

William Bond

Memories of old slate quarry workers living in Llangollen area.

William Bond lived at Pentredŵr for part of his life. As a boy, he had faint recollections of the Wynnstay Quarry working. This was the last in the village, but nearby Pant Glas Quarry was still working under the Roopers, Abergwern had closed. Three men were killed at Pant Glas while working under the cliff which collapsed. The remaining workers at Pant Glas moved to Glynceiriog to work for the Roopers.

He, William Bond, like many other villagers, went to work at Moel Faen Quarry. Work here had proceeded from the Green Pool to the Blue Pool in the early century. His father had worked at the Blue Pool section which was closed at the end of the 1920s on account of water. These were called chambers as in the slate mines, and the owners were the Hawkes family. He had worked at Moel Faen from about the age of sixteen, just prior to that he began work down the Ty'n Dwr mine at Llangollen (near the Youth Hostel).

When Moel Faen closed, some men worked at the Clogau, others went to 'Glem' (Craig Lem), where tradition has it that it was being worked by a millionaire and he paid higher wages. He also remembered the 'Faraway' Quarry (the Keeper's Place). In his early days at Moel Faen, he worked as a rockman, but later after 1918 as a driver of a steam (traction) engine pulling a trailer to Llangollen goods yard carrying 15 tons of slate twice daily (30 tons a day). The incline was then out of use, and he journeyed down the Horseshoe Pass which was then a narrow track full of ruts, rather uncomfortable on solid tyres. It was widened in 1921. He recalled the old incline working with six horses and eight men, four horses on top of the incline and two at the bottom. He could not recall hearing the name of John Taylor & Sons (although they were there until they sold up in 1897: Hawkes followed them). He remembered the name of Littlejohn and that he lived across the road from Valle Crucis Abbey. The men were paid monthly in the office at Pentrefelin, and he remembered slabs being planed in the grey building there by the river. At first, slate was taken down to Pentrefelin by steam engine to a railway siding there, but later it was found cheaper to run the slate directly down to the Llangollen goods yard.

(Mr. C. W. Bond died in January 1986)