

# CABAN



OCTOBER 1949



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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.,  
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● The Front Cover of our last issue showed a Caban underground. This time, we show one of the Cabanau attached to a Mill. For the benefit of any readers outside the Quarries, a "Caban" is a mess-room; but it is also a centre of communal life, and the place in which news and views are exchanged. Hence the title of this Magazine.







## Part 2 THE MILL

## FFESTINIOG SLATE

*An article which continues the fascinating story of Ffestiniog Slate . . . as the great slabs are reduced, by the skill of those who work on them, to the sizes and shapes in which they are needed, the world over . . .*

In our last issue we showed how the slate is won from the depths of the earth and brought to the surface. We left it as it comes into its first glimpse of daylight. Now, we take up the story again, as the slabs pass to the Mills, where they will be split and dressed into the slates that serve millions of houses, all over the country and abroad as well. . . .

Much has been done to it already, but the story is less than half told. Much more remains before it is converted to a form suitable for the use of man.

As it is unloaded from the trolleys on which it is brought to the surface, yet another aspect of the skill of the rockmen far below becomes apparent. Though the original blasting may have brought down large blocks of slate, far too big to be

handled to the surface, these have already been reduced to a size that will travel on the inclines, and on the trucks of the Diesel trains which now take them over and transport them to the mill. Later, when the splitters and dressers get to work, we shall see that the rockman was thinking farther ahead still; knowing all the characteristics of the slate . . . how and where it will split, and where on the other hand it is most likely to give trouble . . . he has borne in mind, from the start, the best size and shape into which it can ultimately be transformed. From the beginning this mental picture has guided him in his endeavour to send up a slab which will give the least work and trouble to his "opposite numbers" in the Mill on the surface.





But that is jumping ahead of our own story. The slabs still have to make their way to the Mill—which in itself is not always an easy journey; to get to the mills at Oakeley, for instance, they have to pass up yet another incline, this time in the open air, before they come to the required level.

But, one way or another, they do reach it—a long, low, grey building—deceptively quiet and free from activity outside but busy as a beehive within. Through the door go the slabs, to be unloaded into the most convenient position for the

particular team which is now going to begin work on them.

The first thing that has to be done is to reduce them in size yet again, for they are not anything like ready for the splitter. Wedges are driven into the body of the slab until it splits into the required (and incidentally much more handleable) proportions and so the slabs pass on to the sawing table.

Imagine a heavy iron table, honey-combed with holes rather like a giant dog-biscuit; through a slot in it project the teeth of a wicked-looking circular saw. The slabs are firmly wedged in position . . . the mechanism is started . . . and the table, an inch at a time, slowly moves the slabs against the teeth of the saw, until one after the other they have been neatly severed. For the benefit of any readers who have not seen a saw-table, this is (as we hope the millmen themselves will agree) a pretty good rough-and-ready picture of the steel saw type.

Then there are the diamond saws, bigger machines with whirling steel discs studded at the edges with industrial diamonds which can bite rapidly into the thickest slabs, working in a haze of spray from the lavish supply of cooling water forced on to them.

The saw tables are big, and so the first thing that strikes your eye when you go into the mill may be the machinery rather than the man—a line of tables, plus a lot of overhead belting which drives the various machines. But, in fact, the machinery is simply hiding the men who perform the most skilled part of the operation; as you walk between the tables you will see, beyond them, the splitters and dressers for whose work everything else is a mere preparation.

Taking the cut slab, the splitter looks over it with a critical eye; settles himself



## INTO THE MILL COMES A NEW "AIR-CONDITIONING" PLANT

more firmly on his wooden stool; takes a mallet in one hand and a splitting tool in the other; and—well, the slate seems to fall apart of its own accord the moment his hands begin to move.

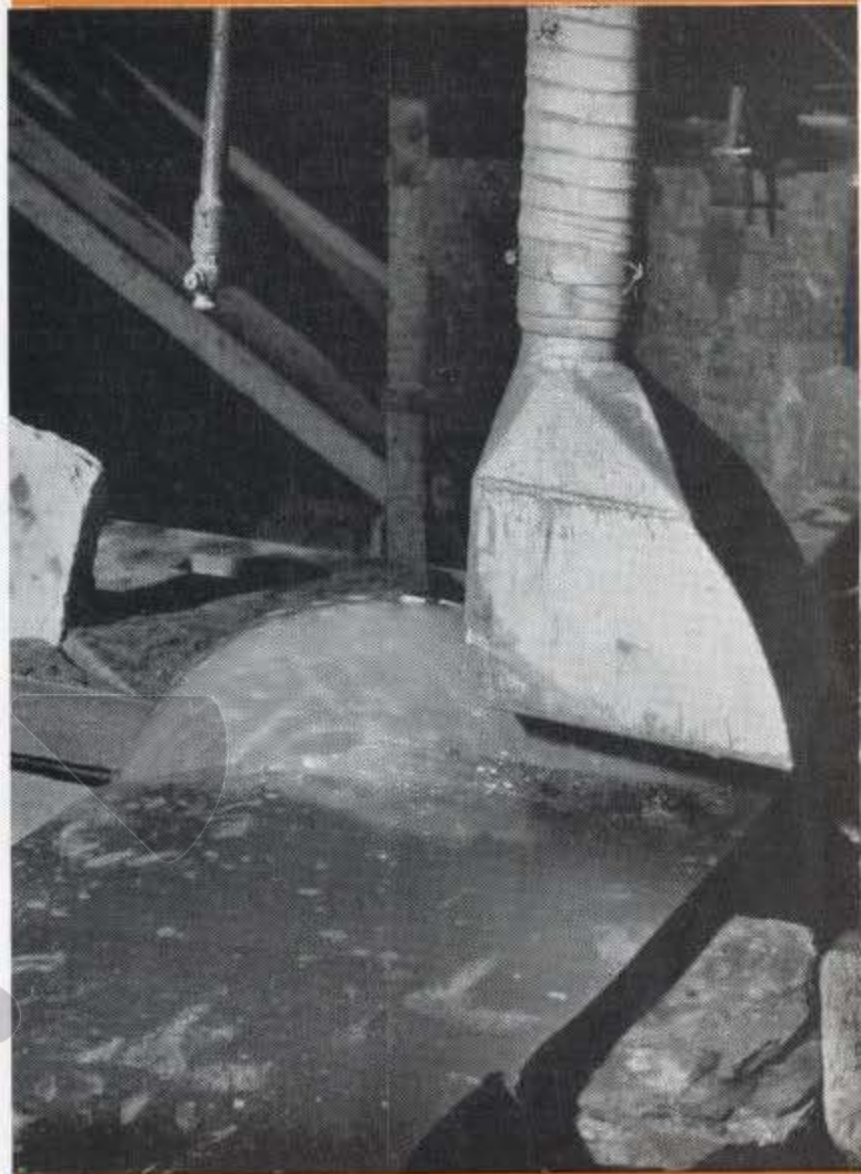
Most splitters are modest; they tell you that all they are doing is to make use of the natural structure of the material, very much as a carpenter can make use of the grain of his wood. They don't tell you the long practice that has gone into it before they became proficient; nor do they go into details about the skill of eye which enables them to turn out a pile of slates which will be even and uniform, in thickness and in size, almost without thinking about it. But so it happens. The slates are ready for the dressing machine—giant, slowly rotating knives, in whose jaws the rough edges are lopped off and each slate reduced to its originally intended size.

It remains to pass them outside, ready for selecting and thence for despatch to the districts all over Britain in which Ffestiniog slate is still a by-word.

The job is done. The product is the best in the world. But you may come out into the air again (if you are a stranger to mill work, that is) feeling a bit bewildered about what you have seen. The contrasts are so great . . . the speed of hand, the sureness of eye; and yet, there's something almost traditional about the setting. A mill has a character of its own; it's a place no factory can equal or imitate. It's one of the places where true craftsmanship is being carried on in this twentieth century.

*The pictures on the right of this page show one of the most recent and most modern innovations in that place of contrasts—the Mill. They illustrate the new dust-catching and air-cleaning plant already installed in one of our Mills, and soon to be introduced in the others.*

*The idea of such a plant is no new thing. Many experiments have been made over a period of years. Most of our readers will remember the experimental plants which were installed by our own engineers. The new plant was designed in the light of experience gained from all these experiments. It was the joint work of our own technicians and of a leading firm of air-conditioning consultants.*



**DUST IS PICKED UP FROM THE  
TABLES AND CARRIED THROUGH  
THE PIPES . . . . .**





# Mr. Robens Inspects New Dust Plant

*"Remarkable Results . . . Pass All My Expectations . . ."*

Just before this issue of CABAN went to press, the Votty Quarry was honoured by a visit from Mr. Alfred Robens, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power, to see for himself the dust-extractor plant which is described and illustrated on the preceding page.

*"I had expected to find some improvement," Mr. Robens said after his inspection, "but what I have seen passes all my expectations. Results are remarkable."*

With Mr. Robens were a party consisting of Mr. Scholes (Mr. Robens' Private Secretary), Mr. E. A. Sheany (health and welfare expert of the Ministry), Mr. W. Staton (the Ministry's expert on dust suppression), Mr. E. H. Frazer (Divisional Inspector of Mines) and Mr. W. M. Thomas (North Wales Inspector of Mines). They were conducted round the mills and chambers by the quarry officials, headed by Mr. H. Cutts.

Mr. Robens chatted with a number of

the people who were working on their everyday jobs—for there had been no "spit and polish" or special preparations before this visit. From them he learned at first hand how slate is handled and prepared, and what effects the new dust suppression apparatus is producing. One of those with whom he talked was Robert J. Jones—who has nearly 45 years' experience of slate. The party's tour was not confined to the surface. Before visiting the mills they had been underground, to see the dust extractors in use on the drills in the chambers.

Before leaving, Mr. Robens had a word to say about the importance of our Industry in the modern world. "It is vitally important," he said, "that this industry should be kept going at full pressure. There are great prospects for it—and the prosperity of Blaenau Ffestiniog depends on it." Mr. Robens concluded by saying that he thought that the quarries deserved a word of appreciation for what was being done for the welfare of those who work in them.



THE OFFICIAL PARTY IN THE MILL. Experts from the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and officials of the Quarries, look with interest at the recently-installed dust extraction plant during the visit described on this page.



# BLAENAU FFESTINIOG

*Another aspect of life in "Our Town" in days gone by is revealed in the diary of Samuel Holland  
—one of the founders of our Quarries, who lived near Blaenau more than 100 years ago.*

For centuries, the life of the Ffestiniog district went on simply as a country area. The people farmed and lived and died, without knowing that there lay under their feet as they walked the mountains a remarkable rock formation which would one day roof the houses of the world. From Roman times onwards, slates were used for roofing, but they were never worked on a big scale. There are few records as to when the very first slate quarrying operations began in North Wales. Some tell one story, some tell another. What is certain is that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, quarrying was already in full swing. In Ffestiniog itself, work began somewhere between 1755 and 1765, at Diphwys quarry.

## **How "Oakeley" Began . . .**

Early in the last century two men—Michael Humble and Samuel Holland—were interested in mining and the sale of slates; and in 1819, riding over to inspect his Quarry at Cefn du Mountain, Mr. Holland was told by his manager that there was "a very good prospect of a Slate Quarry at Rhiwbryfdir in the parish of Ffestiniog. He therefore went over to look at the place where only two or three men were at work, getting slates for covering cottages in the neighbourhood."

So wrote Samuel Holland—a man who was himself to play a big part in the development of the Quarries—and went on: "It was on Mr. Oakeley's estate. He (Mr. O.) being the owner of Rhiwbryfdir. My father liked the appearance of the place, rocks, etc.—he applied to Mr. Oakeley for a Take Note (liberty to try and work there) this Mr. O. granted him for three

years. He immediately set them to work to try the rocks. . . ."

At the outset the amount of slate produced from what was in fact virgin ground was not large. Partly, perhaps, this was due to the management; for, says Holland Jnr. later on in his notebook:—

## **Sam Holland Arrives . . .**

"My father . . . sent over a man from Liverpool, one Peter Whitehead, to look after all, pay the things, and report to him how all progressed and the prospects of a quarry; this man lived at the Grapes Hotel in Maentwrog. My father occasionally went over to Wales to see how matters were going on, and was satisfied that the prospect of a slate quarry at Rhiwbryfdir was good, but he was not satisfied with Whitehead's conduct."

It was in March 1821 that Mr. Holland, evidently getting rather tired of the whole business, sent for his son Samuel to follow him to Wales. The route was difficult and young Sam contrived to get himself into a number of minor adventures on the way; but, one morning, he arrived safely at the Pengwern Arms. That evening "my father gave me instructions what I was to do—to learn the art of Quarrying, look after the men, etc.—and added that if I could get lodgings at some decent house it would be better than staying in the hotel. He introduced me to the three gentlemen who were constant visitors at the hotel. After breakfast the next morning he rode off to Liverpool, leaving me to my own devices. I was then 18 years old. . . ."

He seems to have been a little lost and lonely in his new situation; but lodgings he found, with



the widow of a former clergyman, in a small cottage half a mile below the village. The terms, for bedroom and use of parlour, with four meals, washing and mending, totalled 12/- a week (and, he says, "I almost think they were ready to take less.").

### ***The First Wharf . . .***

At this time, the slates made in the quarry were carried in little carts to a wharf called Pen Trwyn y garnedd on the riverside "a mile or a little more below the Tan y Bwlch Hotel." This was about 6 miles from the quarry.

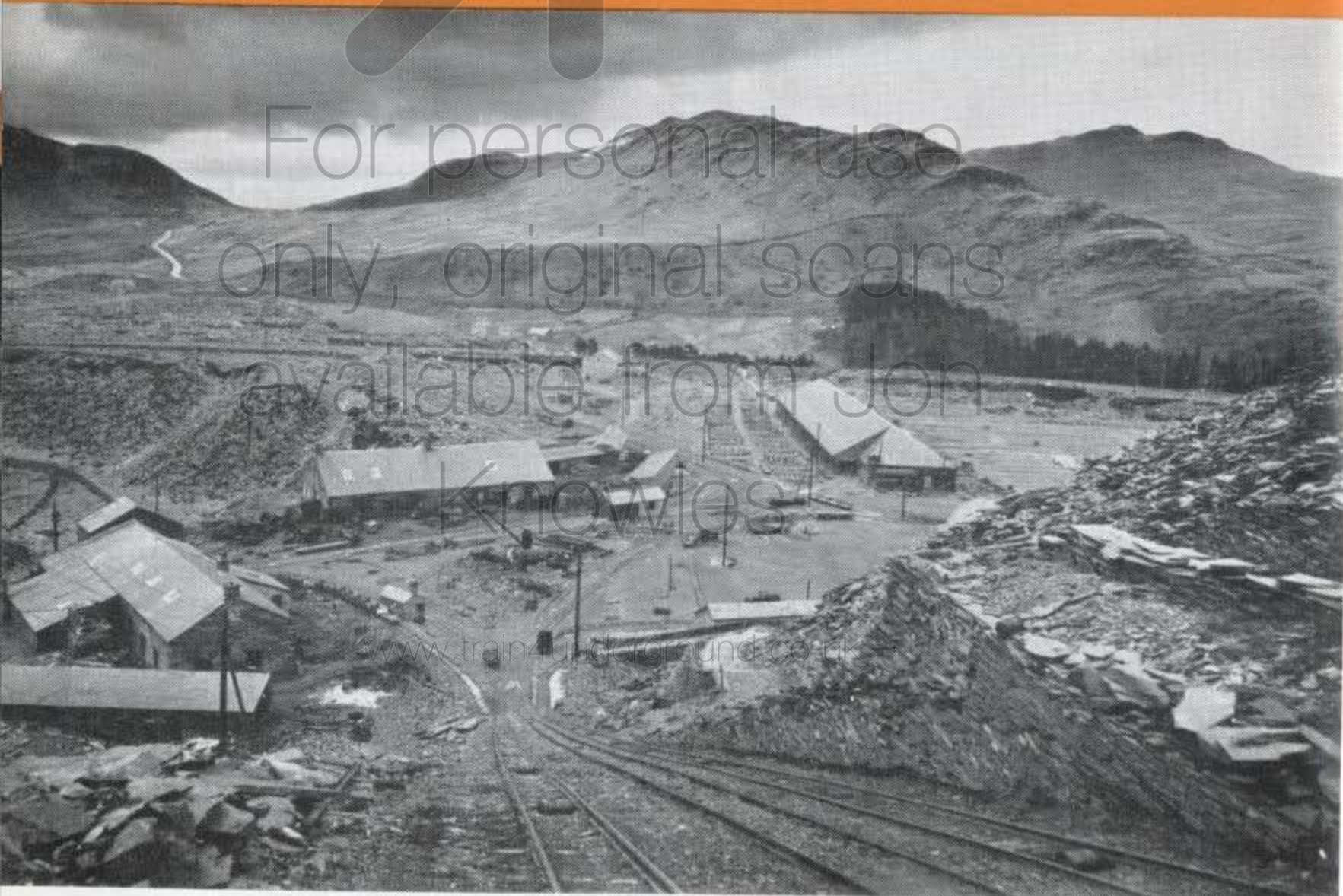
Young Sam Holland spent a good deal of time circulating between one place and the other—mostly on foot—but the Manager was not apparently so keen on his job. "Whitehead I saw very little use of and heard such sad accounts of him, that I wrote and told my father, so he recalled him to Liverpool and discharged him."

Near the wharf was an old cottage, which had once been used as a turnpike, on the road to Portmadoc. This, Holland rented from Mr. Oakeley and decided to make it his home.

This coming, more or less by chance in the first place, of a man who was afterwards to become one of the most prominent characters in the district, was in itself a landmark in the story of Ffestiniog Slate. Much of the future history of the industry was due to his shaping. And another milestone (though unrealised at the time) was passed by this decision to settle himself down in the district on a more or less permanent basis.

Little weights turn big scales—and obviously young Holland was a man who liked to have his household and his surroundings firmly established. So, the people who helped him to settle down and make himself at home must share some credit for the future course of events too. He had, in the early stages, some difficulty in finding any suitable housekeeper to look after his home while he spent his time at the quarries. First came a young Welsh-speaking woman, "but she was as desirous of learning English as I was for learning Welsh, so we did not get on very well together." Having learned that her ambition was to get a place in Liverpool, he prudently passed her on with a recommendation

## **THE QUARRIES . . HUB OF BLAENAU'S COMMERCIAL EXISTENCE**



*The inclines . . . the mills . . . the finished slates . . . the tip. And, behind it all, the mountains. A view which, we think, is typical of the quarries today.*



to his mother—thereby making room for a groom, with his wife and family, from Maentwrog; but as the groom's family increased, the room became insufficient for both him and his master; and young Holland had reluctantly to give them notice.

How he actually found a permanent housekeeper is a story in itself. "Being on the look-out and enquiring for a housekeeper," he writes, "I saw as I was riding up to Tan y Bwlch on the way to my quarry a clergyman (whom I just knew) coming down the hill near the mill and following him was a woman running down the hill. When she overtook the clergyman she took his hat off and boxed his ears, then returned to the T. Bwlch Hotel with the hat. As I always called at the hotel when passing to see if there were any letters for me, the Post Office being there, I remarked to the landlady (Miss Williams) the circumstance I had just witnessed; she said, that impertinent fellow had called and asked for his breakfast; the waitress, not knowing his character, judging from his appearance that he was a clergyman and respectable, immediately served him with breakfast—and went into the room occasionally to see did he require more toast or anything—but on going into the room the last time, she observed that he was not there but on looking out thro' the window, she observed him walking quickly down the hill towards the mill so she immediately ran after him, overtook him and did as I have mentioned, the hat she said was then in the bar and he should not have it unless he called and paid for his breakfast. I remarked that she seemed a bold active servant. Miss Williams remarked that she was an excellent one, but was intending to leave them as she did not like hotel work. . . ."

### **Half a Century Begins . . .**

That box on the ear was a bad one for the imitation clergyman, but a good one for the waitress—who within 24 hours had been engaged by Holland and stayed with him for nearly half a century.

★ ★ ★

*This first article sets the stage in the story of Ffestiniog slate, and the Oakeley and Votty Quarries. It is the beginning of a story which marks the foundation of the industry in which we are all engaged. Sam Holland's journal is full of interest: and more extracts from it—together with the details of what was going on elsewhere in the world of Slate—will appear in future issues of CABAN.*

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## **LATER IN BLAENAU'S STORY**

### ***A Readers' Recollections . . .***

We have received from Mr. John Lewis Arnold, of Portmadoc, a photograph taken many years ago; it shows, he tells us, some of the veteran stevedores who were at one time employed at the Portmadoc wharves by Oakeley Slate Quarries.

Two of the men shown in the photograph, John Pritchard and John Arnold, are still alive to-day.



Mr. Arnold explains that the photograph was taken in the days when the slate trade was in full swing at Portmadoc. At this time the Oakeley Quarries operated three wharves, which handled three or four consignments of slate from Ffestiniog every day. Also, the narrow gauge railway from Ffestiniog was kept busy transporting passengers and all kinds of goods traffic.

These old stevedores loaded every kind of vessel, of every nationality, for all parts of the world, with slates ranging in tonnage from 80 tons to 400 tons.

They were so interested in their work and the ships they were loading that they could name ships, waiting in Caernarvon Bay for the tide to turn, by their rig and their way of sailing.

Although they knew what it was to work from six in the morning to six at night, these men had their pastimes—some doing a bit of gardening, one farming and another sail-making.

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HIS WAS A BIG JOB . . .



*Our Sports Secretary has had a busy time of it !*

In our last issue, CABAN told its readers something about the history and progress of the Oakeley Club. Here it is again! Club corner is, in fact, going to be a regular feature.

### **Annual General Meeting . . .**

This was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Hugh Griffith Hughes (Vice-President of the Club).

An account of the Club's first year was given by Mr. Cadfan Hughes (Chairman, Executive Committee), in the course of which he made a strong appeal to the younger members to give the Club their full support and take every advantage of its facilities. He thanked the Committee and the Officials for their co-operation, and also the staff of the Oakeley office for their advice and help on many occasions.

The accounts presented by Mr. Dennis Roberts, showed a balance in hand at the end of the year of £55 2s. 11d. The accounts were audited by Mr. Emlyn Jones, and a vote of thanks was recorded to him for his work.

The officials were then elected for the coming year—President, Sir Charles Oakeley, Bt.; Vice-Presidents, Mr. H. Cutts and Mr. Hugh Griffith Hughes; Secretaries, Mr. John O. Williams and Mr. J. D. Barlow; Treasurer, Mr. Dennis Roberts.

## **Oakeley Club**

*CABAN sums up a*

### **The New Committee . . .**

The Committee (of representatives from Oakeley and from Votty and Bowydd) was then elected—Messrs. Humphrey Morris, David Lewis, Thomas Williams, John L. Williams, William H. Thomas, David G. Jones, David G. Owen, Cadfan Hughes, Edward Jones, John G. Hughes, Richard Jones, Harry Parry, Iorwerth Roberts, Hugh G. Jones, G. W. Humphreys, Humphrey Lewis, John Evans, Idwal Jones, Handel Roberts, Richard D. Jones. At the first meeting of this Committee, Mr. Humphrey Lewis was elected Chairman.

So much for the formalities. Next, for the transformation that has been made outside the Club premises—in the surrounding grounds. Someone in the Quarry mentioned "Quoits" . . . and someone also recalled how Quoits used to be a very popular game in Blaenau, which the older generation of quarrymen used to play. But latterly the interest had died down, probably through lack of opportunity.

### **Down with the Trees . . . !**

Well, you have only to say something like that in the hearing of a member of the Sports Committee, and the chances are that he will take it as a personal challenge to get something done about it. That's what happened this time; and before long a party of enthusiastic volunteers were preparing a Quoits field by the Club. Which may sound simple, until you realise that it involved cutting down a few trees, returfing quite a large area, and surfacing with clay the part of the pitch where the peg stands. Work was made more difficult too by the drought—which made both the ground itself and the clay surfacing material hard and difficult to work with. But the job was done, and after a few "friendly" games to get everyone's eye in, the Committee organised a championship and Inter-Quarry Competition for members of Oakeley and Votty (for report and results see "News Exchange").

The other big outdoor event of the summer season was the first sports meeting, at which



# More Developments . . .

## *Successful Season—and Looks Ahead.*

a good attendance of Oakeley and Votty people turned out to cheer on their friends and families. The sports themselves with their results are reported elsewhere in this number.

### Whist Once Again . . .

What else has the sports committee up its sleeve? First and foremost, the accent is on football. A Quarry team is to be formed, for the more experienced players; and (an unusual idea which we think other Industrial teams could well copy) it's hoped to establish a "nursery" for young players. There's a host of footballing talent on the junior side, waiting to be developed.

So much for outdoor events. Now what about the inside—where members naturally tend to turn for the bulk of their entertainment in winter. Well, all the old favourites are returning. The ever-popular Whist Drives have opened up again for the winter season, with a handsome prize list. Darts enthusiasts are to have competitions of their own, as well as sending out a team to meet other Clubs. On the Billiards side, the big

event of the year is again the competition for the Mrs. Inge Cup; but inter-quarry events will also be arranged, while an "Oakeley Club" team will challenge teams from other clubs in the district.

The W.E.A. discussion group which proved so popular last season is back again on this year's programme; and a special drive is being made to get the Library really established after a promising beginning last year; the Executive Committee have granted a sum of money for the purchase of new books, on varied subjects likely to be of general interest to all members.

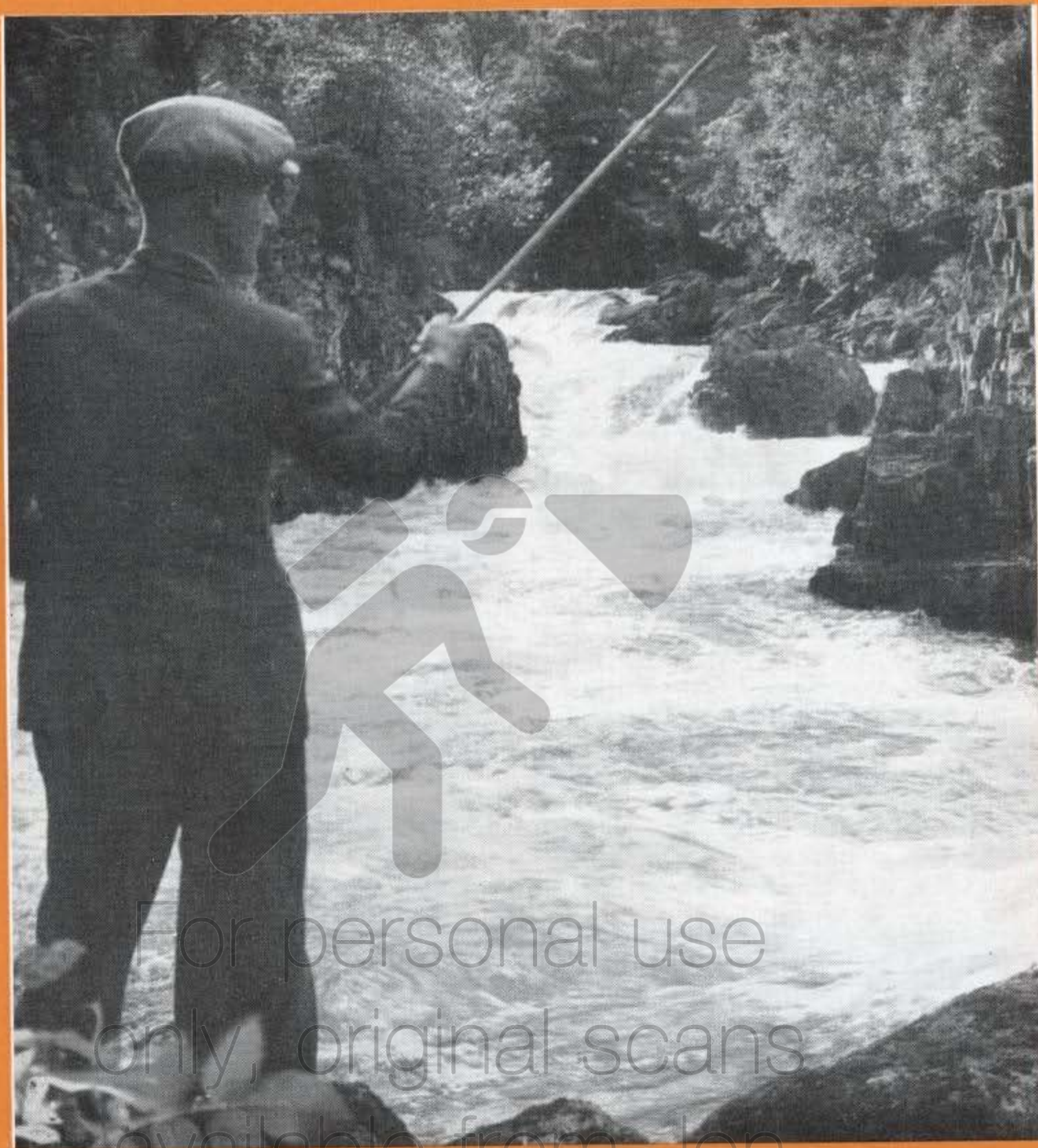
There's a project, too, for an Exhibition of crafts and hobbies, which would give everyone a chance to show the skill which has already been exhibited to some extent in the photographs in this and the previous issue of CABAN.

Finally, the other two highlights of the last season—the Eisteddfod and Nosen Lawen—are to be repeated, and everyone who attended them previously will be looking forward to two more really successful evenings.



SEEN AT THE SPORTS—a happy group of Oakeley and Votty enthusiasts.





FIRST PRIZE—David G. Owen, for this outdoor study

## THE COMPETITION RESULTS

Here we publish the results of the Photographic Competition held during the summer months. This was a magnificent summer for snapshotting and many of our readers took their cameras with them on holiday. We think you will like to see what they brought back with them ; and so we are reproducing here the three prize-winners.

To those who *didn't* win, our regrets this time and best wishes for a future contest. We hope that our Competition gave an extra interest and incentive to your photography this summer.



# Summer Photo Competition

## THE RUNNERS-UP



SECOND PRIZE—T. E. Roberts (Storekeeper, Votty)

Angling—as we discovered when preparing another article for this issue—was prominent in many readers' holiday plans. So it's appropriate that two out of the three prizewinners should have a fishing flavour, and the other has something to do with water too. We don't know what happened to the line from Isaac Morgan's rod, in the picture which won first prize for David G. Owen; but we took this as a bit of "photographer's licence" and awarded him the prize for good composition and a well-chosen background. Percy Jones's study of an angler is excellent, but the surrounding scenery is less clear. T. E. Roberts' study we picked, as a reminiscence which will remind many of us of typical holiday spots—in many different places.



THIRD PRIZE—Percy Jones, Dolwyddelan



# OAKELEY ON SHOW AT "THE NATIONAL"

*Quarries' Exhibit is Seen By Many Thousands of Visitors . . . .*

Time was when the National Eisteddfod was a big event in the slatemaking year. Some of our older readers may remember the Competitions in the Crafts Section, for slate splitting—and the rivalry they caused throughout North Wales. For months beforehand, eyes were open everywhere for the most promising slabs of slate . . . and, rumour having it that such things were not incapable of disappearing, when other enthusiastic competitors were around,

the owner of a really first-class piece would bury it in the ground, or hide it in some remote spot until the date of the contest.

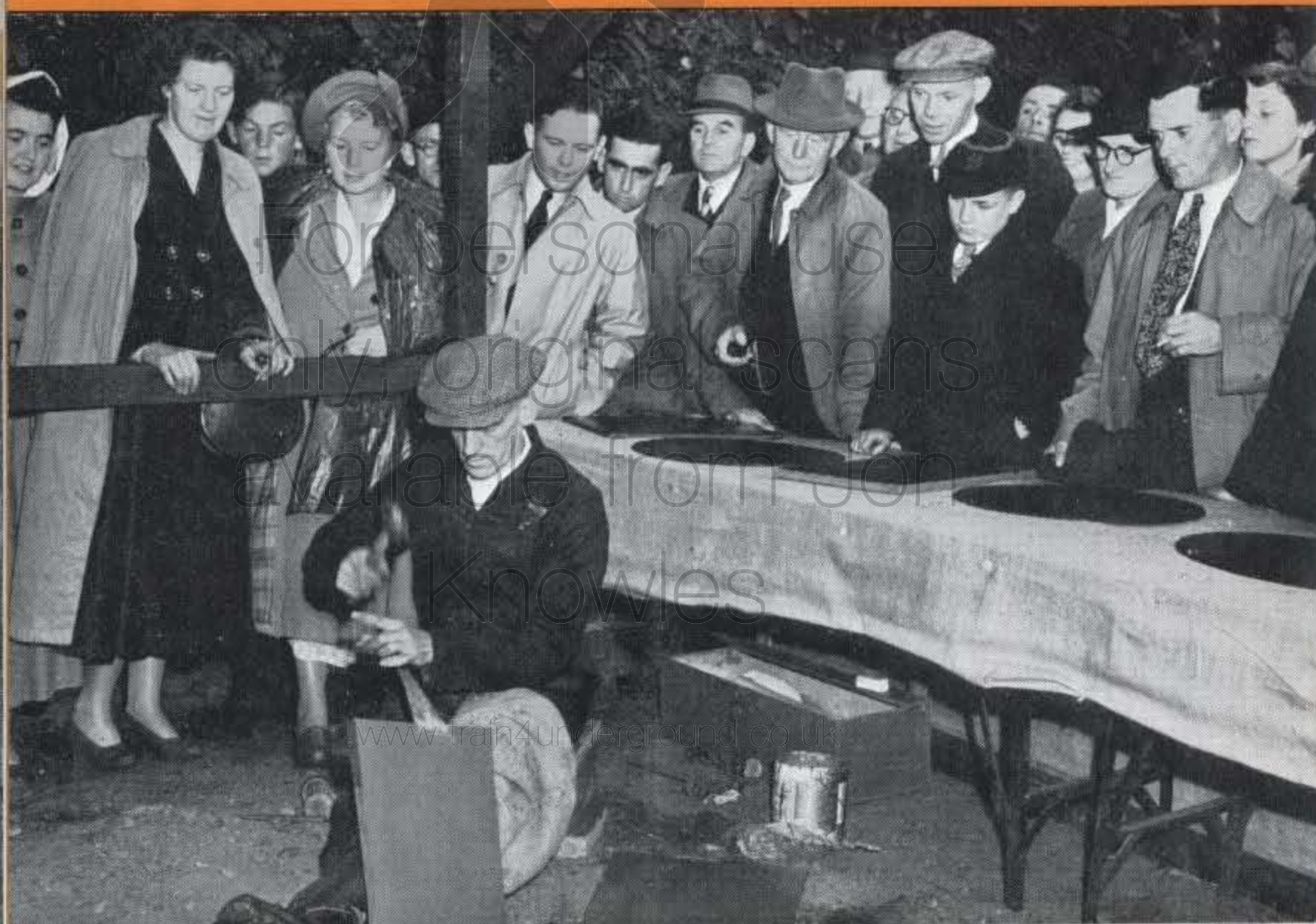
Those days are over. No more are there awards for Champion Splitters. But some of the old tradition was revived when, this year, the Quarries were asked to produce an exhibit for the Exhibition in the grounds of the "National" at Dolgelley.

The two who went with a dressing machine and a lorryload of slabs, to show what Blaenau can do and how we do it, were Philip Owen and Robert Thomas Jones. And their display of splitting and dressing rapidly became a major attraction.

Altogether, some 11,000 people watched the exhibition; there were times, say our demonstrators, when it felt as though they were all gathered round our stand at once!

By everyone who saw it, the display was voted an outstanding success and more than worth while. It isn't every day that we have a chance of showing the general public what the traditional industry of Blaenau really means in skill and experience. Eleven thousand people will go back to their homes with a new respect for those slates under which they have spent a lifetime without giving them a second thought.

**THIS WAS THE STAND THAT DREW ALL EYES . . .**



So great was the interest in the display of splitting and dressing that it had to be carried on as an almost "non stop" performance whenever the Eisteddfod grounds were open.

**. . . AND THESE WERE THE MEN THEY WERE WATCHING**



Back at work, the men who showed the public "how the job is done," exchange a reminiscence of the days of "The National"—when they were the centre of all eyes.



# How I spent my holiday

## Some Oakeley and Votty Enthusiasts look back to the Happy Days of Summer

*Holidays are a fading memory, now—but here's an article that will help to keep that memory green through the winter.*

Elsewhere in this issue you will find details and reports of all the organised Summer events at Oakeley and Votty. But we thought that perhaps this doesn't go far enough—that it would be interesting, too, to find out what some of our members have been doing on their ordinary week-ends this summer; and particularly what they do with their Annual Holiday.

### *We Meet the Anglers*

So, just before the holiday began, we wandered round the Cabanau, Chambers and Mills, chatting to the people we met about their plans for the next week. And after it was all over we did the same thing again, to check up with some of those we had interviewed, on how things had worked out for them.

The first thing we found, as might have been expected, was that angling played a large part in the programme. When tourists come from all over the world to fish our North Wales lakes and rivers, it would be strange, indeed, if the fascination did not catch hold of the people who live within a stone's throw of their banks. And so talk of fish, and flies, and favourite spots, took up the major part of more conversations than we can record here.

Many of the details about fishing in and around Blaenau we picked up from Robert Thomas Jones, Secretary of the Cambrian Angling Association. In duty hours he works in Oakeley Mill, and the greater part of the 180-odd membership of the Association are quarrymen too. Robert Thomas is "more of a heron than a man" (says one of his friends)—so fond of the sport that on week-ends when the quarry is closed for the month-end Saturday, he goes off on a Friday evening and fishes throughout the night. He is one of the real enthusiasts who make their own flies, and tried to describe to us the intricate combinations of feathers, wool and silk which will tempt the big ones to rise. But it's something that only experience can teach; he himself picked up the knack when he was "so high" and it's become second nature to him.

Another of the fly-fishing fraternity is David Simon Roberts (rockman, Oakeley) whose particular hunting ground is Gamallt Lake, where he goes every week. His biggest angling memory is landing a 4-lb. trout.

But don't think that Oakeley has the monopoly of successful anglers.

When we saw Robert Thomas, he was hoping to get in a spell at his favourite spot during holiday week. But as he was one of the demonstrators chosen to represent the quarries at the National Eisteddfod, his time was pretty short this year. You'll read about the "National" side of his holiday, on another page.

### *Bigger Fish Still . . .*

In a chamber at Votty we met two more enthusiasts—Percy Jones and Owen E. Owens who go for still bigger fish. Salmon is *their* aim, and they seek him in the Lledr River, Dolwyddelan. Both are members of the Dolwyddelan Angling Association, and both of them take their sport very scientifically. The talk drifted on to flies—"Silver Doctor" being apparently their joint favourite—and then into finer points of the game, which CABAN could not even pretend to understand!

And lastly a Votty angling enthusiast who has a sport for any weather; for when he's not after trout, Edward Jones is usually showing his skill against all comers at draughts.

### *Far Away Places*

Enough about angling. We found quite a number of people who had decided to strike out and visit friends or relatives in other parts. The record for distance must have gone to Iorwerth P. Edwards (rockman, Votty), who took his wife and three-year-old daughter to the Faroe Islands. There's a story behind the trip. Iorwerth was stationed in the Faroes with the Marines during the war and there he met, working in the British Consulate, the Faroese lady who eventually came back to Blaenau as his wife.





The dressing machines turned for the last time, slowed down and stopped. The men who operate them would soon be doing very different things !

Last year her parents came to see her on this side; this time it was their turn to pay a return visit. That must have been a successful holiday—for Iorwerth decided to settle down there permanently. After a brief return to Blaenau, he has now left for his new home. We're all sorry to lose him; but every reader of CABAN will join in wishing him luck in his new life abroad.

### ***Around and About . . .***

Not quite so far field was the target of R. Malwyn Thomas—though in other respects the story is similar. He, too, was going with his wife to visit her native land across the sea—but this time it was only as far as Cork. Malwyn met Mrs. Thomas in Llandudno, and this is the first time he has been to her home; but he is no stranger to Ireland, having been in Dublin before the war.

Handel Roberts, of Votty, was planning a trip to see his son Robert Roberts, who is now living in Coventry, where he works as a welder on agricultural tractors. While D. Lloyd Jones—Votty again—made a visit to some friends in Cardiff.

Quite a number of Oakeley and Votty personalities were attracted by the big events of the National Eisteddfod, as near as Dolgelley. Some just managed to look in for one or more days; others gave a hand in some capacity such as First Aid, or had a try in the preliminaries of one of the contests.

Well, that's a quick cross-section of how a few of the people of Oakeley and Votty spend their well-earned leisure hours. CABAN would like still more details *from* readers and *about* readers; what are we all doing with our leisure time now holidays are over and winter is here? Why not write and tell us.



***The Last few Slates . . .  
it was "Goodbye"  
to this—and this!***



Last slate on the last pile, this side of the holiday. Later, the same skilled hands were back in the Quarries. What had they been doing in between?



# ON DUTY — OFF DUTY

## *“Caban” Interviews Some Oakeley and Votty Personalities*

“On Duty—Off Duty” opens this time with the one interest that so many of the people of Blaenau Ffestiniog—and of Oakeley and Votty—have in common.

Needless to say, that is *singing*.

It was out of that common interest in song throughout the Cabanau that the idea of a Quarry Eisteddfod first grew. So it is only appropriate that we should feature in this article some of the voices that are heard in and around Blaenau.

First is John M. Richards, whom we found loading a truck with slabs. In his off-duty moments, he is an accomplished tenor—having performed at many local concerts, as well as being a member of the Oakeley Choir.

Our second representative is another tenor—John Gwilym Jones. In his 15-odd years at Oakeley, he too has spent much of his leisure time in performing at concerts in the district; and in pre-war days came out top of the list at a crooning contest in Portmadoc. When he is not on the platform, he says, that doesn't mean that he has no more wish to sing; he and his wife are never happier than when a few friends



*John Gwilym Jones—won a pre-war crooning contest*

visit them, and before long there is quiet sing-song going on, round the fire. Whether his three children join in as well, he didn't tell us; but if there is anything in heredity, they too should turn out into first-class performers when they grow up.

Singing is, we believe, a reputedly healthy pastime. And certainly things in our part of the world seem to bear that out.

Not so long ago, for instance, Votty was visited by one of the veterans—now retired—EOS GWYNANT. At 78, he is still in good voice and sings regularly with the old people's choir. This time, he entertained some of his old friends in the Caban with (among other things) a new version of “Galway Bay,” with Welsh words which he himself has written.

\* \* \*

From singing, to outdoor sport. Prominent among those who turn out in black and yellow to battle for Blaenau in the North Wales Coast League is Hugh Roberts.

In the war years, Hugh turned out for several service teams, before his “demob.” in 1946; when he joined us as a slate dresser, and Blaenau



*John M. Richards—one of the Quarries' tenors*



F.C. as a very reliable wing-half, just about at the same time.

CABAN wishes him good luck and plenty of goals !

\* \* \*

*Shooting* in the quarry ? We expected to include many sports and pastimes in this feature, but never that one ! Yet, so Gwilym Humphrys tells us, sixty years ago it was commonplace.

Quite recently, an American paper has published an account of "an industrial gun with many purposes." When used in quarries, it is mounted on a truck, moved into position, and then by compressed air power brings down loose or dangerous pieces of rock.

Which *would* be novel ! Except that the Blaenau quarrymen, in our fathers' or grandfathers' day, used to use an old elephant gun for just that very purpose. Which is, of course, where the strange connection between shooting and the quarries comes in !

\* \* \*

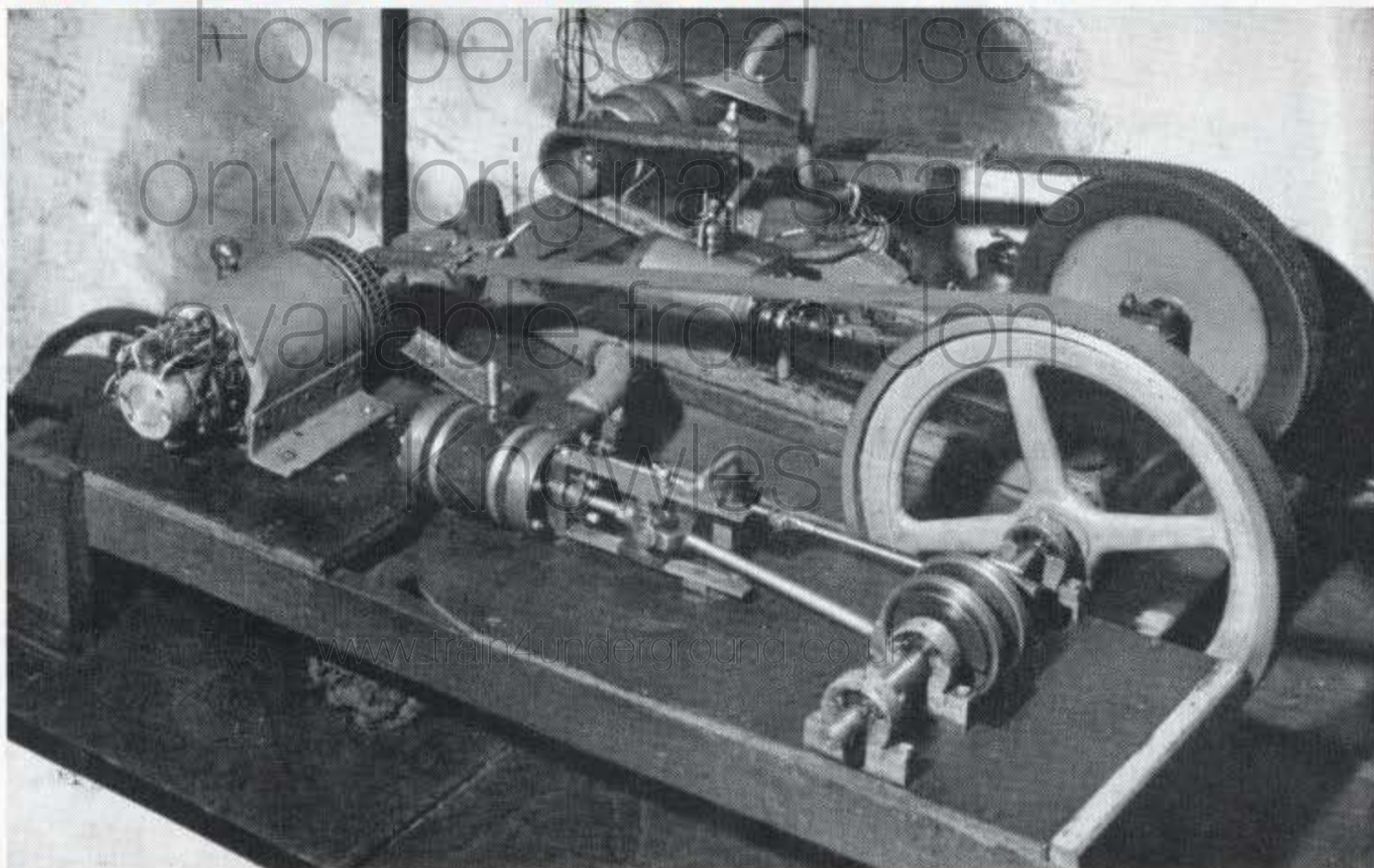
Last to be presented this time is a personality who was born, and still lives, in the Quarry itself—WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS (Compressor Driver). In the workshop attached to his house he has made quite a number of remarkable



*Hugh Roberts—stalwart of the black-and-yellows models—some of which you can see, if ever you look in to see him while he's at work.*

One of them is an electric clock, with accumulators attached so that when the current is cut off, it will still keep on going (an idea which many people would like to copy, in these days of electricity cuts). Another is a model generator, driven by steam, which is illustrated on this page.

## MODEL MAKING IS HIS HOBBY . . . . . !



*The model generator made by William A. Williams*

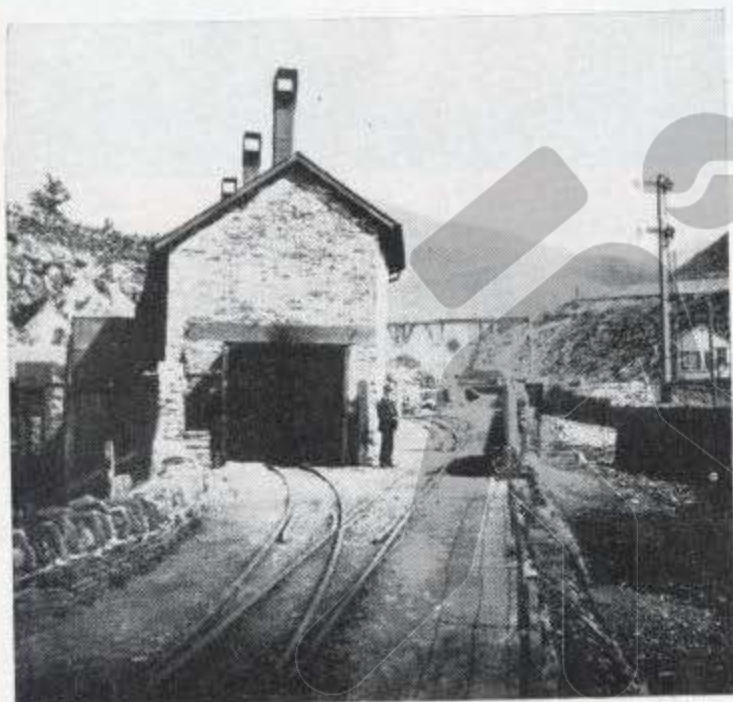


# ROOF OF THE WORLD

The Slaters' is not a job that can be "picked up" haphazard, or read up in books; proper training, and considerable practical experience in actual work on roofs, is essential.

## *The New Training Scheme*

One of the ways in which this training can be obtained is through Ministry of Labour Apprentices' Schemes. Apprentices are trained by actually working on the building of houses.



*Dinas Locomotive shed in the late 'seventies.  
Oakeley Quarry in the distance*

Two of these schemes have been carried out in South Wales, one at Crynant, under the auspices of the Neath Rural District Council, and the other at Court Sart in the town of Neath.

For use in both these schemes, Oakeley Slates were supplied by Messrs. JONAH ROBERTS AND CO., of Neath.

## *A Suggestion from Croydon*

While we are on the subject of slaters, an excellent idea comes from Mr. R. W. Catt, roofing manager of Messrs. HALL & Co., roofing contractors and builders merchants of long standing, and one of our oldest customers. Mr. Catt himself pays regular visits to Blaenau and the Quarries, and says that he has been toying with the idea of bringing a party of slaters with him, so that they will get an insight into our end of the industry.

Messrs. Hall & Co., and their slaters, are faced with a big job in their own district, and are very busy in overcoming it. As many of our

readers will remember, Croydon and its neighbouring suburb of Penge practically established a record for the number of "V.I's" (flying bombs) which fell in their territory.

Croydon itself is an area partly industrialised, partly residential and has its share in both the "No. 1" priorities—housing and industrial repair. It is now a scene of rapid reconstruction, in which Hall and Co., are playing a by no means inconsiderable part. At the moment, quite a number of their two to three hundred trained slaters are doing war damage repair jobs all over the metropolitan and suburban districts, with slate from the Oakeley and Votty Quarries. Their Croydon offices and wharf serve as headquarters for this work, as well as for over 60 depots scattered throughout Southern England.

It isn't only in the quarries that slate calls for toughness—Mr. Catt pointed out that many of his slaters, though above middle age, carried the burden during the war—often working on badly damaged roofs, during air raids, regardless of any idea of taking shelter.



*Dinas in 1947, showing station (now a private house) and engine shed ruins. Note quarry incline in background (see book review on opposite page)*

## *Another Job for Oakeley*

Most people look on the Covent Garden Opera House as more than a purely metropolitan institution; it is in fact the operatic centre of Great Britain. So many of our readers will be interested to know that Oakeley have recently supplied some specially-made slates for its roof.



## *Oakeley and Votty Slate in use in Many Parts*

### **CAN YOU BEAT 80 YEARS ?**

In a previous edition of "Roof of the World," we published an account of the activities of Messrs. Wormell's, of Coventry, under the title "Customers for 50 years."

This has produced a most interesting comment from Mr. M. Miller, Managing Director of Messrs. GEORGE AND TUDOR LTD., of Hereford, who says "unfortunately we cannot give tangible evidence, because of a fire which destroyed our office records in 1941, but we have a strong suspicion that Messrs. George and Tudor Ltd., have been buying and selling your Slates for something in the region of 80 years."

All the evidence seems to show that George and Tudor Ltd. and our own Companies have, in fact, been associated for 80 years or more.

But is even this a record ? After all, the quarries have been in operation for very much more than a century, and many of our friends and customers in the building and roofing industries are nearing—or past—their centenaries, too. We wonder if any of them have old records which would trace a still longer association ?

## **THE RAILWAY THAT WAS PART OF SLATE'S OWN STORY . . .**

*Narrow Gauge Rails to Portmadoc, by J. I. C. Boyd. Oakwood Press. 158 pages, illustrated.*

This book will fascinate every reader who is interested in the story of Blaenau Ffestiniog, or of the slate quarries.

It traces, from the outset, the story of the Ffestiniog Railway which has been so familiar a part of the life and landscape of North Wales for many generations. It tells of the early days ; of how the railway became intimately associated with the slate traffic, and with the transporting to and from their jobs of the quarrymen from the surrounding districts.

Special coaches were built for this purpose, with plates which indicated that they were reserved for Slate Quarrymen ; as long ago as 1871 there were over thirty such "specials" in daily use.

But the line's prosperity declined. Since August, 1946, no trains have been run ; the rolling stock still exists, in storage, and in some stretches trees are already growing through the rails. The author of this book makes an appeal that something should be done.

We are—deliberately—not quoting at length from the book, here ; to compress the story would be to spoil it. Instead, we are glad to announce that it will be available, on loan, to all who wish to read it, through the Library of the Oakeley Club.



*Tan-y-Bwlch Station in the late 'seventies. ("Narrow Gauge Rails to Portmadoc," reviewed on this page)*





*In charge of the Training School, John Williams has cause to be proud of the progress his boys have made since CABAN interviewed them last . . .*

## **YOUTH CARRIES ON . . .**

In our last number we told you something about the new Training School for youth which has been opened at Oakeley Quarry. You might, we thought, be interested to learn what progress the school and its pupils have been making since then.

First, congratulations to our first two "graduates"—Gordon Hughes and Goronwy Williams—who have been passed out as proficient and are now working among the men in the Bonc Shaft Mill—and, when CABAN went to have a chat with them, were looking very happy about it too!

And then, welcome to quite a crowd of newcomers, to fill the School's ranks.

Davy Williams carries on the family tradition—being none other than a son of John Williams, who as everyone knows is in charge of the school itself. Here's to the time when Davy is as expert

at splitting or with the dressing machine as his father.

Two more who joined the school at about the same time are Elvet Roberts and another Williams—Emrys. Emrys is no relation to John and Davy, but some of our readers will recognise him as brother of Oswin Williams, whose long distance running in local events and also at Carmarthen attracted a good deal of notice.

The Sports Committee have more than half an eye on our fourth newcomer—David Thomas Williams—who, at the age of 15, has already had the honour of a trial for Notts Forest. He was presumably spotted by some local scout while playing for his school; soon after, the post brought a letter inviting him to visit "the Forest" for a week, during which time they gave him a certain amount of training and also a trial game. "Too young to begin yet" was their verdict, "but you may hear from us later on."





## ★ REMEMBER . . ?

*Spending an evening in the Oakeley Club. That's how we met them last time. But things have been happening since then.*



And lastly, two lads with slate in their blood who want to get into the quarries and get on with Blaenau's traditional job as quickly as possible. Reinhardt Thomas's parents gave him the opportunity of staying on at School; but he'd heard about the Oakeley School and preferred to come to us instead. Leslie Daniels, before coming to the quarry, had two years as "a farmer's boy", but decided he wasn't cut out for the life. Quarrying, he says, is much more interesting.

It's good to see new faces coming into the school so fast. CABAN will keep you posted about more new arrivals, as they take place. Meantime, all those people in every part of Britain, who so badly need slate for their re-housing drives, will wish well to these six more pairs of willing hands that have come to help in producing the goods for them.



## ★ THIS IS THE STORY IN PICTURES . . . .

Three photographs which, we think, tell the story of the Training School, and its aims, in the simplest possible way. Above, two of its members as you saw them in a previous issue; when they were still comparatively new recruits. Centre, as fully fledged members of the Mill. While, as you see below, their places at the Training School have been taken—with some to spare!—by a batch of newcomers, who already have their eyes on Mill jobs for themselves. There'll be another batch of new faces, we expect, to record next time CABAN's photographer pays a visit to the Training School again . . .





# NEWS EXCHANGE

Oakeley and Votty have again had a busy season on the sports and social side. Many of the events centred round the Club (of whose summer activities details will be found elsewhere in this number).

For the benefit of readers outside Blaenau, who do not speak Welsh, we should explain that the following paragraphs contain accounts of the first Sports to be held by the Company; the Quoits Contest, held during the summer; and many other items.

Cynhaliwyd Mabolgampau Clwb yr Oakeley Medi 3. 1949. Dyma'r fentar gyntaf o'i math, ond fel y deuai prynawn hir a llwyddiannus iawn i ben, tyngedai pawb mai nid hon a fyddai'r fentar olaf.

Mynegodd y pwyllgor wrth hysbysu y digwyddiad yma:—"Mawr obeithiwn y cymer pawb ohonoch ddiddordeb yn y Mabolgampau, ac y bydd i chwi spardynnu y plant a'ch cydweithwyr chawrae eu rhan. Pwy a wyr nad oes yn ein plith ryw "Mac Bailey" neu Wooderson ond iddynt gael y gefnogaeth iawn. Felly awn ati o ddifri."

Wel yn bendifaddau cafwyd y gefnogaeth a dangoswyd brwdfrydedd mawr gan yr ymgeiswyr, canys cafwyd "maes llawn" ymhob digwyddiad, a daeth tyrfa o rieni a chyfeillion i gefnogi yr ymgeiswyr.

Cynhaliwyd y Mabolgampau ar gae Dôl Awel. O blith swyddogion y Cwmni yr oedd yn bresennol Mri. H. Cutts, G. W. Humphreys a Handel Roberts (Beirniaid), William H. Owen a Dennis Roberts (Cychwynwyr), William H. Thomas (Cyhoeddwr), John Evans, Thomas Hughes Jones, David B. Jones, Iorweth Roberts, Humphrey Morris a Richard Jones (Stiwardiaid). Cyflawnodd Mr. John Parry, fel arfer, aml ac amrywiol ddyletswyddau ysgrifennydd yn benigamp a gofalodd Mr. John Evans am y pws.

Ceir y manylion am y dyfarniadau mewn man arall ar y tudalen hon.



Events	Winners
50 yds. for Boys and Girls under 8 yrs.	1st Kenneth Roberts
60 yds. " " 12 yrs.	1st Leslie Jones
	2nd Stanley Wyn Jones
60 yds for Girls under 12 yrs. ...	1st Mena Jones
	2nd Joan Hughes
80 yds. for Boys under 15 yrs. ...	1st Sidney Williams
	2nd Tecwyn Evans
80 yds. for Girls under 15 yrs. ...	1st { Jean Williams
	Joan Hughes
100 yds. for Boys from 15 to 18 yrs.	1st Tommy Davies
	2nd Gwyn Morgan
1/2 Mile for Boys under 18 years ...	1st Tommy Davies
	2nd Gwyn Morgan
3-Legged Race for Boys under 12 yrs.	1st { Melvin Jones
	Bryan Jones
" " Girls under 15 yrs.	1st { Jean Williams
	Joan Hughes
" " Boys under 18 yrs.	1st { Wilfred Williams
	John Perry Jones
" " Girls under 18 yrs.	1st { Rhianon Jones
	Eirwen Roberts
Obstacle Race for Boys under 18 yrs.	1st Graham Williams
	2nd Glyn Jones
Sack Race for Boys and Girls :	
under 12 yrs.	1st Kenneth Jones
	2nd Stanley Wyn Jones
under 15 yrs.	1st Kenneth Davies
	2nd Graham Williams
under 18 yrs.	1st Kenneth Davies
	2nd Peter Jones
High Jump for Boys under 18 yrs.	All level jump 4 ft. 4 ins.
	Geraint Woolford, Thos. John Jones, Dewi P. Williams
Pole Jump for Boys under 18 yrs.	1st Sidney Williams
	Jump 5 ft. 4 ins.
440 yds. Relay Race for Boys under 18 yrs.	
	1st Team { Tony Davies
	Thos. John Jones
	Oswald Evans
	Wilfred T. Williams
80 yds. for Men 50 yrs. and over	1st Thos. Hughes Jones (Oak.)
	2nd Robert Thomas (Votty)
80 yds for Men 30-50 yrs. ...	1st David B. Jones
	2nd Gwilym W. Humphreys
Long Jump for Boys under 18 yrs.	1st John Perry Jones
	2nd Wilfred T. Williams



WITH WATCHFUL EYES...

some of the judges and officials size up the entrants, at one of the events in the Oakeley and Votty Sports Meeting.





## CYSTADLEUAETH TAFLU QUOITS.

Gwelir mewn man arall o'r Rhifyn hwn ychydig o fanylion am y gystadleuaeth taflu Quoits—peth newydd eto yn hanes yr Oakeley a'r Votty. Dyma'r enillwyr.

**PEN CAMPWR UNIGOL YR OAKELEY** (allan o 26 o ymgeiwyr). Mr. Arthur C. Thomas, gyda Mr. Evan Richards yn ail.

**PEN CAMPWR UNIGOL Y VOTTY.** Mr. Howell Williams, a Mr. John Evans yn ail.

**DEUOEDD (AGORED)** (Allan o 14 o gyplau). Buddugwyr. Mr. Arthur Roberts a Hugh Hughes, a Mri. John Williams a W. H. Williams yn ail.

Yn y gystadleuaeth i dîm o bedwar agored i'r Oakeley a'r Votty, tîm o Bonc Shaft a orfu (mae'n amlwg fod yna ddigon o dalent ym myd y Quoits yn yr Oakeley).

Dyma'r tîm buddugol.

Mri. M. Jones, John Roberts, A. C. Thomas ac E. Richards.

## News Exchange (contd.)

### SNOOKER.

Cynhaliwyd "Final y Snooker Handicap" Awst. 31. cyd-rhwng Goronwy Wyn Williams a Wilfred T. Williams, a'r olaf a gariodd y dydd.

### BETH A WNANT YN EU HORIAU HAMDDEN.

Bu'r erthygl "On Duty—Off Duty" yn ein rhifyn diwethaf yn symbyliad i un darlennydd i fynd ati i drefnu rhestr o "hobbies" rhai o wyr amlwg a chwareli.

Dyna Mr. Gwilym Humphreys, y Goruchwyliwr, er engraifft. Cymer ef ddiddordeb arbennig mewn garddio ac y mae'n enwog am ei lwyddiant i dyfu tomatoes. Y mae hefyd yn



(Left) Mr. and Mrs. Roberts. (Centre) Mr. and Mrs. Williams. (Right) Mr. and Mrs. Owen.

### PRIODASAU

Llongyfarchiadau i'r tri priodfab y gwelir eu lluniau yma—y tri wedi priodi er pan gyhoeddwyd y rhifyn diwethaf o'r "Caban".

Dyma nhw.

Thomas Wyn Owen—priododd Gorff. 30.

Hugh Idris Roberts—priododd Awst. 3.

Emlyn Williams—Priododd Awst. 11, yn Llanelidan, Ruthin.

Cyduna holl ddarllenwyr y CABAN a ni yn ein dymuniadau gorau am fywyd priodasol maith a hapus iawn i'r tri.

gerddwr mawr a gellir ei weled yn aml ar ddiwrnod "pen mis" yn crwydro'r mynyddoedd.

Dau ddiddordeb mawr Robert Hughes (arolygydd Bonc Shafft) yw cŵn a magu gwenyn; tra y treulia Evan Morris (arolygydd) ei amser yn teithio'r wlad ar ei fotor-beic. Gŵyr ef hefyd sut i drin yr enwair yn dda iawn.

Rhanna William Roberts ei oriau hamdden yn "heicio" yn yr awyr agored ac yn darllen pob math o lenyddiaeth ger y tân; tra ym myd garddio a magu pob math o ieir y mae diddordeb pennaf Morris Jones.





Yn olaf deil Robert Hughes i ymddiddori yn yr hen grefft o wneuthur y fans a'r inkstands traddodiadol. Er ei fod wedi ymneilltuo bellach y mae llawer o'n darllenwyr yn ei gofio wrth ei ddydd waith yn hollti. Pwrcesir y fans a'r inkstands fel souvenirs gan ymwelwyr o bob rhan o'r byd.

## WELSH SLATE

*A poem which was contributed to this issue by reader of CABAN.*

It's coming up slowly from the old mountain's heart,  
Where Miners and Rock-men have all done their part;  
Then on to the Mill, where they split, trim, and grade  
And where every man's an expert at his trade;  
And last to the Loaders, on whose skill they depend,  
To arrive sound and whole at a long journey's end.  
A word for the Labourers who clear up the muck,  
It's a wearisome job loading truck after truck,  
Of stuff that is useless, in any old way,  
And will lie on a tip to the end of its day.  
Good Luck to the men, through whose hands they have passed,  
Good Luck to the firm and long may it last,  
Though tiles, zinc and concrete may get their cheap sales,  
You can't beat the slate from the Mountains of Wales.

E. W. GEORGE, Rhostyn.

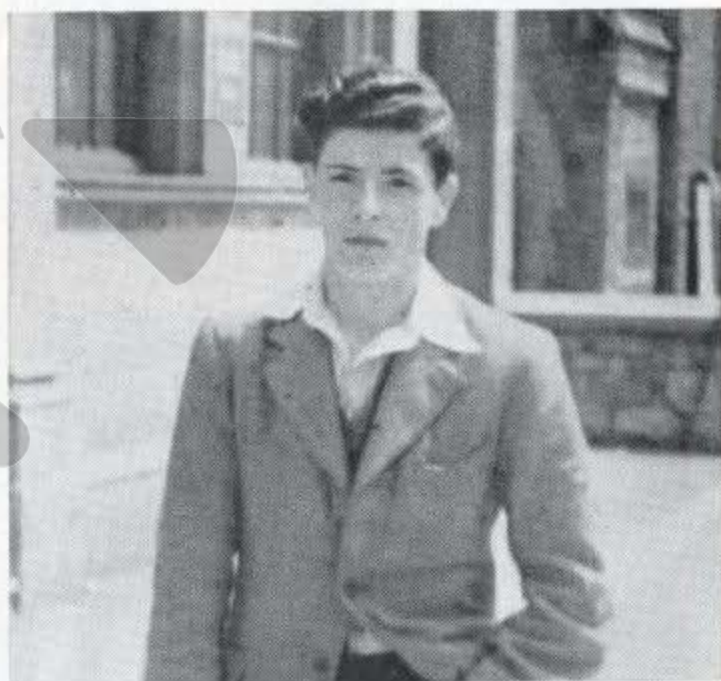
## News Exchange (contd.)

### RHWYDD HYNT.

Bydd i'r darllenwyr o'r Votty adnabod llun Ifor Wyn Jones a adawodd y chwarel i ymuno a'r Llynges.

Bu cyfarfod o dan lywyddiaeth Mr. R. D. Jones yng Nghaban y Felin Isaf yn ddiweddar i ddymuno yn dda i Ifor Wyn yn ei gylch newydd.

Cyflwynwyd anrheg fechan iddo ar ran ei gyd-weithwyr gan Mr. Sam Roberts.



*Photographs which illustrate two of the news items on this page. (Above, left) Robert Hughes, retired slatemaker, produces as a hobby the slate fans and inkstands which are traditional in Blaenau. (Above) Ifor Wyn Jones of Votty recently received a presentation on joining the Navy.*

### I GLOI.

Enynodd y rhifyn cyntaf o'r CABAN ddiddordeb mawr fel y gwelir oddiwrth yr erthygl hon. Daeth llawer mwy o newyddion diddorol am "wyr enwog" yr Oakeley a'r Votty i law y tro hwn. Diolchwn i bawb em eu cyfraniad a gobeithiwn dderbyn ychwaneg eto o newyddion erbyn a rhifyn nesaf ym mis Rhagfyr.

Peidiwch ag oedi—gwnewch nodiad o bob rhyw newydd o'ch caban chi tra y mae'r cyfrwy yn fyw yn eich meddwl ac anfonwch ef ymlaen i'r Swyddfa.

The paragraphs immediately above express our thanks to everyone who has contributed, and hope that we shall receive still more items of interest for our next issue—which will be published in December.





## WHAT PEOPLE WRITE . . . .

### About this Magazine and its contents

The first issue of CABAN drew quite a lot of comments, from outside the Quarries as well as within.

We quote here a few of them which we think may be interesting to our readers.

"It is not a magazine you can pick up from a bookstall, and I am rather sorry about this, because I have enjoyed reading it so much myself that I am sure there would be a warm welcome for it from the general public . . . I have seldom seen a magazine of this type which is so artistically produced. Without exaggeration, I doubt whether any works can boast of a better magazine than CABAN.

The photographs are really superb . . . all of them, without exception, bear the stamp of a photographer who is an artist at his job. The editing of the written contents is equally competent. The first article deals with the story of Ffestiniog Slate and is so well written that I intend to quote extensively from it in a later article."

"South Caernarvon and Merioneth Leader."

"CABAN, the bright little magazine of the Oakeley and Votty Slate Quarries, faithfully reflects the live-wire quality that inspires the working and social life of the quarrymen, both in their underground cathedrals and off duty, much of which is spent by them and their families in the Oakeley Club. Beautifully and profusely illustrated, CABAN gives a vivid im-

pression of the quarries, the quarrymen, their homes and their recreations. . . . This is a valuable contribution to the town's cultural life. . . ."

"Cambrian News."

"The most attractive—in the popular sense of the word—magazine that I have seen for a long time. . . ."

Translated from "Y Faner."

"An excellently produced and most interesting house organ."

"Quarry Managers' Journal."

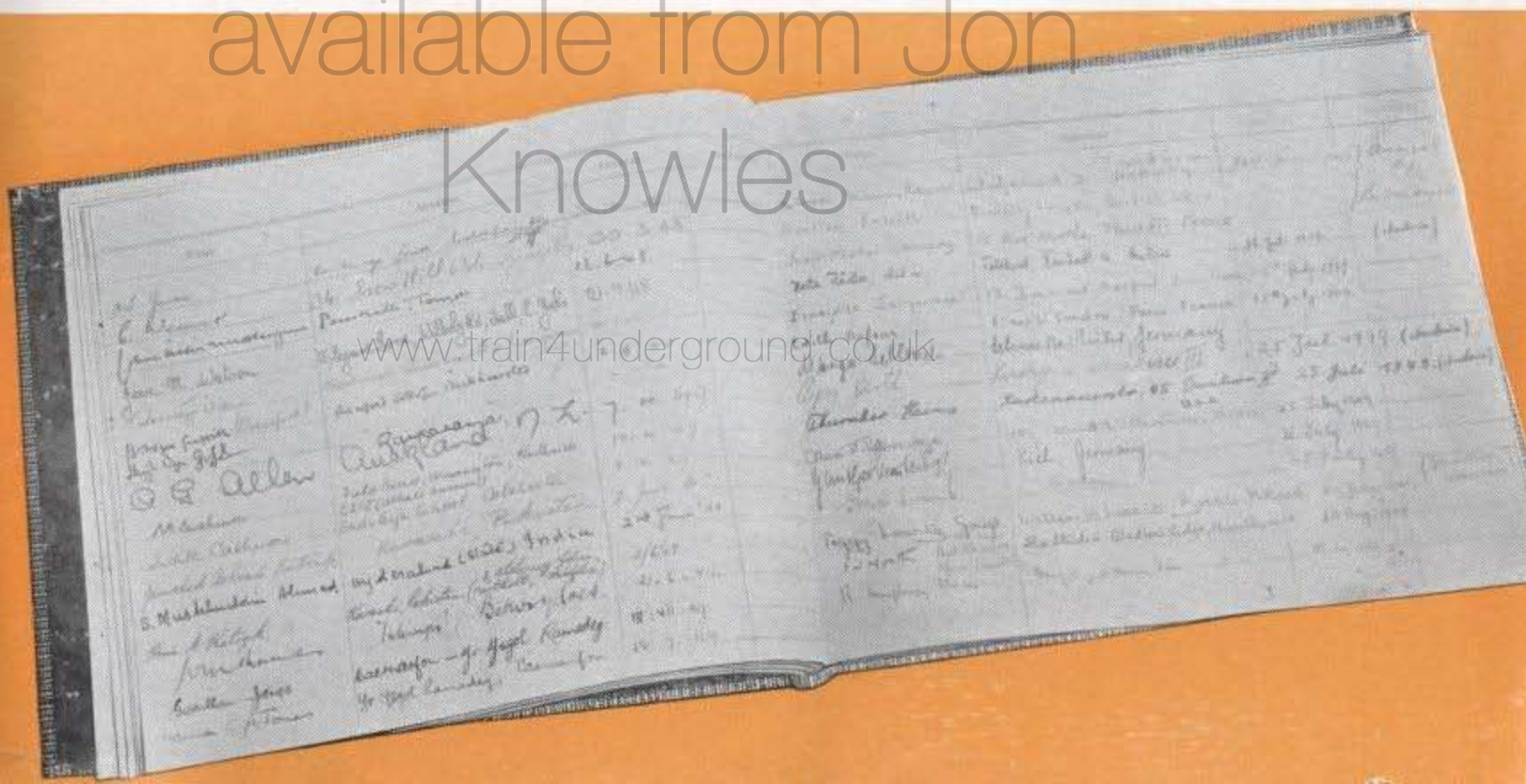
★ ★ ★

## AND WHEN THEY COME TO VISIT US . . . .

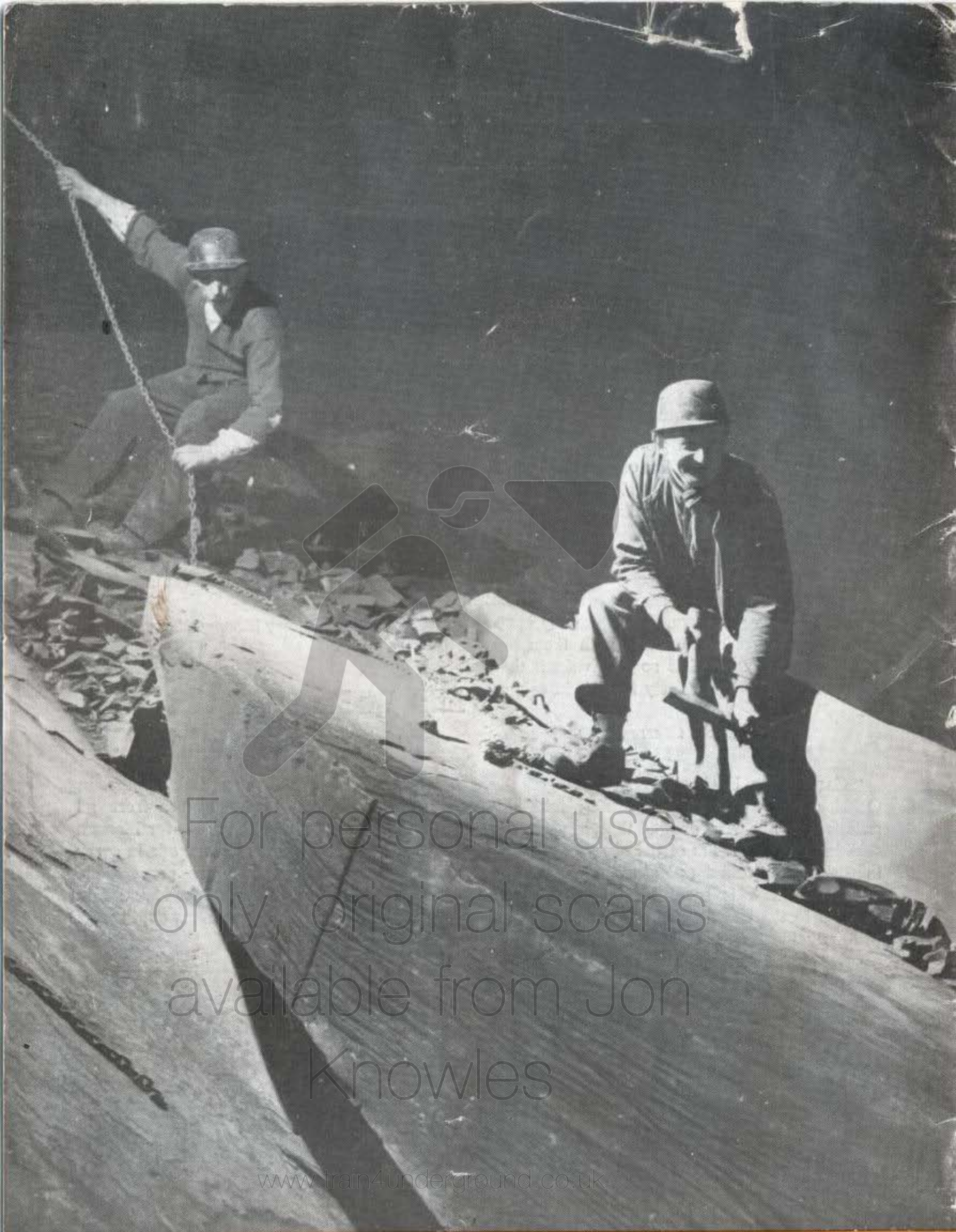
they go on writing—as witness the signatures in the Quarry Visitors' book. Names from all over the world appear in its pages—for Blaenau Ffestiniog and its quarries are famous in every civilised country. On these two pages alone appear signatures from all over Britain, and from New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Norway, France, Germany, and the U.S.A.

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The Rockmen work on a mighty slab of slate

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

Printed by The Abbey Press Ltd. of London