

QUARRY TALES CLITHEROE

QUESTION TIME

GRINDLETON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

OCTOBER 2015

0:21 Q1 – What is it like to work in a quarry?

0:25 Mick – don't work actually in the quarry. Nowadays it's not so bad – out of weather – many years ago lots of men, they had many men to do the work, now they have machines to do the work, in the old days my doo you used to work in if raining put a sack on quarry if they didn't do work didn't get paid

1:17 Q2 - Has quarry ever caught fire?

1:20 Mick – No can't catch fire. Stone doesn't burn too well. Upon the works different fires Conveyor belts that sort of thing

1:35 Martin – quarry get stone out of. Cement is called the works run. They are run completely separately

2:05 Q3 - How hard is it to work in the quarry?

2:12 Paul – it's a lot easier now physically even in packing sack all worked by hand instead of 25 kg bags 50 kg bag moved by hand

2:40 Mick Palletiser forked lift truck– in old days 40 yrs ago the bags would slide down chute and a man would be stood underneath, it dropped onto his back, onto wagon – very hard work. All done by machines now. Used to be 7 or 800 people work there and now there are 110. Technology has improved things so you don't need as many men

3:30 Paul – can do the work of 7 men because you've got machines

3:35 Q4 – What do you do in your spare time at the quarry?

3:40 Mick – don't have any spare time – no lunch breaks

3:53 Paul – managers make time available to go on courses, safety training and first aid Time off from actual job to keep up to date to do

4:24 Q5 Martin – did you have coffee breaks?

4:27 Paul – in control room you're there all time on shift – coffee machine break and brew on job – nice warm environment watching fish comfortable and stressful at times

5:06 Martin So you didn't have a lunch break?

5:08 Paul - You take them when you can

5:12 Mick – They used to do 9 o'clock, 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock. You used to get 20 minutes every time. Then they changed it to flexible. Finish what you're doing. Control continually watching. Don't

get a break. Some days sit and don't do anything. Other days 6 or 7 hours before sit down for sandwiches.

6:20 Q6 - What effect did like the quarry and the works have on your health?

6:25 Mick – biggest things they have done - improvements in health and safety over the years is tremendous. 50 years ago drive past Castle Cement all the trees were grey from dust. Imagine what it was like inside the works. Now filters, equipment masks, ear plugs, overalls. Wore own clothes. Far better now.

7:20 Q7 - How many days did you work?

7:22 Mick 4 on 4 off 4 nights 7 shifts 8 weeks then 20 days off again then 16 days off

8:08 Paul - Monday to Saturday mornings

8:13 Mick – Bank holidays – Saturday and Sunday morning to make sure enough stone to keep kiln going. Big circular store emptied fill it up for Friday it would be empty by middle of Monday. Can't go 4 days

8:54 Q8 - How dangerous is working in the quarry, in the works?

8:57 Mick – If you pay attention to all the courses in health and safety, pay attention to all the notices and all the rules it is very safe. If you don't it can be very dangerous. There is lot of moving equipment, conveyor belts, mortars, might be stopped – Should hear a siren first. Siren in area. Control room press button in that area should get away. Should have locked off with big padlock. Very safe if you follow the safety protocols. If you don't you can end up dead.

9:58 Paul – accidents happen when people start taking short cuts. There's no short cut to safety.

10:05 Mick – it might take only 5 minutes to do a job but 15 minutes to make it safe. In the old days some people would say I won't do 15 minute but go and sit in canteen. Might lose fingers and worse. Got to make sure you've done the safety work before you do actual job and then you'll be OK

10:35 Q9 – How tiring is it working there?

10:39 Mick – 12 hour shifts – flagging a bit at the end of a shift. Even in the control room sitting in chair thinking can make you tired. If wet and cold outside you tire more than sunny day. If things start breaking down more tiring.

11:20 Q10 – What's the biggest thing in the quarry?

11:30 Paul – dumper or loading shovel

11:35 Mick – in the old days it would be what they called a navvy or a big digger. But now we use the big shovels, low shovel with a big bucket and scrape it up and load into a dumper. 70 ton dumper are the biggest.

12:01 Q11 – How much buttons are in the control room?

12:07 Paul – Not many now because they are on a mouse

12:15 Mick – 6 buttons. 6 mice. Use a computer. On panel 2 or 300, maybe more. Lot easier on computer. Technology made job easier. It hasn't reduced work force in the control room. Made the job easier. A lot more information to look at. In old days once it happened and no record.

13:07 Q12 – why did you become a quarry worker?

13:10 Mick – well, I got made redundant. I worked in engineering when I left school and I got made redundant. My father worked in the quarrying industry and he got me a job which saved me having to look for one. I was there till I retired there must have been somat I liked about it.

13:38 Paul – I started when I left school. In the village, could walk to work and was handy and stopped for more than 40 years.

14:00 Q13 - How much cement did you make in a day?

14:06 Mick – 2,500 ton of clinker

14:15 Paul – We sell about 16,000 a week. 6 days. About 2,500 a day. Either bagged or in bulk or on the rail.

14:38 Q14 - Are there different types of cement bags?

14:41 Paul – different types of cement are all in different bags all got labels on. Multicem for mortars, plastic as well as paper bags. We make rapid hardening cement that goes off quicker. General purpose cement. Lots of other the company makes at different sites and we can import and sell.

15:22 Q23 – How many cement bags do you fill in a year?

15:30 Paul – I can tell you how many we can make in day. We can bag 4,000 an hour on 12 spout packer. And 1000 plastic. 5,000 bags an hour

15:50 Mick – Don't know how many hours a day. It might run 10 hours one day it might run 20 hours another. It might not run any one day.

16:00 Martin – some days might want more in railway wagons or tankers.

16:12 Mick – The most they can do is $24 \times 5 = 120,000$ bags in one day. Stockpile em up till they get enough then stop making them.

16:38 Paul – Don't want too big a pile. Like apples they have their sell by date. Just enough to get through the orders they've got.

16:49 Q24 – How much money did you get week?

16:55 Mick about £800.

17:03 Paul – A better figure is your annual salary. The average quarry worker gets about 32,000 – 34,000 a year. 32,000 per year. About £800 a week.

17:27 Martin – Some in the control room will get far more.

17:35 Paul - Some lads in the works will get more. There is some issue over that.

17:40 Mick -the controller £40,000 a year.

17:43 Paul - Average wage across the site will be about £35,000 a year. 36,000 would be 1,500.

17:54 Mick – It's only 615, 32,000

18:03 Q25 – Did you need to stay in a vehicle when you're at the quarry all the time?

18:12 Paul and Mick – Yes - nobody walks any more. It's not safe. You might trip.

18:17 Martin – you might get a dumper driver run over you.

18:25 Mick – You've got a helmet on but if a dumper drives over you that won't save you. Some of them dumper drivers are dozy.

18:29 Paul – They might not see you. They're just a small man in a big truck. No walking in the quarry.

18:39 Q26 - Are there different types of cement?

18:44 Answered that already. Rapid hardening. Your friend has written it down.

18:52 Q27 – Is it good working at the quarry?

18:58 Paul – Yes, I've enjoyed it. Had a good laugh. We worked hard and we played hard. You get paid well. You work in a team. Get used to team. Sometime we'd go out together on days off.

19:17 Mick – we're all friends. Most of them. Yes.

19:22 Q28 – How long is the quarry open for?

19:32 Martin – when do you mean – when did it start or during the day?

19:36 Mick – 1936 it opened.

19:45 Martin – Some were working it out as they went round. Miss Woodvine making them work it out. 81 years.

20:01 Q29 – How old is the quarry?

20:02 Mick – 1936. 81 years

21:04 Martin – there was a little quarry there already. Don't know when that opened. It did not produce cement. It used to produce lime. But it was

20:15 Mick – Bobbie, did you get two books? Peter del Strother. You can read that book. PdS tells you all about quarrying. History of quarrying before 1500, before the Normans came.

20:40 Martin – 1400 there's a piece of paper gives permission to remove limestone from where Salthill quay was.

21:00 Q30 – Did you like working in the quarry?

21:02 Paul - Yes, we did like working there, we liked the people we worked with and we got on well as a team

21:09 Q31 – What sort of work did you do in the quarry?

21:15 Mick – I started off as a shift labourer as everybody did and did all heavy work, then I got a job as a line operator on the kiln outside and after a couple of years I was lucky to get a job inside. I only done 3 jobs.

21:38 Paul – I've done a multitude of jobs. I used to work in the offices doing accounts, banking, invoicing, that sort of thing. Then I went onto the works and worked in the lab, extended from running the labs to running the mills, clinker belts and all sorts of things. I had a very varied occupation.

22:25 Q32 – Did you work long hours in shifts and how did it make you feel?

22:28 Mick – In the beginning when I first started we worked 8 hours but in January and August when the kiln maintenance period when they shut everything down we worked 12 hour days right through 7 days a week. Continuously. Eventually that 12 hours became every day of the year and some people the only days off they took were when they were made to have their holidays. They were told to have their holidays. They didn't want to take them as they didn't get paid. They weren't getting holiday pay. They were very upset.

23:17 Paul – then we went on to 12 hour shifts. 4 on 4 off. Already written down.

23:21 Paul – at end of shift you were ready for a rest.

23:27 Q33 – Did you ever want another job in the quarry?

23:33 Mick – No, I never wanted another job than the one I had at the end in the control room. The first day I joined Castle Cement they took us around the works I went in the control room and I said to myself this is where I am going to work as I liked that kind of thing. I used to be an engineer. It took me 2, 2 and a half years less than and I got in there. I were very lucky just being in right place at the right time. It was very rare to get a job in there. Obviously people in that job and it is only when they leave there is a vacancy. I was lucky. I were in the right place at the right time and I loved it.

24:26 Paul – the company work hard at putting the right people in the right places for work, different jobs suit different people. They were pretty good at that at the cement works.

24:21 Mick – you go for an interview for every job. If you give the right answers you get the right job. If you give the wrong answers you don't get the right job. You get a shovel!

24:51 Q34 – How does it feel to drive a dumper truck in the quarry?

25:00 Mick. Well, I don't drive a dumper truck in the quarry and neither does Paul. But I have driven them when I were working overtime sometime. You wouldn't be on your normal job. You'd be outside and I've driven them on the works. And they are quite bouncy as the seats are very well sprung so you can bounce about but because I'm so tall I'd bang my head on roof bounce that much so I wear a helmet in the cab. You didn't need to wear one inside but I did because I kept banging my head.

23:33 Martin - Did you drive a dumper Paul?

23:35 Paul – I used to drive a loading shovel from time to time and went into clinker store but I didn't particularly like that.

25:40 Mick – they're bouncy aren't they

25:47 Paul – it's a horrible place in the clinker store. When the kiln's is down. Not a very nice job. You can't see where you are going. Get seasick in there.

26:09 Q35 – What was your least favourite day and why?

26:11 Mick – first day going to work. So whatever day it were it were the first of four were the worst. Me last one was my favourite one. And my most favourite of all was the last one we did before a twenty day break. We worked four on and four off. After so many days you got 20 days off. So that last working day were my best day as I got nearly three weeks holiday.

26:48 Q36 – What is your favourite part of the quarry?

26:53 Mick. Got to be the control room for me. Where I worked. That what I always wanted to do.

27:02 I must admit when I first went into Lab and every two hours you'd be walking round the plant. It would take you twenty minutes so it was a good mile and a half walk. I used to enjoy that picking up samples because you went everywhere and saw a lot of different people and all aspects of the job. And I used to enjoy that.

27:25 Q37 – How much cement do you make in a month?

27:31 Paul – Well we make it to order and we sell 16,000 tons cement a week.... That's 65,000 a month. That's bags and bulk and rail and all the lot.

28:02 Q38 – How did it feel to work in the control room?

28:05 Mick - Some days great and other days not so great. If you had a busy busy day and you were on your feet for 6 or 7 hours without getting a break you sometimes thought I don't want to be in here I want to be outside where I can get me breaks regular. But then good thing in the winter it's nice and warm. In the summer it's just the same temperature cos it's air conditioned. And if you work outside it can very cold or you can be very hot inside the control room. That were a good bit about it for me.

28:41 Paul – The best bit, the worst bit I used to find about working in the control room when you went in on a Monday and we weren't running the cement mills because all the stocks were full and everything was stopped. And you think that is going to be easier. But it's not. It's harder because when it is stopped they want to do a lot of maintenance. You've always got people, can you run this? Can you run that? And you're trying to get your breaks, your breakfast and someone's on the phone can you do this, can you do that? All your day's disjointed and you don't know whether you're coming or going sometimes. Just part and parcel of the job.

29:19 Mick - Everybody wants something doing at same time, well you can only do one thing at once in the control room. You'd be trying to do something and somebody ringing to say I want you to do this. Hang on a minute and the other phone would ring. It's quite hectic at times.

29:42 Q39 – Why did you want to work at Castle Cement?

29:45 Mick – well as I said to be honest I didn't. I worked for GEC at Clayton Lemurs Engineering. I got made redundant at 27 I think and I got a job at Horrocksford where Paul works which is same quarry but they made Tarmac. Castle Cement, me Dad got me a job there for a few weeks thinking it was a wage and I would look round for another engineering job but I never did and when they closed that they moved us all over to cement works. I just worked my way up and as Paul said he could walk to work, so could I. I got paid well, I got treat well, the job were interesting and I had no transport costs. I could drive I could walk to work it only took me 20 minutes. It was ideal. That's why I never left.

30:35 Paul - I went there from school, got a job, worked in offices and ended up working on the plant. It was close to home, I was paid a reasonable wages, better wages if you went on the cement works. It was a good place to be.

31:03 Q40 – What was it like to be a quarry worker?

31:08 Paul – it was hard work. Like, in many many years ago before the age of mechanisation and everything, it was hard work. If you worked in the quarry you'd be breaking and filling, which is

breaking rocks up with a big sledgehammer and filling them into little trucks, you'd have to carry on doing that all that in all sorts of weather that's what you got paid for doing. Now it's all mechanised, lot less people required, working in the quarry you're always inside a machine, a loading shovel, a dumper or cab at the side of a drill rig, where they're drilling holes. These are quarry workers. That what it's like. It's a lot better now than it used to be.

32:00 Mick – very labour intensive you'd have to have a lot of men to do a lot of different jobs but now you've got machines to do it so you only need a few men to operate all these machines.

32:15 Paul - Used to 6 or 700 working at the works now there are 110. Technology.

32:25 Q41 – what was your favourite part of the site and why?

32:27 Mick – control room. It is nice and warm all year round, cool if you wanted it, I could set temperature to what I want. I didn't get dirty, it was safer in there, you're not going to get run over by a dumper up there. It was very safe up there.

32:50 Paul – I thought it was safe unless someone rang up just when you were just having your breakfast. I used to like it when you were walking round the plant picking samples up seeing all the different people who work there

33:10 Mick - I liked the line up job. You walked all over the kiln area. You did a lot of walking about oiling and lubricating things, resetting things checking things if the control room wanted someat. But middle of winter not so clever snow blowing in face, ice is blowing in your face, you don't want to be out so much. Better inside.

33:50 Q42 – Did you have to wear special clothes?

33:54 Mick – When you are outside for when you come onto the works the first thing is to put on a hard helmet on and the glasses. You have a little locker just as you come into the works now and as you come further into the changing room area you have to put on your overalls and boots on with steel toe caps and any other safety equipment. Now you have to wear gloves all the time. Your arms have to be covered. You always have too have long sleeves on. So all that equipment has to worn. Reflective trousers. We're all in orange suits so you can be seen easily, everyone is orange with reflective strips on so you can be seen at night.

34:40 Q43 - What training do you have to need to have to blow up stones?

34:47 Mick – you have to do exams for that

34:50 Paul – You have to go to a place called Doncaster. There's a college and they train them. There's a quarrying educational place where they train the shot firers all the ins and outs of drilling, drilling the right sized holes, charging the holes with explosive and sorting all that out. They do special training for that.

35:24 Mick – Difficult. Some have four or five attempts at the exam before they pass.

35:27 Q44 – What comes out of the chimney and why?

35:32 Mick – The big chimney on the kiln? You'll get sulphur dioxide (SO₂). You'll get nitrous oxide (NO_x) and you'll get a little bit of dust but most of it is steam, water vapour coming out. You see when you go to the top of the chimney there is a gap and a plume. If there is a gap most of that is water vapour. If there's no gap there is a bit of dust coming through. Someat's gone wrong somewhere. You can always tell if it is clean.

36:00 Martin – If you look on a warm day you can see the smoke coming out, they call it the plume, but Mick says it's mainly steam. There's a little tiny trace of smoke. As it rises up it disappears. There a little tiny trace but most of it disappears because it's just steam. Cloud

36:28 Paul - Have to monitor everything that goes up stack. We're only allowed to put a certain amount of things up the stack by Environment Agency so it is safe for everyone who lives round here. And that is monitored at all times.

36:46 Mick – Dust for instance is 30 parts per million is the maximum, typically averaging 12 parts per million

36:56 Martin - Specialist words Stack would call chimney and smoke is called a Plume

37:13 Q45 – How old were you when you first worked at the quarry?

37:19 Mick – 27

37:21 Paul – I was 16. I went there straight from school and I retired from there when I was 57.

37:30 Mick – we retired on the same day, well actually I retired about a week later

37:36 Paul – Well I thought you had retired about 20 years ago!

37:45 Q46 – What happened to the chimney when it tipped a bit in xxxx?

37:50 Mick – very strong winds blew it over. It must have been a bit weak on the joint A bit corroded on the bottom. Had to get up there, stop the kiln and make the chimney safe even though it was hanging over a bit. Made it safe put supports on it and then in summer took it off and put a new piece on. That new piece was £100,000, just that bit of chimney. That is how expensive it is to make machines.

38:30 It's a very big piece of chimney it down on the ground when it goes up. Went up in 2 pieces, Big crane on the ground Mobile crane. Enormous doesn't look like it can lift ote, great legs and arms. Massive

38:53 Q 47 – In the future do you think everything will be done by machines?

38:57 Mick – Hopefully not. Now in the control room the job I did which was the kiln some cement companies use something called fuzzy logic. So it's all run by a computer in Asia but massive kilns 10,000 tons 4 times bigger.

39:30 Q49 How many bags do you think you have you made?

39:35 Mick - in my lifetime – Millions

39:47 Q50 – Is working at a quarry stressful?

39:54 Martin – Look at them. Relaxed

40:00 Paul - It can be at times. Retired is the best thing. Some of the jobs can be quite stressful.

40:15 Q51 - How much cement do you make in a year?

40:17 Martin -65,000 tons a month. 800,000 tons a year, bags and bulk

40:33 Q52 – Do you think Castle Cement will the same in 20 years?

40:38 Mick – Think hey can't reduce the work force, every two or three years with modern machinery. Exactly the same with a few less men

41:00 Martin - Unless they find a different way of making cement. Someone might invent

41: 15 Paul - Always something. Always looking to reduce costs. Wages are the major cost.