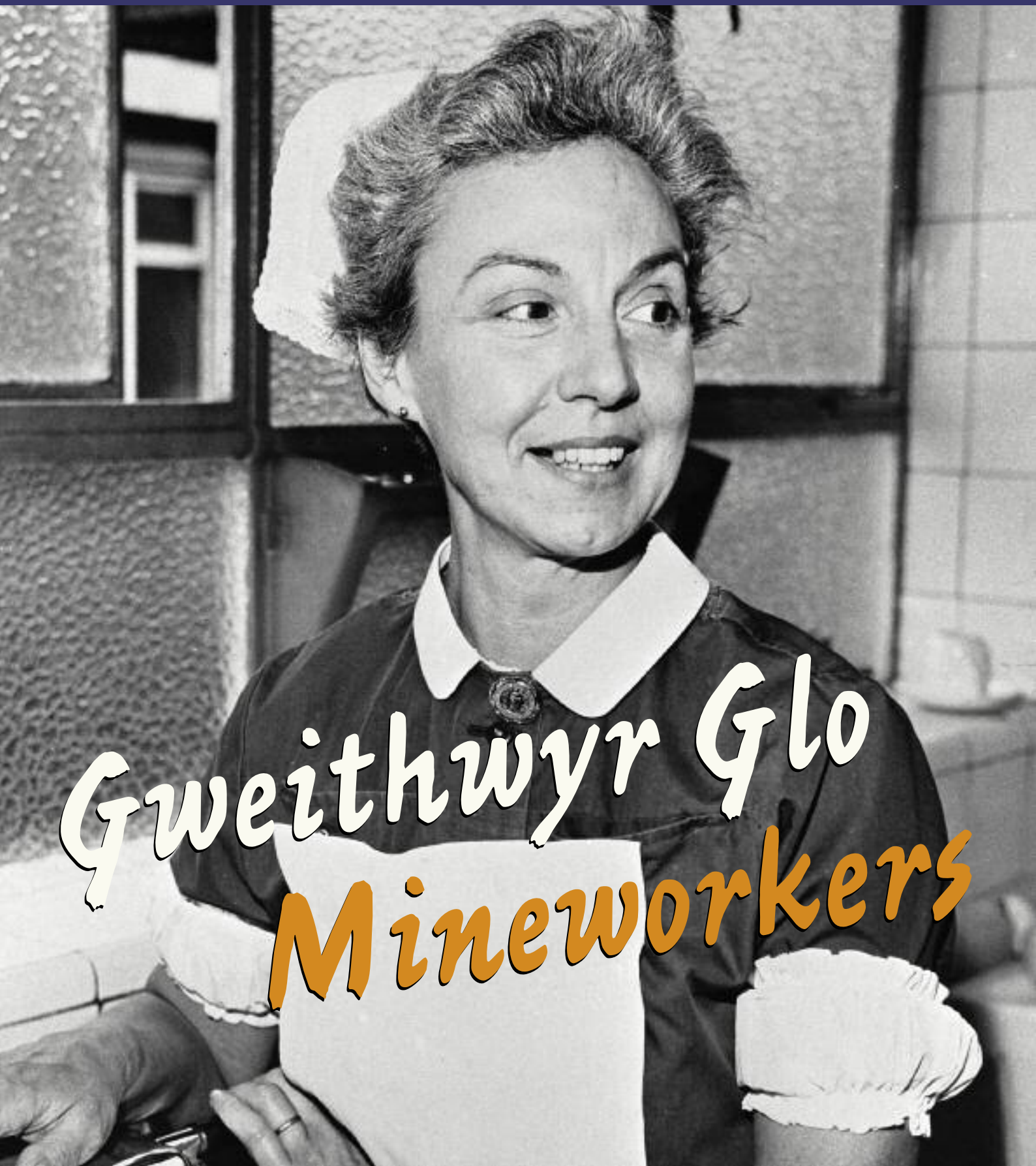


BIG PIT: AMGUEDDFA LOFAOL CYMRU BIG PIT: NATIONAL COAL MUSEUM

WWW.AMGUEDDFACYMRU.AC.UK
WWW.MUSEUMWALES.AC.UK

GLO COAL



Gweithwyr Glo
Mineworkers

Cyflwyniad

CROESO I GLO: RHIFYN 5. YN WAHANOL i'r rhifynnau blaenorol, nid yw'r cylchgrawn hwn yn canolbwyntio ar un thema'n unig; yn hytrach, mae'n adrodd straeon dynion a menywod a ystyriai eu bod yn gwneud gwaith digon cyffredin yn y diwydiant glo.

Yn wahanol i'r gred gyffredin, nid oedd pob glöwr yn ceibio glo. Mae hyn yn arbennig o wir am lofeydd modern, lle mae cyfrifiaduron cyn bwysiced â chaib a rhaw, a'r gweithwyr yn arbenigwyr tra medrus.

Mae'r straeon hyn yn amrywio o glerc a oedd wedi diflasu'n llwyr gyda'i swydd i reolwr uchelgeisiol, yn ogystal â staff ffreutur, nyrsys a bechgyn sgrin. Mae llawer mwy o bobl wedi cyfrannu straeon dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, a doedd dim modd cynnwys pob un yn y rhifyn hwn. Rwy'n ymddiheuro'n fawr iddyn nhw ac yn addo y byddwn yn cynnwys rhagor o'u straeon yn rhifynnau'r dyfodol.

Ni fyddai'r cylchgrawn hwn yn gweld golau dydd heb gymorth a chydweithrediad dynion a menywod cyffredin diwydiant a chymunedau glofaol Cymru. Eleni, rydym yn chwilio am gyfraniadau o feysydd glo'r Gogledd yn arbennig. Os hoffech chi rannu'ch straeon a/neu'ch lluniau, cysylltwch â ni yma yn **Big Pit: Amgueddfa Lofaol Cymru**.

Ceri Thompson

Curadur, Big Pit: Amgueddfa Lofaol Cymru

Introduction

WELCOME TO VOLUME FIVE OF GLO. UNLIKE previous editions, this magazine does not concentrate on a single theme; instead it contains the stories of men and women who were doing what they regarded as ordinary jobs in the coal industry.

Contrary to popular belief, not all mineworkers were occupied cutting coal at the coal face. This is especially true of a modern mine where computers have become as important as shovels and the workforce is composed of highly trained specialists.

The stories in this edition range from a bored colliery clerk to an ambitious colliery manager, and include canteen staff, nursing sisters and screen boys. Many more people have contributed their stories over the past year than are included in this edition. I can only apologise to them and assure them that their stories will appear in future editions of GLO.

This magazine can only be produced with the help and cooperation of the ordinary men and women of the Welsh coal industry and communities. This year we are especially seeking contributions from the coalfields of north Wales. If anyone would like to share their stories and/or photographs please contact us at Big Pit: National Coal Museum.

Ceri Thompson

Curator, Big Pit: National Coal Museum



GWEITHWYR GLOFA DEEP NAVIGATION, 1920
DEEP NAVIGATION COLLIERY WORKFORCE, 1920

Ffotograffydd y Bwrdd Glo

FE YMUNAIS I Â'R BWRDD GLO CENED-laethol fel ffotograffydd ym 1978. Roeddwn i eisoes wedi bod ar ymweliad danddaear â Glofa De Celynnen gyda Choleg Bournemouth, felly roeddwn i'n gwybod beth i'w ddisgwyl. Er hynny, cefais syndod o weld y fath amrywiaeth o waith roedd y Bwrdd Glo yn ei wneud i gefnogi'r diwydiant glo, a'i fod yn rhan annatod o fywyd y cymoedd.

Cefais fy nghyfweliad yn swyddfa fodern y Coal House, Llanisien, ar gyrion Caerdydd, ond pan ddechreuais gyda'r Adran Ffotograffiaeth, roeddwn i'n gweithio yn yr hen ysbyty ceffylau uwchben swyddfeydd y Bwrdd Glo yn Nhon-du. Roedd yr adeilad mewn cyflwr difrifol, a llawer o'r offer yn perthyn i'r 1960au. Fel Sais ifanc o gefn gwlad Dorset, doeddwn i ddim yn gwybod beth ar wyneb y ddaear i'w ddisgwyl.

Cefais hyfforddiant danddaear yng Nglofa Abernant, ac am hanner awr olaf bob dydd, roeddwn i'n gorfod torri coed tân ar gyfer yr hyfforddwyr a hyd yn oed ei gludo i ben y pwll a'i roi yng nghist eu car! Fe fwynheais i'r cyfan, ac rwy'n credu y bydden ni'n dal i allu adeiladu 'cog' (cynhalbost pren i'r to) a gosod 'Dowty' (cynhalbost hydrolig i'r to) heddiw.

Fe wnes i gyfarfod a chydweithio â chymeriadau

gwyh dros y blynyddoedd, a thynnu lluniau ambell un a greodd hanes. Cawn fy sarhau'n rheolaidd gan Mick McGachy, Arthur Scargill, Emlyn Williams â'u tebyg yng nghyfarfodydd Undeb y Glowyr; bydden nhw'n pwyntio bys at griw'r wasg a'u galw nhw'n faw isa'r domen. Fe ddilynais Ian McGregor o amgylch y meysydd glo am rai diwrnodau, yn tynnu lluniau ohono ar daith. Roedd yn syndod o hawddgar, ac er ei fod yn gallu sgwrsio'n rhwydd gyda'r dynion, roedd yn anesmwyth a thrwsgl yng nghwmni'r wasg. Roedd yn hoffi pysgota eogiaid, ac rwy'n cofio tynnu llun ohono'n derbyn plu pysgota a wnaed gan rywun yng Nglofa Cynheidre. 'McGregor' oedd enw un ohonynt a dywedodd Syr Ian ei fod yn 'real killer'. Ychydig wyddem ni ar y pryd!

Roeddwn i wrth fy modd fel ffotograffydd, gan fod pob diwrnod o waith yn wahanol. Fe wnes i rywfaint o waith i gwmni Coal Products, Thomas Ness yng Nghaerffili, a gweddill meysydd glo Gwlad yr Haf. Roedd Prifysgol Caerdydd yn ymchwilio i'r posibilrwydd o aildefnyddio'r ffyrdd yng nglofa'r Betws gan ddefnyddio dulliau pwmpio monolithig, felly fe dreuliais lawer o amser yn tynnu lluniau yno. Rwy'n cofio gwneud arolwg ffotograffig o hen geuffordd a oedd yn rhedeg o dan Lofa'r Deep Navigation, gan ailymddangos gyda bechgyn Brigâd



The NCB Photographer

I JOINED THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD IN 1978 as a photographer. I had been on an underground visit with Bournemouth College to Celynen South Colliery so I knew what to expect at the pits, but I had no idea how many different sorts of activities went on in the NCB to support the mining industry and how embedded it was in the life of the valleys.

I had my interview at Coal House, Llanishen a modern office on the outskirts of Cardiff, but I started work in the Photographic Department in the old horse hospital up above the NCB offices at Tondy. The building was in a terrible state and most of the equipment was from the '60s. As a young Englishman from rural Dorset I really didn't know what I'd let myself in for.

I did my underground training at Abernant Colliery, for the last half hour of every day we would have to saw up firewood for the instructors and even had to carry it up the pit and put it in the boot of their car! I enjoyed it all and I think I could still build a cog [a wooden roof support] and set a Dowty [a hydraulic roof support] today.

Over the years I met and worked with some fantastic people and photographed some of the history makers. I used to get regularly pilloried by the likes of Mick McGachy, Arthur Scargill and Emlyn Williams at the NUM galas; they would point down to the press

pack and hurl insults at the 'gutter press'. I followed Ian McGregor around the coalfield for a couple of days photographing his trip. He was strangely engaging and could easily talk to men face to face but was awkward and clumsy with the media. He was a salmon fisherman and I remember photographing him being presented with some salmon flies that had been tied by someone at Cynheidre Colliery. One of the flies was called a McGregor, Sir Ian said 'It was a real killer' – little did we know!

I enjoyed my time as a photographer as no two jobs were the same. I did jobs for Coal Products, Thomas Ness in Caerphilly, and the remaining bits of the Somerset coalfield. Cardiff University were researching the re-use of roadways at Betws using monolithic pump packing methods so I spent a lot of time photographing that. I remember making a photographic survey of an old adit, which ran under Deep Navigation Colliery, and emerging with the Dinas Rescue Brigade boys from a manhole in the middle of Treharris High Street, much to the astonishment of shoppers and traffic.

There were social events to cover such as the Institute of Engineers, the Coal Merchant Federation dinners (probably the hardest drinkers and roughest bunch of the lot). I remember photographing prospec-



LLUNIAU GAN JOFF WHAITE.
CLOCKWEDD: 'WELSH' – CEFFYL GLOFA BIG PIT;
BOB HASLAM, CYFARWYDDWR BWRDD GLO A KEVIN
WHITEMAN, RHEOLWR PWLL GLO; IAN MCGREGOR
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOFF WHAITE.
CLOCKWISE: COLLIERY HORSE 'WELSH' AT BIG PIT;
BOB HASLAM, NCB DIRECTOR AND KEVIN WHITEMAN,
COLLIERY MANAGER; IAN MCGREGOR





▶ Achub Dinas trwy dwll archwilio yng nghanol Stryd Fawr Treharris, er mawr syndod i siopwyr a'r traffig!

Roedd angen rhoi sylw i ddigwyddiadau cymdeithasol fel ciniawau Sefydliad y Peirianwyr a Ffederasiwn Masnachwyr Glo (sef y criwiau garwaf a'r yfwyr mwyaf o bosibl). Rwy'n cofio tynnu lluniau darpar Freninesau Glo o dan olau gwan yn Neuaddau Lles y Glowyr ar hyd a lled y cymoedd; wel, roedd yn rhan o'm gwaith i! Fe es i sawl glofa breifat ar ran Arolygiaeth y Glofeydd ac arolygwyr hawliadau'r Bwrdd Glo, ac roedd cyflwr rhai ohonynt yn perthyn i'r gorffennol pell. Weithiau, byddwn i'n cael galwad i dynnu lluniau o ddamweiniau angheuol. Ar y pryd, rydych chi'n bwrw ymlaen â'ch gwaith yn ddi-emosiwn, ond wrth argraffu'r lluniau yn yr ystafell dywyll, dyna pryd rydych chi'n sylweddoli pa mor beryglus y gallai'r diwydiant fod mewn gwirionedd.

Gweithiais gyda Dick Marks, gohebydd rhifyn De Cymru o'r Coal News. Roedd chwilio am straeon parhaus yn dipyn o gamp; byddai tân glo yn nhŷ Mam-gu'n ddigon o drywydd am stori ar adegau. Symudodd fy ystafell dywyll o Don-du i Aberaman, yn ôl i Don-du ac yna Llanisien, cyn gorffen yn Ystradmynach. Fe dreuliais i 12 mlynedd yn byw ac yn gweithio yn ne Cymru, ac mae gennyf gyfeillion gwych o'r cyfnod hwnnw. Yn y diwedd, fe'm hanfonwyd i weithio gydag Uned Deledu'r Bwrdd Glo yn Eastwood Hall ym 1991, lle bues i'n cynhyrchu ffilmiau hyfforddiant a diogelwch cyn i bawb gael ein diswyddo ym mis Mawrth 1994.

Jonathan ('Joff') Whaite, Ffotograffydd

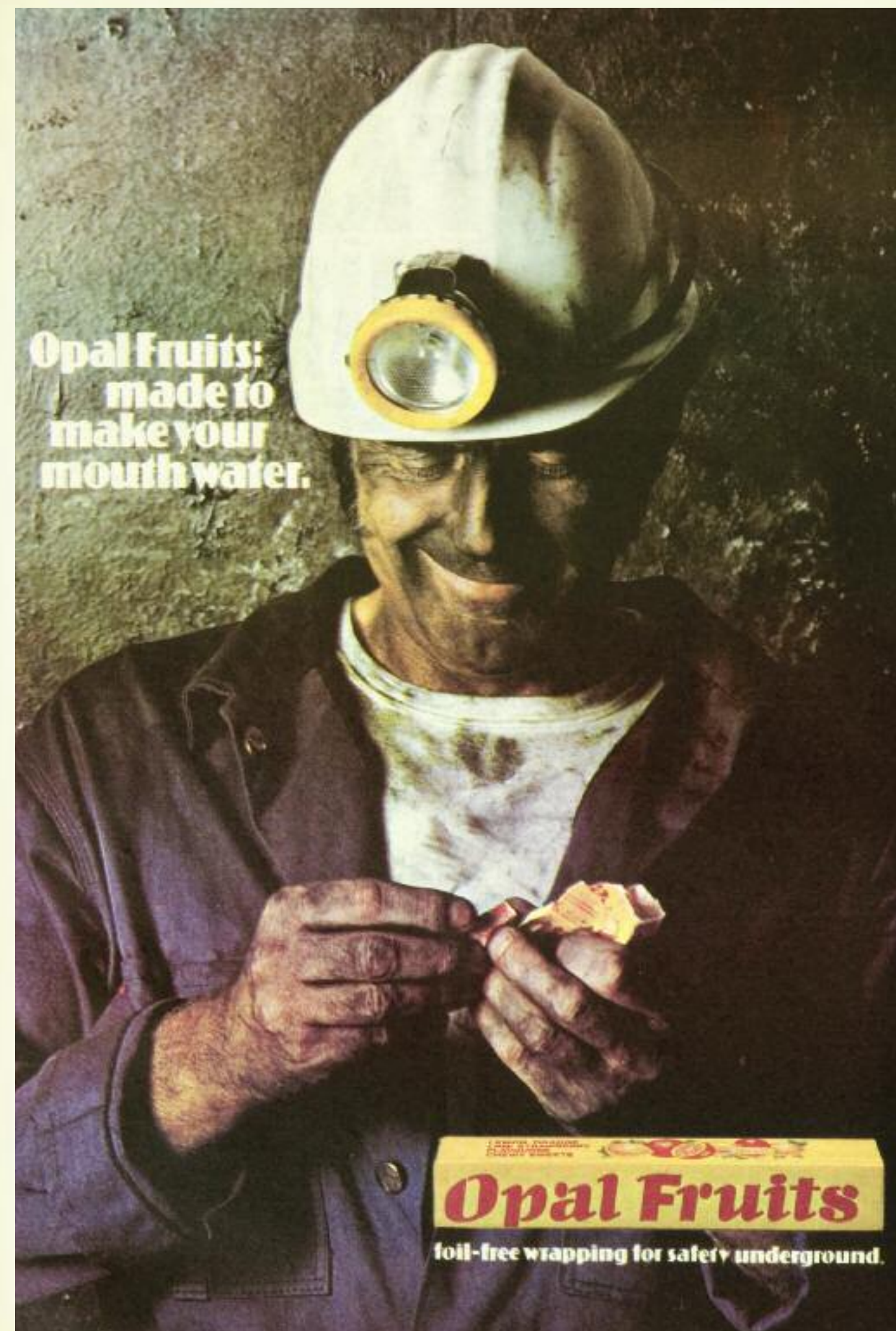


▶ tive Coal Queens in dimly lit Miners' Welfare Halls up and down the valleys; well someone had to do it. I visited a lot of the private mines on behalf of the Inspectorate of Mines and the NCB claims inspectors, some were like stepping back in time. There were times I was called on to photograph fatal accidents. When you are working taking the photographs you remain detached but printing them up in the darkroom brings home just how dangerous the industry could be.

I worked with the Coal News journalist Dick Marks on the south Wales edition. It was a constant struggle to find stories; it seemed if your Grandmother had a coal fire you qualified for a mention. My darkroom moved from Tondy to Aberamman back to Tondy then to Llanishen and finally Ystrad Mynach. I lived and worked in south Wales for twelve years and made some fantastic friends. I was eventually transferred to Eastwood Hall in 1991 to join the NCB Television Unit producing safety and training films until we were all made redundant in March 1994.

Jonathan ('Joff') Whaite, Photographer

PAUL ROBESON JUNIOR
YNG NGLOFA'R MAERDY
PAUL ROBESON JUNIOR
AT MAERDY COLLIERY



Oes 'da chi'ch llyfr dogni?

1941 OEDD HI, AC ROEDDWN I'N GWEITHIO yng Nglofa Fernhill gyda bachan o'r enw Arthur Fallon. Roedd hi bron yn unarddeg o'r gloch y bore, ac fe ddywedodd wrtha i 'Beth wnawn ni - llenwi'r dram wag hon, neu fynd am ginio?' Atebais i 'Man a man i ni lenwi hon yn gyntaf.' Roedden ni'n gweithio mewn llecyn chwe throedfedd o uchder, ac yn llenwi'r dram gyda bocs cwrlo oherwydd pe baech chi'n defnyddio rhaw, a'r Ffeiarman (swyddog y ffas lo) yn eich dal chi, fe fydddech chi'n cael dirwy neu hyd yn oed yn colli'ch gwaith. Felly, roeddwn i'n gorfod defnyddio'r bocs cwrlo, ac wrth wneud hynny, dyma ddarn o garreg yn cwmpo o'r to ac yn torri drwy fy nghoes.

Roedd dyn cymorth cyntaf yn gweithio tua dau neu dri thalchen i ffwrdd, ac fe ddaeth ataf gyda'i focs a rhoi rhwymyn arnaf. Roedd angen wyth dyn i 'nghario oddi yno gan ein bod ni dair milltir o waelod y pwll, a bob tro roedd llwyth o lo yn dod heibio, roedd rhaid iddyn nhw fy ngadael i ar ochr y ffordd er mwyn gwneud lle i'r ceffyl basio. Doedden nhw ddim yn rhoi'r flaenoriaeth i anaf drwg bryd hynny, roeddech chi'n cael eich symud o'r ffordd; yn y diwedd, fe gymrodd hi ddwy awr a hanner i 'nghael i allan.

Ta beth, cefais fy nghludo i fyny'r pwll ac i'r ystafell ambiwlans. Ar ôl iddyn nhw roi'r stretsier ar y bwrdd, dechreuodd pwll mawr o waed ddiferu ohono. Dyma ni, ddwy awr a hanner yn ddiweddarach, ac roeddwn i'n dal i allu teimlo'r gwaed yn llifo i lawr fy nghoes. Yna, daeth y meddyg i gael golwg arnaf, a gofynnodd 'Ai fi yw'ch meddyg chi'. 'Nage,' meddwn i, 'Doctor Nelson yw fy meddyg i'. 'O iawn', atebodd, a sefyll yn ôl. Yna, roedd rhaid inni ddisgwyl am ambiwlans, sef ambiwlans preifat y dyddiau hynny. Aeth yr ambiwlans i fyny'r ffordd newydd i'r ysbyty, a gweld bod y giatiau ar gau. Felly, roedd rhaid i'r gyrrwr ambiwlans ddringo dros y giatiau i'w datgloi.

O'r diwedd, pan gefais fy rhoi ar wely, daeth Dr Frazier i mewn, agor ei got, a thynnu nodwydd fawr ohoni, a oedd yn debyg i gwrlin anferth. Rwy'n cofio edrych arni a meddwl 'Yffach gols!' Gydag ef oedd Dr Nelson, mewn cot fawr frown a photel yn ei law. Dywedodd 'Nawr, wy moyn i chi anadlu hwn' wrth iddo dywallt rhywbeth o botel i ddarn o wlân cotwm. 'Anadlwch hwn, ond ddim yn rhy ddwfn' meddai wrth i'r meddyg a oedd am fy mhwytho roi'r edafedd yn y nodwydd reit o flaen fy llygaid i. 'Nawr 'tel' meddai, gan daflu'r pad ar fy wyneb, 'Anadlwch yn ddwfn'. Ar ôl ychydig funudau, dywedodd Dr Nelson, 'Ody e wedi mynd eto Frazier?' a dyma fi'n gweiddi drwy'r masg, 'Nac ydw! Ddim 'to!' Fe'i clywais yn gofyn am yr eildro 'Ody e wedi mynd, Frazier?' a gwaeddais eto 'Naddo!' ac yna, reit sydyn, roedd hi fel petawn i wedi cael clatsien gyda gordd, a'r cwbl allen i weld oedd sêr a bang! Roeddwn i wedi fy llorio'n llwyr.

Pan ddeffrais i, roedd y weiarles ymlaen ger y gwely, a chlywais y geiriau 'It's Monday night at eight o'clock - going off air.' A meddyliais i 'Na beth od, fe ddois i mewn ar ddydd Mawrth, ac mae hi nawr yn ddydd Llun, dwi wedi cysgu am wythnos gyfan'.

Dim ond ers dwy awr roeddwn i yno mewn gwirionedd. Roedden nhw wedi rhoi poteli dŵr twym o'm cwmpas ac wedi gosod sgriniau o amgylch y gwely. Benthycas organ geg gan fachgen bach yn y gwely nesaf, a dechreuais ei chwarae, ac fe ddaethon nhw i mewn a gofyn 'Pwy sy'n gwneud y sŵn 'na' ac agor y sgriniau a gofyn 'Ydych chi'n iawn?' 'Odw,' meddwn i, 'dwi'n llwgu; a heb gael unrhyw beth i'w fwyta ers y ddamwain.' 'Ww, chewch chi ddim bwyd. Rhaid i chi aros tan amser te. Oes 'da chi'ch llyfr dogni?' 'Llyfr dogni?', mynte fi, 'dwi newydd ddod ar stretsier o danddaear!' Felly, erbyn amser swper, daethon nhw â dau neu dri darn o fara a dishgled fach o de. Yffach, o'n i'n starfo! Doeddwn i heb fwyta dim ers chwech y bore. Bues i yn yr ysbyty am fis. Fe ddes allan ar 29 Ebrill 1941, y noson pan ollyngodd yr Almaenwyr fom ar Gwm-parc, a bues i gartref am ddeufis wedyn.

Sylvanus Thompson, Glöwr



GLOFA FERNHILL
FERNHILL COLLIERY

Have you got your ration book?

IT WAS 1941 AND I WAS WORKING IN FERNHILL Colliery with a chap called Arthur Fallon. It was coming up to eleven o'clock in the morning and he said to me 'What shall we do shall we fill this empty dram or shall we go to dinner?' I said 'We may as well fill it first.' We were working in six feet of height and only filling the dram with a curling box because if you used a shovel, and the fireman [an official on a coal face] caught you, you would get a fine or even the sack. So I had to use the curling box and a stone came down from the roof and cut through my leg.

The first aid man was working about two or three stalls away and he came up with his box and bandaged me up. It took eight men to carry me out as we were three miles in from pit bottom, and every time a journey passed by they had to lay me at the side of the road while a horse pulled the journey of drams passed us. A bad injury wasn't a priority then, you were pushed to one side; it took two and a half hours to get me out.

So, anyway, they got me up the pit to the ambulance room. They laid my stretcher on the table and as they did a big pool of blood came off it. Two and a half hours

and I could still feel the blood running down my leg. Then a doctor came to look at me and said 'Am I your doctor?' I said 'No, Doctor Nelson is my doctor.' 'Oh, right' he said and stood back. Then we waited for the ambulance to arrive, which was a private ambulance in those days. The ambulance driver took us up the new road to the hospital and the gates were locked. So the driver had to climb over the gates to unlock them.

When they eventually got me onto a bed Dr Frazier came in and opened his coat and pulled out a needle, it was like a big curl, and I was looking at it and thinking 'Good God!' He was with Dr Nelson who had a big brown overcoat on and was holding a bottle. He said 'Now I want you to take a deep breath on this' and he had a pad of cotton wool and he was pouring something from the bottle on it. 'Take deep breaths, but don't take them too deep' he said while the doctor who was going to do the sewing up was threading the gut onto the needle right in front of me. 'Right!' he said, slapping the pad on my face, 'Take deep breaths'. After a couple of minutes Dr Nelson said, 'Has he gone yet Frazier?' and I shouted through the mask, 'No! Not yet!' Then he said again 'Has he gone yet Frazier?' and I yelled again 'No, not yet' and then, all of a sudden, whoosh, it was like someone had hit me with a sledge and I could see all stars and bang! I was out.

When I woke up there was a little wireless near the foot of my bed and I heard it saying 'It's Monday night at eight o'clock - going off air.' I thought 'That's funny, I came in on a Tuesday and now it's Monday, I've been sleeping for a week. In fact I had only been there for two hours and they had put hot water bottles around me and pulled the screens round the bed. A little boy in the next bed lent me his mouth organ and I started to play and they came in and said 'Whose doing that in there' and pulled the screens back. 'Are you all right?' and I said 'Aye, I'm starving; I haven't had any food since I had this bump.' 'Ooh, you can't have any food. You'll have to wait 'till tea time. Have you got your ration book?' I said 'Ration book? I've just come in on a stretcher from underground!' So,

when they brought the tea around they gave me two or three corners of bread and a little cup of tea. God, I was starving! I'd not had anything since six o'clock that morning. I stayed in hospital for a month. It was April 29th 1941 when I came out, the night the Germans bombed Cwmparc, and I was home for two months after that.

*Sylvanus Thompson,
Collier*

Un teulu mawr

HYFFORDDAIS FEL NYRS YN YSBYTY Brenhinol Gwent. Roeddwn i'n gweithio yn Ysbyty Cyffredinol Tredegar am gyfnod byr wedyn, ac roeddwn i ar shifft nos pan welais i'r hysbyseb swydd am nyrs yn y lofa. Meddyliais, 'Pe bawn i'n rhoi cynnig arni, fe gawn i benwythnose rhydd wedyn!' Roedd fy nhad yn löwr, fy mrawd yn löwr, ac felly roedd e yn y gwaed am wn i. Bues i'n gweithio yng Nglofa Pochin ym 1955, cyn symud i Lofa Oakdale yng nghanol y 1960au, ac yna'n Uwch Swyddog Nyrsio ar feysydd glo'r De i gyd am ddeunaw mlynedd tan i mi ymddeol ym 1986. Cefais sawl profiad yn ystod fy ngyrfa, rhai da a rhai gwael iawn, ond mae'n well gen i gofio'r amseroedd da.

Ychydig cyn y Nadolig un flwyddyn, cawsom amser caled iawn gyda sawl damwain erchyll ac un farwolaeth. Ar noswyl Nadolig, roedd y dynion yn cerdded heibio'r ganolfan feddygol ar eu ffordd i'r gwaith. Roedd hi'n ddiwrnod cyflog, a phawb yn mynd i ysbryd yr ŵyl. Pawb yn dymuno 'Nadolig Llawn' ac yn dweud 'Mwynhewch' ac yn y blaen.

Roedd dau deleffon yn y ganolfan feddygol; un linell allanol a'r llall oedd ffôn y lofa a oedd yn cysylltu â phob rhan o'r pwll. Roedd caniad gwahanol gan bob ffôn, ac roedd pawb yn gwybod p'un oedd p'un. Roedd pawb yn sgwrsio'n braf ac yn

hapus oherwydd bod Nadolig ar y gorwel, ac yn sydyn, fe ganodd un o'r telefonau.

Aeth y lle'n dawel fel y bedd oherwydd ffôn y pwll oedd yn canu, ac rwy'n cofio cerdded yn nerfus ar draws y ganolfan feddygol i'w ateb, yn ofni taw newyddion drwg oedd e, gan feddwl 'O'r tad, plis, ddim ar noswyl Nadolig'. Codais y ffôn a dyma lais ar y pen arall yn dweud, 'Sister' ac yna tawelwch llethol, ond roedd hi'n amlwg fod rhywun yn dal yno. Yna, meddai'r llais, 'Sister, wy'n ffonio o'r ffas lo peth a peth'. 'Ie', meddwn i, ac yna pesychodd y llais cyn dweud, 'Sister' ac atebais i, 'Ie, beth sy'n bod?' Yn sydyn, dyma'r llais dieithr yn canu, 'God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay', ac yn sydyn, dyma ddynion y ffas i gyd yn canu carolau i mi. Nawr, roedd uchelseinydd o dan y ddaear i roi gwybod i bawb beth oedd yn digwydd, ac felly roedd hi'n fater o 'Os ydych chi'n mynd i ganu i Sis, ry'n ni'n mynd i ganu iddi!' a dyma pawb danddaear yn canu'r garol i mi. Daeth dagrau i'm llygaid yr eiliad honno.

Mae gen i hefyd atgofion melys o dderbyn anrhegion bach hefyd. Doedden nhw byth wedi'u lapio mewn papur neis na dim, ond byddai rhywun yn dod â rhywbeth wedi'i lapio mewn papur newydd i'r ganolfan feddygol ac yn dweud 'I chi mae hwn, Sis' a bant â nhw. Ar ôl ei agor, byddai'n cynnwys bocs bach o siocled neu dusw o flodau. Bob tro roedd rhywun yn priodi, byddwn i bob amser yn cael darn o gacen priodas, ac weithiau, darn o gacen fedydd. Roedd yn hyfryd – roeddwn i'n rhan o'r gymuned.

Stori neis arall yw honno am y lwmpyn o lo a gefais ar ôl i mi fynd dan ddaear am y tro cyntaf. Roeddwn i'n arfer mynd yn ôl gartref bob dydd lau i weld mam, a dyna lle'r oeddwn i'n dangos y lwmpyn hwn o lo gyda balchder i mam pan ddaeth fy mrawd, a oedd yn ffeiarman (un o swyddogion y lofa) i mewn a dweud 'Taflwch e i'r tân, mam!' ond atebodd mam 'Paid ti â mentrol!' Flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach, pan fu farw fy mam, roedden ni'n mynd drwy'i phethau personol hi pan welson ni ei 'bocs lwcus', sef bocs yn llawn o'i phethau arbennig hi, a gweld bod fy lwmpyn glo i yno. Mae e gennyf hyd heddiw.

Ar ôl ffrwydrad Six Bells, daeth dynion y Frigâd Achub draw i gael golwg ar offer achub y lofa, a chan fy mod i ar ddyletswydd yn ystod y danchwa honno, buom yn trafod ein profiadau yn ystod yr amser ofnadwy hwnnw. Ar ôl ein sgwrs, fe aethon nhw i'w car a dyma un ohonynt yn dychwelyd ataf gan ddweud 'Dyma rywbeth i chi, Sis, ry'ch chi'n ei haeddu fe', a bant â fe. Rhywbeth wedi'i lapio mewn papur newydd. Pan agorais i'r pecyn, gwelais mai lamp glöwr oedd e. Mae'r lamp gen i o hyd, ac rwy'n mynd â hi bob amser pan fyddaf yn rhoi sgwrs am ddyddiau'r lofa.

Er nad oeddem i fod i fynd danddaear o gwbl, fe es i lawr sawl gwaith. Mae rhwydd hynt i mi ddweud unrhyw beth am y glowyr, ond wiw i neb arall wneud hynny. Rydych chi'n clywed rhai'n dweud bod eu hiaith yn warthus a bod eu tai yn dlodaidd iawn. Doedd hynny ddim yn wir o gwbl, roedd ▶

One big family

I TRAINED TO BE A NURSE IN THE ROYAL Gwent. I was in Tredegar General Hospital for a short while after that and I was on nights there when this advert for a colliery nurse came up. I thought, 'O, I wouldn't mind doing that, I could have the weekends free!' My dad was in mining, my brother was in mining, so it was in the blood I suppose. I worked in Pochin Colliery in 1955, moved to Oakdale Colliery in the mid-1960s and was later the Senior Nursing Officer for the whole of the south Wales coalfield for eighteen years until I retired in 1986. During my career I experienced many things, some good and some very bad, but I'd prefer to remember the nicer times.

During the run up to one Christmas we'd had a very trying time with some very nasty accidents including a fatality. On Christmas Eve the men were going to work past my medical centre. It was pay day and everyone was feeling in a Christmas spirit. Everybody was saying 'Happy Christmas' and 'Have a nice time' and so on.

In the medical centre there were two telephones; one was an outside line, the other was the pit phone connecting me to every part of the colliery. They had two different rings and everyone knew the sound of these phones. Everybody was chatting and happy because Christmas was coming and then, suddenly, the phone rang.

There was immediately dead silence because it was the pit phone and I remember walking hesitantly across the medical centre floor to pick up the phone fearing bad news and thinking to myself 'O, please God not on Christmas Eve'. I picked up the phone and voice the other end said, 'Sister' and then there was silence, but you could still tell that someone was on the other end. Then the voice said, 'Sister, this is the so and so coal face'. I said, 'Yes', and he said again, after much coughing, 'Sister' and I said, 'Yes, what is it?' And suddenly there came a voice, 'God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay', and suddenly there were all the face men singing Christmas carols to me. Now underground there's a tannoy system to let everybody know what's happening and nobody was going to be left out, so it was 'If you're going to sing to sister, we're going to sing to Sister!' and I had the whole of the underground workforce singing God rest ye merry gentlemen. I wanted to cry then.

I also have lovely memories of having little presents bought to me. They were never wrapped up in lovely paper or anything, but someone would come in the medical room with something wrapped in newspaper and they'd say 'This is for you Sis' and away they'd go. When you'd open it up there would be a little box of chocolates or a little bunch of flowers. When anyone got married I always had a piece of wedding cake, and sometimes it would be a piece of christening cake. It was lovely – I was part of a community.

Another nice story is about the piece of coal I got from my first trip underground. I used to go home

every Thursday to see my mother and we were having tea and I was proudly showing Mam my piece of coal when my brother, who was a fireman (*a colliery official*), walked in and said 'Throw it on the fire Mam!' but my mother said 'Don't you dare!' Years later, after my mother died, and we were going through her things we found her 'lucky box', the box she kept her special things in, and when I opened it up there was my piece of coal. I've still got that piece of coal.

After the Six Bells explosion, Rescue Brigade men came round to check the colliery rescue equipment and, as I had been on duty there during the disaster, we talked about what we had done during that terrible time. After our chat they went to get in their car and the next thing one of them came back to me and said, 'Here you are Sis, this is for you, you deserve it', and away he went. It was something wrapped in newspaper. When I opened it up it was a miner's lamp. I've still got that lamp and always take it with me when I give one my mining talks. ▶



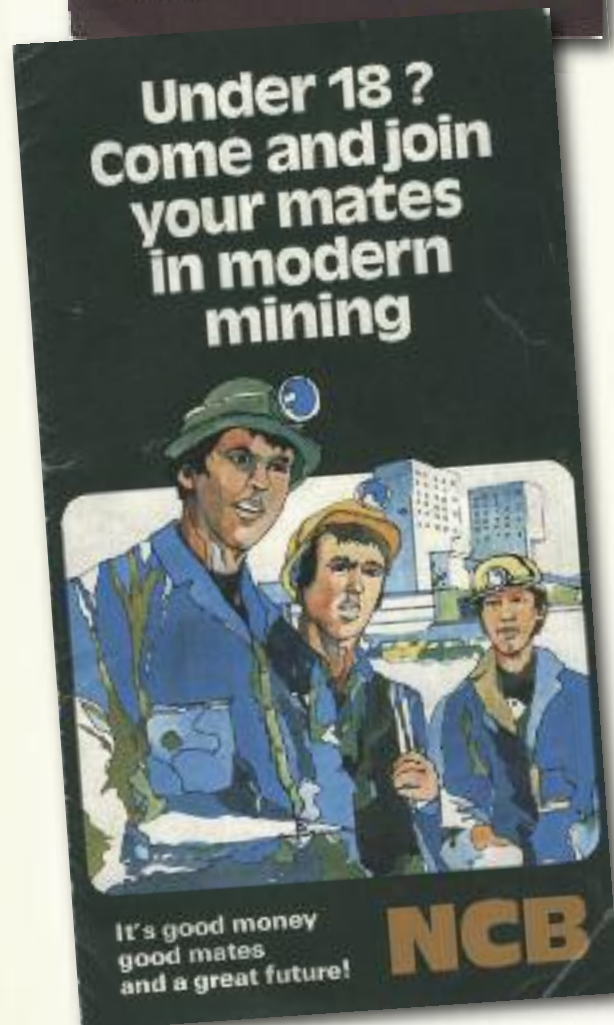
SISTER EVANS (ARY DDE) YN DISGWYL MYND I LAWR GLOFA OAKDALE
SISTER EVANS (RIGHT) AND TWO COLLEAGUES WAITING TO GO DOWN OAKDALE COLLIERY

Enjoy the full-flavoured
SNUFF
that miners prefer



IN PACKETS
OR APPROVED
"SAFETY" TINS AT
YOUR COLLIERY CANTEEN.





ganddyn nhw gartrefi hyfryd oedd bob amser fel pin mewn papur. Wrth gwrs, roedd ambell eithriad fel ym mhobman arall. Roedden nhw bob amser yn trin y nyrsys gyda'r parch mwyaf. Os bydden nhw'n rhegi, yna roedden nhw'n dweud 'Sori, Sister, o'n i ddim yn sylweddoli bo' chi yno'. Roeddwn i'n mynd i'r ystafelloedd gwisgo weithiau, lle'r oedd ganddyn nhw luniau rhywiol o ferched ar y waliau, ac os oeddwn i yno, bydden nhw'n eu gorchuddio'n slei bach gyda'u helmedi. Ond bydden i'n codi'r helmedi ac yn dweud 'Ma' pin-yp newydd 'da chi, o's e bois?'. Roedden nhw'n griw arbennig iawn.

Os oedd eu gwagedd neu eu plant yn ddifrifol wael, roedd rhai o'r glowyr yn dod i ofyn i mi esbonio'r salwch, a beth oedd y driniaeth orau. Nid y dynion hyn chwaith, doedden nhw ddim eisiau gwybod, ond roedd y rhai iau wastad eisiau trafod eu problemau gyda chi. Daeth un bachgen i'r ganolfan feddygol, a dweud wrthyf ei fod am gael fasectomi, sef y dyn cyntaf yn y pwll i gael un. Ac ar ôl y driniaeth, 'Barren Jones' fu ei enw am byth wedyn!

Roeddwn i'n hapus iawn yn gweithio yn y diwydiant glo. Roedd yna agosatrwydd a chynhesrwydd mawr yno, roedd y dynion yn wych a'u teuluoedd yn hyfryd, ac weithiau fe fydden nhw'n dod â'u plant ataf. Roedd y diwydiant glo yn un teulu mawr.

Iris Evans, Sister yn y Lofa

We weren't really supposed to go underground, but I actually went down many times. I can say what I like about the miners but no one else dare say anything derogatory. You hear some people saying that their language was shocking, that their houses were very poor. It's a load of nonsense, they had beautiful houses and they kept them beautifully. You always had the odd one but there's always the exception. They were always very respectable to all the nursing officers; we were treated with the greatest respect. If they swore it was, 'Sorry Sister we didn't know you were there'. I used to go around the fitting shops sometimes and they always had their pin-ups on the walls and if I went in somebody would very discreetly take their helmet off and put it over the pin-up. But I used to lift it up and say 'You've got a new pin-up have you boys?' They were a great crowd, a great crowd.

If their wives or children were seriously ill, some of the miners used to ask if I could explain what was going on and what could be done about it. Not the older men, they didn't want to know thanks, but the younger men often wanted to talk their problems over with you. One lad came to my medical centre said to me that he was going to have a vasectomy, the first man in the pit to have one. So he had his vasectomy and from that day on he was always known as Barren Jones! I was very, very happy in mining, there was a warm closeness, the men were great and their families were lovely, sometimes they used to bring their kiddies to see me. The mining industry was one big family.

Iris Evans, Colliery Sister

Llwybr siampên

GADEWAIS YR YSGOL YN 15 OED, AC AR ÔL mynychu Canolfan Hyfforddi Wattstown, fe es i weithio yng Nglofa'r Cambrian. Plymar oeddwn am fod yn wreiddiol, ond oherwydd y byddwn i wedi gorfod ymuno â'r fyddin fe benderfynais fynd yn löwr – a oedd yn waith neilltuedig.

Roeddwn i'n gweithio ar y ffas lo, gan wneud gwaith llaw a chydau pheiriannau. Fyddwn i byth yn dychwelyd yno am fil o bunnoedd yr wythnos i fod

yn onest, oherwydd fe welais i ddamweiniau di-ri - doedd dim pris ar fywyd! Er gwaethaf hyn, roedd y glowyr yn gydweithwyr bendigedig. Roedden ni fel brodyr, ac roedd hynny'n gwneud iawn am yr amgylchiadau gwaith ofnadwy.

Un noson, roedden ni newydd adael y baddondai pen pwll ac yn rhuthro i ddal y bws. Cafodd y dyn o'm mlaen i drawiad ar y galon, ac fe gwympodd i'r llawr a marw. Doedden ni ddim ar



GWNEUD YMARFER
CORFFYN NHAL-Y-GARN
INJURED MINERS
EXERCISING AT TALYARN

The champagne path

I LEFT SCHOOL AT FIFTEEN YEARS OLD AND, after attending Wattstown Training Centre, went to work in Cambrian Colliery. I actually wanted to be a plumber but if I had I would have been conscripted into the army; so I went underground which was a reserved occupation.

I worked on both hand cut and machine cut faces. I wouldn't go back for a thousand pounds a week to be honest, because I saw so many accidents – life was

cheap! In spite of everything, miners were fantastic people to work with. We were like brothers and it made up for the awful working conditions.

One night we had just left the pithead baths and rushed for the bus. The man in front of me had a heart attack, fell down and died. We were just outside the colliery so my friend and I dragged him back onto the premises so that his widow would have more than the £23 she would have had if we had left him where he

► safle'r lofa, felly dyma fi a'm cydweithiwr yn llusgo'r corff yn ôl i dir y lofa er mwyn i'w weddw dderbyn mwy na'r £23 y byddai wedi'i gael petaen ni wedi'i adael yn yr union fan lle bu farw. Pan ddaeth dyn yr ambiwlans, fe ddwedon ni mai yno y bu'r creadur farw. Er ein bod ni'n teimlo'n drist iawn, o leiaf roedden ni wedi helpu ei wraig weddw.

Cefais ddamwain go gas yn y Cambrian. Dydd Gŵyl Dewi 1963 oedd hi, ac roeddwn i wrthi'n datblygu ffas lo newydd. Roedden ni wedi tyllu'r tyllau ffrwydro ddiwrnod ynghynt, ac roeddwn i eisiau ffrwydro'r pum twll ar ochr chwith y ffas lo i ddechrau. Doedd y ffeiarman ddim yn hapus, gan ei fod eisiau ffrwydro'r cyfan gyda'i gilydd, ond fe ildiodd, a llenwi'r tyllau fel y dywedais i. Ar ôl gwneud hynny, sylweddolodd nad oedd ganddo'r batri tanio, felly aeth yn ôl i fyny'r llwybr i chwilio amdano. Yn y cyfamser, fe wnaethom barhau i weithio. Roedd cynhalbost yn sownd yn y llawr, a chawsom gryn drafferth i'w rhyddhau. Felly, dyma fi'n rhoi fy nwy fraich o amgylch y post i geisio'i godi'n rhydd, a'r peth nesaf rwy'n ei gofio yw teimlo ochrau'r gwely yn yr ysbyty a methu'n glir â chofio ble'r oeddwn i.

Gofynnais 'Ble'r ydw i?' a chlywais sŵn traed yn

rhuthro tuag ataf. Roeddwn i ar ben fy hun yn y ward a newydd ddeffro o fod yn anymwybodol. Roedd fy wyneb wedi malurio ac roeddwn i'n ddall; yn ddiweddarach, ces wybod gan fy ngwraig fy mod i wedi bod yn yr ysbyty ers sawl diwrnod. Roedd pobl yn credu fy mod i wedi marw, yn wir, roeddwn i wedi marw yn ôl adroddiad ym mhapur newydd y Rhondda Leader! Roedd dau o'm cydweithwyr hefyd yn yr ysbyty, ond fi oedd wedi dioddef waethaf oherwydd 'mod i reit yn erbyn y tyllau ffrwydro. Cafwyd achos llys maes o law. Roedd y taniwr yn honni ei fod wedi dweud wrthym ni i gysgodi'n ddiogel, ac roedd e'n ceisio achub ei swydd trwy ein beio ni, ond ar ôl diwrnod hir o holi a stilio, cafodd ei ddyfarnu'n euog. Ni ddychwelais i weithio danddaear fyth wedyn.

Cefais lawer o broblemau ar ôl y ddamwain, a bues i yn ôl ac ymlaen i'r ysbyty am saith mlynedd. Dywedodd y meddyg na ddylwn i weithio eto, ond roedd rhaid i mi wneud rhywbeth. Cefais air gyda Reg Turner, ysgrifennydd y gyfrinfa, a gofynnodd a fuaswn i'n hoffi rhoi cynnig ar fod yn dasgmon yn swyddfeydd NCB Llanisien. Pan es i yno, cefais wybod mai un o'm dyletswyddau i fyddai golchi ceir y penaethiaid, ond fe ddywedais i, os oedden nhw'n hoffi gyrru yn eu ceir mawr crand, fe allen nhw eu golchi eu hunain! Yna, fe wnaethon nhw ddweud wrthyf am geisio am swydd garddwr cynorthwyol yng Nghanolfan Adsefydlu'r Glowyr yn Nhal-y-garn, ger Pont-y-clun.

Dechreuais weithio yno ym 1970. Roeddwn i wrth fy modd, a dechreuodd fy iechyd wella'n sylweddol hefyd. Pan ymddeolodd y prif arddwr, fe gymerais innau'r awenau, ac roeddwn i'n dal yno pan drosglwyddodd Tal-y-garn i ddwylo'r Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol ym 1986. Roedd Tal-y-garn yn cynnwys enghraifft o bob coeden a dyfai yng ngwledydd Prydain, ac roedd yno lawntiau o fri, llwybrau a ffyrdd o'u hamgylch. Cafodd llwybr arbennig ei greu o boteli siampên yno hefyd. Pan oedd y meist'r haearn, G T Clarke, yn byw yn y tŷ, roedd ychydig o dir corslyd ger y llyn, a doedd dim modd cael dŵr oddi yno. Er mwyn datrys y broblem, fe benderfynon nhw gasglu'r holl boteli siampên gwag o'r tŷ, eu troi wyneb i waered a'u gwrthio yn y tir corslog i greu llwybr. Roedd yn enwog iawn ar y pryd, ond welais i erioed mohono – mae'n siŵr bod y llwybr siampên wedi suddo o dan y mwd.

Agorwyd 'glofa enghreifftiol' yn Nhal-y-garn gan yr Arglwydd Robens ym 1964, er mwyn helpu i adsefydlu'r glowyr a oedd wedi'u hanafu. Os oedd ganddynt broblemau gyda'u coesau er enghraifft, roedden nhw'n gorfod cerdded ar hyd y llwybr hir o'r lofa hon i'm cartref i ar dir Tal-y-garn. Ar ôl hynny, roedden nhw'n mynd i mewn i'r lofa enghreifftiol ac yn gorfod ymlusgo eu hunain i'r ffas lo a gwneud pethau fel gosod cynhalbyst a datgymalu'r cludydd. Yna, roedden nhw'n dychwelyd i'r prif dŷ i wneud ymarfer corff. Pe bawn i heb fynd yn löwr, byddwn i wedi hoffi mynd i goleg garddwriaethol. Ond roedd mynd i'r Cambrian yn fater o wneud arian, a'r pwll glo oedd yn talu'r cyflogau gorau yn y cwm – roedd rhaid i chi fyw. Ond garddio fyddai'r dewis cyntaf, delfrydol.

Melville Banbury, Garddwr

PAUL ROBESON
YN CANU'YNG
NGHANOLFAN
ADSEFYDLU
TAL-Y-GARN
PAUL ROBESON
SINGING AT
TALYARN
REHABILITATION
CENTRE



► had died. When the ambulance man came we swore that that was where he had died. We were upset about it all but at least we had helped the widow.

I had a very bad accident in Cambrian. It was 1st March 1963 and I was working on developing a new coal face. We had bored the shot holes the day before and I wanted to blow the five holes on the left hand side of the face first. The fireman wasn't happy as he wanted to blow the lot down in one go but he gave in and charged up as I wanted. After he had charged up he found that he didn't have his shot firing battery with him so he went back in the roadway to look for it. While he did that we carried on working. There was a roof support which was stuck in the floor and we had a lot of trouble trying to get it out. So I had both arms around this post trying to work it loose and the next thing I remember was feeling the sides of a hospital bed and wondering where I was.

I said 'Where am I to?' and I heard a rustle of feet coming towards me. I was in a ward on my own and just coming out of unconsciousness. I had a smashed face and I was blind; my wife later told me that I had been in hospital a good couple of days. I had almost been given up for dead, in fact *The Rhondda Leader* actually reported that I *had* died! The two men I was working with had also gone to hospital but I was injured the worst as I had been right up against the shot holes. There was a court case eventually. The shotsman claimed that he had told us to take cover, he was trying to save his job by blaming us but, after a day long trial, he was found guilty. I never worked underground again after the accident.

I had a lot of problems after the accident and went back and fore the hospital for seven years. The doctor told me not to work again but I wanted to do something. I had a word with Reg Turner the lodge secretary and he asked me if I would like to go as a handyman in the NCB Llanishen offices. When I went

down there they told me that part of my duties would be to clean bosses' cars, but I said that if they liked driving in their big cars they could clean them themselves! Then I was told to try for an assistant gardener's job in Talyarn Miners' Rehabilitation Centre near Pontyclun.

I started in June 1970, I loved the job and my health improved a lot. When the head gardener retired I got his job and was still there when the National Health Service took over Talyarn in 1986. Talyarn had an example of every tree that grows in Britain and had prize lawns, paths and roads around them. Talyarn also used to have a path made from Champagne bottles. When the ironmaster G. T. Clark, owned the house they had some boggy ground down by the lake and they couldn't get the water from there. To solve the problem they kept all the empty Champagne bottles from the house, turned them around and pressed them into the ground to make a walkway. It was famous at one time but I never saw it so it must have sunk under the mud.

There was a 'model mine' in Talyarn which was opened by Lord Robens in 1964. It was designed to rehabilitate injured miners. If they had leg problems for example they had to walk back and fore along a long path from the model mine to my house in the grounds. After that they would go into the model mine where they had to crawl through into the coal face and do things like put up roof supports and take the conveyor apart. After the model mine, they went from there to the main house to do different exercises.

If I hadn't gone into the colliery I would have liked to have gone to horticultural college. Going to Cambrian was a matter of getting money and the colliery was the best paid job in the valley – you had to live, but my first choice would have been gardening.

Melville Banbury, Gardener

**Earn
Big Money
in Mining**



Bechgyn y Ridyllfa

ROEDDWN I'N 14 OED YM 1939, AC I FOD I ddechrau gweithio danddaear fel glöwr ifanc gyda fy nhad yng Nglofa Banwen. Ond, yn anffodus, roedd cwymp mawr wedi bod danddaear, a chefais fy anfon i weithio ar y sgrin yn rhidyllu'r glo yn lle hynny.

Roedd y rhidyllfa'n edrych fel crocbren, yn sefyll ar stiltiau dur a oedd yn ddigon uchel i'r wagenni glo fynd oddi tano i gael eu llenwi. Roedden ni'n gweithio mewn clamp o adeilad haearn rhychog lle'r oedd y sŵn ofnadwy'n cael ei chwyddo'n gacoffoni byddarol, annioddefol a fedrai wneud pobl yn llythrennol sâl yn gorfforol. Roedd breichiau'r cludfeltiau amrywiol yn cael eu gollwng i gefn y tryciau er mwyn eu llwytho, ac oherwydd bod angen neilltuo bwlch hir yn y llawr ar gyfer pob un, roedd hi'n amhosibl cadw'r adeilad yn gynnes yn y gaef. Roedd pump bwced tân glo yn llosgi'n wynias yn y drafft a godai o'r llawr, ond roedd rhaid sefyll o fewn troedfedd iddynt i gadw'n gynnes. Ac yna'r holl lwch! Wrth wagio pob dram, roedd cwmwl o lwch du trwchus yn rholio i lawr y 'Rhidyll Fawr' i mewn i'r rhidyllau llai. Doedd dim offer dŵr neu echdynnu ar gael i atal y llwch, ac felly roedd yn disgyn am bennau'r bechgyn a oedd yn codi cerrig a slag o'r cludfeltiau. Gan fod angen rhidyllu dros fil o dunelli ym mhob shift, roedd yna lwch di-baid. Pan oedd y gwynt yn chwythu o'r dwyrain, ni allai'r pentref chwaith ddianc rhag y llwch a'r sŵn parhaus.

Yng nghanol yr holl lwch a dwndwr y peiriannau, roedd bodau dynol yn gweithio. Roedd tua ugain ohonynt yn gweithio o fewn ac o amgylch y rhidyllfeydd – yn gymysgedd o fechgyn, dynion a gafodd anafiadau drwg danddaear, a glowyr hen iawn, rhai yn eu saith degau hwyr ac un yn 80 oed a ddechreuodd weithio yn y 1870au. Roedd hi'n amhosibl cynnal sgwrs gyda'r gweithwyr eraill, dim ond cyfathrebu trwy ystumio neu ddefnyddio arwyddion llaw. Os oeddech chi am wybod faint o'r gloch oedd hi, yna byddech yn edrych draw tuag at Mr Jones 'Camnant' ar y 'Belt Cobble' ac yn tapio ble fyddai'ch watsh ym mhoced eich gwasgod (os oedd gennych chi un!). Os oedd hi'n ddeg munud i ddeg, byddai'n dal dwy law i fyny â'r bysedd ar led, yn cau'r ddwy law ac yn codi dau fys, eu cau, ac yna'n codi deg bys i fyny. Os oedd hi'n ddeg munud wedi deg, byddai'n codi deg bys ac yn chwifio ei law wrth ei frest, ac yn codi deg bys eto.

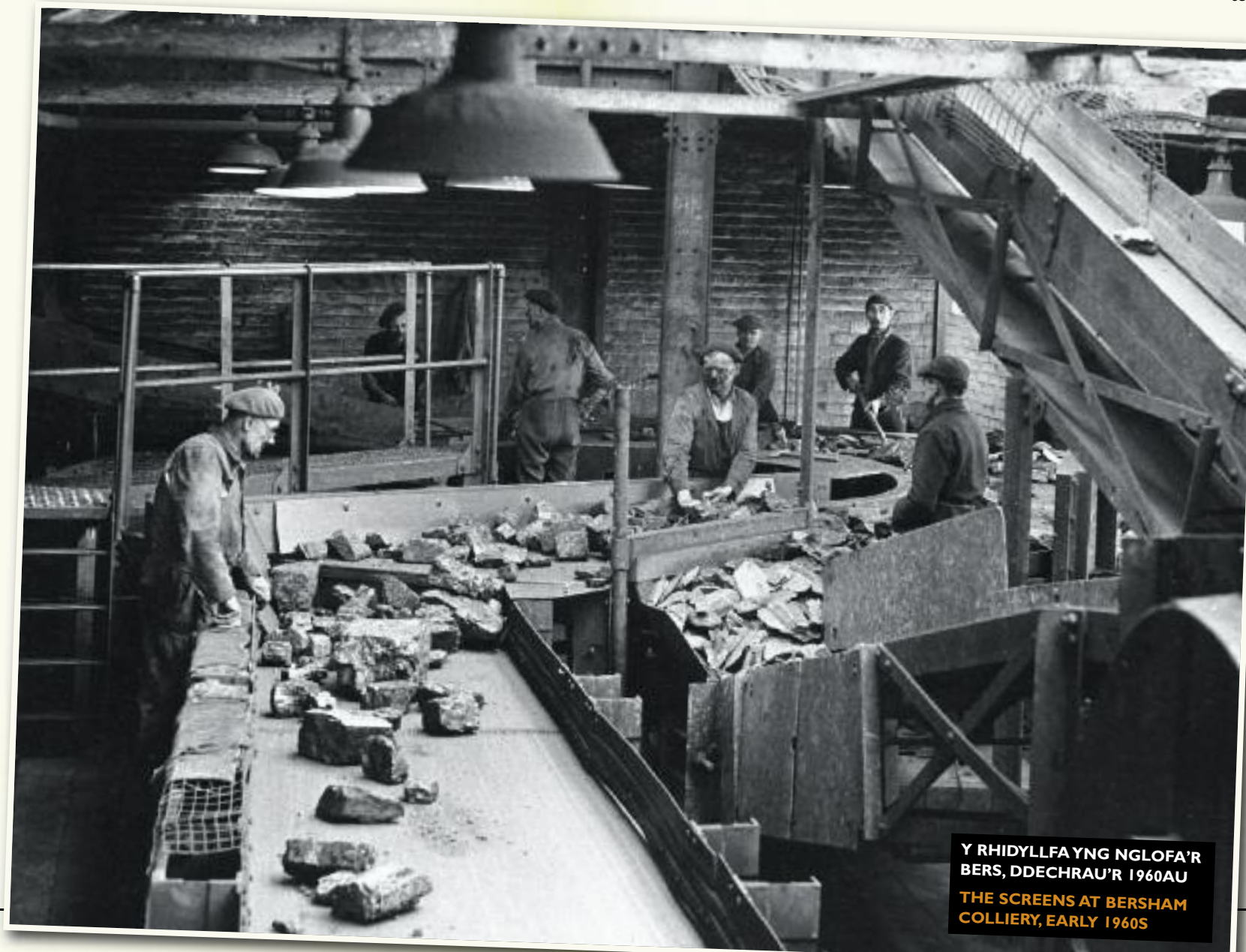
Gan nad oedd ffreutur i'r gweithwyr, roedd y trefniadau bwyta yn gyntefig ar y naw. Roedd gweithwyr yn dod â photeli o de, a oedd yn blasu'n well heb laeth, gyda nhw o gartref, ac yn eu cadw'n gynnes o dan y bwcedi tân. Roedden nhw'n rhoi penwaig cochion, cig moch a sosej ar rofiau, a'u ffrîo ar y tân agored.

Y rhidyllfa laddodd David Jones. Pymtheg oed oedd e. Roedd yn gwisgo cadach gwddf y diwrnod hwnnw gan ei bod mor oer, ac aeth darn ohono'n sownd yn olwyn yrru'r 'cludydd bach'. Roedd yr olwyn yrru hon tua phedair troedfedd ar ei thraws, a dim ond pum troedfedd oedd Dai. Mae'n siŵr ei fod wedi ymladd yn enbyd i geisio torri'n rhydd ond roedd y gadwyn yrru wedi'i ddal ac yn ei lusgo tuag at ddannedd yr olwyn yrru. Boddwyd ei sgrechiaadau

gan ddadwrdd y peiriant siglo a oedd yn rhidyllu'r tunelli o lo a ollyngwyd i mewn iddo. Trodd yr olwyn, a chafodd David druan ei lusgo rownd a rownd nes disgyn yn glep yn erbyn y llawr congrid.

Os oedd un gweithle a gynlluniwyd i draflyncu'r ysbryd dynol yn llwyr, yna'r gwaith rhidyllu glo oedd hwnnw. Er ei fod yn waith didostur o galed, nid oedd y gweithwyr yn ymddangos yn ddigalon. Yn hytrach, roeddynt bob amser yn chwilio am gyfle i gael sbort, fel sleifio lwmpyn o lo poeth ar y cludfelt a chwerthin yn braf wrth weld rhyw greadur difeddwl yn gafael ynddo ac yn neidio i'r awyr mewn braw. Roeddynt hefyd yn edmygu'r llwythi o dryciau gorlawn – 'French Nut and Cobble', wedi'u cribino, eu fforchio a'u naddu, ac yn dipyn o bictiwr yn heulwen yr haf. Glo carreg sgleiniog wedi'i docio a'i drin mor daclus â gwelyau blodau hardd.

George Brinley Evans, Glöwr, Milwr, Arlunydd ac Awdur



Y RHIDYLLFA YNG NGLOFA'R BERS, DDECHRAU'R 1960AU
THE SCREENS AT BERSHAM COLLIERY, EARLY 1960S

Working on the Screens

It was 1939 and I was fourteen years old and supposed to start underground as a collier boy with my father in Banwen Colliery. However, there had been a big fall of roof underground and I was sent to work on the screens instead.

The coal screening plant was shaped like a gallows. It stood on steel stilts high enough for coal wagons to pass underneath to be loaded. The whole operation was housed in a large corrugated iron building that amplified the already colossal noise to an ear-splitting, unbearable, cacophony that could literally make people physically ill. The jibs of the various conveyor belts were lowered into the trucks for loading and each one needed a long gap in the floor which made it impossible to keep the plant warm in the winter. Five open coal burning braziers burned white hot in the up draught from the floor but only warmed you if you were standing within a foot of them. Then there was the dust! With each dram that was tipped, a jet-black cloud of dust rolled down the 'Big Shaker' into the screens. There was no water suppression or extractor fans so the dust fell right on to the heads of the boys

picking slag and stone from the conveyors. More than a thousand tons a shift had to be screened so the clouds of dust were continuous. When the wind blew from the east, even the village itself didn't escape the all engulfing noise and dust.

Amongst all this machinery, noise and dust were human beings. There were about twenty of them working within and around the screens. They were a mixture of boys, men who had been badly injured underground and very old miners, some in their late seventies, including one eighty year old who had started work in the 1870s. Verbal communication between the workers was impossible and all communication was by signals. If you wanted to know the time you looked across to Mr Jones 'Camnant' on the 'Cobble Belt' and tapped where the watch pocket on your waistcoat would have been (if you had a watch!). Old Mr Jones would take out his watch and signal. If it was ten minutes to ten he would hold up both hands, fingers outstretched, close both hands and put two fingers up, close them, then put ten fingers up. If it was ten past ten, he would put ten fingers up then wave his hand past his chest then put up ten fingers again.

There was no works' canteen so culinary requirements were most primitive. Bottles of tea, which tasted better without milk, were brought from home and kept warm in the ash under the fire braziers, kippers, bacon and sausage were fried on a shovel on the open fire.

It was the screens that killed David Jones. He was fifteen years of age. He was wearing a muffler that day, as it was very cold, and it got caught in the drive wheel of the 'Small Conveyor'. This drive wheel was four feet in diameter and Dai was just five feet tall. He must have tried desperately to pull free but the drive chain held him fast and pulled him into the teeth of the drive wheel. His screams and struggles were drowned by the noise of the shaker rocking to and fro, sieving the tons of coal being poured onto it. The wheel turned and he was taken around and around and slammed against the concrete floor.

If there was ever a place of work designed to completely swallow up the human spirit it was the coal screening plant. It was very hard, but the people who worked there didn't seem to feel sorry for themselves. On the contrary they always seemed to find something to laugh about such as slipping a hot slag onto the conveyor belt and laughing as the unsuspecting slag picker jumped a yard in the air. They could also admire the trains of fully loaded trucks – trucks of French Nut and Cobble, raked, forked and dressed and looking a real treat in the summer sun. Shining, glistening anthracite coal trimmed as neatly as well-attended flower beds.

George Brinley Evans, Miner, Soldier, Artist and Author

Gwrthryfel yn y gwynt

NID CYFARFOD ARFEROL O UNDEB Y Glowyr gyda dim ond llond llaw o'r ffyddloniaid yn bresennol oedd y cyfarfod hwn yn mynd i fod.

1985 oedd hi, ac wedi bron i flwyddyn o streicio, roedd llawer o ddynion a'u teuluoedd yn ysu am ddyddiau gwell. Roedd ambell berthynas dan straen, a phrin oedd y rhai nad oedd wedi methu talu'r biliau a oedd yn dal i ddod, er nad oedd cyflog ar gael i'w talu. Roedd y mwyafrif yn flin iawn ynglŷn â'u hamgylchiadau; yn chwerw eu bod yn gorfod derbyn cymorth elusennol yn union fel eu rhieni a'u teidiau a'u neiniau drigain mlynedd yn ôl, yn diodde'r cywilydd o ddibynnu ar geginau cawl.

Roedd llawer yn meddwl na allai'r fath amgylchiadau truenus, diraddiol, ddigwydd byth eto, hyd nes i'r Prif Weinidog Margaret Thatcher adfywio'r dyddiau du hynny. Hefyd, roedd llawer yn anniddig am eu bod ar streic ar gais Arthur Scargill, yr arweinydd cenedlaethol, na chafodd sêl bendith lawn na phriodol – ac a arweiniodd at nifer o lowyr yn dychwelyd i'r gwaith, a chreu Undeb y Glowyr Democrataidd i fynd benben ag Undeb Glowyr Prydain (NUM). Felly, ymhlith y dyrfa fawr a ddaeth ynghyd i'r cyfarfod, roedd rhyw naws wrthryfelgar ac anoddefgar yn y gwynt – rhywbeth yr oedd pwyllgor yr undeb, a'r prif siaradwr yn arbennig, yn pryderu'n fawr amdano.

Yn ei anerchiad agoriadol cyn trafod prif fater yr agenda, fe geisiodd leddfu rhywfaint ar yr awyrgylch danllyd trwy ddweud ei fod yn hollol ymwybodol o deimladau'r gynulleidfa. Dywedodd

ei bod hi'n bwysig trafod pethau'n bwylllog. Apeliodd arnynt i ymdawelu, ac na fyddai'n barod i dderbyn sylwadau sarhaus neu anweddus. Parablodd ymlaen trwy ddweud ei fod yn ymwybodol o'r sion ei fod yn rhan o brosesau annemocrataidd. Roedd yr honiadau hyn wedi'i wylltio, meddai, ac roedd yn eu gwadu'n chwyrn.

Ofer oedd ei eiriau. Roedd yn wynebu cynulleidfa a oedd wedi hen golli eu hamynedd a'u gwroldeb yn sgil misoedd lawer o segrudod. Buan yr anghofiwyd am unrhyw reolau pwyllgora democrataidd wrth i ddynion neidio ar eu traed i ddweud eu dweud. Anwybyddwyd cri am drefn wrth i un ar ôl y llall fynegi eu barn a'u rhwystredigaeth a'u cyfeirio tuag at y llwyfan, gyda'r prif siaradwr yn gyff gwawd yn fwy na neb.

Wrth iddo wynebu'r gynulleidfa anniddig, sylweddolodd y siaradwr ei fod wedi colli pob awdurdod yn y cyfarfod, a phenderfynodd gymryd y cam ffôl o fabwysiadu rhyw ymffrost gwag. Wrth iddo ymateb i'r cwestiynau diweddaraf gan y gynulleidfa, clywodd rywun yn gweiddi ac yn cyfeirio at y sion ei fod yn rhan o brosesau annemocrataidd. Collodd bob rheswm a synnwyr cyffredin yn llwyr wrth ymateb i'r honiadau hyn. Trodd i wynebu'r sawl a oedd yn ei gyhuddo. 'Let's get this straight!' bloeddiodd 'I want to clear the air. There have been lots of allegations about me lately, but if I catch the f.....g alligator, I'll cut his f.....g head off!'

Bill Richards, Dirprwy ac awdur

An air of rebellion

IT WAS NOT DESTINED TO BE THE USUAL NUM branch meeting when only the faithful handful turned up.

It was 1985 and, after almost a year on strike, many men and their families were desperate to see a relief from their circumstances. Some relationships were at breaking point and there were few who hadn't experienced the inability to pay the bills which still arose in spite of the absence of the means to pay them. Amongst the majority there was bitterness about the circumstances that they found themselves in; bitterness at the necessity to accept charitable help that had a precedent sixty years earlier when their parents and grandparents had known the indignity of seeking food from public soup kitchens.

It had long been considered that such degrading circumstances could not rise again but Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was to prove instrumental in their resurrection. In addition, the festering mood of many stemmed from the view that they were on strike at the behest of a national leader, Arthur Scargill, who had not obtained a full and proper mandate which had led to many miners returning to work and the formation of a rival Union of Democratic Miners in opposition to the

NUM. Therefore, amongst the large number assembled for the meeting, an air of rebellion and intolerance prevailed, something that the union committee, and particularly the main speaker, were very apprehensive about.

Before opening his address to the main matter on the agenda, he attempted to lower the highly charged atmosphere by indicating that he was fully aware of the mood of his audience. He told them that it was essential to consider matters dispassionately and cool their heated emotions. He appealed for calmness and would be unwilling to accept comments that contained abusive or indecent language. He continued his preamble by adding that he was aware of a rumour that was circulating that he had been party to undemocratic procedures. These allegations he absolutely denied and was furious about them.

His pleas for calm went unheeded. He faced an audience whose patience and fortitude had long since been eroded by the privations of many months of idleness. The usual observance of democratic meeting procedures was soon completely disregarded as men leapt to their feet to air their views. Appeals for order went unheeded as a continuous barrage



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Make no mistake – coal is here to stay. Exploration for more coal reserves goes on all the time in Britain – as in other countries. We need all we can find – plus the right type of young men under 18 for training to help us get it. Intelligence, fitness and a real interest in mining are the basic qualifications we are looking for.

Mining Training Scheme
for skilled mining jobs

Mining Craft Apprenticeships
for a chance to join the management team

Open to young men who are ready and able to follow a course of technical education.

Engineering Craft Apprenticeships
for skilled engineering jobs

Engineering craft apprentices also have every opportunity to take suitable technical college courses.

How to apply

To apply for one of these training schemes ask:

- Your school careers master;
- Your local Careers Officer;
- At any colliery or N.C.B. Recruitment Office;
- Your local N.C.B. Area Headquarters (Manpower Office).

NCB

If you want to know about pay and holidays ask for the leaflet "Mining's Big".

of pent-up feelings and opinions were directed at the platform, with the main speaker being the subject of much derision.

As he viewed the hostile audience the speaker must have realised that he had lost the meeting and the futility of continuing may have provoked a foolish sense of bravado. As he responded to the latest question from the audience he heard a shouted allegation from amongst the crowd in reference to the rumours about

his involvement in undemocratic procedures. Sense and reason then deserted him completely and the urge to retaliate became overwhelming. He broke off his response and turned on his latest accuser. 'Let's get this straight!' he yelled defiantly 'I want to clear the air. There have been lots of allegations about me lately, but if I catch the f-----g alligator, I'll cut his f-----g head off!'

Bill Richards, Deputy and author

Dishgled a chymeriadau difyr

ROEDDWN I'N 21 OED PAN DDECHREUAIS weithio i'r NCB yn ffreutur y Kay a Kears a'r Garn. Yn ddiweddarach, treuliais ddwy flynedd ar bymtheg yn gweithio yn ffreutur y Big Pit, fel cynorthwydd yn gyntaf ac yna fel rheolwraig. Ar ôl i Big Pit gau, symudais i Lofa Gogledd Celynnen cyn gorffen gyda'r Bwrdd Glo yng Nglofa Oakdale.

Roedd llawer mwy na phrydau a diodydd poeth ar werth yn y ffreutur – sigarennau, 'twist' (baco main), losin, sanau, tyweli, hyd yn oed clytiau.

Cyn cael swydd gyda'r NCB, roeddwn i'n gweithio yn ffatri Western Biscuits ond roedd yr awyrgylch llawer gwell yn ffreutur y lofa gan fod y dynion fel petaen nhw'n eich parchu chi – doedden nhw byth yn rhegi o'ch

blaen chi nac yn ymddwyn yn ffiadd. Roedd chwech ohonon ni'n gweithio tair shift wahanol, ac roedd tua mil o ddynion yn y pwl glo, felly roedd hi fel ffair yno gyda phobl yn mynd a dod, yn enwedig cyn i shift gychwyn neu orffen. Roeddwn i'n arfer cerdded i'r gwaith o Garn yr Erw am hanner awr wedi pedwar y bore er mwyn cychwyn gweithio am bump, ond byddwn i'n dal y bws adref gyda'r glowyr. Roeddwn i'n hoffi gweithio yn Big Pit oherwydd ei fod yn uchel yn y mynyddoedd o gymharu â bod ar waelod y cwm yn y Garn.

Fe gwrddais i lawer o bobl yn ystod fy ngyrfa, ond rwy'n cofio'r Arglwydd Robens, cadeirydd yr NCB yn arbennig, a'r actor Tom Baker a ddaeth i'r Big Pit i ffilmio pennod o Doctor Who – roeddwn i wastad yn paratoi bwffes di-ri i'r pwysigion.

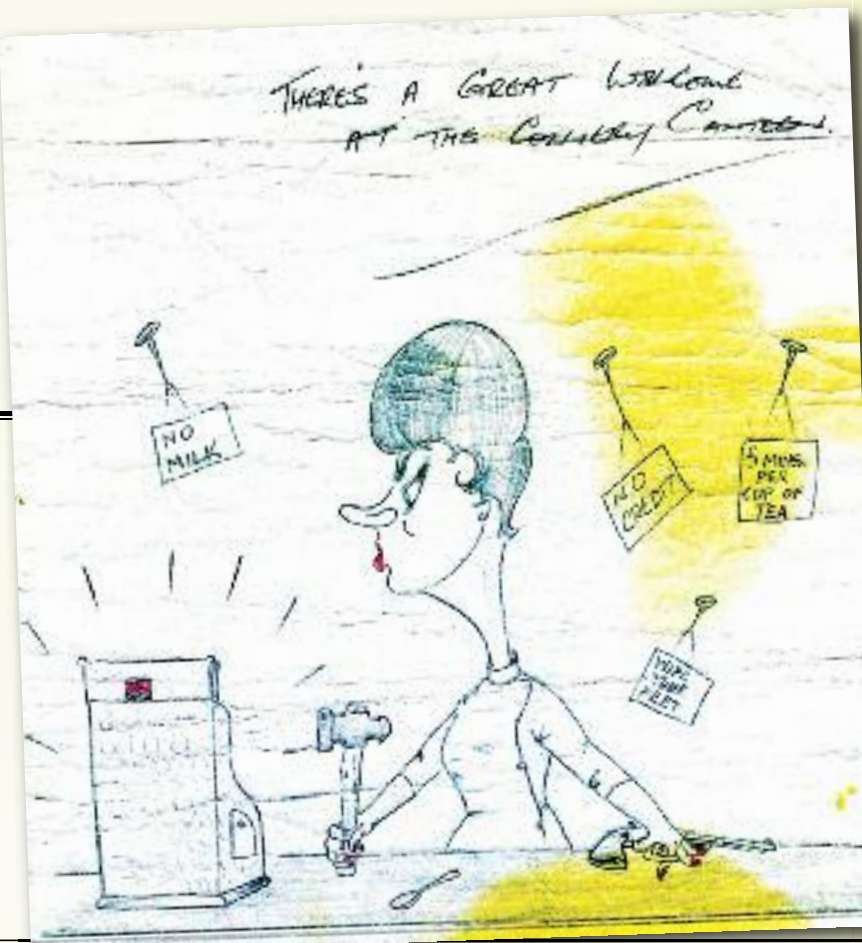
Unwaith yr wythnos, bydden ni'n sgwrio'r holl sosbenni a'r padelli ffrio ac yn golchi cwpanau'r ffreutur mewn cannydd. Roedd y cwpanau tseinini'n iawn, ond doeddwn i ddim mor hoff o'r hen rai plastig salw a ddaeth i'w lle. Pan ddechreuais i weithio, darnau o gludfeltiau oedd ar y lloriau, ond rhoddwyd carpedi yn eu lle maes o law, a oedd yn cael eu glanhau'n rheolaidd. Roedden ni'n arfer cael archwiliadau bob chwe mis i wneud yn siŵr bod y safonau glendid yn iawn, a'r lle yn ddi-bla. Gallen nhw gau'r ffreutur yn syth pe baen nhw'n darganfod rhywbeth, ond ni ddigwyddodd hynny erioed. Roedden ni'n gorfod cael ein hiwnniform ein hunain pan ddechreuais weithio yn y ffreutur, ond fe wnaeth NCB gyflenwi dillad gwaith i ni wedyn. Roeddwn i'n ennill £4.15s am weithio 46 awr yr wythnos i ddechrau, ond cynyddodd y cyflogau ymhen amser, ac erbyn diwedd y 1970au, roedden ni hefyd yn cael cyfran o gynllun bonws y gweithwyr danddaear. Roedden nhw'n arfer cynnal cyfarfodydd undeb yn y ffreutur, a chafwyd sawl dadl danbaid weithiau. Er hynny, ni chlywais neb yn yngan gair o reg yn ystod y trafodaethau hyn, yn enwedig a minnau'n aros yn y swyddfa â'r drws ar gau – oni bai 'mod i am wrando ar ambell beth, wrth gwrs.

Fe dreuliais i 27 mlynedd yn gweithio yn y diwydiant glo. Roedd yn fwy na bywoliaeth i mi, roedd yn rhan o fy mywyd i.

Mrs Carol Williams, Rheolwraig Ffreutur

Cartwnydd y lofa

SWYDDOG CYFLENWADAU'R BIG PIT oedd Dai Parr; roedd e bob amser yn gwneud lluniau cartŵn fel y rhain o Mrs Carol Williams wrth ei gwaith yn y ffreutur. Roedd yn gartwnydd toreithiog iawn, ac mae ei waith i'w weld mewn amrywiol lefydd ym Mlaenafon o hyd. Roedd hefyd yn gyfrannwr rheolaidd i'r dudalen 'Mining Laughs' yn y Coal News.



Tea, twist and towels

I WAS TWENTY-ONE YEARS OLD WHEN I started work for the NCB in the canteen at Kay and Kears Slope and Garn Slope. Later I went up to work in the canteen at Big Pit for seventeen years, first as an assistant then as the manageress. I transferred to North Celynnen after Big Pit closed and eventually finished with the Coal Board at Oakdale Colliery. The colliery canteens didn't only provide meals and hot drinks; they sold just about everything – cigarettes, 'twist' [chewing tobacco], sweets, socks, towels, even nappies.

Before getting a job with the NCB I'd worked in Western Biscuits' factory and I found that the atmosphere was better in colliery canteen as the men seemed to respect you – they never swore in front of you or were ever obnoxious in any way. There were six of us working the three different shifts and there were around a thousand men at the pit so it was always busy with people coming in and out, especially just

before a shift started or finished. I used to walk to work from Garn yr Erw at half past four in the morning to start work at five but I used to get a lift back home on the bus with the colliers. It was nice working at Big Pit as it was up in the air compared to being down in the valley at Garn Slope.

I met a lot of people during my career but I especially remember Lord Robens, the chairman of the NCB, and Tom Baker who was at Big Pit to film an episode of Doctor Who – I always seemed to be preparing buffets for dignitaries.

Once a week we had to scour all the saucepans and frying pans and soak the canteen cups in bleach, the china cups were OK but I wasn't fussy when they were replaced with horrible plastic ones. When I started there were pieces of conveyor belting on the floors but these were later replaced by proper mats which were cleaned regularly.

There used to be six monthly inspections to check up for infestations and cleanliness, they could shut you down if they found anything, but they never did. We used to have to supply our own uniforms when I started working in the canteen but the NCB supplied them later on. When I started the wages were £4.15s for a 46 hour week, but as time went on the wages improved and by the late 1970s we also had a proportion of the bonus scheme that the men earned underground. They used to hold the union meetings in the canteen and they used to get quite heated sometimes, however I never heard any bad language during the debates, especially as I used to stay in my office with the door closed – unless I wanted to hear what was going on!

I worked in the pits for twenty-seven years all together; it was not only my livelihood; it was part of my life.

Mrs Carol Williams, Canteen Manager



The colliery cartoonist

DAI PARR USED TO BE THE SUPPLIES officer at Big Pit; he was always drawing cartoons like these of Mrs Carol Williams at work in the canteen. He was a very prolific cartoonist and you can still see his work in various places around Blaenafon. He was also a regular contributor to 'Mining Laughs' in the Coal News.

Y Glöwr Olaf

CEFAIS FY NGENI YM MAESTEG AR 30 MAI 1944. Roedd fy nhad-cu a'i chwe brawd yn lowyr yng Nghwm Rhondda. Symudodd i Gwm Afan pan agorodd y pyllau glo yno, a daeth fy nhad a'i bedwar brawd yn lowyr yn yr ardal honno. Pan oeddwn i'n 15 oed, dechreuais yng Nghanolfan Hyfforddi Maesteg ym 1959; a fi oedd yr unig un o ddau frawd a aeth yn löwr. Ar ôl hynny, gweithiais yng nglofeydd Duffryn Rhondda, Caerau a Choegnant, a Chloddfa Ddrifft Blaen-nant.

Dechreuais weithio mewn pyllau bach ('trwyddedig' neu 'breifat') ym 1988. Roeddwn i eisïau gweithio mewn pwll bychan erioed, felly dyma fachu ar y cyfle ychydig ddyddiau ar ôl i mi orffen ym Mlaen-nant. Gweithiais mewn un ar ddeg



o byllau bach i gyd, gan gynnwys Llety Philip, Fforest Rhif 3, Pentwyn, Bryn a Chefn Mawr. Gweithiais fel dyn achub a chymorth cyntaf am nifer o flynyddoedd hefyd. Bues i'n lwcus o ran diogelwch fy hun, gyda dim ond mân bwythau a sawl dihangfa lwcus, sy'n gyffredin mewn glofeydd. Penderfynais roi'r gorau iddi ym 1999 oherwydd clefyd y llwch ac ati, ac ar ôl cael trawiad ar y galon. Roeddwn i'n 55 oed.

Roedd dydd Gwener, 2il Chwefror 1990 fel unrhyw ddiwrnod cyffredin arall. Roeddwn i, David Williams, Raymond Enoch a Terry Coburn yn gweithio ym Mhwl Rhif 2 Cefn Mawr, pwll glo bach

yng Nghwm Afan. Roedden ni'n gweithio yng ngwythien lo 18' y Wenallt. Ar ôl llwyddo i dorri trwodd, aethom ati i lenwi 13 dram erbyn hanner dydd. Roedd y brig i'w weld ac yn swinio'n ddigon diogel. Yna, fe aethom i gyd yn ôl i ben y pwll er mwyn i'r bechgyn gael mwgyn a phaned. Soniais wrth y rheolwr fod y ffas lo mewn cyflwr da, a bod pawb yn fodlon gyda'r sefyllfa.

Ar ôl rhyw 20 munud, fe aethon ni'n ôl i'r pwll a threulio tua 10 munud i gyrraedd y ffas lo. Yna, fe benderfynon ni rannu'n ddau grŵp. Byddai David a Ray yn mynd i'r ffas i lenwi'r dramiau glo, a Terry a finnau'n tyllu'r hedin er mwyn ei ffrwydro i ddarparu rhagor o ddramiau glo i ni. Yn sydyn, fe glywsom ni sgrech o'r man lle'r oedd ein bytis yn gweithio ac fe aethom yno ar ein pedwar cyn gynted â phosibl. Ar ôl cyrraedd, gwelsom David yn sgrechian ac mewn poen mawr. Roedd wedi'i daro gan glamp o garreg, ond roedd e'n gweiddi fod Ray oddi tani. Dywedais wrth David am ddychwelyd i ben y pwll er mwyn rhoi gwybod i'r rheolwr a'r gweithwyr eraill. Yna, fe geisiodd Terry a fi godi'r garreg enfawr oddi-ar Raymond gyda darn o hen gledren, ond roedd yn rhy drwm o lawer. Ar y pryd, roedd Raymond yn dal yn fyw ac yn gweiddi arnom i'w ryddhau o'r fagl. Yn y diwedd, yr unig beth allwn i ei wneud oedd cysuro fy nghyfaill tan iddo farw.

Erbyn hyn, roedd y rheolwr a'r lleill wedi cyrraedd gyda jac car, a dyma fi'n ei lithro o dan y garreg fawr. Dyma'r garreg yn codi o'r diwedd, a llusgais Raymond oddi yno. Cafodd ei roi ar stretsier a'i gario i olau dydd. Drannoeth, disgrifiais yn union beth ddigwyddodd wrth yr arolygwyr a'r rheolwr. Fe wnes i barhau i weithio yn y pwll hwn tan iddo gau ychydig flynyddoedd wedyn.

Raymond Enoch oedd y glöwr olaf i gael ei ladd yn y pwll glo olaf yng Nghwm Afan. Rwyf wedi gosod plac er cof amdano ar safle'r hen bwl, ac ar yr ail o Chwefror bob blwyddyn, rwy'n mynd â blodau yno. Bryd hynny, mae'r atgofion ofnadwy yn llifo'n ôl, atgofion fydd gen i pan af i'm bedd. Dyma bris eithaf y diwydiant glo.

Allan Price, Glöwr

The Last Miner

I WAS BORN MAESTEG ON THE 30th OF MAY 1944. My grandfather and his six brothers were all coalminers in the Rhondda Valley. He moved to the Afan Valley when the mines started opening here and my father and his four brothers became miners in this valley. I started in Maesteg Training Centre in 1959 when I was fifteen years old; I was the only one of two brothers to go into the mines. Afterwards I worked in Duffryn Rhondda, Caerau, Coegnant Collieries and Blaenant Drift Mine.

I started in small ['licensed' or 'private'] mines in 1988. I had always wanted to work in a small mine; so when I had the chance I took it, just a few days after I finished in Blaenant. I worked in about eleven small mines altogether, including Llety Philip, Forest No3, Pentwyn, Bryn and Cefn Mawr. I was also a mines rescue and first aid man for many years. I was always lucky with my own safety, I had a few stitches and narrow escapes but you get that in mining. I finished mining in 1999 with dust related diseases



ALLAN PRICE, JIMMY WILLIAMS
A TERRY COBNER YNG
NGLOFA RHIF 2 CEFN MAWR
ALLAN PRICE, JIMMY WILLIAMS
AND TERRY COBNER AT CEFN
MAWR NO2 MINE

and after having suffered a heart attack. I was 55 years of age.

Friday the 2nd of February was just like any other day. David Williams, Raymond Enoch, Terry Coburn and myself were working at Cefn Mawr No 2, a small mine in the Afan Valley. We were working in the 18' Wenallt Seam. We broke into the coal and had filled thirteen drams by 12 noon. We noted that the top was good and sounded safe.

We decided to go to the surface for a tea break and for the boys to have a fag. I reported to the manager about the good condition of the coalface and how pleased we were about it.

Well, after twenty minutes we again entered the mine and were at the coalface in about 10 minutes. We then decided to split up into two groups. David and Ray would go into the face to fill coal, Terry and I would bore the gate heading which could then be fired and would give us extra drams of coal. Suddenly we heard a scream coming from the direction where our butties were working and we crawled in as fast as possible. When we got there I could see David screaming and in terrible pain. He had been hit by this massive boulder, but was shouting that 'Ray is under it'. I told David to

get out to the surface and let the manager and surface workers know what had happened. Terry and I then tried to lift the huge boulder off Raymond with an old dram rail, but the boulder was too heavy. At this time Raymond was alive and shouting for us to release him from this trap. In the end all I could do was to comfort my buttie until he died.

Now the manager and others had arrived on the scene with a car jack, which I slipped under the boulder. This lifted it and I dragged Raymond from there, he was then put into a stretcher and taken to the surface. The following day I was asked to accompany the inspectors and manager and to give them my account of what happened. I still worked at this mine until it closed a few years later.

Raymond Enoch was the last miner to be killed in the last mine in the Afan Valley. I have placed a memorial plaque at the site of the mine for Raymond and, every February the second, go and place flowers there. Then the terrible memories flood back to me, these I will take to my own grave with me. This is the true price of coal.

Allan Price, Collier

Brodwaith a chwistrellu clustiau

PAN OFYNNWYD I MI LENWI'R BWLCH yng nghanolfan feddygol Glofa Bargoed am dri mis ym 1958, wnes i erioed feddwl y byddwn i'n aros yno am 21 mlynedd tan fy ymddeoliad ym 1978. Roedd iechyd galwedigaethol yn faes eithaf newydd i mi, ond wrth edrych yn ôl, cefais brofiad fel nyrs yn ysbyty argyfwng yr Eglwys Newydd drwy gydol yr Ail Ryfel Byd, gan ofalu am gannoedd o filwyr ag anafiadau drwg, felly roeddwn i'n hen gyfarwydd â thrawma. Yn ddiweddarach, yn Ysbyty Llandochau, roeddwn i'n gweithio fel sister ar y ward niwmoconiosis – clefyd y llwch – a oedd ar gyfer glowyr sâl, wrth gwrs (Dr Charles Fletcher oedd pennaeth yr uned ymchwil, ac roedd mor garedig tuag at y glowyr, ac yn eu galw'n 'halen y ddaear').

Roeddwn i hefyd yn sister mewn ysbyty TB am flwyddyn, ac ar ôl priodi ym 1949, byddwn i'n cynorthwyo yng Nghlinig y Frest Caerffili, a oedd yn llawn glowyr ag anhwylderau'r frest, ac felly fe ymunais i â chanolfan brysus iawn a chael bywyd prysur iawn. Roedd tua 2,000 o lowyr, gwaith peirianeg, gorsaf bŵer, swyddfeydd NCB a chanolfan hyfforddi; roedd angen archwilio'r hyfforddeion cyn mynd o dan y ddaear. Roeddwn ni hefyd yn archwilio'r glowyr a oedd yn rhy sâl i weithio tan eu bod yn 65 oed, a byddai ein meddygon caredig ac ystyriol yn yr NCB yn eu hasesu wedyn ar gyfer eu pensiwn.

Roedd nifer y cleifion dydd yn uchel iawn. Roedd angen rhoi bath a phyjamas glân i bob claf a oedd angen triniaeth ysbyty ar ôl cael damwain, oni bai eu bod angen archwiliad ar gyfer anafiadau pen neu'r asgwrn cefn. Hyd yn oed ar ôl damwain angheuol, byddem yn golchi'r corff ac yn gwisgo'r glöwr mewn pyjamas; doeddwn i byth yn defnyddio amwisg. Roedd y rhan fwyaf o'r anafiadau'n cael eu trin yn y Canolfan, lle'r oedd yr holl waith ailrwympo'n cael ei wneud. Roeddwn ni'n sterileiddio ein rhwymynnau ein hunain, ac ni chefais erioed unrhyw broblemau gyda heintiau. Roeddwn ni'n cofnodi pob damwain yn y llyfr triniaeth ddyddiol a'r gofrestr damweiniau. Yna, roeddwn ni'n llenwi ffurflen gyda'r holl fanylion perthnasol, cyn i'r swyddog a oedd yn gyfrifol am y dynion ei llofnodi, a'i chydlofnodi gan y rheolwr, fel bod tystiolaeth iawn ar gael er mwyn gwneud cais am iawndal am golli gwaith.

Roeddwn i'n gorfod pwytho mân-anafiadau yn rheolaidd, ac un diwrnod, fe wnes i ddigwydd clywed

llais dieithr yn dweud 'Gadewch iddi hi bwytho; mae hi'n dda am frodiol!' Roeddwn ni'n tylino'r corff gyda gwres i'r rhai oedd ei angen, ac yn rhoi pigiad tetanws er mwyn osgoi ymweliadau â'r ysbyty. Fe wnes i archwiliad diabetig o'r rhan fwyaf ddaeth i'r clinig, a chafodd 13 o ddynion eu hanfon at y meddyg i gael archwiliad pellach. Roedd dynion yn cael archwiliad pelydr-x bob blwyddyn, ac roedd glowyr yn cael eu cyfweld yn y ganolfan ac o flaen bwrdd meddygol fel bo'r angen, er mwyn cael asesiad iawndal. Roedd galw mawr am chwistrellu clustiau! Hefyd, fe wnes i ffilm fer ar gyfer yr NCB yn pwysleisio'r angen i wisgo esgidiau da, menig, padiau pen-gliniau a sanau gwlân (nid neilon, gan fod tarwden y traed yn broblem gyffredin).

Roeddwn i'n ymweld â'r glowyr yn yr ysbyty, ac yn aml yn helpu glowyr gyda'u problemau neu eu teuluoedd. Treuliais wythnos yn y 'Rest', cartref gwyliau ym Mhorthcawl i lowyr ag anafiadau drwg (dim gwragedd!). Fe es i a'm cydweithiwr i wersyll gwyliau Butlin's yn Minehead, gyda llond bws o lowyr wedi'u hanafu â'u teuluoedd. Roedd yn gyfnod prysur iawn, ond roedd y rheolwyr yn gymwynasgar a charedig bob amser. Fe gynorthwyais i hyfforddi'r tîm cymorth cyntaf iau ac fe aethon ni i'r gystadleuaeth genedlaethol ar gyfer Cymorth Cyntaf yn Blackpool ym 1969. Er na enillon ni'r flwyddyn honno, llwyddodd y tîm i gael y wobr gyntaf mewn cystadleuaeth ranbarthol ym Mhorthcawl y flwyddyn ddilynol. Yn ystod achos o'r frech wen ym 1964, fe wnes i gynorthwyo Dr Battram, meddyg yr NCB, i frechu cannoedd o lowyr a phobl eraill.

Hefyd ym 1969, gofynnodd y Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol i mi a'm cydweithiwr i fynd i Montréal i gynrychioli'r maes iechyd galwedigaethol mewn Cynhadledd Nyrsio a gynhaliwyd bob pedair blynedd. Roedd yn hynod ddiddorol, ac fe ddysgon ni lawer am nyrsio galwedigaethol mewn gwledydd eraill. Ar ôl y gynhadledd, cawsom gyfle i ymweld ag Efrog Newydd, Washington a Mynwent Arlington i weld rhosyn yn cael ei osod ar fedd John F. Kennedy.

Cefais yrfa gyfoethog wrth weithio ym Margod. Roedd y glowyr yn wych; a bob amser yn gyfeillgar, yn ddewr ac yn llawn hiwmor. Roedd gennyf berthynas dda gyda rheolwyr da a chymwynasgar, a chyda'r NUM ac eraill. Roeddwn i'n ddiolchgar i'r ysbytai lleol, a oedd yno bob amser mewn argyfwng, a'r meddygon lleol hefyd yn gwneud eu rhan. Nid gwaith oedd popeth chwaith; roedd yna

Embroidery and ear syringing

WHEN I WAS ASKED, IN 1958, TO COVER THE medical centre in Bargoed Colliery for three months little did I think that I would stay for twenty-one years until I retired in 1978. Occupational health was quite new to me but, on reflection, I thought I had nursed throughout World War Two at Whitchurch Emergency hospital and had nursed hundreds of badly injured soldiers so I was used to trauma. Later, as a sister in Llandough Hospital I supervised the pneumoconiosis ward which was, of course, for sick miners (Dr Charles Fletcher was head of the research unit and was so kind to the miners who he said were the 'salt of the earth').

I was also a sister at a TB hospital for a year and after getting married in 1949 I would help at clinics in Caerphilly Chest Clinic which was attended by so many miners with their chest complaints, so I came to a very busy centre and a busy life. There were about 2,000 miners, an engineering works, the power station, NCB offices and a training centre; trainees were examined before going down the pit. We also examined miners too ill to work until 65 who would then be assessed for their pension by our kind and considerate NCB doctors.

Daily attendances were high. All accident cases needing hospital treatment were bathed and given pyjamas unless a spinal or head injury was queried. Even when we had a fatal accident we would bathe and dress the miner in pyjamas; I would never use shrouds. Most injuries were treated at the Centre where all re-dressings were done. We did our own sterilisation of dressings and I never had any infection control problems. Every accident was recorded in the daily treatment book and then the accident register. A form was completed with all the details and signed by the official in charge of the men, then countersigned by the manager, so there was full evidence if compensation was claimed for loss of work.

I often was called upon to stitch minor wounds and one day I overheard an anonymous voice say 'Let her do the stitching; she's good at embroidery!' Heat massage was given to those requiring it and anti

tetanus jabs where needed to avoid hospital visits. I did a diabetic survey of most of the people that came through the clinic and 13 men were sent to their own doctor for investigation. Men were x-rayed yearly and, when necessary, miners were interviewed at the centre and before a medical board to assess compensation. We did a lot of ear syringing! I also made a short film on safety for the NCB stressing the need for good boots, gloves, kneepads and woollen socks (not nylon as athlete's foot was a common condition).

I visited men who were hospitalised and often helped miners with their problems or with their families. I did a week in The Rest, a holiday home in Porthcawl for badly injured miners (no wives allowed!). A colleague and I also went to Butlin's Holiday camp in Minehead and took a coach load of injured miners and their families. It was a busy time but the management there were kind and helpful. I helped to train the junior first aid team; we went to the National First Aid competition, Blackpool in 1969. We didn't win that year but the following year the team scooped first place in the area competition at Porthcawl. In 1964, during the small pox outbreak, I accompanied Dr Battram, the NCB doctor and vaccinated hundreds of miners and other people.

Again in 1969, a colleague and I were asked by the Royal College of Nursing to represent occupational health at the Quadrennial Conference of Nurses in Montreal. This was so interesting and we learned a lot about occupational nursing in other countries. After the congress we visited New York, Washington and Arlington Cemetery to see a rose being placed on John F. Kennedy's grave.

My working life in Bargoed was most fulfilling. The miners were great; they were always friendly, humorous and brave. I had a good relationship with good, helpful managers, a good rapport with the NUM and many others. I was grateful to the local hospitals, which were always there for any emergency, and local doctors also played their part. It wasn't all work though; there was a good social side to life. However, I must pay special tribute to my hard-working first aid attendants; Calvin Quick, Harry Pritchard and his son Arthur, Walter Smith, 'Chick' Davies and Moss Chowles our night attendant. Apart from keeping the centre immaculate (to the amazement of some of our VIP visitors!) they also went underground to check first aid boxes, replace items and check on morphia supplies.

My proudest moment was in 1978 when I was invited to the miners annual dinner in Porthcawl and presented with a stereo music system. All those present stood and drank my health and said 'Thank you'; something I'll remember all my life. An item on the occasion was also published in Coal News.

Betty Barker, Colliery Sister

MRS A.E. (BETTY) BARKER, SISTER Y LOFA A CALVIN QUICK (CYNORTHWY-YDD CYMORTH CYNTAF) YNG NGLOFA BARGOD, 1973

MRS A.E. (BETTY) BARKER, COLLIERY NURSING SISTER AND CALVIN QUICK (FIRST AID ATTENDANT) AT BARGOED COLLIERY, 1973

LOYAL AND DEDICATED

MINING men and their wives raised their glasses to Sister Betty Barker who has retired from the industry after more than 20 years at Bargoed Colliery medical centre.

She was presented with a stereo music system by pit NUM lodge secretary Emlyn Andrews at the lodge's annual dinner at Porthcawl. Said Mr Andrews: "Sister Barker has given loyal and dedicated service. She deserves the highest recognition for her devotion to Bargoed pitmen over the years."

ERTHYGL O'R COAL NEWSYN ADRODD HANES YMDDEOLIAD MRS A.E. (BETTY) BARKER FEL SISTER YNG NGLOFA BARGOD, 1978

CUTTING FROM COAL NEWS ABOUT MRS A.E. (BETTY) BARKER'S RETIREMENT AS NURSING SISTER AT BARGOED COLLIERY, 1978



► elfen gymdeithasol dda hefyd. Er hynny, rhaid talu teyrnged i'm cynorthwyrwyr cymorth cyntaf am weithio mor galed; Calvin Quick, Harry Pritchard a'i fab Arthur, Walter Smith, 'Chick' Davies a Moss Chowles ein gweithiwr nos. Yn ogystal â chadw'r ganolfan fel pin mewn papur (er mawr syndod i rai o'n hymwelwyr pwysig), roeddynt hefyd yn mynd danddaear i wirio'r blychau cymorth cyntaf, yn eu hail-lenwi ac yn gofalu bod gennym ddigon o gyflenwadau morffin.

Rwy'n arbennig o falch o'r achlysur honno ym 1978 pan gefais fy ngwahodd i ginio blynyddol y glowyr ym Mhorthcawl, a phan gyflwynwyd system sain i mi. Safodd pawb ar eu traed i godi'u gwyrddau a dymuno iechyd da i mi, a dweud 'Diolch yn fawr', rhywbeth y byddaf yn ei gofio am weddill fy oes. Cyhoeddwyd hanes y digwyddiad yn y *Coal News* hefyd.

Betty Barker, Sister yn y lofa

Fy niwrnod cyntaf danddaear

ROEDDWN I'N 14 OED YM MIS AWST 1936, ac yn barod i gychwyn gweithio. Roedd fy nhad yn gweithio yng Nglofa Tŷ Draw, ac wedi clywed eu bod nhw'n chwilio am fechgyn ifanc yno. Felly, fe es i'r lofa a gweld bod rhyw ddeuddeg o fechgyn yn sefyll mewn rhes. Edrychodd y ffeiarman arnom, teimlo'n cyhyrau ni, ac yna aeth i'r swyddfa i nôl y rheolwr. Rwy'n meddwl mai cyn swyddog y fyddin oedd y rheolwr, ac fe ddaeth e mäs gyda'i ffon ac edrych i fyny ac i lawr y rhes. Cyfeiriodd y ffeiarman ataf i a dweud 'Ma' hwn yn grwtyn cryf' ac atebodd y rheolwr 'Ody wir', ond cafodd pob un o'r deuddeg ohonom waith beth bynnag. Roeddwn i newydd orffen yn yr ysgol ar ddydd Gwener, ac yn cychwyn gweithio fel gwas colier y dydd Gwener canlynol. Roedd yn brofiad cyffrous iawn, a chael swydd yn dipyn o gamp yn y dyddiau hynny.

Cefais fy anfon i weithio fel 'gwas colier' i löwr a oedd yn byw drws nesaf ond un i mi. Fe ddaeth heibio'r tŷ am chwarter wedi chwech ar y bore cyntaf hwnnw, ac eistedd ar gadair wrth y drws yn disgwyl i mi orffen fy mrecwast. Pan oeddwn i'n barod, fe ddilynais ef i'r lofa gyda fflasg o ddŵr yn un boced a bocs bwyd yn y llall yn fy nal i lawr, gan mai dim ond pum troedfedd pedair modfedd o daldra oeddwn i! Canllawiau solet, nid rhaffau, oedd yn tywys y gaets yn Nhŷ Draw, ac roedd yn eich ysgwyd yn ddidrugaredd wrth inni fynd i lawr y siafft! Yna, roedden ni'n gorfod cerdded i'r ffas lo o'r gwaelod ac erbyn cyrraedd roeddwn i wedi blino'n lân!

Ar ôl cyrraedd y 'talcen' (man gweithio ar y ffas lo), eisteddom ni am ychydig funudau. 'lawn te' meddai fy nghyfaill 'Dere i ni gael codi'r tŵls o'r bar i ni gael dechrau arni' – roeddwn i wedi hen flino'n barod, ac wedi cael mwy na digon cyn cychwyn hyd yn oed! Roedd gen i lamp fatri ddwy folt trwm ac roedd ganddo fe lamp olew. Cymerodd y lamp fatri oddi arnaf a'i hongian ar bostyn (postyn pwll) yn y ffas lo.

Roedd y glöwr ar ei liniau o'm blaen i, yn torri'r glo gyda mandrel, ac roeddwn i'n llwytho'r cyfan i focs cwrlo, a'i lusgo yn ôl a'i wagio i'r dram wag y tu cefn i ni. Roedd y talcen rhyw ddwy droedfedd chwe modfedd o uchder, ac roeddech chi'n gorfod gwrthio'r bocs cwrlo hwn ar eich pedwar ar hyd y ffas, a minnau'n bachu fy nghefn yn erbyn y to bob gafael. Roedd fy nghefn i'n gwaedu mewn ambell le,

ac roeddwn i'n ysu am gael mynd adref. Doedd gennyf ddim nerth ar ôl llenwi'r ddram gyntaf! Yna, meddai'r glöwr 'Nawr 'te, fe nawn ni ymestyn cledrau'r dram yn barod ar gyfer yfory'.

Wedyn, fe ddangosodd i mi sut i dyllu'r to â llaw ar gyfer y ffrwydrion er mwyn creu mwy o uchder yn y twnnel. Roeddech chi'n gorfod cychwyn gyda rhoden ddrilio troedfedd o hyd, yna un tair troedfedd ac ati. Roedd angen troi handlen y peiriant drilio. Sôn am chwysu! Roeddwn i'n diferu! Yna, roedd y dram wag yn cyrraedd. Roeddech chi'n gallu aroglir' ceffyl a oedd yn tynnu'r dram ymhell cyn iddo ymddangos oherwydd roedd ganddo fe'r seimwst neu 'grease heel' (haint ffwngaid a achoswyd gan yr amgylchiadau llaith) a rhywbeth tebyg i glwstwr o rawnwin dros ei draed i gyd. Yna, byddai'r halier yn ei lusgo i mewn, yn bachu'r dram llawn, ac yn tywys y ceffyl oddi yno eto, gan adael dram wag er mwyn i ni ei lenwi eto. Dwi ddim yn cofio sawl bocs cwrlo a gymerodd i lenwi'r dram, ond roedd e'n cymryd achê! Roeddwn i'n gorfod mynd chwe llath i fyny'r ffas a llusgo'r bocs cwrlo llawn yn ôl i'r dram eto, gan grafu fy nghefn yr holl ffordd.

Dim ond un botel o ddŵr oedd gennyf ar gyfer y shifft, ac ar ôl i chi orffen tyllu'r tyllau ffrwydrion ar ddiwedd pob shifft, roeddech chi'n gorfod cymysgu clai a dŵr i stensio neu lenwi'r tyllau ar ôl gosod y ffrwydrion (i'w hatal rhag chwythu). A chan nad oedd gennyf yr un diferyn ar ôl, dyfalwch o ble ges i ddŵr!

Pan es i adref y diwrnod hwnnw, fe eisteddais wrth y bwrdd i gael fy mwyd gan wingo mewn poen. Holodd fy nhad, 'Beth sy'n bod achan?' Atebais i 'Ma' da fi bum ewin du'. Ac meddai 'nhad, 'Mi wnâi dyllu nhw i ti nawr'. Wedi i mi orffen bwyta, dyma 'nhad yn gafael mewn nodwydd a gwneud tyllau bach yn ewinedd fy mysedd er mwyn i'r gwaed lifo drwyddynt. Adeg ymolchi wedyn, roedd rhaid i ni gymryd ein tro, fy nhad, fy mrawd a mi. Pan oedd hi'n bryd i mi 'folchi, fe wnes i blygu ar fy mhedwar dros y bath i olchi hanner ucha'r corff, gyda 'mhen yn y dŵr. Dechreuais gwympo i gysgu nes clywais y gweddill yn gweiddi 'Gwylia rhag ofn i ti foddi!'

Ie, dyna fy niwrnod cyntaf danddaear!!!

Sylvanus Thompson, Glöwr

My first day underground

I WAS FOURTEEN IN AUGUST 1936 AND READY to start work. My father was working in Ty Draw Colliery and said that they might be starting some boys there. So I went to the colliery and there were twelve of us boys in a row and the fireman looked at us, felt our muscles and then went into the office to fetch the manager. The manager, I think he was an ex army officer, came out with this stick and he went up and down the row and the fireman was said to him about me 'Look he is a strong boy this one' and the manager said 'Oh, yes aye' but he started the twelve of us anyway. I'd finished school on a Friday and the following Friday I was starting work underground as a collier's boy. It was exciting as it was good to even have a job in those days.

I was down to work as a 'collier's boy' with a collier who was living two doors down from me. He came to my house at quarter past six on that first morning and sat down on the chair by the door waiting for me to eat my breakfast. When I was ready I followed him up to the colliery, with a flagon of water in the one pocket and a box of food in the other weighing me down as I was only five foot four tall. The cage was on rigid guides not ropes at Ty Draw and it shook you to death as it travelled down the shaft! Then we walked to the coal face from bottom and, Good God, I was exhausted!

When we got to our 'stall' [a working place on the coal face], we sat down for a few minutes. 'Alright then' said my buttty 'Let's get the tools off the bar and we'll start work' – I was exhausted already, I'd had enough before I even started work. I had a heavy two volt battery lamp and he had an oil lamp. He took my battery lamp off me and took it up to the coal face and hung it up on a post ['pit prop'].

The collier was on his knees in front of me cutting the coal with his mandrel and I was loading it into the curling box, dragging it back and tipping it in the empty dram waiting behind us. The stall was about two foot six in height and you had to crawl on your knees along the face pushing this curling box and my back was hitting against the roof at every move. My back was bleeding in bits and I just wanted to go home, I was slammed out after filling the first dram! Then the collier said 'Right, we'll get the dram rails extended ready now for tomorrow'.

After that he showed me how to hand bore the roof for the explosives so that we could have height in the roadway. You had to start with a foot long drill rod, then a three foot one and so on. There was a handle on the drilling machine and you had to turn it. Sweat! Good God, It was running out of me! Then the empty dram came in. You could smell the horse

who was pulling it before he actually appeared because he had 'grease heel' [a fungal infection caused by damp conditions] and had what looked like bunches of grapes on his feet, covered in them he was. Then the haulier would bring him in, hitch up the full dram on and take him out and give us an empty dram in return and you'd start to fill it with coal again. I don't remember how many curling boxes it took to fill a dram but it took a long time! I had to go six yards up the face and then drag the full curling box back down to the dram hitting my back all the way.

I only had a bottle of water to last through the shift and after you had finished boring the shot holes at the end of the shift you had to mix clay with water to make stemming [to stop the explosive charges blowing out] to put into the holes after the explosives charge. Because I had no water left you can guess where the liquid came from!

When I came home that afternoon, I was sitting down to have food at the table and I was in agony and my father said 'What's the matter boy?' I said 'I've got five black nails'. He said 'I'll bore a hole in them for you after now'. After I finished my food he got a needle and he made holes in my finger nails for the blood to run through. When it came time to have a wash we had to take it in turns, my father, my brother and me. When it was my turn I was on my hands and knees leaning over the bath to wash my top half I had my head in the water and was falling asleep until I heard the others shouting 'Watch out, you'll drown!'

Aye, my first day underground!!!

Sylvanus Thompson, Collier



LLENWI GLO GYDA
BOCS CWRLO 1902
FILLING COAL WITH A
CURLING BOX 1902

“Yn yr ysgol ddylech chi fod!”

1938 OEDD HI, AC ROEDD TOM, BACHGEN
14 oed a oedd yn byw ar yr un stryd â mi wedi bod yn gweithio danddaear fel gwas colier ers pythefnos. Roedd ei 'byti' hŷn wedi gadael iddo sefyll ar ddram o lo er mwyn crafu'r glo oddi ar y to i wneud lle i'r ceffylau basio drwodd. Disgynnodd y glo a rhan o'r to carreg ar ei ben. Roeddwn i'n 16 oed ar y pryd, a'r unig un oedd â chymwysterau cymorth cyntaf yn yr ardal. Pan gyrhaeddais safle'r ddamwain, gwelais fod ganddo anafiadau difrifol iawn. Roedd wedi torri'i fraich a'i asennau, ac roedd ganddo hollt ddofn hyd at yr asgwrn ar draws ei dalcen. Ar ôl ei lanhau a rhoi rhwymynnau amdano, cafodd ei gludo ar stretsier i'r ystafell cymorth cyntaf ar ben y pwll er mwyn i'r meddyg gael golwg arno a gorchymyn ei anfon i Ysbyty Brenhinol Gwent. Fe es i gydag ef yn yr ambiwlans, ac roedd e'n hollol ymwybodol drwy'r amser, a'r cwbl a ddywedodd ar hyd y daith oedd ailadrodd 'Diolch yn fawr' wrthyf.

Ar ôl cyrraedd yr ysbyty, roedd y ddau ohonom yn dal yn ein dillad gwaith llychlyd. Daeth y sister i'w nôl i'w lanhau. Pan ddychwelodd ataf gyda dillad

Tom, roedd hi yn ei dagrau gan fod Tom yn diolch drosodd a throsodd iddi. Rwy'n cofio'i geiriau'n iawn 'Alla i ddim glanhau mwy, ma' fe dal yn ymwybodol – faint yw ei oed?' 'Pedair ar ddeg oed' atebais. 'A faint yw dy oed di?' gofynnodd. 'Un ar bymtheg' atebais. Edrychodd arnaf a dweud 'Yn yr ysgol ddylech chi fod, nid 'lawr y pwll'.

Fe es yn ôl i'r pentref, dal yn fy nillad gwaith, a chnocio ar ddrws tŷ Tom. Daeth ei fam i'r golwg, gofyn os oedd ei ddillad gwaith i gyd yno, a chau'r drws. Es i adref i'n tŷ ni ychydig ddrysau i ffwrdd, ymolchi yn y bath sinc, a newid i ddillad glân.

Arthur Lewis, Rheolwr y Lofa

Dechreuodd Mr Arthur Lewis OBE weithio fel gwas colier pan oedd e'n 14 oed, ym 1936. Roedd wedi bod yn aelod o Urdd Sant Ioan ers 8 oed. Adeg y ddamwain uchod, ef oedd yr unig arbenigwr cymorth cyntaf ymhlith 350 o ddynion. Yn ddiweddarach, daeth yn rheolwr glofa ac yna'n ddarlithydd mewn peirianeg lofaol.

“You both should be in school”

IT WAS 1938 AND TOM, WHO LIVED IN MY street, was aged fourteen and had been underground for only two weeks as a collier's boy. His adult 'butty' had let him stand on a dram of coal to rip the roof top coal down to make room for the horses to pass through. The top coal and part of the stone roof fell onto him. I was sixteen years old and the only qualified first-aider in the district. When I was called to the scene I saw that his injuries were very severe. Apart from fractures to his arm and ribs he had a gash the whole width of his forehead which had exposed his skull.

After splinting and bandaging his injuries, I had him stretchered to the first aid room on the surface where a doctor examined my first aid and ordered that he be taken to the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport. I accompanied him in the ambulance and he was conscious at all times but kept saying 'Thank you' to me all through the journey.

When we arrived at the hospital both of us were still in our working clothes and covered with coal dust. The sister in charge took him away to clean him up.

When she came back to me with his clothes she was in tears because Tom was continuously thanking her. I remember her words 'I can't clean him any more as he is still conscious – how old is he?' I replied 'Fourteen years old', 'And how old are you?' she asked, 'Sixteen' I replied. She looked at me and said 'You both should be in school not down the pit'.

I travelled back to the village, still in my working clothes, and knocked on Tom's door. His mother answered, asked if all his working clothes were there and closed the door. I went home to my house a few doors down, bathed in our tin bath and changed into clean clothes.

Arthur Lewis, Colliery Manager

Mr Arthur Lewis OBE began work as a collier's boy aged fourteen in 1936. He had been in the St John's Ambulance Brigade since he was eight years old. At the time of the accident above he was the only First Aider among 350 men. He later became a colliery manager and, eventually, a lecturer in mining engineering.



ARTHUR LEWIS, 10
OED, CADÉT GYDAG
URDD SANT IOAN, 1932
ARTHUR LEWIS AS A
TEN-YEAR-OLD ST
JOHN'S AMBULANCE
CADET, 1932

Roedd angen bod yn heini iawn

AR ÔL I LOFA'R GROES-FAEN GAU, COLLAIS fy swydd fel clerc y rheolwr a chefais fy nhrosglwyddo yn ôl i Ystrad Fawr, pencadlys yr NUM rhanbarth y de-orllewin. Dyma ble y dechreuais fy ngyrfa, ond nid dychwelyd i'r swyddfa deipio oeddwn i, ond i'r Adran Ddiogelwch. Roedd hi'n deimlad rhyfedd gweithio gyda'r merched eto. Roedd y Swyddog Diogelwch yn foi mawr a siriol – cyn belled â'i fod mewn hwyliau da, a'n bod ni ddim o dan draed. Roedd e'n mynnu bod pawb yn cadw'n dawel (yn enwedig pan roedd e'n llenwi'r cwpons pêl-droed!).

Roedd pedair ohonom yn rhannu swyddfa, lle'r oedd pawb yn gyfrifol am ei gwaith ei hun. Fy nyletswydd i oedd cadw cofnodion holl byllau'r ardal yn ymwneud â diogelwch a rheoli llwch. Roeddwn i'n arfer mynd i'r ganolfan gyfrifiadur yn Nhredomen bob dydd, rhyw filltir i ffwrdd, i gasglu data a'i drosi. Roedd y cyfrifiadur yn anferthol ac yn llenwi'r ystafell gyfan. Tu ôl i'r drysau gwydr, tebyg i rai mewn rhewgelloedd archfarchnadoedd, roedd riliau maint platiau bwyd yn troi a throsi, gyda'r tapiau yn weindio a dadweindio. Roedd pobl yn agor a chau'r drysau hyn er mwyn newid y riliau gwag neu eu trwsio os oedd rhyw affawd fach. Wn i ddim sut ar y ddaear roedd y menywod yn gallu gweithio a chyfrannu data yng nghanol yr holl sŵn. Roedd y data wedi'i argraffu ar res o daflenni tylllog, gyda thyllau ar bob ochr a oedd yn plygu drostynt eu hunain yn awtomatig. Roeddwn i'n gorfod disgwyl nes bod holl ddata'n glofeydd ni wedi'u hargraffu, a'u cludo yn ôl i'w darllen yn y swyddfa

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

The wheel has stopped, it winds no more
Sheep now sleep behind rotted stable door
Wind whistles through broken windowpanes
Locker and lamp rooms, reduced to shame

The pithead baths once painted white
Glowed and sparkled in winter light
Now derelict and broken down
It bears close resemblance to our town

Night has devoured all daylight
Making way for silver moonlight
Transforming pithead into Eiffel Tower
Restoring faith and trust by people in power

Dreams are broken when the sun starts to shine
Bringing back memories of friends lost in mine
Wind carries their voices on mountaintop
Listen, listen, don't ever stop

Anne Jenkins

ddiogelwch. Roeddwn i'n cario llwyth o bapurau yn ôl ag ymlaen i'r car. Roedd angen bod yn heini iawn y dyddie hynny!

Yna, daeth y newyddion fod y Brif Swyddfa yn Llanbradach i gau, ac y byddai'r staff yn symud i'r Pencadlys Rhanbarthol. Doedden ni ddim yn blês o gwbl. Roedden nhw'n credu eu bod nhw'n well na ni, yn ôl y sôn (achos eu bod nhw'n gweithio yn y BRIF SWYDDFA!) ac y bydden nhw'n cymryd y desgiau a'r cadeiriau gorau, ac yn bachu'r safleoedd gorau ac ati. Efallai fod hyn yn swnio braidd yn bitw heddiw, ond roedden ni'n poeni'n fawr ar y pryd.

Daeth y diwrnod pan ymunodd criw ffoenuchel, hollwybodus, y brif swyddfa (fel roedd pawb ohonom wedi'u bedyddio) â ni. Pan gyrhaeddais y gwaith, roedd HI yn eistedd yn fy nghadair I. 'Fy nghadair i yw honnal', cyhoeddais innau, ac er mawr syndod, fe safodd ar ei thraed ac ymddiheuro. Roedd 'hi' yn wraig dal ac esgrynog, ond yr hyn a'm synnodd fwyaf oedd ei thraed hir a main. Doeddwn i erioed wedi gweld traed tebyg o'r blaen, a oedd yn llawer rhy hir i'w hesgidiau. Roeddwn i wedi disgwyl rhywun haerllug a thrahaus o blith gwrachod y brif swyddfa; yn hytrach, roeddwn yn teimlo'n flin amdani. Erbyn deall, roedd ei gŵr, a fu'n briod o'r blaen ac a oedd yn dad i ddau o blant a oedd yn byw gyda nhw – wedi'i gadael am ferch ifancach, a llwyddo i droi ei blant yn ei herbyn. Ac i wneud pethau'n waeth, roedd e'n codi braw arni trwy sleifio i'r tŷ pan oedd hi yn y gwaith, a chwalu'r lle. Hefyd, rhyw ddwy neu dair gwaith yr wythnos, byddai'n crwydro o amgylch y byngalo yn oriau mân y bore, yn gwneud sŵn crafu a thapio a fflachio golau drwy'r ffenestri.

Does dim rhyfedd ei bod hi mewn ffasiwn stad. Fe ddaethon ni'n ffrindiau da, ac fe gysgais yn ei chartref rhyw unwaith neu ddwywaith yr wythnos er mwyn cadw cwmni iddi a rhoi cyfle iddi gael noson dda o gwsg. Dwi ddim yn berson dewr iawn, ac roeddwn i'n dychryn gyda'r sŵn lleiaf. Y bore canlynol, roedd hi'n hollol ffres yn y gwaith tra'r oedd golwg ofnadwy arnaf i!

Roedd gerddi prydferth, lawntiau, perthi a rhandir yn amgylchynu Ystrad Fawr. Yn ystod ein hawr ginio, byddem yn gwyllo'r garddwr yn trin y tir. Dangosodd i ni sut i wneud siytni gyda thomatos gwyrdd. Aeth pawb yn ddwl am siytni. Byddai pawb yn dod â'u siytni i'r gwaith i gymharu, ac er bod cryn dipyn o gystadleuaeth, dim ond tipyn o hwyl oedd y cyfan. Adeg tymor salad, roedden ni'n bwyta letys, tomatos, ciwcymbr a shibwns fel cwingod!

Fyddwn i ddim byth wedi colli'r cyfle na'r profiad o weithio gyda'r NCB. Mae rhai'n gorfod teithio o amgylch y byd i chwilio am gyffro – ond gallen nhw fod wedi arbed arian a gweithio i'r NCB!

Anne Jenkins, Swyddog Clercio ac Awdur

You had to be fit

AFTER GROESFAEN COLLIERY CLOSED, I LOST my job as manager's clerk and transferred back to Ystrad Fawr, the Headquarters of the NCB South Western Division. This had been the place I started from, but not into the typing pool this time, but into the Safety Section. It was strange working with girls again. The Safety Officer was a very large jolly man – jolly if he was in a good mood but if not we kept out of his way. He demanded quiet (especially when he did his football coupons).

There were four of us in the office each responsible for the work designated to us. I kept records of all the pits in our area with regards to safety and dust control. For the latter I visited daily the computer centre in Tredomen about a mile away to collect data and translate it. The computer was huge and filled the large room it was in. Behind glass doors, similar to those in a supermarket freezer section, reels and reels the size of dinner plates, kept whizzing around with data tape winding and unwinding. People kept opening and shutting these doors to either change the empty reels or mend them if there had been a little accident. How the girls worked inputting data in all that noise I do not know. The data that came out was printed on large perforated lined sheets with holes down each side that were folded over and over on themselves. I had to wait for all my collieries to be printed out and transport them back to the safety office to be read. This meant several trips to my car. You had to be fit in those days!

News came that Llanbradach, the Head Office, was to disband and that staff would be merged into the Regional Headquarters. We did not like this at all. We were told that they thought themselves a cut above us (because they worked in HEAD OFFICE!) they would seize the best chairs, desks, command the best positions, etc. Saying it now seems so petty but at the time we were very worried.

The day arrived when these toffee nosed, know it all, citizens of the hierarchy (as we had worked ourselves up to think of them!) were due to start. When I arrived at work 'SHE' was sitting in 'MY' chair but I said straight out 'That is my chair!' and, to my surprise, she got up and apologised. 'She' was tall, big boned and extremely skeletal, but what fascinated me was her feet, they were long and thin. I had never seen such a long thin feet that could not stay in their shoes. I had expected a bossy overpowering witch from the head office coven; instead I felt sorry for her as she looked so wretched. It turned out that her husband, who had been married before and had two children, who lived with them, had left her for a younger woman and had turned the children against her. As if that was not enough he was terrorising her by entering her home when she was at work and trashing the place. In addition, twice or three times a week in the early hours of

the morning he would creep around the bungalow, scratching, tapping and shining a light through windows.

No wonder she was in the state she was. We became good friends and I slept down her home once or twice a week to keep her company and for her to have a good night's rest. I am not a brave person and jumped at every little sound. In work the next day she would be as bright as a button whilst I would look as if I had been dug up!

Beautiful gardens, lawns, shrubberies and an allotment surrounded Ystrad Fawr. In our lunch hour we



ANN JENKINS YNG NGLOFA'R GROES-FAEN, 1965
ANN JENKINS AT GROESFAEN COLLIERY, 1965

would watch the gardener tending his beloved plot. He showed us how to make chutney from green tomatoes. We went chutney mad.

We brought our jars of chutney in to compare, and a fair bit of competition took place, but it was all in fun. In the salad season we ate lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and spring onions faster than Brer Rabbit.

I would not have missed my experience working for the NCB. Some have to go back packing around the world to find excitement – they could have saved their money and worked for the NCB!

Anne Jenkins, Clerical Officer and author

LLUN CYSYLLTIADAU
CYHOEDDUS A
GYMERWYD YN BIG PIT
AR GYFER BERLEI
LINGERIE A AGORODD
FFATRIYN FORGESIDE YN
YSTODY 1970AU

PUBLIC RELATIONS
PHOTO TAKEN AT BIG PIT
FOR BURLEI LINGERIE
WHO HAD OPENED A
FACTORY AT FORGESIDE
DURING THE 1970S.





GLEN JOHNSON A DES CADDY (AR Y DDE) YNG NGLOFA TŴR
GLEN JOHNSON AND DES CADDY (RIGHT) AT TOWER COLLIERY

“Rwy’ mo’yn eistedd yn eich cadair chi!”

ROEDD HI’N UCHELGAIS GENNYF FODYN rheolwr glofa ers pan oeddwn i’n ifanc iawn. Gadewais yr ysgol ar ddiwrnod fy mhen-blwydd yn 15 oed, ddydd Gwener 13 Gorffennaf, 1948, ac fe es i’n syth at reolwr Glofa’r Cwm i ofyn am waith. Pan ofynnodd i mi pam roeddwn i eisiau swydd yno, atebais ‘Oherwydd rwy’ moyn eistedd yn eich cadair chi!’

Roedd rhaid i mi fynd i ysgol nos am na chefais fawr o addysg. Roeddwn i’n gorfod codi am hanner awr wedi pump y bore a mynd i’r ysgol yn y nos. Fe gymrodd hi tua deng mlynedd i mi fod yn rheolwr glofa. Roedd rhaid i mi wneud profion P1, P2, S1, S2, S3 a’r holl dystysgrifau cenedlaethol NAI, NA2 a’r Tystysgrifau Cenedlaethol Uwch, cyn gwneud Diploma mewn Mwyngloddio. Yna, roedd rhaid i mi wneud cwrs tystysgrif Rheolwr Glofa mewn Cyfraith Gwaith Glo ym 1962. Ym 1963, cefais fy mhenodi yn oruchwyliwr neu’n oferman yng Nglofa’r Cwm, ac yna’n is-reolwr tan 1973 pan gefais ddychafiad i fod yn ddirprwy reolwr am y deng mlynedd nesaf.

Fe es i’r Cwm yn bymtheg oed a threulio 33 mlynedd yno. Pan ddes i’n is-reolwr, roedd llawer o

bobl – yn enwedig ar lefel rheoli – yn meddwl y byddai’n anodd iawn i’r dynion fy ngalw i’n Mr Caddy yn lle Desmond George. Yn hytrach, fe synnais pa mor hawdd y gwnaethon nhw dderbyn hynny. Ambell waith pan oeddwn i gyda’r rheolwr cynhyrchu neu’r dirprwy gyfarwyddwr, byddai rhywun yn anghofio am eiliad ac yn dweud ‘Nage fel hyn oedden ni’n arfer gwneud pethau, Des’ a byddai’r cyfarwyddwr yn troi ataf i ddweud rhywbeth, ond roeddwn i’n anwybyddu hynny, a’r peth nesaf, roedden nhw’n dweud ‘Mr Caddy’ unwaith eto.

Rwy’n falch o’r hyn lwyddais ei wneud yng Nglofa’r Cwm. Hoffwn i feddwl y gallwn i fod wedi cadw’r lofa ar agor am gyfnod llawer hirach, ond allwch chi ddim profi hynny mwyach wrth gwrs. Roedd Glofa’r Cwm yn enwog ledled y DU am lo golosg unigryw. Yr unig lofa debyg arall yn y De oedd Nantgarw, ond doedd y lofa honno ddim yn gallu cynhyrchu cymaint o lo â ni gan ei bod yn anodd iawn, iawn, i’w chloddio oherwydd y llethrau serth. Yr unig le arall yn y byd sy’n cynhyrchu glo cystal yw America, gyda chlytiaid ohono yma ac acw. Ond yr adeg honno, yr unig farchnad ar

“I want to sit in your chair!”

IT WAS MY AMBITION TO BECOME A COLLIERY manager from a very early age. I left school on Friday July 13th, 1948, on my fifteenth birthday and I went straight up to the Cwm Colliery and asked the manager for a job. He asked me why I wanted a job there and I said ‘Because I want to sit in your chair!’

Not having had much education I had to go to night school. I had to get up half past five in the morning for work and go to school in the evening. It took me something like ten years to become a colliery manager. I had to do the P1, P2, S1, S2, S3 and all the National NAI, NA2 and the Higher National Certificates and then eventually the Diploma in Mining. Then I had to take the Colliery Manager’s certificate in mining law which I did in 1962. In 1963 I became an overman in Cwm, in 1967 I became under manager and I remained in that post until 1973 when I was promoted to deputy manager, and I spent ten years doing that.

I went into the Cwm on my fifteenth birthday and did thirty three years there. When I became under manager a lot of people thought, particularly at management level, that it would be very difficult for the men to stop calling me Desmond George and call me Mr Caddy instead. However, I was pleasantly surprised that they accepted it like a duck taking to water. There were the odd occasion when I would be with the production manager or the deputy director and somebody would forget themselves and say ‘We never used to do it like that Des’ and the director would look at me to say something, but I used to ignore it and the next minute it would be ‘Mr Caddy’ again.

I’m proud of what I achieved in the Cwm. I would like to think that I could have kept the colliery open for a much longer period of time, but you can’t prove that now of course. Cwm was renowned throughout the UK for its unique type of coking coal. Now the only other pit in south Wales that came near to that was Nantgarw and that wasn’t a pit that could produce vast amounts of coal as it was a very, very difficult pit to mine because of its steep gradient. The only other coal like it in the world is in America where there are only patches of it. But at that the only market was the power station and our coal was too good for that. Our coal was too rich for the markets available.

I left the Cwm in October 2nd 1984 and moved to Merthyr Vale first and then to Oakdale in July 1985. When Oakdale was ready to close I was asked to take the challenge of my life which was to manage Maerdy and Tower collieries. After going to both pits, and spending twelve, fourteen hours a day there to make sure I knew my facts, I came to the conclusion that Maerdy didn’t have a future but Tower did. However, there was a heck of a lot of work to be done and a lot of money had to be spent, and knowing the labour force of Tower and knowing the attitude of Tyrone O’Sullivan, the union leader there, who thought the sun shone out of Arthur Scargill’s backside. I told him that there was a future for the pit but it would remain open on one condition and that was that we would have to get private contractors in and we’d have to get them in immediately. Well, he told me ‘Over my dead body you will!’ I said ‘Well it’ll be either that or you’ll close. You’re not going to make the decision; it will be the

labour force.’ I spoke to all three shifts on the surface and told them about my plan and they went on strike for a day or two. However, they came back, accepted what I had said and within twelve months the pit was in profit.

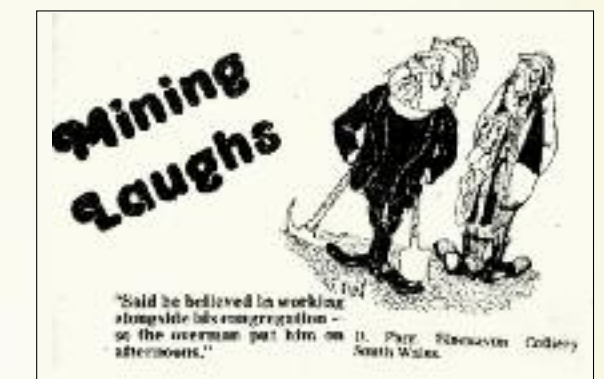
It was vital to get private mining contractors into Tower because they were specialists in high speed drift mining. Although there were some good individuals already in the pit, they weren’t sufficient in number to man a sixteen foot roadway, twenty four hours a day. Thyssen mining contractors eventually won the contract and drove the roadway down, almost a mile in length, one in seven drift gradient, and they did it in only twelve months.

That one roadway replaced sixteen other roadways so we now had one conveyor going all the way into the heart of the pit instead of sixteen. That’s when Tower took off and it’s still going today, although they’re just about ready to close now [Mr Caddy was interviewed during autumn 2007 and Tower closed in March 2008], but they’ve had a very good run. If you talk to the workforce today, I bet they’re very happy about the decision I made in those days.

I don’t want to take the accolade for it but I was sent there to do a job, a managerial job, which I thought I did reasonably well but I’ve got to say that it was my plan that put that pit where it is today, not the NUM because they didn’t have a clue, whatever they may say. I retired from Tower just before it was ‘bought out’ by the workforce.

I went into the colliery because all my family worked in the Cwm. There was nothing else; I thought that if my father could do it and my brothers could do it, so could I. My mother didn’t want me to go there mind. She said ‘There’s enough of you there now!’ If the colliery hadn’t been there I would have gone to the armed forces and made a career there instead. I was never going to be just ‘one of the lads in the village’ that just put his hands in his pockets and be happy with a nine ‘til five job or whatever, a factory job, I didn’t want that. Looking back I would never, ever change my life. If I could turn the clock back to 1948 I would do exactly the same thing again.

Desmond Caddy, Colliery Manager



► gyfer ein glo ni oedd gorsaf bŵer, ac roedd y glo yn llawer rhy dda ar gyfer hynny. Roedd ein glo ni'n rhy gyfoethog ar gyfer y marchnadoedd oedd ar gael.

Ffarweliais â Glofa'r Cwm ar 2 Hydref 1984 a symudais i Ynysowen yn gyntaf ac yna Oakdale ym mis Gorffennaf 1985. Pan oedd Oakdale ar fin cau, gofynnwyd i mi ymgymryd ag un o heriau mwyaf fy mywyd, sef rheoli glofeydd y Tŵr a'r Maerdy. Ar ôl ymweld â'r ddwy lofa, a threulio rhwng 12 ac 14 awr y dydd yno i wneud yn siŵr o'm ffeithiau, fe ddes i'r casgliad nad oedd gan Lofa'r Maerdy unrhyw ddyfodol, yn wahanol i Lofa'r Tŵr. Roedd peth wmbredd o waith i'w wneud, fodd bynnag, a llwyth o arian i'w wario, o adnabod gweithlu'r Tŵr ac agwedd Tyrone O'Sullivan, arweinydd yr undeb yno, a oedd yn meddwl bod yr haul yn tywynnu o ben-ôl Arthur Scargill. Dywedais wrtho fod gan y lofa ddyfodol, ond y byddai'n parhau ar agor ar un amod, sef y byddai'n rhaid i ni gael contractwyr preifat yno, a hynny ar unwaith. Wel, fe drodd ata i a dweud 'Dros fy nghrogi!' Ac meddwn i 'Wel, naill ai hynny neu gau'r pwll yn gyfan gwbl. Nid dy benderfyniad di fydd e; ond y gweithwyr.' Cefais air gyda thair shift o weithwyr ar y wyneb, gan egluro fy nghynlluniau iddynt, ac fe aethon nhw ar streic am ddiwrnod neu ddau. Ond dychwelyd wnaethon nhw, derbyn yr hyn a ddywedais i, ac o fewn deuddeg mis, roedd y lofa'n gwneud elw.

Roedd hi'n hanfodol cael contractwyr glo preifat i'r Tŵr oherwydd roedden nhw'n arbenigo mewn cloddio lefelydd yn gyflym iawn. Er bod unigolion da iawn yn y pwll eisoes, doedd dim digon ohonynt i gloddio trwy dwneli 16 troedfedd, 24 awr y dydd. Cwmni contractwyr Thyssen gafodd y

contract yn y diwedd, ac aethant ati i dyllu twnnel graddiant 1:7 bron filltir o hyd, mewn cwta deuddeg mis. Fe wnaeth yr un twnnel hwn gymryd lle 16 o dwneli llai, felly dim ond un cludfelt oedd yn mynd i galon y pwll bellach yn lle'r 16 blaenorol. Dyna pryd y dechreuodd Tŵr fynd o nerth i nerth, ac mae'n dal ar waith heddiw, er ei bod ar fin cau (*cafodd Mr Caddy ei holi yn ystod hydref 2007, a chaeodd Glofa'r Tŵr ym mis Mawrth 2008*), ond fe gawson nhw rediad da iawn. Pe baech chi'n siarad gyda'r gweithwyr heddiw, rwy'n sicr eu bod nhw'n fwy na bodlon gyda'm penderfyniadau i bryd hynny.

Dwi ddim eisiau cymryd y clod i gyd, ond cefais fy anfon yno i wneud gwaith, gwaith rheolwr, a'i wneud yn eithaf da yn fy marn i. Er hynny, rhaid dweud mai fy syniad i roddodd Glofa'r Tŵr ar ben ffordd, nid yr NUM, oherwydd doedd ganddyn nhw ddim clem, beth bynnag maen nhw'n ei ddweud. Fe wnes i ymddeol o'r Tŵr ychydig cyn i'r gweithwyr ei brynu.

Fe ymunais i â'r lofa oherwydd bod fy holl deulu'n gweithio yn y Cwm. Doedd dim byd arall yno; a meddyliais i, os yw fy nhad a'm mrodyr yn gallu'i wneud e, gallaf i wneud e hefyd. Cofiwch chi, doedd mam ddim eisiau i mi fynd yno. 'Mae 'na hen ddigon ohonoch chi yno nawr' meddai. Oni bai am y lofa, bydden i wedi ymuno â'r lluoedd arfog yn lle hynny. Doeddwn i byth am fod yn 'un o fois yn y pentref' sy'n fodlon gyda swydd naw tan bump neu beth bynnag, rhyw waith ffatri. Doeddwn i ddim eisiau hynny. Wrth edrych yn ôl, fyddwn i byth, byth, yn newid fy mywyd i. Pe bawn i'n gallu troi'r cloc yn ôl i 1948, byddwn i'n gwneud union yr un peth eto.

Desmond Caddy, Rheolwr y Lofa

Gweithio ar ben y pwll

CEFAIS FY NGENI YM MIS RHAGFYR 1925. Ar ddechrau'r 1930au, rwy'n cofio fy nhad yn dod adref o'i waith, ac yn rhoi ei gyflog ar y bwrdd â golwg bryderus iawn arno, a mam yn dweud 'Cer mas i chwarae Desmond, fe alwa i arnot ti pan fydd swper yn barod'. Ychydig flynyddoedd wedyn, deallais nad oedd dad yn derbyn yr isafswm cyflog oherwydd bod y talcen glo (*man gweithio*) yn rhy anodd ei drin. Roedd gennym ni dân agored gyda gard tân mawr o'i amgylch, lle byddai'r dillad gwaith môlsgin yn hongian i'w sychu. Rwy'n cofio mam yn chwerrthin oherwydd ei bod yn gallu gwneud i drowsus dad sefyll ar eu traed eu hunain gan fod chwys yr oesoedd yn ei gwneud mor stiff a chaled.

Ar 1 Ionawr 1940, dechreuais weithio yn rhidyllfa'r lofa yn Glyncastle. Erbyn hynny, roedd dad yn fyr ei wynt ac yn rhy wael i weithio danddaear mwyach, a chafodd ei anfon gan y Gorchymyn Gwaith Hanfodol i weithio ar y rheilffyrdd, a wnaeth fyd o les iddo gan ei fod yn gweithio tu allan yn yr awyr iach. Roedd ganddo glefyd y llwch a silicosis. Pan fu farw ym 1972, dangosodd yr awtopsi mai dim ond hanner un ysgyfaint oedd ganddo.

Roedd llwch difrifol yn y rhidyllfa. Roedd pob bachgen newydd yn gweithio wrth y cludfeltiau, yn codi slag a malurion o'r belt – a hyd yn oed yn sgubo'r llwch oddi ar y glo ar gyfer Bragdy Mitchell & Butlers. Roedd y darnau bach o lo yn cael eu golchi a'u graddio fesul 'nuts', 'beans', 'peas' ac ati. Dylid cofio bod y darnau bach o lo oedd yn llithro drwy'r bylchau yn cael ei bwysu a'i dynnu o gyfanswm tunelli'r glowyr, felly doedd y glowyr byth yn cael tâl am y glo drud oedd wedi'i olchi.

Yn fuan wedyn, cawsom ddyletswyddau eraill i'w cyflawni. Un ohonynt oedd creu mortar ar gyfer yr adran adeiladu, trwy gymysgu lludw, calch a dŵr gyda pheiriant â rholeri mawr. Roedd dynion o oedran penodol wedi'u galw i'r fyddin, a chyn hir, doedd dim llawer o fechgyn yn eu harddegau hwyr yn gweithio ar ben y pwll. Cludwyd llond bysus o ddynion di-waith o ardal Merthyr, ac roeddwn i'n gorfod dangos i un ohonyn nhw sut i wneud mortar. Doedd e ddim wedi gweithio ers deng mlynedd, a chlywais am ddyn arall a oedd heb weithio ers 14 mlynedd.

Erbyn hyn, roeddwn i'n 16 oed. Roedd llawer o fechgyn eraill o'r un oed â mi, a ni oedd yn gwneud ►

Working on the surface

I WAS BORN IN DECEMBER 1925. IN THE EARLY 1930s I remember my father coming home from work putting his wages on the kitchen table and being very distressed, my mother said "Go out and play Desmond, I'll call you when tea is ready". In later years I knew my father hadn't earned the minimum wage as his stall (*working place*) was too difficult. We had an open fire with a big fire guard around it, on which the working clothes were draped to dry. I remember my mother laughing because she could make my father's moleskin trousers stand up on their own because they were so stiff with dried sweat.

On January 1st 1940 I started work in the screens at Glyncastle Colliery. By then my father was very short of breath and unfit to work underground anymore and was directed by The Essential Works Order to work on the railways which probably did him good, as he was working outside in the fresh air. He had pneumoconiosis and silicosis. When he died in 1972, the autopsy showed he only had half of one lung.

The dust in the screens was dreadful. All the new boys worked on the conveyors picking slag and debris off the belt – even brushing dust off the coal ordered by Mitchell and Butlers Brewery. The small coal was all

washed and graded into 'nuts', 'beans', 'peas' and so on. A point to be made here is that the small coal dropped through spaced bars and was weighed and deducted from the colliers' tonnage so the miners were never paid for the expensive washed coal.

It wasn't long before we were given other jobs to do. One of them was to make mortar for the building department from a mixture of ash, lime and water all ground up in a machine with great big rollers. Men of call up age had to join the forces and soon there weren't many older teenagers working on the colliery surface. We had bus loads of unemployed men transported down from the Merthyr area and I had to show one of these men how to make the mortar. He hadn't worked for ten years he said and I heard of one man who hadn't worked for fourteen years.

By now I'm sixteen years old. There were other boys around the same age and we did everything, weighing the drams as they came up from the pit, hitching them onto the endless rope, working with the blacksmiths when needed, i.e. straightening rings [arched roof supports] with a thirty-ton hydraulic press, sharpening, hardening and tempering the coal cutter teeth and mandrels, fitting new handles to sledges ►



► popeth – pwyso'r dramiau a oedd yn dod i fyny o'r pwll, eu bachu'n sownd yn y rhaffau diddiwedd, gweithio gyda'r gof fel bo'r angen, h.y. sythu'r cylchedd (cynhalbyst bwaog) gyda gwasg hydrolog 30 tunnell, hogi, caledu a thymheru'r mandreli a dannedd y torrwr glo, gosod coesau newydd ar geibiau, gyrdd, bwyell ac offer eraill. Yr unig dro es i danddaear oedd gyda'r gof i wirio cadwyni olwyn weindio'r pwll. Roedd yr hen ofaint yn dibynnu arnom ni'r bois ifanc â llygaid da i sylwi ar unrhyw graciau yn y dolenni.

Erbyn 1944, roedd Bois Bevin wedi ymuno â ni, sef bechgyn ifanc o oedran galw i'r fyddin, a gafodd eu hanfon i'r pyllau glo yn hytrach na'r lluoedd arfog. Roedden nhw'n feirniadol iawn o amodau gwaith y pyllau, ac fe fynychais i sawl un o'u cyfarfodydd lle'r oedd y rheolwyr, undebau a'r glowyr dan y lach go iawn! Myfyriwr o Rydychen oedd eu llfarydd, ac roedd e'n siaradwr gwych ac yn dipyn o rebel. Roedden nhw'n methu credu bod dynion yn gweithio dan amodau mor uffernol.

Pan oeddwn i'n 21 oed, ymunais â'r felin lifio lle'r oedden ni'n cynhyrchu trawstiau ar gyfer cledrau tramiau, coed danheddog o bren llwyfen 3 troedfedd, blociau brêc o bren llwyfen 8 x 6 x 5 troedfedd o hyd ar gyfer olwyn weindio'r pwll, wedi'u

leinio gyda leinin brêc Ferodo. Erbyn hyn, roedd Powell Duffryn wedi trosglwyddo rheolaeth i'r NCB, a chafodd miloedd o dunelli o goed rhagorol o Norwy eu hanfon atom. Hefyd, rwy'n cofio dau offer torri glo newydd sbon yn cyrraedd, a'r glowyr yn dod i lawr i'w dadlwytho o'r lorri eu hunain a gofalu eu bod yn cael eu cludo'n ddiogel i'r pwll. Doedden ni erioed wedi gweld cyfarpar newydd cyn i'r pyllau gael eu gwladoli, gan mai pethau ail-law o lofeydd eraill oedd gennym cyn hynny.

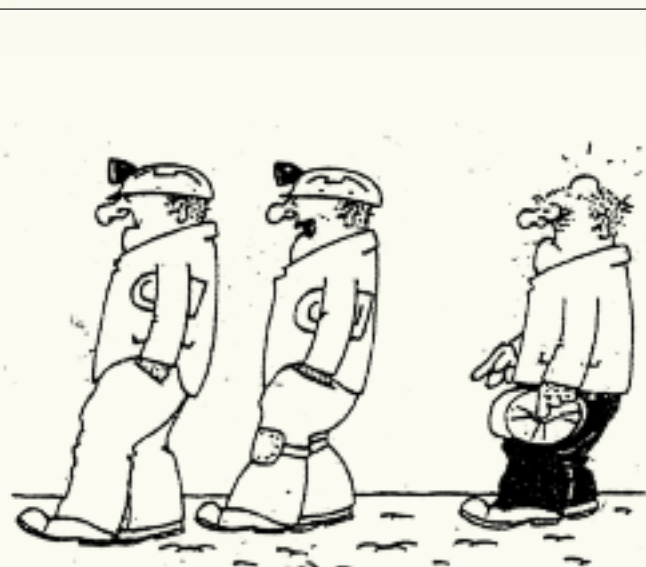
Yna, cafodd y Gorchymyn Gwaith Hanfodol ei godi mwya'r sydyn ar 1 Ionawr 1950. Roedd fy nhad yn falch o'r ffaith nad es i danddaear o gwbl, er fy mod wedi cael sawl cynnig i fynd, ac y gallwn i fod wedi ennill arian mawr. 'Dwyt ti ddim eisiau bod fel fi, grwt', roedd e'n arfer dweud, felly dyma oedd fy nghyfle i ddianc o'r pyllau glo ar ôl deng mlynedd yno.

Dechreuais weithio gyda chwmni ceir Vauxhall ar 28 Chwefror 1950. Cyrhaeddais Luton ar ddydd lau, ac fe wnaeth Swyddfa'r Di-waith fy anfon i gael archwiliad meddygol a chyfweliad ar y dydd Llun. Roedd deg ohonom yn ceisio am ddwy swydd. Dechreuais weithio'r diwrnod canlynol.

Des Jones, Gweithiwr pen pwll

► hammers, picks, axes and other tools. The only time I went underground was with the blacksmith to check the pit winding chains. The old blacksmiths liked us boys with our good eyesight to see the cracks in the links.

By 1944 we had the Bevin Boys who were young



"He's after a lump sum for it."
G. Thornley, Hucknall Colliery,
Nottinghamshire.

men of call up age who were directed to the mines rather than conscripted into the armed forces. They were very critical of the working conditions in the mines, I went to many of their meetings and management, unions and miners all came in for a real going over! Their spokesman was an Oxford student who was a marvellous speaker and very rebellious. They couldn't believe that men worked under such awful conditions.

At twenty-one years old I went to work in the sawmill, here we made tramline sleepers, cog timbers from three-foot logs of elm, pit winder brake blocks from elm wood 8 x 6 x 5 feet long, lined with Ferodo brake linings. By this time the National Coal Board had taken over from Powell Duffryn and we had thousands of tons of marvellous Norway timber delivered to us. I also remember two brand new coal cutters being delivered and the colliers came down and unloaded them off the truck themselves and supervised transporting them up to the pit. We'd never seen brand new gear before the pits were nationalised, it was always second hand from some other collieries.

Then all of a sudden the Essential Works Order was lifted on January 1st 1950. My father was proud of the fact I'd never gone underground although I'd had many offers to do so and I could have earned big money. 'You don't want to become like me my boy', he used to say, so here was my chance to get away from the mines altogether, I had done exactly ten years.

I started at Vauxhall Motors 28th February 1950. I arrived in Luton on Thursday and was sent by the Unemployment Exchange for a medical and interview on Monday. There were ten of us and only two of us got a job. I started the next day.

Des Jones, Surface Worker

Aur

FEYMUNAIŌ Â'R NCB AR ÔL GADAEŁ YSGOL, a chefais fy hyfforddi yng Nglofa Oakdale. Gwnes fy hyfforddiant danddaear yng Nglofa Tirpentwys ac yna Big Pit, gan aros yno am sawl blwyddyn wedyn. Ar ôl priodi, fe es i weithio yng Nglofa Hafodyrynys ac yna yn ôl i Dirpentwys eto, lle cefais i'r ddamwain.

Yn ôl y sôn, roedd y slab o garreg a'm trawodd yn mesur chwe troedfedd wrth ddeunaw modfedd wrth chwe modfedd. Dim ond dwy droedfedd naw modfedd o uchder oedd y ffas lo lle'r oeddwn i'n gweithio, ac felly ni ddisgynnodd yn bell iawn. Yn anffodus, fe ddisgynnodd ar ei hochr yn erbyn fy asgwrn cefn oherwydd roeddwn i wedi plygu ac yn methu mynd i unlle. Ceisiais ei wthio oddi ar fy nghefn, ond roeddwn i'n dynn yn erbyn y ffas lo ac yn methu symud, felly gwaeddais am help. Pan ddaeth rhywun o'r diwedd, fe wnaethon nhw glymu rhywbeth o amgylch fy nghanol neu fy nghefn. Wn i ddim beth oedd e, sling efallai, ond beth bynnag ydoedd, y peth cyntaf feddyliais i oedd pa mor gyfyng oedd hi yno. Dwi'n meddwl eu bod nhw wedi fy llusgo i lawr y ffas gyda blanced, a minnau ar fy nghefn. Wnes i ddim sylweddoli ar y pryd bod hyn yn gamgymeriad, ac ar ôl cyrraedd y prif hedini, fe wnaethon nhw ddefnyddio'r blanced i 'nghodi i, a minnau'n sgrechian mewn poen wrth blygu fy nghefn. ►

Gold

I JOINED THE NCB FROM SCHOOL AND DID my training in Oakdale Colliery. I did my underground training at Tirpentwys Colliery and eventually went to Big Pit where I spent quite a few years. When I got married I went to Hafodyrynys Colliery and then back to Tirpentwys again. It was at Tirpentwys that I had the accident.

From what I was told the stone slab that fell was six feet by eighteen inches by six inches. The coal face I was working in was only two feet nine inches high so it didn't fall very far, but it fell edge on. So the edge of the slab actually caught my spine as I was bent over and I couldn't go anywhere. I tried to push it off my back but I was up against the coal face and I was stuck, so I shouted for help.

When help arrived they tied something around my waist or back. I don't know what it was, it may have been a sling but, whatever it was, the first thing that went through my mind was that there wasn't much room there. I think they dragged me down the face on a blanket and I was on my back. I didn't realise at the time that this was the wrong thing to do and, when they got me down the face into the main heading they actually lifted me in the blanket so it arched my back and I screamed.

Even then, from the waist down, I was just a mass of 'pins and needles'. A doctor met me about half way out to pit bottom, and asked me if I could feel anything and I told him about these pins and needles and he said "You're going to be OK, great". Even in the ambulance



GERALD ANSLOW
GYDA'I FEDAL AUR
OLYMPAIDD.

GERALD ANSLOW
WITH HIS OLYMPIC
GOLD MEDAL

I was lying on my back which was a bad, bad move. So I was on my way to the Royal Gwent Hospital and the pins and needles feeling grew and then faded away down my legs till it got to my knees and then there was just nothing.

I know now that what they should have done was to turn me onto my stomach, to take the pressure off my back. These days they have the knowledge of how to treat spinal injuries correctly and, if the spinal cord isn't completely naffed, you've got a good chance of getting sensation or something back. With my spinal chord it's kinked, not severed, and there's no sensation from there down because the pressure hadn't been taken off from the beginning. At the time they did what they thought best, but it was the wrong thing.

What did come out during the investigation was that the extension bars on the roof supports, which would have prevented a stone falling, were all fitted the day after the accident. This was strange because they weren't there the day before!

The NUM representative told me that he couldn't prove that they weren't there, but you take it from me, they weren't. However the compensation was OK at the time because I was only on about twelve quid a week.

These days though the compensation is tremendous, paraplegics like me are getting around a million pounds but I've got no money worries to be honest. I miss the mines though, your mates were great. If you needed help the miners were there for you. They were good days. ►

Hyd yn oed bryd hynny, roedd rhan isaf y corff yn binnau bach i gyd. Daeth meddyg ataf hanner ffordd i lawr y pwll, a gofyn a oedd gennyf unrhyw deimlad o gwbl. Soniais i am y pinnau bach a dywedodd 'Ry'ch chi'n mynd i fod yn iawn'. Roeddwn i'n gorwedd ar fy nghefn yn yr ambiwlans hefyd a oedd yn gamgymeriad mawr arall. Felly, roeddwn i ar y ffordd i Ysbyty Brenhinol Gwent, a'r pinnau bach yn fwyfwy amlwg cyn diflannu'n araf i lawr fy nghoesau, ac yna dim byd.

Erbyn hyn, rwy'n gwybod y dylen nhw fod wedi fy nhroi i orwedd ar fy mol, er mwyn tynnu'r pwysau oddi-ar fy nghefn. Heddiw, maen nhw'n gwybod beth yw'r ffordd gywir o drin anafiadau i'r asgwrn cefn, ac os nad yw llinyn y cefn wedi'i dorri'n llwyr, mae gennyf siawns eithaf da o gael teimlad neu ryw faint o deimlad yn ôl. Mae llinyn fy nghefn i wedi plygu rhywfaint, nid wedi torri'n llwyr, a does dim teimlad o fan'ny i lawr oherwydd eu bod nhw heb dynnu'r pwysau oddi arno o'r cychwyn cyntaf. Ar y pryd, roeddwn nhw'n meddwl eu bod yn gwneud y peth iawn, ond fe wnaethon nhw gamgymeriad.

Yn ystod yr ymchwiliad, fe ddaeth i'r amlwg fod bariau estynedig ar y cynhalbyst, a fyddai wedi atal y garreg rhag cwmpo, wedi'u gosod ddiwrnod wedi'r ddamwain. Roedd hyn yn beth rhyfedd, gan nad oedden nhw yno'r diwrnod blaenorol! Yn ôl cynrychiolydd yr NUM, doedd dim modd profi nad oedden nhw yno cyn hynny, ond dwi'n gwybod yn iawn nad oedden nhw. Ond roedd yr iawndal a gefais yn iawn ar y pryd, oherwydd dim ond deuddeg punt yr wythnos oedd fy nghyflog. Heddiw, fodd bynnag, mae yna iawndal sylweddol, ac mae pobl sydd wedi parlysu'n llwyr fel fi yn cael tua miliwn o bunnau – ond does gen i ddim pryderon ariannol mewn gwirionedd. Dwi'n gweld eisiau'r pyllau glo, er hynny, roedd gen i gyfeillion gwych yno. Os oeddech chi angen cymorth, roedd y glowyr yno i chi. Roeddwn nhw'n ddyddiau da.

Rwyf wedi fy mharlysu o'm canol i lawr, ac fe gymrodd bron i bum mlynedd i mi dderbyn hynny. Ar y cychwyn, roeddwn i'n wftio'r syniad o wneud chwaraeon mewn cadair olwyn, ond fe ddechreuais gymryd diddordeb a hyfforddi. Ym 1969, fe wnes i

gymryd rhan mewn Saethyddiaeth yng Ngemau Cymru a'r Gemau Cenedlaethol yn Stoke Mandeville (gan ddod yn gyntaf ac ail yn y naill a'r llall). Ym 1970, fe wnes i gymryd rhan mewn cystadleuaeth Saethyddiaeth yng Ngemau'r Gymanwlad yn yr Alban; roedd yn brofiad gwerth chweil er na chefais unrhyw fedal. Er i mi ennill Gemau Cymru a'r Gemau Cenedlaethol rhwng 1971 a 1973, ni chefais fy newis fel Saethydd yng Ngemau Gymanwlad Seland Newydd. Yn hytrach, fe'm dewiswyd i gystadlu mewn Cleddyfaeth - nid fy mhrif gamp hyd yn oed! Er hynny, llwyddais i gipio'r fedal efydd.

Cefais fy newis fel aelod o dîm Prydain ar gyfer Gemau Olympaidd Toronto, Canada, ym 1976, gan ennill y fedal aur mewn Saethyddiaeth. Er gwaetha'r ffaith fy mod yn parhau i hyfforddi, ni chefais fy newis ar gyfer Gemau Paralympaidd 1980 o gwbl, a gynhaliwyd yn yr Iseldiroedd yn lle Moscow – cartref Gemau Olympaidd y flwyddyn honno – am nad oedd athletwyr anabl o gwbl yn yr Undeb Sofietaidd!

Fe wnes i barhau gyda'r gamp tan 1984, gan gystadlu mewn Pencampwriaethau Agored yn erbyn cystadleuwyr anabl a rhai nad oeddynt yn anabl, mewn Saethyddiaeth a Bowlio ledled Prydain (gan gynnwys Gemau'r NCB). Penderfynais roi'r gorau iddi oherwydd roeddwn ni wedi prynu tŷ newydd, ac roedd cryn dipyn o waith angen ei wneud ar yr ardd felly dwi'n dal ati i arddio. Bues i'n chwarae bowls am ychydig flynyddoedd wedi hynny, ond doedd gen i ddim digon o amser i wneud unrhyw chwaraeon o gwbl mewn gwirionedd.

Yr agoriad llygad mwyaf i bobl paraplegig sy'n gwneud chwaraeon yw mynd draw i Stoke Mandeville. Rydych chi'n meddwl eich bod chi'n gïamstar mewn cadair olwyn tan i chi weld pobl sydd fwy neu lai wedi'u parlysu o'r gwddf i lawr – a chael agoriad llygad o weld beth maen nhw'n gallu'i gyflawni. Dwi bob amser wedi argymhell unrhyw berson paraplegig i fynd i Stoke Mandeville, a gallwch chi gyflawni llawer o bethau trwy ymarfer digon. Ond mae'n rhaid i chi ymarfer.

Gerald Anslow, Glöwr ac Enillydd Olympaidd

So I am paralysed from the waist down and it took me about five years to accept it. At first I pooh-poohed doing sport in a wheelchair but eventually gave in and started training. In 1969 I competed in archery in both the Welsh Games and the National Games at Stoke Mandeville (I came first and second respectively). In 1970 I competed in Archery at the Commonwealth Games in Scotland; it was good experience but no medal. Although I won both the Welsh and National Games between 1971 and 1973, I wasn't picked for Archery in the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand. Instead, I was selected for Fencing, which wasn't my main sport! However, I managed to win a Bronze Medal.

I was selected for the Great Britain Team for the Olympic Games in Toronto, Canada in 1976 and won team gold for Archery. However, despite continuing my training, I wasn't picked for the 1980 Paraplegic Games which were held in Holland as Moscow, where the Olympic Games were being held,

apparently didn't have any disabled sports people!!!

I carried on with sport until 1984 competing in Open Championships against both disabled and able bodied competitors in both Archery and Bowls throughout Britain (including NCB Games). I then decided to call it a day as we had just bought the new house and had a heck of a lot of work sorting the gardens out so I just battle on with that. I did bowling for a few years after but I just couldn't find the time for sport.

The biggest eye opener for paraplegics who take up sport is to go to Stoke Mandeville. You think that you are good in a wheelchair until you go there and see people who are more or less paralyzed from the neck down – what they can achieve in a wheelchair is an eye opener. I have always recommended any paraplegics to go to Stoke Mandeville and you can achieve a lot if you practise. But you've got to practise.

Gerald Anslow, Collier and Olympian

Llwch glo yn y cwpwrdd ffeilio

YM 1982, CEFAIS FY NISWYDDO'N SYDYN fel ysgrifenyddes i'r Rheolwr Cynhyrchu a oedd yn gyfrifol am nifer o lofeydd. Cefais waith dros dro am ychydig wythnosau, ac yn sgil marwolaeth sydyn Clerc Rheolwr Glofa Markham, fe wnes i gais am y swydd honno a llwyddo i'w chael.

Ar ôl bod yn Swyddfa'r Rheolwr Cynhyrchu am 7 mlynedd, roeddwn i'n awyddus i barhau i weithio gyda'r glowyr cyffredin yn hytrach na symud i Swyddfa'r Pencadlys. Er hynny, roedd symud o swyddfa gysurus llawn offer yn gryn sioc, ac ar yr ail

ddiwrnod, roedd rhaid i mi hwfro llwch y glo o'r cypyrddau ffeilio.

Roeddwn i'n adnabod Mr Morris, y Rheolwr, ers fy swydd flaenorol pan arferai weithio yng Nglofa'r Maerdy. Ar y diwrnod cyntaf, dywedodd ei fod yn ymwybodol o'r gwahaniaethau rhwng y ddwy swyddfa a'i fod yn barod i gefnogi unrhyw gais am offer newydd. Archebais deipiadur newydd, ffeiliau ac offer ysgrifennu newydd, cadair swyddfa, cadair ymwelydd, drych yn ystafell gotiau'r merched (a ddefnyddiwyd gan ddwy gydweithwraig o'r ystafell

AUDREY GRIFFITHS
YNG NGLOFA
MARKHAM PAN
OEDDY SIAFFT
UCHAFYN CAEL EI
LLENWI, RHAGFYR
1985
AUDREY GRIFFITHS
AT MARKHAM
COLLIERY WHEN
THE UPCAST
SHAFT WAS BEING
FILLED IN,
DECEMBER 1985



Coal dust in the filing cabinets

IN 1982, MY POST AS SECRETARY TO A PRODUCTION Manager in charge of several collieries was suddenly made redundant. For a few weeks, I was given temporary work and then, following the unexpected death of the Manager's Clerk at Markham Colliery, I applied for and was given the job.

Having been in a Production Office for seven years, I was eager to stay near the grass roots of the mining industry and not move into a Headquarters Office. The move from the comfort and good equipment of my previous office to the basics of a colliery office came as something of a shock, however, and on my second day, I took in my vacuum cleaner to get the coal dust out of the filing cabinets!

I knew Mr Morris, the Manager, from my previous job when he was at Maerdy Colliery. On that first morning, he told me he was aware of the differences in the two offices and he was prepared to support any requests for new equipment. The orders went in for a new typewriter, new files and stationery, an office chair, a visitors' chair, a mirror in the ladies' cloakroom (used also by two female colleagues from the timekeepers' office), roller towels in both cloakrooms, etc. etc. and all were quickly approved.

The request for a photocopier was not so speedily granted but, for a few weeks, it gave me the chance to leave the office and visit Oakdale Colliery in order to use their machine. Quite soon, much to the relief of all

► amseru), tyweli ar gyfer y ddau doiled ac ati, ac fe'u darparwyd ar unwaith. Ni chefais gymaint o lwc pan ofynnais am beiriant llungopiö newydd, ond am ychydig wythnosau, cefais gyfle i adael y swyddfa a defnyddio peiriant Glofa Oakdale. Ymhen hir a hwyr, fe gyrhaeddodd y llungopiwr, er mawr ryddhad i'r holl staff a oedd yn disgwyl yn eiddgar amdano.

Bob dydd, roeddwn i'n cyrraedd yn gynnar er mwyn gwneud adroddiadau o'r shiftt nos, a chyn hir, fe wyddwn 'mod i wedi gwneud y penderfyniad cywir wrth barhau i weithio gyda'r ochr gynhyrchu, gan fy mod yn teimlo'n rhan o bethau. Fy nhasg gyntaf oedd siarad gyda Mr Perrott, yr Is-reolwr a oedd danddaear; cyn hynny, dyn oedd wedi bod yn gyfrifol am gymryd adroddiadau. Nawr, pan roedd Mr Perrott yn ateb y ffôn, roedd e bob amser yn gweiddi, "Bois, peidiwch â rhegi nawr, mae 'na wraig fonheddig ar y ffôn!" Weithiau, byddai'n enwi un o'r dynion hynny a oedd yn dueddol o regi, ac fe ddaeth yn dipyn o destun jôc rhyngom ni. Mewn gwirionedd, allen i ddim clywed neb arall ond Mr Perrott oherwydd ei bod mor swnllyd yn y cefndir, ond roedd e wrth ei fodd yn esgus enwi dihiryn gwahanol bob dydd. Roeddwn i'n casáu ysgrifennu un math o adroddiad yn fwy na dim, sef adroddiad ar ôl damwain danddaear, a allai ddigwydd unrhyw bryd.

Fe wnes i gyflwyno rhywfaint o weithdrefnau gweinyddol, ac rwy'n cofio Pwyllgor yr NUM yn synnu cael 'Nodiadau Gweithredu' wedi'u teipio'n daclus yn dilyn eu cyfarfodydd gyda'r Rheolwr. Roedden nhw'n gorfod mynd drwy fy swyddfa er mwyn gweld Mr Morris, ac yn sgwrsio gyda mi wrth aros eu tro. Gan fy mod o gefndir glofaol, roeddwn

i'n mwynhau gwrandao ar eu straeon a'u sylwadau nhw, a buan y dysgais sut i dderbyn tipyn o dynnu coes anorfod ond hwyliog.

Roedd swyddfa'r lofa yn lle prysur a chymdeithasol iawn, a chyn hir, roeddwn i'n gyfarwydd â'r peirianwyr, y syrfewyr a'r staff meddygol i gyd a'r cynrychiolwyr cwmnïau a oedd yn dod i weld y Rheolwr ac yn taro draw am sgwrs i basio'r amser, yn ogystal â'm cydweithwyr yn y swyddfa. Wrth i'r gwaith gweinyddol arferol fynd rhagddo - ffeilio adroddiadau, ysgrifennu llythyrau a rheoli dyddiadur y Rheolwr - roedd digonedd o jôcs i'w clywed, troeon trwstan i'w hesbonio a chlecs i'w rhannu, ac roedd pawb mewn hwyliau da ac yn parchu'i gilydd.

Ar ddechrau 1984, roeddwn yn yr ystyby'n cael llawdriniaeth ar fy nghoes, a phan gafodd aelodau undeb COSA eu cynghori i beidio â chroesi'r llinell biced ar ddiwedd Mawrth, roeddwn i'n dal yn defnyddio baglau tra'r oedd criw Markham i gyd ar streic. Ar ôl i mi wella'n llwyr, penderfynais eu cefnogi a mynd ar streic fy hun. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn, cafodd Mr Morris ei drosglwyddo i swydd arall, a chafodd rheolwr newydd ac ifanc iawn o'r enw Mr Williams ei benodi'n ei le. Clywais bethau mawr a brawychus amdano gan beirianwyr a oedd yn dal i weithio fel aelodau o undeb BACM. Ar ôl i'r streic ddod i ben, fe ddaeth e ataf i ar y diwrnod cyntaf yn ôl yn y gwaith gan ddweud, "Rwyf wedi clywed cryn dipyn amdano chi, roedd gen i ofn cwrdd â chi". Wel wir! Er bod ganddo'r enw o fod yn dipyn o deyrn ymysg y dynion, roedd e'n garedig iawn i fi ac roedd gennym berthynas waith dda iawn. Ar ôl y streic, pleidleisiodd y dynion dros gau'r pwll, a thros y misoedd nesaf, lleihaodd gwaith y

lofa a'r swyddfa fesul tipyn. Gadawodd Mr Williams y Bwrdd Glo, a chafodd Mr Perrott, fy Is-reolwr cellweirus, ei benodi'n rheolwr. Mae gennyf atgofion hapus o gydweithio ag ef yn ystod misoedd olaf 1985.

Penderfynais adael yr NCB a mynd ar fy liwt fy hun, gan wneud cais i Fwrdd Croeso Cymru i hyfforddi fel Tywysydd swyddogol - a oedd yn destun chwilfrydedd a chwestiynau mawr gan bawb a arferai weithio ym Markham. Prynais rai o'r offer swyddfa (dim ond £5 gostiodd y teipiadur!) a phan gaeodd Glofa Markham yn llwyr ym mis Ionawr 1986, fe newidiodd fy mywyd yn llwyr. Llwyddais i basio arholiadau'r Bwrdd Croeso a dechreuais deithio o amgylch Cymru, yn gofalu am grwpiau o wahanol wledydd.

Rydyn ni'n dal i gyfarfod bob hyn a hyn, ond yn anffodus, mae llai a llai ohonom wrth i'r blynyddoedd fynd yn eu blaen. Roedd hi'n fraint mawr cael bod yn rhan o ddiwydiant mor wych, a chyfarfod â phobl a oedd yn gweithio'n galed ac yn dioddef sawl damwain a salwch yn aml, ond byth yn colli eu dyngarwch a'u hiwmor iach. Rwyf wedi bod yn tywys grwpiau o amgylch Big Pit ers ugain mlynedd bellach, gan roi blas ar fywyd y diwydiant glo iddynt; pan fyddaf yn mynd â nhw i wisgo'r offer cywir, rwy'n gweld bod yr hen hwyl a'r ffaethineb yn dal yno. Bob tro rwy'n meddwl am fy nghyfnod fel clerc y Rheolwr yng Nglofa Markham, rwy'n cofio am hynny gyda hiraeth ac anwylydeb, ac yn ddiolchgar tu hwnt am y profiad.

Audrey D. Griffiths, Clerc y Rheolwr



"... I've plucked and stuffed the turkey — now all you've got to do is kill it."
J. Huntington, Boldon Colliery, Co Durham.

► staff waiting to use it, we did receive our own.

Each day, I arrived early to take the night shift reports and soon knew that my decision to try and stay close to the production side had been correct since I had a real sense of involvement. My first task was to speak to Mr Perrott, the Under-manager who was underground; previously, it had always been a man who took the reports. Now when Mr Perrott answered the phone, he inevitably shouted, "Boys, watch your language, lady on the line!" Sometimes, he named one of the men who were supposedly swearing in the background and it became a bit of a joke between us. Actually, because of the background noise, I couldn't hear anybody but him, but he delighted in pretending otherwise and named a different culprit every day. One sort of report, however, I always hated taking, and that was when there was an accident underground which could happen at any time.

I introduced some administrative procedures and I remember the NUM Committee were especially surprised to be given typed 'Action Notes' following their meetings with the Manager. They had to come into my office to get through to Mr Morris and they often chatted to me when waiting to go in to see him. Having come from a mining background, I enjoyed listening to their news and views and very quickly learned to accept the inevitable good-natured teasing.

Colliery offices were busy and sociable places and soon I knew not just those who worked in the offices

alongside mine but also all the engineers, surveyors and medical staff, as well as the company representatives who called to see the Manager and usually stopped to pass the time of day. While the administration side of filling in reports, writing letters and managing the Manager's diary continued, there were always jokes to hear, scams to be explained, and bits of gossip to exchange and everyone was cheerful and respectful.

At the beginning of 1984, I was in hospital for a leg operation and when at the end of March, COSA advised their members not to cross picket lines, I was still on crutches but my colleagues at Markham were out. When I finally had a medical all-clear, I supported them and was now on strike myself. During this time, Mr Morris transferred and a new very young manager, Mr Williams was appointed. When I met any of the engineers who as members of BACM, were still working, I was given the most fearful descriptions of him. On the first day back after the strike, he came out to greet me with the words, "I have heard a great deal about you and I have been scared to meet you". Well!!! I soon learned that while his reputation with the men may have been well deserved, he showed me much kindness and we had a good working relationship. After the strike the men voted for closure and, during the next few months, the colliery and offices were wound down. Mr Williams left the Coal Board and Mr Perrott, my teasing Under-manager, was put in charge. I have

happy memories of working with him during the last few months of 1985.

I decided to leave the NCB and become self-employed and applied to the Wales Tourist Board to train as an official Tour Guide - the cause of much interest and many questions from all who worked at Markham. I purchased some of the office equipment (the typewriter cost me all of £5) and, in January 1986, Markham closed down completely and my life took an entirely different turn when I passed the Tourist Board examinations and began travelling extensively through Wales in charge of groups from many different countries.

We still meet occasionally but sadly, as time passes, there are missing faces. I am privileged to have been part of a great industry and to have had contact with people who worked hard and often suffered accidents and illness but never lost their humanity or their good humour. For more than twenty years, I have been escorting visiting groups to Big Pit and I think it has been possible in advance to give them a flavour of what it has meant to be part of the mining industry; when I take them to be kitted out, I find that the good humour still exists. Whenever I think of my time as Manager's clerk at Markham, it is with some nostalgia, great affection and immense gratitude for the experience.

Audrey D. Griffiths, Manager's Clerk



"We didn't buy you half an ounce of twist last year ... we didn't collect enough money."
G. Thornley, Hucknall Colliery, Nottinghamshire.

'Bryn dim nodyn'

DECHREUAIS WEITHIO YNG NGLOFA Gogledd Rhondda ym 1954 ar ôl gadael yr ysgol yn bymtheg oed. Ar ôl 16 wythnos o hyfforddiant, roeddwn i'n gweithio yn rhidyllfa'r lofa – hen waith caled, brwnt, o ddidoli'r cerrig o'r glo ar y cludfeltiau, a'u pacio y tu ôl i mi. Ar ddiwedd y shift, roedd rhaid i mi roi'r cyfan yn ôl ar y cludfeltiau er mwyn llenwi'r wagenni 'baw'.

Pan ddaeth hi'n amser i hyfforddi danddaear, fy mhartner oedd Will Williams, a oedd yn ddyn llym iawn. Roeddwn i'n gorfod cerdded y tu ôl iddo i'r gwaith, ac roedd e'n cadw llygad barcud arna i drwy'r adeg. Ar ôl gorffen fy hyfforddiant, dechreuais weithio fel gwas coed yn cyflenwi cynhalbyst pren i'r ffas lo. Weithiau, roeddwn i'n gorfod llusgo'r coed i'r llefydd angenrheidiol. Y cam nesaf oedd bod yn gynorthwyydd neu'n was colier tan roeddwn i'n 21 oed, pan fydddech chi'n cael gweithio yn eich talcen (man gweithio) eich hun yn y ffas lo.

Ym 1960, penderfynais roi cynnig ar fod yn ddirprwy (swyddog y lofa). Doeddwn i ddim eisiau gwneud hynny mewn gwirionedd, ond roedd arian yn brin wrth inni fynd ar streic bob pythefnos bron yng Nglofa Duffryn Rhondda am ryw beth neu'i gilydd. Pan es i swyddfa'r dŏl i ofyn am arian, fe ddywedon nhw mai fy nghyfrifoldeb i oedd gofalu am fy nheulu, ac y bydden nhw ond yn rhoi llaeth ar gyfer fy mab bach. Felly, penderfynais fynd yn ddirprwy am nad oeddynt yn mynd ar streic! Gan fy mod i eisiau bod yn 'un o'r bois' o hyd, roeddwn i'n torchi llewys a'u helpu ar y ffas lo, ond un

diwrnod roeddwn i'n siarad gyda'r swyddog diogelwch ac meddai, 'Mae'r dynion fel pe baen nhw'n dy lico di', ac atebais i 'Beth sy'n bod ar hynny?'. 'Wel' meddai, 'Os nad y'n nhw'n dy gasáu di, dwyt ti ddim yn gneud dy waith yn iawn'.

Roeddwn i'n arfer rhoi 'nodyn cynnar' (caniatâd i adael yn gynnar cyn diwedd y shift) i'r bechgyn cyn i'r rheolwr ddal criw o ddynion ar ben y pwll heb ganiatâd. Doedd e ddim yn hapus a dweud y lleiaf. Er bod fy nynnion i wedi cael caniatâd, cefais fy ngalw i'r swyddfa gyda'r dirprwyon eraill. Wrth i mi gerdded ar draws yr iard, roedd y dynion yn chwerthin ac yn gweiddi 'Byddi di'n ôl ar y ffas 'da ni fory!'. Felly, fe newidiais fy agwedd yn llwyr, ac roedd pawb yn fy ngalw i'n 'Bryn dim nodyn' wedyn.

Bues i'n daniwr am amser hir, a rhaid cyfaddef ein bod ni'n dueddol o fod braidd yn ddi-hid wrth drin ffrwydron. Roeddwn i'n gweithio shift hwyr un prynhawn, ac roedd y dynion eraill i gyd wedi dychwelyd i ben y pwll, a'm gadael i gyda'r swyddog awyru. Fe benderfynon ni danio'n barod ar gyfer y shift dydd. Aethom ati i roi'r ffrwydron yn y tyllau a chysylltu'r gwifrau, ac er ein bod yn gwybod mai ni oedd yr unig rai ar ôl yn yr ardal, fe wnaethon ni benderfynu cael un sbec arall cyn tanio. Pan gyrhaeddais i, roedd oferman neu arolygydd y lofa yn eistedd reit uwchben y man lle'r oedden ni wedi gosod y ffrwydron. Ar ôl i ni ddweud wrtho beth oedd dan ei ben ôl, atebodd 'O, reit' yn ddigon didaro! Dywedais i y byddai'n fwy na 'o reit!' petawn i wedi troi'r switsh!

Ar un adeg, roeddwn i'n gweithio mewn glofa breifat, ac wedi llenwi'r tyllau ffrwydro, symud y dynion i le diogel, a dychwelyd i'r prif borth i danio'r ffrwydron. Am ryw reswm, roeddwn i'n cael trafferth tanio, ac roedd rhaid i mi wirio'r gwifrau a thrio eto - ond dim lwc. Felly, fe wnes i lanhau'r gwifrau a gwirio eto, ond yn lle tanio, fe es i ymlaen i weld y tyllau ffrwydro. Pan gyrhaeddais yno, roedd un o'r glowyr yn ymyrryd â'r ffrwydron, a gofynnais iddo beth oedd yn ei wneud. 'Roeddet ti mor hir yn tanio, felly benderfynais i wirio'r rhain i ti' atebodd. Doedden ni ddim yn defnyddio'r batris iawn i danio'r ffrwydron bob amser. Os mai dim ond ychydig o dyllau oedd angen eu ffrwydro, bydden ni'n defnyddio ein lampau - roedden ni'n ddidaro iawn ynglŷn â'r holl beth.

Fe weithiais i mewn llawer o lofeydd bach. Roedd hyn oherwydd fod y perchnogion yn dueddol o'n diswyddo yn rheolaidd er mwyn osgoi talu arian diswyddo pe bai'r pwll yn cau. Roedden nhw'n eich derbyn yn ôl yn fuan iawn wedyn, ond erbyn hynny, roeddwn i wedi cychwyn gweithio mewn glofa arall. Sôn am 'deithwyr diwydiannol'!

Fe dreuliais i 45 mlynedd yn y pyllau glo, a fyddwn i ddim wedi dymuno gwneud dim arall. Dwi wedi gweithio fel tywysydd yn Amgueddfa Glowyr De Cymru ers 2001, ac rwyf wrth fy modd yn sgwrsio â'r ymwelwyr - er nad ydw i cystal gyda'r plant, ac yn dueddol o siarad gyda nhw fel oedolion. Alla i ddim siarad eu hiaith nhw!

Bryn Jones, Taniwr



BRYN JONES
(ARY DDE)
BRYN JONES
(ON RIGHT)

'Bryn no notes'

WHEN I LEFT SCHOOL AS A FIFTEEN-YEAR-old in 1954 I started work in North Rhondda Colliery. After my sixteen weeks training I worked on the screens, which was hard, dirty work picking stones out of the coal on the conveyors and packing them behind me. At the end of the shift I had to put them all back on the conveyor to be filled in the 'muck' wagons. When it was time to do my underground training I was put with Will Williams who was very strict; I had to walk behind him on the way in to work and he watched me all the time. After training I went as a timber boy supplying wooden supports for the coal face, I sometimes had to drag it up the face to where it was wanted. The next rung on the ladder was as a collier boy, you had to work as an assistant until you were twenty one when you could work your own stent [working place] on the coal face.

In 1960 I decided to go as a deputy [a mine official]. I didn't really want to do it but we seemed to be having a strike every two weeks at Duffryn Rhondda for one thing or another and my savings were going fast. When I went down the dole office to ask for money

they told me that it was my responsibility to look after my family and would only give me milk for my young son. So I basically went as a deputy because they didn't go on strike! I still wanted to be 'one of the boys' and mucked in helping them on the coal face, but one day I was talking to the safety officer and he said 'The men seem to like you' and I answered 'What's wrong with that?' 'Well' he said 'If they don't hate you, you're not doing your job!'

I used to be very free in giving 'early notes' [permission to leave work before the end of the shift] to the boys until one day the manager caught a pile of men up the pit without permission and he wasn't very happy at all. Although my men all had permission I was called into his office with the other deputies. When I was going across the yard to the office all the men were laughing and saying 'You'll be back on the coal with us tomorrow!' So, I changed my attitude completely and I became known as 'Bryn no notes'.

I was a shotsman for a long time and I must admit that we tended to get a bit complacent handling explosives. I was on the late shift one afternoon and the men

had all gone up the pit leaving me with the ventilation officer. We decided to fire the coal ready for the day shift. We charged up all the holes, connected the wires and although we knew we were the only people in the district, decided to have a last check before firing. When I got to the place there was the colliery overman sitting right on top of the explosives charges. When we pointed out what he was sitting on, he said 'Oh aye', he was as casual as could be. I pointed out that it would've been 'Oh aye' if I'd turned the key!

I was working in a private mine and had charged the shot holes and taken the men to a safe place and gone back to the main gate to fire the round. For some reason I had trouble firing and I had to check the wires and try again - nothing. So I cleaned the wires and checked again but instead of firing I walked on to check the shot holes. When I got to them there was one of the colliers playing with the charges. When I asked him what he thought he was doing he said 'You were such a long time firing that I was checking the charges for you.' We didn't always use the proper shot firing batteries. If we had a couple of holes to fire we used to

use our cap lamps - we were very blasé about it!

I worked in a lot of small mines. This was mainly because the owners used to lay us off regularly so they wouldn't have to pay redundancy money if the pit shut down. They used to take you back on quite quickly but, by then, I had usually started in another mine. Talk about 'industrial gypsies'!

I spent forty-five years in the mines and wouldn't have wanted to do anything else. I've been a guide in the South Wales Miners' Museum since 2001 and I love talking to the visitors although I'm not so good with the children and tend to talk to them like I do with the adults. I don't seem to be able to speak their language!

Bryn Jones, Shot firer

Am swydd ddiflas!

GADEWAIS YSGOL RAMADEG TRECELYN pan oeddwn i'n 14 oed, a dydd Llun 8 Ionawr 1945, fe wisgais fy siwt ysgol a cherdded o dan Draphont Crymlyn i swyddfeydd Glofa Aber-big lle'r oeddwn am ddechrau gweithio fel clerc swyddfa ('gwas swyddfa').

Ar ôl cyrraedd y swyddfa, roeddwn i'n teimlo fel pe bawn i newydd gamu i olygfa o nofel Dickens. Roedd angen stolion uchel i weithio wrth y ddesg o dan y ffenestr fawr, a oedd yn wynebu tŷ'r rheolwr ar y bryn. Ac ar fwrdd mawr ym mhen arall yr ystafell, gyferbyn â'r ffenestr, roedd y dechnoleg ddiweddaraf – hen deipiadur Remington! Hefyd, roedd yna rholiwr gwlyb i'm helpu i ludo'r stampiau yswiriant a chyflogaeth ar y cardiau priodol, ac i wlychu fy mysedd wrth gyfri'r arian papur.

Roedd tân glo ar ganol y wal allanol yn ddigon i gynhesu'r ystafell: dim ond swyddfa fach oedd hi, heb fawr o le i bedwar oedolyn a mi. Roeddwn yn cael amser paned yn y bore, ond roedd ciwbiau Oxo yn fwy poblogaidd na the. Ar ben y desgiau uchel ac amlwg, lle gwnaed y rhan fwyaf o'r gwaith mwyaf difrifol, roedd y cyfriflyfrau talu mawr lle'r oeddwn yn ysgrifennu cofnod pob gweithiwr bob wythnos gydag inc. Amser paned ar y bore cyntaf hwnnw, perswadiodd y Prif Glerc fi i ymuno ag Undeb y Gweithwyr Gweinyddol a Chlercol, a dangosais fy ngherdyn undeb gyda balchder i 'nhad wedyn.

Cefais fy nghyflogi i wneud y tasgau mwyaf gwasaiidd, fel gludo'r stampiau diweithdra ac yswiriant ar 'gardiau'r' gweithwyr, helpu'r prif glerc gyda'r cardiau mynegai 'talw wrth ennill', a'r cofnodion Treth Incwm. Ar y llaw arall, roedd dydd

Gwener yn ddiwrnod talu, a'r swyddfa'n llawn bwrlwm. Toc wedi 9 y bore, roedd cwnstabl o Swyddfa Heddlu Crymlyn a gof y lofa yn hebrwng y prif glerc ar hyd y llwybr bychan o'r swyddfa i Orsaf Drenau Lefel Isel Crymlyn. Yna, roeddynt yn cwrdd â'r trên o Gasnewydd er mwyn casglu bag lleidr mawr a oedd yn cynnwys yr arian i dalu'r holl weithlu o ryw 200 o fechgyn a dynion. Ar ôl i'r Prif Glerc lofnodi derbynneb y banc o Gaerdydd, byddai'r gof yn cludo'r bag trwm ar ei ysgwydd. Yna, roedd y Prif Glerc syber yn arwain y ffordd yn ôl – gyda'r gof yn cario'r bag, a'r heddwys yn ei ganlyn.

Roedd gan yr Ariannwr allwedd arbennig i agor y bag yn y swyddfa. Ar ôl tynnu'r arian papur a swp mawr o arian mân allan o'r bag, byddai pawb yn dechrau cyfri (gan gynnwys Bill, un o Fois Bevin, a oedd yn gweithio gyda ni yn y swyddfa). Ar ôl gorffen cyfri, roedden ni'n rhoi'r swm cywir o arian ym mhob pecyn cyflog. Er nad oeddwn i'n cael gwneud hyn, byddwn i'n rhannu'r dasg o ysgrifennu enwau'r dynion ar flaen y pcedi, a rhoi'r docedi i mewn. Roeddwn i hefyd yn mwynhau eistedd wrth y ffenestr fach, yn dosbarthu'r pecynnau cyflog i'r glowyr – ac yn adnabod llawer ohonyn nhw.

Roedd yn waith diflas ar y naw, felly roeddwn i'n treulio llawer gormod o amser yn yr atig yn chwilo'ta drwy hen gyfriflyfrau Glofa Gogledd Aber-big gan obeithio dod o hyd i gyfeiriad at fy rheulu, ond yn ofer. Roedd y swydd yn fy atgoffa i o Robert Frost a ddywedodd 'The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning, and does not stop until you get into the office.' Roedd fy rheolwr wedi penderfynu bod hynny'n wir yn fy achos i, ond fe roddodd y cyfle i mi barhau 'gyda ni' er iddo godi'i lais rhywfaint pan ddywedodd "O gofio'r adeg pan wnes ti ludo'r stampiau yswiriant ar y cardiau anghywir, machgen i!"

Felly, roedd gen i ddewis – aros neu adael. Cefais gynnig swydd debyg iawn fel gwas swyddfa yn swyddfa bersonél Lucas & Co yng Nghwmbrân, felly penderfynais adael swyddfa'r pwll gyda rhywfaint o edifeirwch. Yn y diwedd, gwrthodais y swydd honno a phenderfynu mynd i hyfforddi ar lawr y ffatri, a dysgu sut i gynhyrchu tyredi gynnau awyrennau ar raddfa fawr.

Walter Harris, Gwas Swyddfa

ABERBEEG SOUTH COLLIERY.

No. 10¹⁰ Work ending 10 FEB 1945

Name *W. Harris*

Basic Rate	Wage Add.	Minor Award	Skilled Craft	Grat. Pay
15.0	15.0			1 10.0

Allowance: 15/-

DEDUCTIONS

Dental	Health Insurance	Unemp. Insurance	Hospital	Coal	Relief Fund	Comp. Levy	Arts	Vice Savings	Income Tax	Misc. Deductions
								2		

Tax 10.0

NET PAY 1 7.2

Any Workman coming with an Absence of the Colliery is requested before leaving the Colliery premises, to give notice of such Absence to the Management, otherwise any claim for Compensation will be refused. B. S. Col. 1946.

SLIP CYFLOG WALTER
WALTER'S PAYS LIP

Bored!

I LEFT NEWBRIDGE GRAMMAR SCHOOL WHEN I was fourteen and on Monday 8th January 1945, I put on my school suit and passing under the Crumlin Viaduct walked to the offices of Aberbeeg South Colliery where I was starting work as junior clerk ['office boy'].

As I walked into the office, I felt as if I was entering a scene from a Dickens novel. High stools were necessary to work at the desk under the large window, which faced the manager's house on the hill. On top of the large table across the room opposite the window, was some of the latest technology – the old Remington typewriter! Also available was a wet roller to help me stick the insurance and employment stamps on the appropriate cards, and to wet the fingers when counting bank notes.

A coal fire in the middle of the outside wall was the only heating that was needed; the office wasn't very big and a bit cramped for the four adults and me. We had a tea break in the morning, but Oxo cubes were more popular than tea. The prominent high desk, where most of the serious work was done, supported the huge pay ledgers where each employee's record for each week was entered in ink. At break-time that first morning, the Head Clerk persuaded me to join the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union and I was very proud when I later showed my union card to my father.

I was employed to do the only most menial tasks, such as sticking the unemployment and insurance stamps in the employees 'cards', assisting the head clerk with 'Pay-as-you-earn' index cards, and the Income Tax records. Friday was pay day and, unlike other days, the office became a hive of activity. Soon after we started at 9am, the Chief Clerk with a Police Constable from Crumlin Police Station as an escort and the colliery blacksmith to carry the money back formed a small procession that wound its way along the narrow path from the office building to Crumlin Low Level Railway Station. They then met the 'up train' from Newport

and collected a large leather bag which contained the money to pay the whole workforce of about 200 men and boys. The Head Clerk signed a receipt from the bank in Cardiff, which prompted the blacksmith to lift the heavy bag onto his shoulder. The Chief Clerk solemnly led the way back – followed by the blacksmith carrying the pay, and the policeman.

The Cashier had a special key to open the bag in the office. When the banknotes, with a large amount of coins, were taken out of the bag, we all started counting (including Bill the Bevin Boy who worked in the office with us). After checking the cash, the correct amount of money was put into each pay packet. I wasn't allowed to do this, but I shared in the work of writing the men's name on the front of the packet, and putting in the dockets. I also enjoyed sitting at the little window to hand out the pay packets to the miners many of whom I knew.

I found the work very boring, so I spent too much time in the attic browsing through the old ledgers from Aberbeeg North Colliery looking for some reference to my family, but I was disappointed not to find a word. The job reminds me of Robert Frost who said: "The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning, and does not stop until you get into the office." The manager decided that in my case it was very true, however he gave me the chance to stay employed 'with us' although he raised his voice a bit when he said: "Particularly when you had stuck the insurance stamps on the wrong cards my boy!"

So I had a choice – to leave or not to leave. I was offered a similar job as office boy in the personnel office of Lucas & Co. in Cwmbran, so I left the pit office with some regret. I decided later to decline the personnel job and decided to train on the shop floor and learn about mass production of aircraft gun turrets instead!

Walter Harris, Office Boy



WALTER MEWN
PRIODAS DEULUOL
YNG NGHWMBRÂN,
1947
WALTER AT A
FAMILY WEDDING
IN CWMBRAN, 1947

Gwyllo'r 'pinnau'

ROEDDWN I WRTH YMYL Y PWYNT TROSGlwyddo danddaear, lle'r oedd y cludfeltiau'n croesi'i gilydd, pan ganodd y ffôn. Roedd hyn yn beth anghyffredin iawn, ac yn aml, nid oedd pobl yn ei ateb beth bynnag oherwydd taw 'technoleg fodern' oedd e. Ond fe atebais i'r ffôn. Tommy Wyn, rheolwr glofa Ynysowen oedd yno, gyda neges o argyfwng. Dywedodd fod y tip wedi llithro a bod llaid yn lifo i lawr tua'r siafftiau, a bod rhaid inni adael y pwll. Roedd rhaid inni adael digon o ddynion ar ôl i ddiogelu'r ffas lo, cyn dychwelyd wedyn i ben y pwll.

Felly, fe wnes i sgrialu i fyny'r ffas lo V 20, a oedd tua 500 i 600 metr i ffwrdd, cyrraedd y ffas, a chael gafael ar Don Morgan, yr oferman – ond ar ôl cyrraedd yno, roeddwn i wedi cyffroi gymaint, neu mor nerfus, fel na allen i drosglwyddo'r neges. Dywedodd Don wrthyf am eistedd i lawr, 'Shgw! Phil, cym' anadl ddofn, a dweud beth sydd ar dy feddwl di.' Ar ôl i mi ddweud y neges, doedd e ddim yn fy nghredu i. 'Gad dy gelwydd!'. Atebais, 'Wy ddim yn dweud celwydd, Don, dyna pam fod y belt wedi stopio' achos roedd e'n flin nad oedd y cludfelt yn symud, ac na allai gynhyrchu glo.

Felly, fe ddilynodd y cyfarwyddiadau a'm hanfon i weld Viv Morgan, yr oferman ar ffas lo V21, er mwyn pasio'r neges ymlaen. Unwaith y gwnes i hynny, aeth pawb i waelod y pwll, a chefais

orchymyn i aros yno gyda fy nghyd-glerc mesur a gofalu bod y dynion i gyd wedi gadael y pwll. Erbyn hyn, dim ond ychydig o ddynion diogelwch oedd danddaear, yn ogystal â rhywfaint o fois y pypiau ac un neu ddau a oedd yn gosod y props a diogelu'r ffas lo. Fe arhosais i ar waelod y pwll, yn disgwyl iddyn nhw ddod allan.

Tua awr a hanner yn ddiweddarach, roedd pawb ar ben y pwll. Aethom i weld y cofnodwyr amser a staff y lamprwm fel bod pawb yn gwybod yn union ble'r oedd pawb arall. Yna, fe'n hanfonwyd draw i'r tip glo yn Aber-fan. Dilynais fy nghydweithiwr, a oedd yn adnabod yr ardal, a cherdded i fyny Moy Road. Roedd y lle'n ferw gwyllt, ac roedd hi'n amlwg bod un rhan o'r ysgol wedi dymchwel a'r llaid yn dal i lifo dros y ffordd. Cawsom raw bob un, a'n hanfon i gyfeiriad y domen anferthol o'n blaenau. Dyna lle'r oeddwn i, yn pwyso ar y rhaw (yn llanc ifanc heb lawn sylweddoli beth oedd yn bod), a gofynnais i'r dyn a oedd yn palu wrth fy ymyl i, 'Ble mae gweddill yr ysgol 'te, beth ry'n ni'n 'neud yma?'. Atebodd 'Ti'n sefyll arni; ti'n sefyll ar yr ystafelloedd dosbarth.' Sylweddolais yn fuan pa mor ddiwerth oedd fy ymdrechion i. Roedden ni'n gwneud tyllau yn y llaid er mwyn i ragor o laid gwlyb eu llenwi. Palu, taflu i'r ochr, a gweld bod y twll wedi llenwi eto. Ond dal ati wnaethon ni, er bod y rhan fwyaf o'r gwaith wedi'i ganoli ar yr

Watching the pins

I WAS ON THE TRANSFER POINT UNDER-ground, where the conveyors intersect, collecting the time books when the phone went. It was very unusual for the phone to go and people often didn't usually answer it anyway because it was 'modern technology'. But I answered the phone and it was Tommy Wyn, the Merthyr Vale colliery manager who told me that he had an urgent message. He told me that the tip had slid and the slurry was heading towards the shafts and we had to evacuate the pit. We had to leave just enough men to make the coal face safe and then, once they did that, to come out the pit as well.

So I scrambled up to the V20 coal face, which was about 500-600 metres away, got to the face and got hold of Don Morgan, the overman, but when I reached him I couldn't really relay the message because I was stammering with excitement or whatever, nerves, I couldn't tell him the message. But then Don sat me down and said, 'Look Phil take deep breaths now, and then give me the information.' So I told him the message, he didn't believe me at first, he said, 'That can't be.' I answered 'It is Don, I'm not making this up and that's why your belt is on stop' – because he was quite annoyed that the belt was on stop and he couldn't produce coal.

So he carried out his instructions and he sent me over to see Viv Morgan, the overman on V21 coal face

to relay the message to him. Once I'd done that, we all went to pit bottom and I was told to stay there with my fellow measuring clerk and check that all the men were out the pit. Only the safety men were now left underground, just a couple of pumps men and a couple of men working on the faces putting the props up and securing the face. I remained at pit bottom waiting for them to come out.

It was about an hour and half afterwards that we all got up the pit. We reported to the time keepers and the lamproom so they knew exactly where everybody was. We were then told to go up to the Aberfan tip area. I just followed my colleague as he knew the area and we walked up to Moy Road. There was frantic activity, obviously the school had collapsed on the one side and the slurry was still crossing the road. We were told to make our way to this one big heap of slurry and given a shovel. So I was leaning on the shovel (typical youngster still not realising exactly what was going on) and I said to this guy who was digging away to the side of me, 'Where's the rest of the school then, what are we doing by here?' He said 'You're standing on it; you're standing on classrooms.' It soon occurred to me how useless what I was doing was. We were digging holes into the slurry and it was immediately filling back up as more slurry flowed down. It was dig it, chuck it and then the hole would fill back up again. ▶





CHWITH:
AMBIWLANSYS
A LORĪAU
WRTH YSGOL
PANTGLAS; DE:
GLOWYR YN
CLODDIO
DRWY'R
BUDREDDI YN
ABER-FAN

LEFT:
AMBULANCES
AND LORRIES
OUTSIDE
PANTGLAS
SCHOOL;
RIGHT:
MINERS
DIGGING IN
SLURRY AT
ABERFAN



► ystafelloedd dosbarth yn y rhan o'r adeilad a oedd yn dal i sefyll. Roedd pobl yn palu trwy dunelli o fudreddi er mwyn cyrraedd yr ystafelloedd dosbarth.

Ar y diwrnod cyntaf hwnnw, rwy'n cofio stopio palu er mwyn gweld y peiriant cyntaf yn cyrraedd i glirio'r rwbel. Yn sydyn, dyma ni'n clywed sŵn rhyw ddeuddeg troedfedd i ffwrdd, a dyma gydweithiwr i mi a oedd yn byw yn yr ardal (a gollodd ei blentyn a'i gartref yn y drychineb) yn mynd draw i glirio rhywfaint o'r rwbel, a chanfod drws oddi tano. Cododd y drws, a gweld bod dyn yn gorwedd yno, yn gwbl ddianaf. Roedd e wedi bod yn curo'r drws ers amser, ac yn methu'n glir â'i wthio oddi arno oherwydd pwysau'r holl rwbel. Dyna un o uchafbwyntiau prin y dydd. Roedd e'n amser ofnadwy, a dim ond nawr rwy'n gallu dechrau meddwl amdano.

Ar ôl y diwrnod cyntaf, anfonodd y rheolwr fi i Moy Road i orchuwyllo'r hyn a oedd yn cael ei lwytho i mewn i'r lorïau. Erbyn hyn, roedd peiriannau wedi cymryd lle'r dynion â rhawiau er mwyn clirio'r ystafelloedd dosbarth. Roedd y peiriannau'r llwytho'r llaid a'r rwbel i'r lorïau, ac

roedd rhaid gwneud yn siŵr nad oedd darnau o gyrff yng nghanol y llaca. Roedd heddwas gyda mi, ac roeddwn i'n ysgrifennu nodiadau ar gyfer rheolwr y lofa. Doeddwn i ddim yn hoffi'r gwaith hwnnw o gwbl, er na welais i unrhyw beth erchyll.

Yn ddiweddarach, cefais fy anfon i fyny'r mynydd, lle'r oedd 'pinnau' (sef pyst pren tirlfesur bach) wedi'u gosod mewn llinell syth ar hyd y tip. Pe bai unrhyw un o'r pinnau hyn yn symud o'r llinell, gallai olygu bod y tip yn symud eto, a byddai'n rhaid inni seinio'r larwm i rybuddio'r dynion a oedd yn gweithio oddi tanom. Paratowyd twll ymochel ar ein cyfer (fel adeg y Rhyfel Mawr, gyda llwyth o fagiau tywod) er mwyn rhoi rhywfaint o loches i ni. Dyma oedd ein gwaith tra bu'r ardal gyfan yn cael ei ddiogelu. Roedden ni yno drwy'r gaeaf oer, yn gwyllo'r pyst ar y domen.

Roedd yn gyfnod trist a thrasig dros ben. Yn aml, byddaf yn clywed pobl yn dweud eu bod nhw wedi gwneud hyn, llall ac arall, ond celwydd golau yw llawer ohono – llawer iawn hefyd.

Phil Budding, Swyddog y Lofa

► But we all kept digging, although the main activity was concentrated in the classrooms of the part of the school that was still standing. People were tunnelling through tons of muck to get into the classrooms.

On that first day I remember stopping digging to watch the first machine being brought in to clear the rubble. All of a sudden we could hear a noise about twelve feet away from us and one of my colleagues who lived in the area (he lost a child and his house had been destroyed in the slide) went over and cleared some of the rubble and there was a door under it. He lifted the door and there was a bloke under it, he was uninjured but, with the weight of the rubble on the door, he couldn't push it off himself and had been banging on the door for ages. That was one of the brighter moments of that day but it wasn't a very nice time and it's only now that I can revisit it in my mind.

After the first day the manager sent me back to Moy Road to observe what was going into the lorries. By now there were machines cleaning out the classrooms rather than men doing it with shovels. The machines filled the slurry and debris into waiting

lorries and you had to watch that no body parts were mixed with the muck. There was a policeman with me and I was just taking notes for the colliery manager. I didn't like that task at all, although I didn't see anything gruesome.

Later on I was sent up the mountain side where 'pins' (which were short wooden surveying posts) were placed in a line right along the tip. If any of the pins went out of line it might mean that the tip was on the move again and we would have to sound a klaxon to warn the men working below us. We were provided with a dug out (just like a First World War one, lined with sandbags) to provide some shelter for us. We did that right up until they secured the whole area. So we were up there through the cold winter, just observing these pins.

It was a very tragic time, I often listen to people saying that this was done, that was done and they did this and they did that but a lot of it is made up – a hell of a lot of it.

Phil Budding, Colliery Official

Dyddiau caled

DECHREUAIS WEITHIO YNG NGLOFA Penallta ym mis Mehefin 1933, yn 14 oed. Roedd y pwll ar waith 3 diwrnod yr wythnos ar y pryd, ac roeddwn i'n ennill 2 swllt 5 ceiniog y dydd. Fy mrawd, Eric, gafodd waith i mi gyda bachan a oedd yn gweithio yn y talcen nesaf ato – gŵr o'r enw Hopkin Farr.

Wythnos cyn i mi gychwyn gweithio, roedd rhaid i mi fynd i'r pwll i gwrdd â Hopkin a ffeiarman ac oferman yr ardal. Os oeddech chi'n ddigon iach a heini, roedden nhw'n fodlon eich derbyn chi i bob pwrpas. Roedd rhaid i mi fynd at y cofnodwyr amser, cofrestru, a rhoi manylion fy rhieni, fy nghartref, fy meddyg, a'r ysbyty. Wedyn, roeddwn i'n gorfod mynd i lawr i'r lamprwm i gael tocyn lamp i mi. Pe baech chi'n colli'r tocyn lamp, gallai gostio'n ddrud i chi – roedden nhw'n codi hanner coron – cyflog diwrnod cyfan! Yna, dywedodd staff y lamprwm ym mha ardal o'r pwll yr oeddwn i'n gweithio ynddi, cyn i Hopkin lofnodi y byddai'n gyfrifol amdanaf.

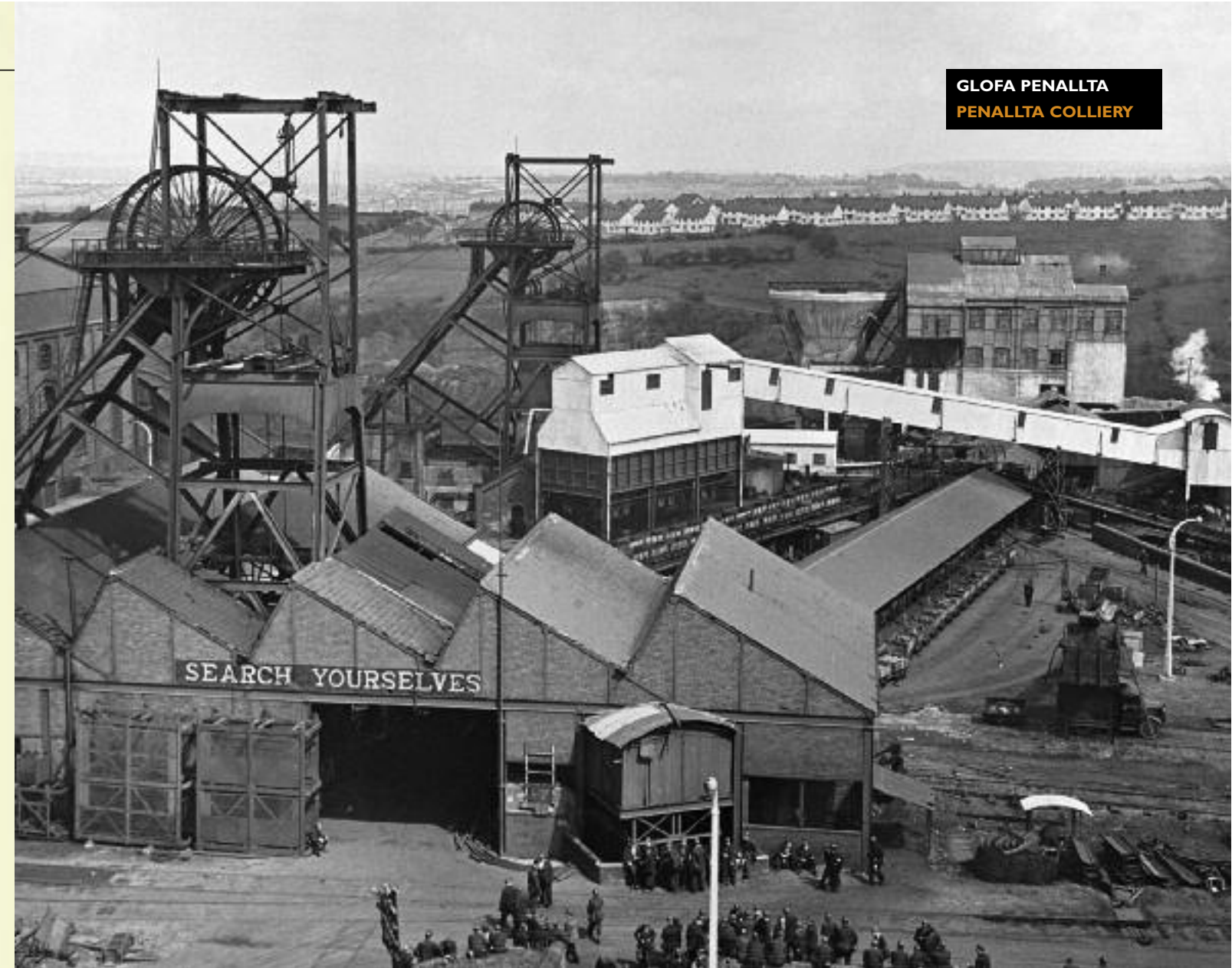
Roedden ni ar ben y pwll erbyn 6 y bore fel arfer. Ar shiftt ddydd, roedd y 'bond' neu'r gaets gyntaf yn gadael am 6. Roedd corn y lofa'n arfer canu am 6 o'r gloch, 6.15 ac eto am 6.25. Os nad oeddech chi wedi cael eich lamp erbyn 6.25 o'r gloch y bore, byddai'n rhaid i chi fynd adref. A chaech chi mo'ch talu. Roedden ni'n galw corn Penallta yn 'hen fuwch' gan ei bod yn swnio fel buwch! Yn y gaets wedyn, roedd y bechgyn ifanc yn sefyll yn y canol a'r dynion o boptu. Roedd y daith i grombil y pwll yn mynd â'ch anadl oddi wrthych. Ar

ôl cyrraedd y gwaelod, roedd y rhan fwyaf o weithwyr y shiftt nos yn disgwyl am gael dychwelyd i ben y pwll. Ni wastraffwyd unrhyw amser yn weindio, gan mai dim ond hanner awr oedd ganddyn nhw i gludo'r holl ddynion i waelod y pwll.

Roedd gan eich cydweithiwr lamp drydan, ond lamp olew oedd gan y bechgyn. Felly, roedd yna lamp fflam ym mhob talcen. Roedd pob dyn yn gallu defnyddio'r lamp olew i weld faint o nwy oedd yno. Roedd rhaid i chi gymryd gofal o'ch lamp, gan fod eich bywyd yn dibynnu arni.

Doeddech chi ddim yn cael cerdded ar hyd y prif lwybr lle'r oedd y rhaffau halio ar waith, a ble'r oedd y glo'n cael ei gludo allan. Fe allech chi golli'ch swydd pe bai rhywun yn eich gweld yno. Felly, roeddech chi'n gorfod mynd i lawr trwy'r drws aer. Byddech chi'n cerdded yng nghanol yr aer cynnes a oedd yn awyru'r holl ardaloedd cyn iddo fynd i fyny Pwll Rhif 2. Felly, byddech chi'n cerdded ar hyd y sianel ddychwelyd nes cyrraedd eich ardal chi. Roedd y ceffylau'n arfer â dod i nôl y dramiau glo o'r ardal i'r partins dwbl, gyda'r dramiau gwag ar un ochr a'r dramiau llawn yr ochr arall. Dyna pryd roedd y gwaith halio'n dechrau. Yna, byddai'r rhaff halio yn eu dychwelyd i waelod y pwll.

Roedd y talcenni unigol tua chwe throedfedd o led, ac yn arwain o dwneli o'r enw 'hedins'. Roedd y wythien lo yn cynnwys y glo isaf, sef y darn mwyaf, a'r glo uchaf, sef y darnau llai. Roedd gan Hopkin fandrel fawr a oedd yn gryfach ar gyfer y glo isaf, ac roedd ychydig o glai gwlyb yno. Gallai roi'r fandrel i mewn i'r clai gwlyb er mwyn cael gafael ar y talpiau ▶



GLOFA PENALLTA
PENALLTA COLLIERY

Hard days

I STARTED WORK AT PENALLTA COLLIERY IN June 1933 at the age of fourteen. The pit was working three days a week at this time and my wages were 2s 5d a day. My brother Eric had got work for me with the fella working in the next stall to him – a man called Hopkin Farr.

The week before I started I had to go over to the pit to meet Hopkin and the fireman and the overman of the district. Basically as long as you were fit they were willing to take you on. I had to go to the timekeepers and sign on, giving details of my parents, where I lived, my doctor, and the hospital that I came under. Then I had to go down to the lamp room and they gave me a lamp check. If you lost your lamp check it'd cost you, they'd charge you half a crown – a day's wages! The lamp room then noted down the district I was working in and Hopkin had to sign that he would be responsible for me.

We were usually over the pit by 6am. On the day shift, the first 'bond', or cage, was at 6am. The colliery hooter used to blow at 6am and at 6.15am and again at 6.25am. If you hadn't got your lamp by 6.25am you would have to go home. And you wouldn't get paid.

Penallta's hooter was called the 'old cow' because it sounded just like one! When we got into the cage us boys were put into the centre with the men standing on either side of us. When you went down in the cage it would take your breath away. When you reached pit bottom most of the night shift were there waiting to go up. They never wasted any time winding as they had only half an hour to get all the men down.

The man you were working with had an electric lamp, but all the boys had oil lamps. So there was a flame lamp in each stall. All the men were capable of telling how much gas there was by using the oil lamp. You had to take care of your lamp as that was your lifeline.

You weren't allowed to walk the main roadway where the haulage ropes were working and where the coal was taken out. If you got caught on the mains you had the sack. So you had to go down through the air doors into the return. You were walking then with the warm air that had ventilated all the districts coming towards you before it went up the No 2 Pit. So you'd walk along the return airway until you come to your district. Horses used to fetch the trams of coal out of

the district to the double partings where there were empty trams one side and full trams on the other. That's where the haulage started. From there the rope haulage took them back to the pit bottom.

The individual stalls were each about six feet wide and were driven off tunnels that were called headings. The seam of coal itself was made up of what we called a bottom coal, which was the bigger coal and a top coal, which was the smaller coal. Hopkin had a big mandrel for the bottom coal. It gave him more leverage. There were slips in the bottom coal. He knew where these slips were and he could get his mandrel in there to ease it out. Sometimes you had to break this bottom coal in order to lift it on to the tram it was so big. And then for the top coal he had a smaller pick.

Then you had to shovel it all in the dram but only when there was nobody about as you weren't supposed to use a shovel! The Powell Duffryn Company insisted that you fill the tram with a curling box to ensure that there was no stone in it – stone that had come off the 'rippings' [the rock above the coal seam]. When the overmen and firemen were

about the word would pass up the face so you had to use the curling box [a large metal scoop with handles]. You had to scrape it in with your hands, lift the curling box and put it in the dram. When they had gone we would use the shovel again! But Hopkin was a clean collier. He would always clear the rippings away into the gob before he started pulling down the coal so that there was no stone about.

The drams had to be bedded, and then raced-up to about two-foot above the rim. You put the small coal inside; you had to keep the big lumps for the top. The Powell Duffryn only paid the colliers for lump coal. The rest would go to the washery and then be sold after all. I didn't know these things at the time. As you got older the colliers would tell you these things. We'd fill five or six trams of coal a shift, each holding a little more than a ton.

Sometimes they'd fetch you a load of stone to put into the gob. The man you were working for would get paid sixpence for unloading one of those. Sometimes it was the only way you'd get an empty dram to fill. Sometimes you had to unload three or four of these trams a day. This stone came from the headings on the ▶

► glo mawr. Weithiau, roeddech chi'n gorfod torri'r glo isaf er mwyn ei godi i'r dram, gan ei fod mor fawr. Yna, byddai'n defnyddio caib llai o faint ar gyfer y glo uchaf.

Wedyn, roeddech chi'n gorfod rhofio'r glo i'r dram, cyn belled nad oedd neb o gwmpas, oherwydd doeddech chi ddim i fod i ddefnyddio rhaw! Roedd Cwmni Powell Duffryn yn mynnu eich bod yn llenwi'r dram gyda bocs cwrlo i sicrhau nad oedd unrhyw garreg yno – carreg a oedd wedi rhwygo o'r 'ripin' (y graig uwchben y wythien lo). Pan oedd yr offerman a'r ffeiarman o gwmpas, roedd rhaid i chi ddefnyddio'r bocs cwrlo (sgŵp metel mawr gyda handle) rhag ofn y byddent yn clywed am y rhaw!



Roedd rhaid i chi grafu'r glo gyda'ch dwylo, codi'r bocs cwrlo, a'i roi yn y dram. Ar ôl iddynt adael, roedden ni'n defnyddio'r rhaw unwaith eto! Ond roedd Hopkin yn golier glân. Roedd e bob amser yn clirio'r ripins cyn dechrau rhyddhau'r glo, fel nad oedd unrhyw gerrig o gwmpas.

Roedden ni'n gorfod llenwi'r dramiau a'u sodro ac ychwanegu pentwr hyd at ddwy droedfedd uwchben yr ymylon. Roeddech chi'n rhoi'r glo lleiaf

y tu mewn; ac yn gadael y darnau mwyaf ar gyfer y rhan uchaf. Roedd cwmni Powell Duffryn ond yn eich talu am gnapiâu glo. Byddai'r gweddill yn mynd i'r olchfa, cyn cael eu gwerthu maes o law wedi'r cwbl. Doeddwn i ddim yn gwybod hyn ar y pryd. Byddai'r glowyr yn dweud pethau fel hyn wrthyh wrth i chi fynd yn hŷn. Roedden ni'n llenwi pump neu chwech dram o lo bob shift, gyda phob dram yn dal ychydig dros dunnell.

Weithiau, roedden nhw'n nôl llwyth o gerrig i chi i'w rhoi yn y gob. Roedd y dyn yr oeddech chi'n gweithio iddo yn cael chwe cheiniog am ddadlwytho un o'r rhain. Dyma'r unig ffordd y gallech chi gael dram gwag i'w llenwi, weithiau. Ar brydiau, roedd rhaid dadlwytho tair neu bedair dram o gerrig bob dydd. Cafwyd y cerrig hyn o hedins y brif lefel, lle'r oedden nhw'n gorfod crafu cymaint o'r to dros y wythien lo er mwyn cael digon o uchder ar gyfer y ceffylau. Roedden ni'n arfer creu tyllau tanio gyda dril llaw 'glöyn byw'. Byddai Hopkin yn gwneud hyn yn ei amser sbâr wrth ddisgwyl i'r dramiau gyrraedd. Yna, byddai'r ffeiarman yn gofyn a oedd y tyllau'n barod, cyn gwrthio'i ffon i mewn iddynt i sicrhau eu bod yn ddigon dwfn. Yna, adeg shift y prynhawn, byddai'r taniwr yn dod i danio a chwythu'r to i lawr gyda ffwrddron.

Y diwrnod canlynol, byddai'n rhaid clirio'r holl faw hyn i'r gob cyn dechrau gyda'r glo! Roedd y cerrig mawr yn cael eu gadael ar gyfer y waliau o boptu'r llwybr – neu'r 'pac' fel y'u gelwid. Roedd angen waliau da a chadarn i gynnal y to. Ac wrth i chi weithio mwy a mwy, roedd angen ymestyn cledrau'r dramiau i mewn i'r talcen. Y colier a'i gynorthwyydd oedd yn gorfod gwneud y gwaith hwn i gyd.

Ym 1935, gadewais Benallta am Lofa Wyllie er mwyn cael mwy o waith. Roedd Wyllie ar agor chwe diwrnod yr wythnos. Felly, fe es i yno a sefyll mewn rhes gyda llwyth o ddynion eraill. Roeddech chi'n gorfod crefu am waith bryd hynny. Roeddech chi eisiau gwaith, a doedd dim ots beth oedd e, cyn belled â'ch bod yn gallu'i gael e. Roeddwn i'n gorfod bod yn 16 oed cyn cael arian dŵl, ac felly heb waith, doedd gen i ddim byd i'ngynnol. Doedd dim modd cael cymorth o unman arall. Oedd, roedden nhw'n ddyddiau caled.

Doug Evans, Glöwr

► main level, where they had to take so much of the roof away over the seam of coal to give enough height for the horses. We used to have to bore the shotfiring holes with a 'butterfly' hand boring drill. Hopkin would be doing that in his spare time when he was waiting for drams. Then the fireman would ask if the holes were bored and he would put his stick in to see if the depth was right. The shotsman then would come to fire and blow this roof down with explosives on the afternoon shift.

When you came into work next day there was all this muck to clear away into the gob before you could start on the coal! The big stones were kept for the walls on both sides of the roadway – the pack as they called it. The walls had to be good on the roadsides as

a support to the roof. And of course you were advancing all the time so the tram rails into the stall had to be constantly lengthened. The collier and his assistant had to do all this.

In 1935 I left Penallta for Wyllie Colliery in order to get more work. Wyllie was working six days. I went over to Wyllie and stood in line with a load of others. You were bloody beggars in those days. You wanted work and you didn't care what you did as long as you could get it. I couldn't get dole until I was sixteen, so there would be nothing to keep me if I didn't have a job. You didn't get any help from anywhere. Aye, they were hard days.

Doug Evans, Collier

“O ble yng Nghymru 'rydych chi'n dod?”

CEFAIS FY NGENI YM MIS MAWRTH 1916 yn Boryslaw, Galicja, i deulu o Bwyliaid. Roedd Boryslaw yn rhan o Ail Weriniaeth Gwlad Pwyl o 1918 tan 1939, ond bellach mae'n rhan o'r Wcráin. Roedd gennyf frawd hŷn, Eugeniusz, a aned ym 1914 a chwaer o'r enw Zofia a aned ym 1918. Roeddwn i a fy mrawd wedi cael galwad i ymuno â Llu Awyr Gwlad Pwyl, ond ym mis Medi 1939, cawson orchymyn i adael pan wnaeth yr Almaenwyr oresgyn Gwlad Pwyl. Fe wnaethom encilio i'r mynyddoedd a'r fforestydd ar ffiniau Hwngari a Rwmania, i aros am gymorth Prydain a Ffrainc – ond ni ddaeth neb.

Teithiais drwy Rwmania ymlaen i borthladd Varna ger y Môr Du, a gwisgo fel offeiriad Pabyddol er mwyn cael tocyn i fynd ar long. Yna, llwyddwyd i greu tocynnau ffug er mwyn i 40 o'm cyfeillion deithio ar y llong hefyd. Llong Americanaidd oedd hi, a chawsom ein cludo fesul deg o'r harbwr i fwrdd y llong.

Ar 23 Rhagfyr 1939, daethom i Beirut ar ôl siwrnai 30 awr. Roedd y tywydd mor ddrwg nes bob pawb yn swp sâl, ac roedden ni'n gorfod clymu ein hunain wrth y rheiliau i osgoi disgyn i'r môr. Serch hynny, roedd y tywydd yn ei wneud yn anodd i longau tanfor yr Almaenwyr ein gweld. Oddi yno, aethom ymlaen i Alexandria, a threulio deuddydd yno'n disgwyl i ryw fil gyrraedd o Tsiecoslofacia. Yna, aethom ar fwrdd llong Ffrengig o'r enw 'EXPLORATEUR GRANDIDIER' a oedd yn hwylio am Marseille. Roedd 2,800 o Wlad Pwyl a Tsiecoslofacia ar fwrdd y llong, ond gan mai dim

ond lle i 680 oedd yn y cabanau, roedd rhaid inni orwedd ar lawr y dec.

Ar ôl cyrraedd Marseille, cawsom ein cludo ar fysiau i Camp de Carpiagne ym mynyddoedd Carpiagne. Roedd hi'n ddifrifol o oer, a dim ond un blanced yr un oedd gennym. Roedd llygod mawr yn rhedeg ar drawstiau'r cytiau – yn wir, roedden nhw'n bla! Dim ond un gwresogydd golosg mawr crwn oedd yn cynhesu'r holl gwt. Roedd y bwyd yn afiach, sbarion weithiau, ond llymru yn bennaf. Dim ond am dridiau y buom ni yno cyn cael ein cludo ar drên i wersyll ffoaduriaid Sbaenaidd yn Montauban. Roedd rhaid i ni gerdded dwy filltir o'r trên i'r gwersyll.

Roedd y gwersyll dan ei sang; pysgod a reis wedi'u berwi oedd y bwyd yn bennaf. Weithiau, roedden ni'n lladd anifeiliaid er mwyn cael cig. Gwnaethom gais i ymuno â Llu Awyr Ffrainc, ac fe'n lleolwyd ym maes glanio Maison Blanche ar gyrion Algiers (sef maes awyr Algiers heddiw) ar 15 Mawrth 1940, mewn grŵp o 280 o Bwyliaid. Pan aeth Ffrainc i ddwylo'r Almaenwyr ym Mehefin 1940, aethom ar drên i Oran ac yna Casablanca. Ar fore 28 Mehefin, aethom ymlaen i Gibraltar, a threulio deuddydd yno cyn ymuno â llong filwyr 'NEURALIA' a chael ein cludo i Lerpwl gan gyrraedd yno ar 12 Gorffennaf 1940. Ar ôl cyrraedd y porthladd, daeth pawb at ei gilydd a cherdded i'r orsaf drenau er mwyn teithio i Innsworth, maes glanio tua 2 filltir o Cheltenham.

Yma, fe wnaethon ni ymuno â Sgwadron 304 Pwyliaid y Llu Awyr Brenhinol. Peiriannydd ►

“What part of Wales are you from?”

I WAS BORN IN MARCH 1916 IN BORYSLAW, Galicja and came from a Polish family. Boryslaw was part of the Second Republic of Poland from 1918 until 1939, but it is in the Ukraine now. I had an older brother Eugeniusz, born in 1914 and a sister Zofia born in 1918. My brother and I had been recalled to the Polish Air Force but then, in September 1939, received orders to leave Poland when the Germans invaded. We became part of the organised withdrawal to the mountains and forests on the borders of Romania and Hungary where support from France and Britain was expected but didn't come.

I travelled through Romania to the Port of Varna on the Black Sea, where, to be able to get a permit to board a ship, I dressed as a Roman Catholic Priest. The permit was then forged to allow another forty friends to go on board. It was an American ship and to enable us to get on board we were rowed 10 people at a time from the harbour.

On December 23rd 1939 we arrived at Beirut after a thirty-hour journey. The weather was so bad that everyone was ill and we had to tie ourselves to the rail-

ings to stop falling overboard. However, the weather was good cover from the German submarines. We then moved on to Alexandria where we spent two days waiting for about 1,000 Czechs to arrive. From here we boarded a French ship the EXPLORATEUR GRANDIDIER which was bound for Marseille. This ship carried 2,800 Czechs and Poles but there was only cabin space for 680 so we had to lie down on the deck.

At Marseille we got on buses which took us to Camp de Carpiagne in the Carpiagne Mountains. It was bitter cold and we were given one blanket. Rats were running on the rafters inside the huts – the place was over-run with rats! There was a big, round coke heater to heat the whole hut. Food was terrible in France.

We were given scraps to eat, but mostly a porridge-like gruel. We only stayed in this camp for three days before being taken by train to Montauban to a Spanish Refugee camp. We had to walk two miles from the train to the camp.

The camp was very crowded; the food was mainly boiled fish and rice. Sometimes we killed animals for ►

EMILE ZIOMEK YN
GYRRU'R WEINDIWR
SYMUDOL YN ARDAL
MAESTEG, 1956



► oeddwn i, a chawsom ein lleoli mewn sawl maes glanio gydol y rhyfel. Fe gymrodd hi bum mlynedd i mi ddeall Saesneg yn iawn, iaith a oedd yn swno fel cŵn yn cyfarth i mi'n bersonol ar y dechrau.

Ym 1943, roedd Sefydliad Cymorth Portiwgal yn anfon parseli i Wlad Pwyl. Cysylltodd fy mrawd â nhw a gofyn iddynt anfon parcel i'n rhieni ni, ac er mawr syndod i ni, fe gawsant un. Ar yr un pryd ym mis Ionawr 1943, gofynnodd fy mrawd i'r Groes Goch chwilio am ein rhieni ac anfon neges i ddweud ein bod yn ddiogel. Llwyddwyd i ddod o hyd iddynt, a chawsom neges yn ôl. Ynddi, roedd yn dweud bod milwyr Rwsiaidd wedi cipio ein chwaer, a bod ein rhieni yn dal yn fyw ond wedi gorfod symud tŷ.

Ym mis Mawrth 1947, cefais fy rhyddhau o'r Llu Awyr Brenhinol yn Thetford gan y Corfflu Ailsefydlu Pwylaidd. Cefais waith yn syth bin fel mecanig a churwr paneli. Symudais i Drecelyn, oherwydd pan oeddwn i'n RAF Chivenor, fe gwrddais i â'm gwraig Marion Lewis a oedd yno gyda'r WRAF.

Ym mis Awst 1951, cefais swydd gan yr NCB fel weldiwr a churwr paneli yng Ngweithdai'r Ardal Ganolog yng Nglofa Gogledd Celynnen, Trecelyn. £6 15s 6d oedd fy nghyflog. Yn ystod y 1960au, daeth Weindiwr Symudol i garej Ardal 6 yn Nhrecelyn, a chafodd ei fachu'n sownd yn barhaol i gerbyd Leyland Beaver, yn barod ar gyfer unrhyw argyfwng. Fi fyddai'n gyrru'r tryc a'r weindiwr ar ymarferiadau rheolaidd i byllau gwahanol. Roedd

rhai o'r ymarferiadau yn golygu gosod y weindar dros y lein reilffordd a thynnu'r olwynion ffordd i ffwrdd, yna gollwng y weindar a'i roi ar yr olwynion rheilffordd er mwyn i injan locomotif ei lusgo i'r pwell.

Hefyd yn y chwedegau, roedd garej Trecelyn yn gyfrifol am y faniau arfog a oedd yn cludo cyflogau i'r pyllau. Felly, am 4 o'r gloch bob bore Gwener, byddwn i'n gyrru un o'r faniau hyn i swyddfeidd Ystrad Fawr er mwyn llwytho symiau sylweddol o arian mewn pecynnau cyflog – roeddwn i'n arbennig o nerfus ar ddechrau Penwythnos y Glowyr gan ein bod yn cludo mwy o arian nag arfer. Yn ystod trychineb Aber-fan, roeddem wrthi bob awr o'r dydd i sicrhau bod y lorïau'n gallu cludo holl rwbwl y tirlithriad.

Teimlwn ei bod yn rhy beryglus i ymweld â Gwlad Pwyl ar ôl clywed straeon am y Rwsiaid yn arestio Pwyliaid eraill oedd yn dychwelyd i'w mamwlad. Felly, wrth i'r blynyddoedd fynd heibio, daeth Cymru yn gartref i mi, er bod fy acen yn awgrymu fel arall – ar wahân i'r tro hwnnw ar wyliau yn Nyfnaint, pan ofynnodd y dyn tu ôl i'r bar 'O ble yng Nghymru rydych chi'n dod?' Ymddeolais ar fy mhen-blwydd yn 65 oed, ym 1981.

Emil Ziomek, Mecanig moduron

(Bu farw Emil ar 12 Mai 1994. Dyma'r hanes gan ei blant a'r dogfennau a gadwodd.)

EMILE ZIOMEK
DRIVING MOBILE
WINDER IN THE
MAESTEG AREA, 1956



► meat. We applied to join the French Air Force and were posted to Maison Blanche airfield on the outskirts of Algiers (now Algiers Airport) on the 15th March 1940 where we were part of a group of 280 Poles. With the collapse of France in June 1940, we boarded a train for Oran then onto Casablanca. On the morning of 28th June we travelled to Gibraltar, where we stayed for two days waiting for transport by the Troopship 'NEURALIA' to Liverpool, where we arrived on 12th July, 1940. When we docked we assembled and walked to the railway station to travel to Innsworth, an airfield about two miles from Cheltenham.

Here we joined the Royal Air Force as 304 Polish Squadron. I was an engine fitter and we were stationed on many airfields during the war. It was five years before I began to understand English properly which at first, to me, sounded like dog barks.

In 1943 the Portugal Relief Organisation were sending parcels into Poland. My brother contacted them and asked for one to be sent to my parents. Much to our surprise they duly received one. At the same time in January 1943 my brother asked the Red Cross to find our parents and pass a message on to them to say we were safe. They did find our parents and they were able to write a message to us. It said that our sister had been taken away by Russian soldiers, and also that our parents were alive but had to move house.

In March 1947 I was discharged from the Royal Air Force at Thetford by the Polish Resettlement Corps. I immediately found work as a Panel Beater and Motor Car mechanic. I moved to Newbridge because, whilst at RAF Chivenor, I met my wife Marion Lewis who was in the WRAF.

In August, 1951, I became employed by the NCB at the Area Central Workshops at North Celynen Colliery,

Newbridge, as a Welder and Panel Beater. My wages were £6 15s 6d. During the 1960s an Emergency Mobile Winder was brought into our Area 6 garage at Newbridge, and was kept permanently on standby attached to a Leyland Beaver truck. I drove this truck and winder on various exercises to different pits. Some of these exercises involved positioning the winder over a railway line and removing the road wheels then lowering the winder onto its attached railway wheels for a locomotive to take it to the pit.

Also in the sixties, the Transport Garage in Newbridge became responsible for the armoured vans which delivered the wages to the pits. So at 4am every Friday morning I drove one of the vans to Ystrad Fawr offices to load up with the large sums of money in wage packets – we were especially nervous at the start of Miners' Fortnight because of the extra money we were carrying. During the Aberfan disaster we worked all hours to keep the lorries on the road to take away the muck from the tip slide.

I felt it was too dangerous to visit Poland because of stories I heard about returning Poles being arrested by the Russians. Therefore as time went by Wales became my home, although my accent always gave me away – except once on holiday in Devon a barman asked 'What part of Wales are you from mate?' I retired on my sixty-fifth birthday in 1981.

Emil Ziomek, Motor Mechanic

(Emil died on 12th May 1994. This is his story as told to his children and from documents that he kept.)

Six Bells

DECHREUAIS WEITHIO GYDA'R NCB PAN oeddwn i'n bymtheg oed, ym 1955. Cefais fy nghyflogi fel clerck cyflogau ar gyfer holl lofeydd y grŵp yn swyddfeydd Aber-carn. Tua 1958, roedd swydd wag am glerc/teleffonydd yng Nglofa Six Bells, a chan fy mod i'n byw yn Aber-big, roedd yn golygu y gallwn gerdded i'r gwaith yn lle dal bws i Aber-carn.

Ar 28 Mehefin 1960, tua dwy flynedd ers i mi gychwyn gweithio yn Six Bells, cefais neges gan swyddfeydd y lofa tua hanner dydd yn dweud bod rhywbeth wedi digwydd, ac y dylwn gysylltu â'r gwasanaethau brys i gyd. Dechreuais feddwl beth yn y byd oedd wedi digwydd i greu'r fath gynnwrf. Tua phump y prynhawn, dywedodd rheolwr y grŵp wrthyf am fynd adref a pharatoi ar gyfer shifft deuddeg awr yn ateb y ffons. Erbyn hynny, wrth gwrs, roeddwn i'n gwybod bod trychineb wedi digwydd. Roedd hi'n gyfnod pryderus iawn. Roedd fy nhad yn gweithio yn y lofa, ond roeddwn i'n gwybod ei fod yn ddiogel gan mai gof pen pwll ydoedd. Er hynny, roedd rhai o'm perthnasau i'n gweithio danddaear y diwrnod hwnnw.

Pan ddes i'n ôl i'r gwaith y noson honno, roedd ceir ym mhobman a miloedd o bobl wedi ymgynnull o amgylch y pwll, a'r swyddfeydd wedi'u meddiannu gan aelodau'r wasg a'r cyfryngau. Fel roedd y cyrff yn cyrraedd pen y pwll, fy ngwaith i oedd anfon enwau'r unigolion i'r brif swyddfa.

Roedd pobl y wasg a'r cyfryngau yn drwyn i gyd ac yn fusneslyd iawn, â'u bryd ar gael stori. Doedd dim swyddogion cysylltiadau cyhoeddus gan yr NCB ar y pryd, ac felly roeddem ni'n gorfod ymdrin â'r wasg yn bersonol. Wrth gwrs, roedd yna straeon am ddynion a oedd yn absennol oherwydd salwch neu rai oedd wedi cyfnewid shifftiau, ond roedden ni'n dueddol o osgoi dweud gormod wrthyn nhw gan eu bod mor fusneslyd. Roeddwn i wedi ymlâdd yn llwyr pan es i adref o'r gwaith y bore cyntaf hwnnw, ond doeddwn i ddim yn gallu cysgu mewn gwirionedd gan fod pethau'n dal i droi yn fy mhen. Cafwyd angladdau mawr, ond ni es i'r un ohonynt.

Gadewais Six Bells ym 1963 oherwydd bod cymaint o atgofion trist yno. Cefais swydd mewn ffatri llawn menywod, a oedd braidd yn od ar ôl gweithio gyda dim ond dyniaid o fenywod mewn swyddfeydd llawn dynion yn yr NCB. Er gwaetha'r atgofion drwg ers y drychineb, roeddwn i'n mwynhau gweithio gyda'r NCB. Roeddwn i'n ifanc, yn gallu cerdded i'r gwaith, ac roedd gen i gyflog. Roeddwn i hefyd yn mwynhau gweithio gyda'r dynion, oherwydd eu bod yn llawer mwy agos-atoch a ddim mor bigog â'r menywod. Roedden nhw hefyd yn parchu menywod y gwaith bryd hynny, ond dynion oedd yn rheoli yno a phrin y byddwn wedi datblygu fawr ar fy ngyrfa yno.

Mair Price, Teleffonydd



DYNIION ACHUB YNG
NGLOFA SIX BELLS
RESCUE MEN AT SIX
BELLS

DIWRNODYR
ANGLADD
FUNERAL OF THE
VICTIMS



Six Bells

I started work as a fifteen year old with the NCB in 1955. I was employed as a wages clerk for all the collieries in the group at the group offices in Abercarn. About 1958 there was a vacancy for a clerk/telephonist at Six Bells Colliery and, as I lived in Aberbeeg, it meant that I could walk to work instead of catching a bus to Abercarn.

It was on the 28th June 1960, and I had been at Six Bells about two years, when I received a message at about mid day from the colliery offices to say that there had been an incident and to alert all the emergency services. I was wondering what on earth type of incident had happened for all the services to be called. By about five that afternoon I was called to see the group manager who asked me to go home and prepare to work twelve hour night shifts manning the telephones. By then, of course, I knew that a disaster had happened. It was really worrying, my father worked at the colliery but he was a boiler smith on the surface so I knew he was all right, but I had relatives who were working underground on that day.

When I came back to work that evening there were cars everywhere and thousands of people around the pit and the offices had been taken over by press and media. When each body had been brought up the pit it was my job to send the name to the head office.

I found the media and press people very nosey, very intrusive, they just wanted a story. There were no NCB public relations people then and we had to deal with them personally. Of course there were stories about men who were off sick or had swapped shifts however, because we felt that they were just being nosey we tended to hold back and not tell them too much. I left work the first morning very tired but with all the activity my mind was working overtime and I couldn't really sleep, I couldn't switch off. The funerals were huge, but I didn't attend any of them.

I left Six Bells in 1963 because I had too many bad memories there. I obtained a job in a factory surrounded by women which was a bit strange after the NCB where I was one of a handful of women in offices full of men. In spite of the bad memories of the disaster, I quite liked working for the NCB. I was a youngster, I could walk to work and I had a pay packet. I also enjoyed working with men because they were more down to earth and not as touchy as women. They were also more respectful to working women then, although it was very male orientated and I would have been unlikely to have gone further up the ladder there.

Mair Price, Telephonist

Mae ceffylau'n gallu cyfri!

AR ÔL I MI ORFFEN GWEITHIO GYDA chwmni Glo Prydain ym 1988, dechreuais weithio fel swyddog mewn pyllau trwyddedig. Nid oedd gennym injans halio mewn un pwll, dim ond 7 ceffyl yn llusgo'r dramiau i mewn ac allan. Er nad ydw i'n or-hoff o anifeiliaid, dwi ddim yn hoffi'u gweld nhw'n cael eu cam-drin, a doeddwn i ddim yn hoffi meddwl am geffylau yn gweithio danddaear. Serch hynny, gwelais eu bod yn cael pob gofal. Gan nad oes awenau ar geffylau'r pwll, mae'n rhaid iddyn nhw ufuddhau i orchmynion llafar.

Y gorchymyn mwyaf amlwg, 'come on', oedd mynd ymlaen, 'stand back' i fynd yn ôl a 'see back' i droi i'r dde a 'come-ee back' i fynd i'r chwith. Roedd gennym un gaseg go styfnig o'r enw Dolly, ac yn y dyddiau cynnar, roedd rhaid inni ddefnyddio genfa er mwyn iddi ufuddhau i'n gorchmynion ni. Dim ond am ychydig wythnosau barodd hynny, a buan y daeth at ei choed. Dyma ffaith fach i chi – mae ceffylau'n gallu cyfri. Dim dyfalu ydw i, ac nid rhywun sydd wedi dweud hynny wrthyf. Maen nhw'n gallu cyfri go iawn! Bob dydd, bydden nhw'n llusgo'r dramiau o'r pwll, ac ar ôl dadfachu'r dramiau, roedden nhw'n dychwelyd i'r pwll. Ar ôl i'r ceffylau dynnu wyth dram o lo, byddan nhw'n troi'n ôl ac yn mynd i'r stablau yn hytrach nag i'r pwll. Dim ond chwe dram o lo oedd angen eu llenwi ar y penwythnos, ac ar ôl i ni ddadfachu'r chweched dram, byddai'r ceffylau yn dychwelyd i'w stablau. Yna, ar ddydd Llun, bydden nhw'n aros tan yr wythfed dram cyn mynd i'r stablau. Yn ogystal â gallu cyfri, felly, roedden nhw'n gwybod pa ddiwrnod o'r wythnos oedd hi! Roedden nhw'n geffylau clyfar iawn, yn hollol anhygoel.

Fe gollais i un ceffyl, sef Sam. Mi faglod Sam ar yr inclein a thorri'i gefn. Roedd rhaid i ni alw'r milfeddyg ac Arolygiaeth y Glofeydd; roedd cryn dipyn o ffŷs a ffwdan ynglŷn â'r holl beth. Roedd ceffylau mewn pyllau trwyddedig yn cael cryn dipyn mwy o sylw a gofal na'r glowyr eu hunain, ond stori arall yw honno!

Phil Budding, Swyddog y Lofa

Horses can count!

AFTER I FINISHED WITH BRITISH COAL IN 1988 I began working as an official in licensed mines. In one of these mines we had seven horses working there, no haulage engines just horses pulling the coal drams in and out. I'm not really much of an animal lover but I don't like to see animals hurt and when I saw these horses I didn't like the idea of them working underground one little bit. However, I found that they were actually really well looked after. As colliery horses have no reins, they have to obey verbal commands.

The obvious verbal command, 'come on', was to go

forward, 'stand back' was to reverse back and 'see back' was to go the right and 'come-ee back' to the left. We did have one horse, a mare called Dolly who was a bit headstrong and, in her early days, we had to put a bit in her to get her to obey instructions. But that was only for a couple of weeks and she soon picked it up. A little story for you, horses can count, this is not guesswork, this is not somebody told me, they can actually count! Every day they would pull their drams out of the pit and, after they had been disconnected from the dram, they would turn and go back into the

mine. After they had pulled eight drams out, they would turn and head for the stables instead of going back underground. On the weekend we'd only have to do six drams, and, after you'd disconnected them from the sixth dram, they'd turn and go up to the stables. On the Monday they would wait until the eighth dram before heading for the stable. So they couldn't only count but they knew what day it was as well. They were very clever horses, they were unbelievable.

I did lose one horse and that was Sam. Sam lost his footing on an incline and broke his back. We had to

have the vet there and the Mines Inspectorate; in fact there was an almighty fuss about it all. Horses in licensed mines had more consideration paid to them than the colliers, but that's a different story!

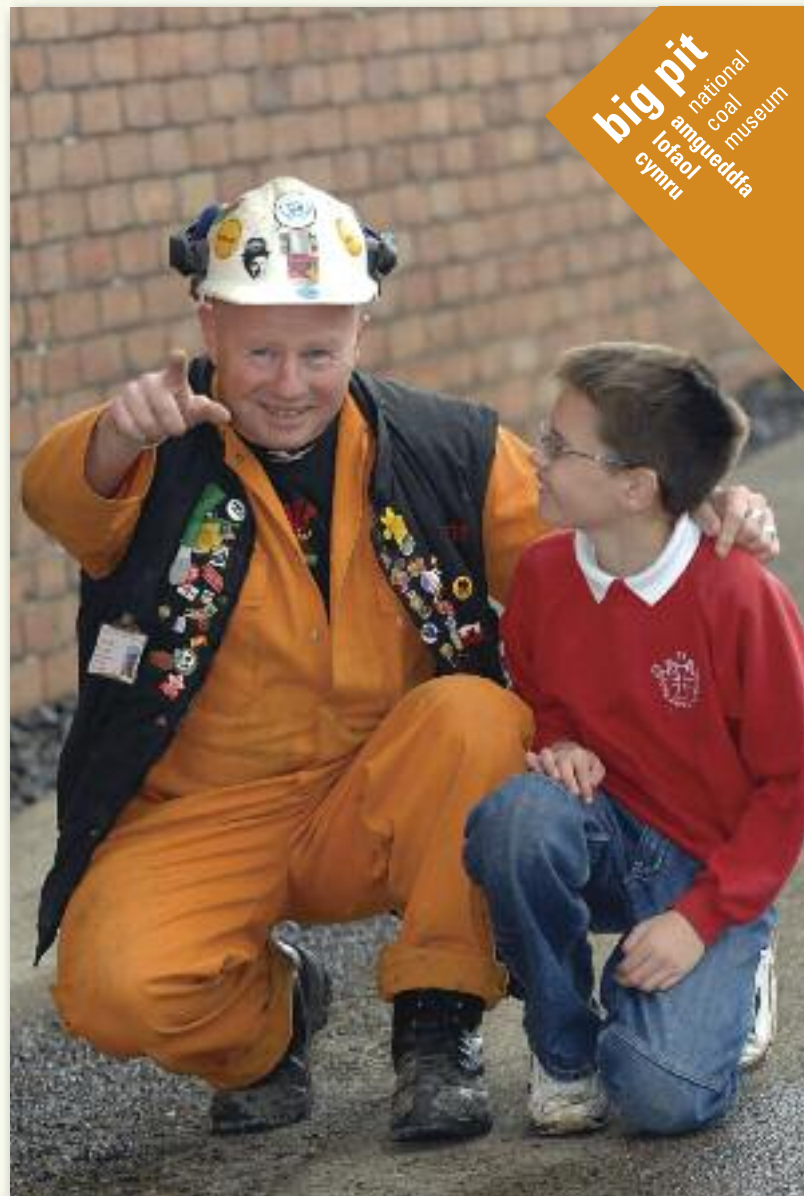
Phil Budding, Colliery Official



CEFFYL Y PWLL YNG
NGLOFA RITHAN, 1995
COLLIERY HORSE AT
RITHAN MINE, 1995

GWEITHWYR GLOFA
DEEP NAVIGATION,
GORFFENNAF 1979
DEEP NAVIGATION
COLLIERY
WORKFORCE,
JULY 1979





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Chwefror – Tachwedd:
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10 am – 3.30 pm.
Ffoniwch am amserau agor
dros y gaeaf.

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The next edition of GLO will concentrate on the north Wales coalfields. If you have any stories or photos from the area, please call us on (01495) 790311 or email bigpit@museumwales.ac.uk.

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