25th August. Name and addresses on all entries, please—and let's see a lot of them.

## A New way in

*(See opposite page)*

**I**F you stand by the top of the main incline near the Oakeley quarry office you look down into a vast pit from which the slate has long since been taken. The opposite side forms a nearly vertical cliff-like face at the bottom of which are the two main mine adits, at this distance looking quite small. That on the right is known as the Arches incline.

Some years ago a mass of this face fell. One huge piece, a great boulder weighing thousands of tons, crashed down dead on to the Arches incline, smashing through the built-up stonework of the incline bed and cracking the arched brickwork in nearby tunnels. Mercifully, it happened at a time when there was nobody about.

That entrance to the mine was thus well and truly blocked. It was important to reopen it again when the ground had settled, and the first thought was to break up the boulder—a costly business as it was of very hard rock, not slate. However, instead of that, it was eventually decided to tunnel through it at the angle of the incline to reconnect the two sides. It proved to be a really tough drilling job. Our photograph shows the new entrance with the boulder itself forming a new arch for the Arches incline.

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# A NEW WAY IN



# NEWS EXCHANGE

## A RARE VISITOR



**MR. E. EMLYN JONES** of the Vetty Quarry Office sends us the following interesting account.

On Thursday, February 9th, following a two or three-day period of severe gales in this district, we found what appeared (to our uninitiated minds) to be a very uncommon member of the bird family near our "C" adit level.

With its plumage of jet black, and a pure white breast; round black head and a long brown bill, and light brown webbed feet—it was indeed a beautiful and graceful bird.

As it was obviously in an exhausted condition, I decided to take it home with me, where every care and affection was lavished upon it immediately by my wife and two daughters—even to the extent of providing the bird with the luxurious use of a large basin of water complete with a supply of wriggling live worms and plenty of crumbs!

At first it appeared as if the bird would really turn on the unaccustomed attention and somewhat questionable diet, because it certainly dived a number of times in the water for the food, but a few hours later it became apparent that it was becoming weaker. Eventually—

it died in the parrot cage we had by then borrowed from a neighbour. As my most intimate friends were at a loss to identify the bird, I decided to send the body to Mr. T. G. Walker, the well-known Welsh ornithologist—an Anglesey schoolmaster, and a regular contributor on bird life to the Welsh press. The rest of the story—and the

solution as to the bird's identity—is contained in the letter I subsequently received from Mr. Walker, translation of which is given below.

Dear Friend,

Many thanks for your letter and for sending the bird along.

It is the Little Auk (*Castro* Bach in Welsh), a rare and uncommon bird, an inhabitant of the far north. It swims, dives, exists on fish, and is by nature a sea bird.

Now this, during the same week, I received the bodies of two other Little Auks—one from Curwen (Merioneth) and the other from Gaerwen (Anglesey); also a letter from Talsarnau (Merioneth) informing me of three similar birds found there. All these were found on the same day as the one in your case at Blaenau Fflameng.

If you recall the wind direction at the time, it is almost certain that they were all blown by the gale from Cardigan Bay.

The Little Auk is the smallest member of the auk family, which include the Razorbill, Puffin, Guillemot and Penguin.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) T. G. WALKER

Hendlas School,

Bodorgan, Anglesey.

*Editor's Note.*—According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the Little Auk takes to the ocean when all the young birds are grown, and together they spend eight months on the stormy North Atlantic south of the Azores. This bird is a source of wealth to the Eskimos, who eat the birds and eggs and make garments from the skin.

★



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## A SMALL WORLD INDEED!

**I**N February, we received a letter from Mr. P. Derrington, a director of Derrington & Sons Ltd., 32 Dartmouth Street, Birmingham, one of the friends in the trade to whom we send a copy of CABAN. He wrote, "I was very interested in the

account, on page 10, of Arthur Evans. Surely this is the same Sgt. 'Taffy' Evans with whom I served for 18 months or more in the 105th British General Hospital in Kent, Normandy and Belgium, and with whom I was in the same 'demob' party. If it is he, please give him my very kind regards; if it is not, you must blame a very striking resemblance for my mistake."

We lost no time in showing this to Arthur Evans, and as you will have guessed he is in very truth that "Sgt.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Thomas who married recently. Ivan is a former member of CABAN. He served for 6 1/2 years with the Royal Signals. He was in Greece as a prisoner of war.

Mrs. Thomas is the daughter of Richard Jones, the quarry painter, also has army connections; she served in the A.T.S. in London for 4 1/2 years. We wish them a long and happy married life.

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"Taffy" Evans". He continues the story by explaining that although in the same "demob" party and intending to exchange addresses, they somehow were separated at Waterloo Station and did not meet again. Needless to say he has written to Mr. Derrington, and Caban is glad to have been the means of putting them in touch with each other again.

The photograph on the preceding page is one taken in the 105th British General Hospital. Mr. Derrington is fifth from the left in the front row, and Mr. Evans fourth from the right in the back row.

**W**E were very sorry to learn that Tom Evans, the Votty engineer (photo below) had gone off to Liverpool for an operation, but glad to know now that he is back again in Blaenau. Everyone will wish him a speedy recovery. We confess we do not know how long these things take, but hope that he will again be enjoying himself at the quarry—as we picture him here—by the time CABAN is published.



## Hen wlad y Gân yw Cymru

*Hen wlad y gân yw Cymru  
Cartrefle'r awen bar,  
Gwlad beirdd a thelynorion,  
Gwlad deurion fel y dur;  
Rhyfelwyr anorchfygol  
A fagodd Cymru fu,  
Mae'i hybryd etsi'n araf  
Yng ngwael y Cymry sy'*

*Cyfeir:—Hen wlad y gân yw Cymru,  
Cartrefle'r awen bar,  
Gwlad beirdd a thelynorion,  
Gwlad deurion fel y dur.*

*Hen wlad y gân yw Cymru,  
Er gwaethaf llid a brad,  
Mae'i meibion megis cewri  
Di-ildio yn y gad;  
Gwrthafent eu gelynyon  
Yn bybyr lawer gwaith,  
Aberthent waed eu calon  
Er mwyn eu gwlad a'u hiaith.*

*Hen wlad y gân yw Cymru  
Er nad oes ganddi scdd,  
Mae'i bechgyn a'i genethod  
Yn llawn o loen a heidd?  
Er lleiddu tannau'r delyn  
Gan gwynfe y deurion fu,  
Mae'i hybryd etsi'n araf  
Yng ngwael y Cymry sy'*

*Hen wlad y gân yw Cymru  
Er colli nod y ddraig;  
Hen wlad y gân fydd Cymru  
Tra chwery tonnau'r aig;  
Mae adlais ei hen delyn  
Ar adain denau'r gwynf  
Yn dwyn i'm côf a'm calon  
Alawon Cymru gynt.*

**ROBERT OWEN**

(*Glan Pryor*)

Robert Owen, a native of Trawsfynydd, was a notable poet in his day. His songs were often heard at concerts in Wales. He worked at the Middle Quarry. Died, 20th August, 1876.

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# QUARRY STORIES

## (STRAEON Y CHWAREL)

Sent in by J. W. JONES

**P**ETH cyffredin yn y chwarelau lawer blwyddyn yn ôl oedd gweled rhai gweithwyr yn colli dyddiau o waith a mynd "ar eu spri". Eisteddent i yfed yn y tafarnau y naill ddydd ar ôl y llall, a gwario y cwbl o'u harian. Collai un hen frawd diddan ei waith yn aml, a blinodd y Prif oruchwyliwr ar ei geryddu. Dywedodd wrtho "os y gwelaf di yn dyfod o dŷ tafarn eto, ni adawaf iti weithio yn y chwarel hon eto".



Aeth yr hen weithiwr at ei waith yn edifeiriol gan addaw troi dalen.

Ymhen yr wythnos gwelodd y swyddog ef, yn dyfod o un o dafarnau y dref, a bore drannoeth galwodd ar y troseddwr ato i'r swyddfa. Wedi iddo ei geryddu am dorri ei air ac yfed diodydd meddwol, trôdd yr hen weithiwr ato a dywedodd wrtho "chwarae teg imi Mr. Roberts, nid yfed diodydd meddwol a wneuthum pan welsoch fi yn dyfod o'r *Baltic Hotel*, ond mynd yno i setlo yr hên account a wneuthum".

**A**NAFODD bachgen ifanc ei fys ym Melin Pen y bont, ac wedi i'r meddyg ei archwilio yn fanwl, credodd mai y peth gorau oedd ei ddatgymalu. Ar ôl y driniaeth lem, gofynnodd y bachgen i'r meddyg "ydach chi yn meddwl Doctor y medraf fi chwarae piano?" "Medri'n iawn meddai yntau".

"Wel, dyna fi wedi eich dal yn dweud celwydd, nid wyf fi erioed wedi dysgu!"

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# STRAEON Y CHWAREL (Contd.)

**BYDDAI** yr hen chwarelwyr yn rai hoff o gnoi baco, a byddai ambell un yn ei waith yn begio oddi ar ei gydweithwyr. Aeth un o'r cyfryw at hen fachgen diddan i ofyn am "flewyn o faco". "Dywed wrthyf fi a roddais i beth iti o'r blaen?" "Naddo" meddai hwnnw.

"Dos i ffwrdd, nid oes arnaf eisiau ychwaneg o gwmeriaid newydd."



**CELCIO.** Arferiad fu mewn bri gan yr hen weithwyr gynt, oedd celcio rhyw ran o'u cyflogau. Nid oeddynt yn hoffi i'w gwragodd wybod. Er hynny byddai ambell wraig yn cael golwg ar y "guddfan" mewn ffordd annisgwyl!

Wedi i hen frau guddio sofran felen ym mhoced rhyw hen dopcot a hongiai mewn adeilad gerllaw ei dy, cafodd lonydd da am spel! Pan yn dychwel o'r chwarel ar brynhawn braf, gwelodd yr hen dopcot wedi cael ei golchi ac yn hongian ar y lein dillad yn yr ardd!

"Beth oeddet ti yn colli amser i olchi yr hen dopcot yna Betsan, ni wnaif byth ei gwisgo!"

"Wyddost ti beth Robin", meddai hithaw. "Fe dalodd yr hen dopcot yn well imi am ei golchi na wnaeth dim byd cryoed weldi."



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# ANRHEG O LYFRAU

Y dydd o'r blaen, derbyniawom air sydd yn dipyn o galonddid inni oddiwrth wr cwnog y gwyr ein darllenwyr yn dda lawn amdano—gwr y cawsom ni yn y Foty y fraint o'i gyfarfed pan ymwelodd a'i hen ardal rhyw ddwy flynedd yn ol. Mewn gwirionedd, mae'n anodd gwybod sut i gyfeirio'n lawn at Mr. Llewelyn Wyn Griffith. Gwyddom amdano fel awdur llyfrau lawer, darlledydd poblogaidd ers blynyddoedd yng Nghymru a Lloegr, ysgrifennydd Cymdeithas y Cymrodorion, aelod o wahanol gynghorau ynglyn a Chymru, ac yn y blaen—a hyn i gyd, cofier, er ei fod yn dilyn galwedigaeth pob dydd fel Arolygdd ei Fawrhydi yn adran y Dreth Incwm! Fel y gellir tybio'n hawdd, mae'n wr prysur a llawer o alwadau arno, ond er hynny i gyd, ni bu yn ol o anfon atom i ddatgan ei ddiddordeb yn "Y Cahan" ac i'n lloogyfarch yn gynnes lawn, a diolchwn o galon lddo am hynny.

Ar yr un pryd, derbyniwyd parcel yn cynnwys dau ddwsln o lyfrau ar amrywiaeth o bynciau—yr oll yn Gymraeg—oddiwrth Mr. Wyn Griffith. Yn sicr, bydd y rhain yn ychwanegiad gwerthfawr a ddiddorol at y llyfrau sydd eisoes yn llyfrgell y Clwb, ac anogwn ein cyd-weithwyr i wneud defnydd ohonynt.

Ar ran y Clwb, carem ddal ar y cyfle yma i gyflwyno ein diolchgarwch diffuant i Mr. Wyn Griffith am ei garedigrwydd. (Yn anffodus, mae golod yn rhy brin i nodi'r llyfrau dderbyniwyd, ond bydd rhestr gyflawn i'n chael yn llyfrgell y Clwb.)

## *No Joints!*

(See back cover)

This has nothing to do with anatomy, nor with the butcher. We thought that some of our non-quarrying readers might like a word of explanation about the picture on the back cover.

The rockman, in getting out his blocks of slate, takes the utmost advantage of any natural cracks or joints in the rock, but often, especially on the lower floors at the Cuckley quarry, these have to be made in the solid rock. Slate splits fairly readily, as you probably know, on two planes, one, parallel with the face, the other from top to bottom down through it. Usually a third joint is necessary across the face of the rock before slabs can be removed. This is done by "cutting", and our photograph shows Stanley Owen and David Emlyn Lewis cutting such a joint.

Using a wooden staging as they are working some way up the underground chamber they have mounted a 3-in. diameter bar horizontally and parallel to the rock face. This carries two heavy drifters or rock-drills, and the line of holes made by these drills (2½-in. or 2¾-in. diameter and as close together as possible) can be seen in the picture. These holes are about six feet deep and you will realise that it is essential that they be kept parallel with each other. The remaining rock between the holes is broken out with a breaching tool, thus leaving a cut right across the rock.

It is slower, of course, than the splitting of the rock on the other planes by light charges of powder, but it saves much valuable rock that by blasting methods would be smashed and rendered worthless.





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## CHANNELLING

(See previous page)

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