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16 October 2015

This letter is in response to a request from Diccon Rogers asking about the 20 years I was manager of Pendrathen Quarry situated on St Marys, Isles of Scilly

The quarry was acquired by a Mr Roy Mitchell sometime in the early sixties. (Any dates are approximate) Prior Mr Mitchells ownership the quarry was pretty run down. I was manager from this time until the early 1980s.

Once re-equipped the quarry proved to be a superb asset and of great benefit to St Mary's providing many services and a variety of building materials, such as washed aggregates, concrete blocks, lintels, bricks, paving slabs, cement, mixed concrete, etc. In addition to all that we had a tarmac plant which was much used by the local council, and many local residents for road and track surfacing.

Diccon has asked me in particular about what recycling we did during my time as manager and so I can emphasise that at Pendrethen we also took in plenty of building rubble, cleaned it, crushed it, and re-used it wherever we could either as aggregate in our own jobs or sold into the local market. We did lots of demolition jobs, often as part of building projects and often took the rubble from the demolitions to the Quarry for recycling. We also operated the "Stone Dump" yard at Moor Well on St Mary's for the separation of building stone, next to where the Council Tip is now. Particularly when we demolished and rebuilt Silver Street in Hugh Town this "Stone Dump" was useful for separating and cleaning stone and rubble for re-use in town, or further processing at Pendrethen.

Another big plus was that the quarry itself provide continued employment for as many as 8/10 locals. The quarry didn't just function for the sole purpose of processing granite etc, a separate building trade arm of the quarry was developed and a building team with the necessary skills went into construction work. For instance 95% of Jacksons Hill housing was built by personnel employed by "The Quarry", including the infrastructure, road, storm drains, pavements etc the quarry also provided materials for work done on the quay, much of the airport was developed by the quarry we laid the mains water pipe right round St Mary's, we demolished part of Holgates hotel, put up the TV mast with foundations nearly 30 feet deep, the list is endless. At times the workforce was 25 to 30 people.

We developed the construction trade in Scilly in all areas. We also operated the "ram pit" at Perwreck at Deep Point on St Mary's, digging out ram for use on island roads and tracks etc. All of this activity was based on operating from Pendrethen Quarry. The quarry properly set up as it was, was a major benefit to the economy of St Marys.

Factors that need to be considered with such a quarry operation in a place like Scilly, crushed granite sometimes needed to be washed, so a water supply is essential, water being a crucial commodity on the Island. It needed to be used sparingly and wisely, with these thoughts in mind we never had a problem, whenever we did any washing. I always liaised with Stan Carrs who worked for the council and was the man responsible for the water on the island at the time; it also helped to keep the dust under control, all this attention to detail kept us trouble free, therefore no problems.

With regard to the supply of granite we had two sources, 1, drilling and blasting; obviously with blasting one generates a big bang or two, and I had to keep the police informed, and make sure that

the lifeboat didn't get launched. Life was much easier and relaxed in those days, I say that because to blast one needs to have a licence to hold explosives eventually this got to be a headache because of terrorism, the IRA being very active at that time etc, so an additional supply was developed, source No 2 being an agreement with the Duchy granting The Quarry a licence to draw stone from Bar Point at low tide. Paying the Duchy a fee each year, depending on tonnage extracted.

What's been mentioned presents the main ingredients of The Quarry's operations, in addition to these we used the quarry plant and machines, particularly the diggers and lorries, to for endless local jobs from large to small, for instance bury many a dead horse or cow, Put up the incinerator chimney, provide and sink concrete moorings in St Mary's harbour, fence off the golf links car park. In the 20 or so years that Pendrethen Quarry functioned in this manner under my management it provided be a major asset to the islands, appreciated by the Council, the Duchy and the locals.

I left the islands in the 1980s to live in mainland Cornwall. The Quarry continued to operate in the same way for many years afterwards, and my son David (who remains living and working in Scilly as an engineer) had his first engineering workshop at the Quarry, mainly to service and maintain the quarry equipment but in due course growing to provide engineering to outside customers.

This letter is a true statement of fact.

Signed



Bryan Parr

23-10-15
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