

MINERS MEMORIAL PROJECT

Fatalities in Quarries



Registered Charity 1094700

This document forms part of the Miners Memorial Project and contains records of **fatal accidents** which occurred in Forest of Dean quarries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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Contents

Birch Hill Pennant Sandstone Quarry	2
Darkhill Sandstone Quarry	3
Drybrook Limestone Quarry	4
Futteral (Point) Quarry	6
Lancaut Limestone Quarry	8
Point Limestone Quarry	10
Point Sandstone Quarry	12
Redhill Limestone Quarry	14
Tidenham - Dayhouse Quarry	16
Whitecliff Quarry	17
Wilderness Sandstone Quarry	18
Worcester Walk Quarry	20

Birch Hill Pennant Sandstone Quarry



Photograph taken by Ron Beard, 2004

Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Morgan	Frederick	02/02/1905	24	Labourer	When engaged lifting a stone on to a trolley by a crane, the nippers slipped and struck him on the forehead, causing immediate death.

Birch Hill Quarry was one of several along the valley (Quest Slade) east of Fetterhill, which worked the Pennant Sandstone (Upper Coal Measures or Westphalian) for building stone. The photograph was taken from SO 59744 08602 looking WSW.

There were quarries here by 1877 at least, with a tramroad connection to sidings on the Severn & Wye Railway's Coleford Branch, which had opened in 1875. Birch Hill was taken over by the United Stone Firms Co Ltd, which was formed in 1910 to operate all the major stone quarries in the Forest. This firm went into liquidation in 1913, although the company continued to operate under the receiver. It was re-organised in 1926, but went into receivership again in 1931. Work continued under the receiver until 1939, when the firm was acquired by Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd. Like nearby Point Quarry, Birch Hill probably closed at some time in this period. Working of the present Birch Hill Quarry began in the early 1960s by Taylor & Martin. There were originally three small quarries (one called Jackdaw), but the quarry has now expanded considerably. It is currently producing stone for walling, buildings and restoration work.

Darkhill Sandstone Quarry



Photograph taken by Ron Beard, November 2004

Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Kear	Thomas	09/03/1910	47	Labourer	A crane, with boiler, fell over into the quarry owing to one of the pins fastening the guys to the sills coming loose. Instead of a proper cotter pin being through the larger pin to fasten it, a piece of wire only had been used.

The above photograph, taken from SO 59083 08692 looking east, shows the remains of one of the Darkhill (Dark Hill) Sandstone Quarries.

There were stone quarries on both the Dark Hill and Birch Hill sides of the valley at Fetterhill (or Futterill or Futteral). Most quarries in the area worked the Pennant Sandstone (Upper Coal Measures or Westphalian), although quarries in the Dark Hill-Ellwood area worked sandstone in the underlying Trenchard Group. By about 1900 E. Turner & Sons of Cardiff had quarries and a stone works at Fetterhill, although the exact location of their quarry is unknown. In 1910 the quarries and works were taken over by the United Stone Firms Co Ltd, which was formed to operate all the major stone quarries in the Forest. This firm went into liquidation in 1913, and the stone works were apparently closed soon after, although the company continued to operate under the receiver. It is not known when the quarry closed. Another stone works had been set up at Fetterhill by 1897, when it belonged to the Darkhill Stone Co It was leased to Samuel Clothier in 1905 and assigned to Thomas Pullen in 1920. He continued to send out stone, possibly quarried at Darkhill, from the sidings built when the branch first opened until their closure in 1957, after which road transport was used. The works and quarry were taken over by Simpson's before they closed in the 1970s or 1980

Drybrook Limestone Quarry



Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Hoare	Oliver	16/05/1900	35	Quarryman	When altering the position of a crane he stepped backwards over the edge the quarry and falling a distance 30 feet fractured his skull.

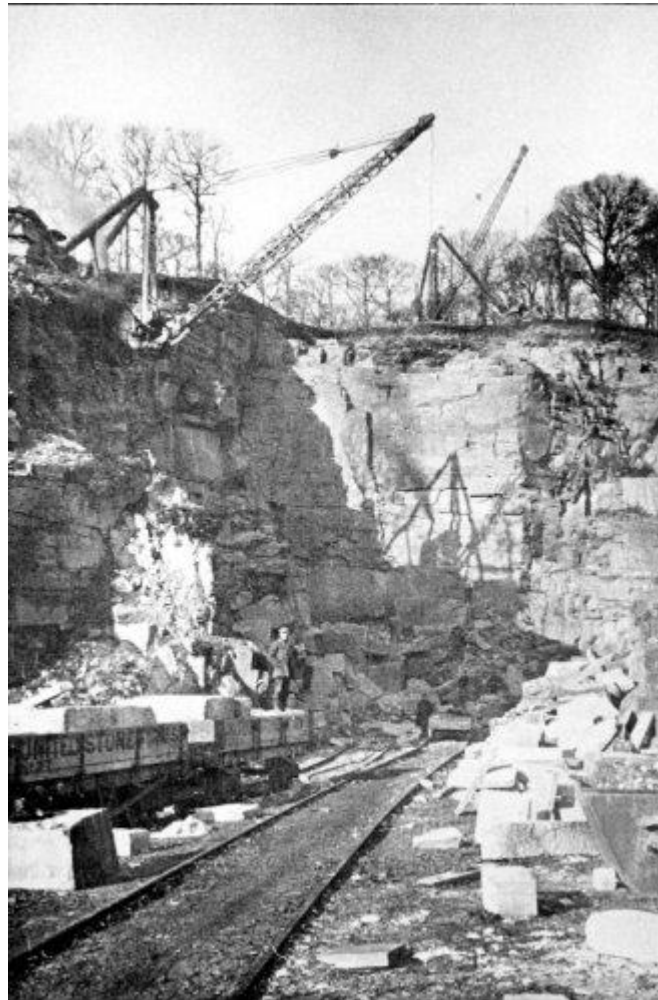
Drybrook Quarry is a working quarry which, from the accident report, was working in 1900, when it was owned by Oliver Hoare. Later it was worked by Thomas Roberts for road metal from the Lower Dolomite, part of the Carboniferous Limestone Series (Dinantian). The quarry was taken over by Drybrook Quarries Ltd in 1926, and a private siding was laid by the Great Western Railway from Drybrook Halt in 1928. Nevertheless, most of the stone went out by road, and the line was closed in 1952-3. It was still owned by Drybrook Quarries Ltd in about 1970, but was later considerably enlarged by the Amey Roadstone Corporation (ARC Ltd), 25 men being employed in 1989. ARC Ltd is now called Hanson Aggregates, who are the current owners. The quarry is a large one, now being over 500 m across. There are plans to convert part of the site into a tourist attraction.



*The quarry
from Morse
Lane looking
east*

Photographs taken by Brian Gange, April 2004. Historic photograph from A Pope collection

Futeral (Point) Quarry



Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Manfield	John	24/07/1894	19		Crane collapsed under the weight of a three ton stone and crushed him.

The accident above, was recorded at the Futeral Sandstone Quarry. Unfortunately there were several quarries in the Fetter Hill area which may have been the particular one. A possibility is Birch Hill Quarry, dealt with elsewhere) or the Point Quarry, one of the most prominent in the area.

Sandstone of the Pennant Group (Upper Coal Measures or Westphalian) has been worked for building stone and other uses for centuries. Point Quarry is one of several in the valley (Quest Slade) between Fetterhill and Parkend, others being Birch Hill (SO 595087) and those on Bostonbury Hill (SO 603082). It was owned by Edwin Payne in the 1870s and Richard and Juliana Payne in the 1890s, and the family firm dated back to 1760; a new company, E.R. Payne & Son, was set up in 1905, and a well-equipped stone works was opened in the quarry soon after. The Paynes also had quarries at Dark Hill, Wimberry, Bixhead, and Barnhill. Sidings were provided when the Severn & Wye Railway's Coleford Branch was opened in

1875, although there had been a tramroad connection to Parkend since about 1812. Like many others, Point Quarry was taken over by the United Stone Firms Co. Ltd in 1910, but this went into liquidation in 1913. It was re-organised in 1926, but went into receivership again in 1931. Work continued under the receiver until 1939, when the firm was acquired by Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd. The stoneworks at Point Quarry had apparently closed by then, but some stone may have been quarried after WW2.



*The quarry
from SO
59828
08544,
looking north*

Photograph taken by Ron Beard, November 2004. Historic Photograph from A Pope collection

Lancaut Limestone Quarry



Fatal Accidents					
Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Murphy	Samuel	22/04/1900	21	Quarryman	Fall of a stone about 5lbs. in weight from above where he was working fatally injured his head.
Wakham	Thomas	08/12/1903	56	Labourer	When stooping to pick up a piece of stone to fill into a trolley another stone rolled down the side of the heap from which he was filling and catching against a projecting stone jumped and struck him on the head causing injuries from which he died four days afterwards. Had he not at the moment been stooping rather low thus allowing of his head being struck the accident would not have resulted in even serious injury. It seems a case of pure misadventure.
Thomas	Joseph	12/02/1904	56	Quarryman	When unramming a misfire shot the charge exploded and caused injuries from which he died shortly after.

Lancaut Quarry is now much overgrown, as seen in the above photograph (ST 54118 96113). Lancaut Quarry worked the Whitehead Limestone (part of the Carboniferous Limestone Series or Dinantian), which consists of calcite and dolomite-mudstone with some shale and

sandstone. Much of the limestone may originally have been used locally for lime burning - there are remains of limekilns in the woods above the quarry (ST 537 967). However, with the development of Avonmouth Docks in the 1870s, stone was loaded from jetties near the quarry for transport down river. The long-disused quarry is now part of the Lancut Nature Reserve, administered by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.



*Limestone
rockface in
the quarry*



Old limekiln

Photographs taken by Mike Bramwell, April 2004

Point Limestone Quarry



Photograph taken by Ron Beard, January 2005

No deaths were recorded officially at this quarry, but four deaths did occur following a spectacular explosion in 1872. Several men rushed into the quarry after the firing and were overcome by fumes. Four men died, they were: Thomas Goode of Mitcheldean, Hiram Baylis and John Griffiths, both of the Plump, and William Tomlin of Cinderford.

Several quarries on Plump Hill worked various units of the Carboniferous Limestone Series (Dinantian), namely the Lower Limestone Shales, Lower Dolomite, and Crease and Whitehead Limestones. Much of the limestone was used for lime burning, and quarrying has probably taken place here for centuries. One of the largest quarries is that at SO 6615 1715, (the above photograph was taken from SO 66193 17136, looking NW). It was at this quarry that the above explosion occurred. A second spectacular explosion also occurred at this quarry, 36,000 tons of stone were blasted in a single explosion in what was reported as a "Great Blast" on 31 August 1893, fortunately no fatalities occurred at this time.

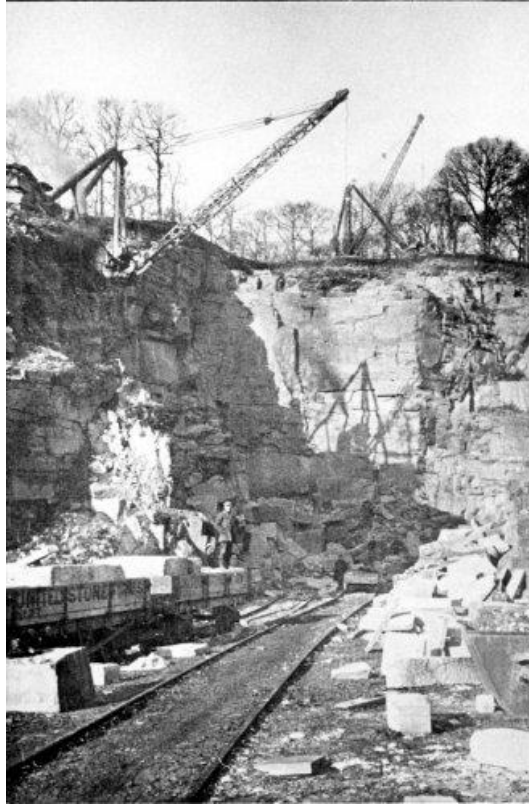
'Gentlemen came from all parts of the county to witness it and we are informed that one came from America... It is estimated that the explosion was witnessed by between 5,000 and 8,000 people, who lined the opposite hillside, which afforded a splendid gallery from which to view the explosion. At 5.30, as had been arranged, 3 blasts from a cornet by Mr J. Marfell, leader of the Drybrook Brass Band, indicated that all was ready, and that in 5 minutes a second blast on the cornet would be the signal for the explosion to take place. Three minutes, however, only elapsed when this was given, but it was too feeble to be heard by Mr. W. J. Smith (the local manager) who was ensconced with his battery in an old kiln, and the explosion did not take place. Immediately people thought something was wrong. Two minutes more elapsed, Mr Marfell gave a louder blast, which Mr Smith heard, and

turning his battery the gigantic upheaval of the rock was instantly observed and the whole face of the quarry broke up and moved forward cracking and splitting up on all sides.'

.At the time the explosion occurred, the quarry was owned by Aaron Simmonds.

There is another large quarry on nearby Hazel Hill at SO 6625 1670. All these quarries have been abandoned for many years.

Point Sandstone Quarry



Fatal Accidents					
Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Manfield	John	24/07/1894	19		Crane collapsed under the weight of a three ton stone and crushed him.
Smith	Milsom	02/10/1906	40	Blacksmith	A temporary smith's shop had been erected against the face or side in a disused part of the quarry. Some large overhanging stone, which was thought to be secure, fell from the quarry wall upon this shed in which deceased were working. The rocks or stones were presumably loosened by the heat of the smiths' fire and rain. Pace had his leg broken below the knee and died from blood-poisoning on October 8th, 1906. Smith had his left leg badly cut, and died on November 13th, 1906, from exhaustion and diarrhoea brought on by the accident. 2 killed.
Pace	James	02/10/1906	42	Foreman	A temporary smith's shop had been erected against the face or side in a disused part of the quarry. Some large overhanging stone, which was thought to be secure, fell from the quarry wall upon this shed in which deceased were working. The rocks or stones were presumably loosened by the heat of the smiths' fire and rain. Pace had his leg broken below the knee and died from blood-poisoning on October 8th, 1906. Smith had his left leg badly cut, and died on November 13th, 1906, from exhaustion and diarrhoea brought on by the accident. 2 killed.

Fatal Accidents					
Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Blackmore	Robert	16/10/1906	51	Engineer	His clothes were caught, in some unexplained way, in a driving shaft 9 feet from the ground, belonging to the dressing machinery, and making 170 revolutions per minute. He was stripped naked and thrown to the ground in less than in a minute, and died in 10 or 12. What he was doing at the time is not known probably examining or oiling.

The accident to Manfield was recorded at the Futteral Sandstone Quarry. Unfortunately there were several quarries in the Fetterhill area which may have been the particular one. A possibility is Birch Hill Quarry (dealt with elsewhere) or the Point Quarry, one of the most prominent in the area. The other accidents were reported as having occurred at The Point Limestone Quarry, but as the owner was named as E R Payne & Son, this was almost certainly the Point Sandstone Quarry.

Sandstone of the Pennant Group (Upper Coal Measures or Westphalian) has been worked for building stone and other uses for centuries. Point Quarry is one of several in the valley (Quest Slade) between Fetterhill and Parkend, others being Birch Hill (SO 595 087) and those on Bostonbury Hill (SO 603 082). It was owned by Edwin Payne in the 1870s and Richard and Juliana Payne in the 1890s, and the family firm dated back to 1760; a new company, E.R. Payne & Son, was set up in 1905, and a well-equipped stone works was opened in the quarry soon after. The Paynes also had quarries at Dark Hill, Wimberry, Bixhead and Barnhill. Sidings were provided when the Severn & Wye Railway's Coleford Branch was opened in 1875, although there had been a tramroad connection to Parkend since about 1812. Like many others, Point Quarry was taken over by the United Stone Firms Co. Ltd in 1910, but this went into liquidation in 1913. It was re-organised in 1926, but went into receivership again in 1931. Work continued under the receiver until 1939, when the firm was acquired by Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd. The stoneworks at Point Quarry had apparently closed by then, but some stone may have been quarried after WW2.



The quarry from SO 59828 08544, looking north

Photograph taken by Ron Beard, November 2004. Historic photograph from A Pope collection

Redhill Limestone Quarry



Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Bath	James	17/05/1905	58	Quarryman	Fall of overburden, which was overhanging contrary to Special Rules. The Council's Surveyor was subsequently fined by the Magistrates under the Quarries Act, 1894. The deceased was working on a ridge about 5' from the surface of the quarry, loosening the soil which lay on top of the rock. He was in a kneeling position using a ... when a quantity of rubbish fell upon his back knocking him down flat. Assistance was at once rendered, and he was got on the top of the quarry, where he drank a drop of cold tea, and had a pipe of tobacco. He, however, fainted and was taken home in a conveyance where he died later in the day. The jury returned a verdict that death was due to shock by an accidental fall of earth.'

There are at least two quarries on Red Hill, west of Lydney. The larger lies between Redhill Farm and the Lydney to Bream road (SO 621 037). In recent years it has been used for landfill. It has been levelled and semi landscaped, and is now used for timber storage. The above photograph was taken looking south.

There is a smaller quarry at SO 621034. Both worked outcrops of the Carboniferous Limestone Series (Dinantian), mainly the Lower Dolomite which dips westwards at 70-80°. The area has been quarried for centuries. In 1778 the lessee of Lydney Ironworks was given the right to work quarries on Red Hill, where he had the use of a limekiln, as well as at Pailwell, Aylburton Common, Kidnalls and the Snead. The Red Hill quarries are now long disused.



A second
view,
looking SW

Photographs taken by Robin Warren, March 2004

Tidenham - Dayhouse Quarry



Photograph taken by John Sheraton, January 2000

Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Taylor	Henry	25/10/1894	21		Killed by a fall of a stone weighing 6 cwt which fell 15 feet onto his head.

The recorded fatality was reported to be at an 'unnamed Quarry' at Tidenham. Dayhouse Quarry is not the only quarry that has worked at Tidenham so we cannot be sure that this was the site of the accident.

Tidenham (or Dayhouse) Quarry worked the massive Drybrook Limestone, part of the Carboniferous Limestone Series (Dinantian) and here about 200 ft thick. The rocks dip steeply WNW, and the quarry is very deep. Quarrying appears to have begun around the 1930s, originally for lime burning, but later for road metal or aggregate. Its proximity to the Great Western Railway's Wye Valley line facilitated the transport of stone. The quarry was owned by P.H. Ingledew in 1942, T.S. Thomas & Son Ltd in 1971, and worked until the 1990s. The last train from the quarry ran in September 1992, although stone may have been sent by road for some time after this.

Today the flooded quarry is used for diver training because of its considerable depth. The above photograph shows the quarry at SO 555 955, looking NW.

Whitecliff Quarry



Photograph taken by John Sheraton, June 2002

Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Martin	Walter	18/12/1951	47		Was shifting loose stone after firing. Levering with a bar he stepped back and fell 80 feet and suffered multiple injuries which proved fatal.

Limestone was quarried near Whitecliff before the 17th century, and limekilns are recorded here in the 18th. The opening of a tramroad from Coleford to Monmouth in 1812 stimulated quarrying, and there were three new kilns in 1836. The tramroad was converted to a standard-gauge railway by the Great Western Railway in 1883, and there was an agreement between the GWR and the Whitecliff Lime Co. for a private siding in 1885. Monmouth Steam Sawmills Co. Ltd took over the quarry in 1904, Thomas Swan & Co. Ltd in 1930, and Fred Watkins (Whitecliff Quarries) Ltd soon after World War 2. Ownership passed to Man-Abell (Whitecliff Quarry) Ltd in the mid-1960s, stone for tarmac, aggregate, blast-furnace flux and railway ballast being produced from the massive Lower Dolomite, part of the Carboniferous Limestone Series (Dinantian). After the line to Monmouth was closed in 1917, stone was transported onto the Severn & Wye Railway's branch at Coleford until that closed in 1967. The quarry was disused by the 1990s, by which time it was quite extensive (500 yds across).

Wilderness Sandstone Quarry



Fatal Accidents

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Smith	William	05/09/1902	43	Labourer	He approached too near the edge and overbalancing fell into the quarry a distance of 25 feet from where he was working removing overburden. He was not thought to be seriously injured but died 18 days after from general paralysis the result of the accident.
Smith	John	23/12/1903	68	Labourer	Fall or slide of a large mass of sandstone rock and rubbish from above where they were filling boxes for the crane. The bed of stone lies on a thin bed of marl dipping at a high angle this in consequence of the wet weather caused the stone to slide away suddenly from joints which released it as the gutter which had been only just cut through at the bottom for the purpose of working this bed of stone was narrow these men were unable to get away. It does not appear to have given any previous indication of being loose. 2 killed
Morgan	John	23/12/1903	53	Labourer	Fall or slide of a large mass of sandstone rock and rubbish from above where they were filling boxes for the crane. The bed of stone lies on a thin bed of marl dipping at a high angle this in consequence of the wet weather caused the stone to slide away suddenly from joints which released it as the gutter which had been only just cut through at the bottom for the purpose of working this bed of stone was narrow these men were unable to get away. It does not appear to have given any previous indication of being loose. 2 killed

The Wilderness quarry remains active today, mainly because of the attractive looking stone which is used in the repair and maintenance of buildings which were originally constructed with similar stone. The colour of the stone is clearly visible in the above photograph taken at SO 67131 18439, looking NNE.

Sandstone has been quarried near Mitcheldean since the late 18th century, and was exploited on a large scale from 1882, when the Wilderness Stone and Brick Works was begun by W.M. Colchester-Wemyss. The Wilderness Sandstone Quarry worked the Brownstone unit of the Devonian Lower Old Red Sandstone. The rocks dip west at about 45°, and consist of dull red to green sandstone, locally calcareous, with a few layers of conglomerate and mudstone. The stone was in demand for monumental work and as a building stone and was used in buildings as far afield as Gloucester, Bristol, Birmingham, Barry and Newport. Wilderness Quarry, and the associated brickworks which dated from 1885, was one of many in Dean taken over by the Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd in 1900. The United Stone Firms Co Ltd was formed in 1910, but this went into liquidation in 1913. It was re-organised in 1926 but went into receivership again in 1931. Work continued under the receiver until 1939, when the firm was acquired by a new Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd. Wilderness Quarry itself closed soon after the First World War, with the loss of 150 jobs, but has been worked sporadically since then. The site was acquired by a road haulage company in 1964, and several small industrial units had been built by 1987.



The quarry from SO 67167 18335, looking north

Photographs taken by Ron Beard, March 2006

Worcester Walk Quarry



Photograph taken by John Sheraton, November 2004

Fatal Accidents					
Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Occupation	Cause
Joynes	William	11/06/1906	14	Signal boy	He was engaged as signal boy for the engineman close to the edge of the quarry and was crushed against the fence by the jib of the steam crane which was being slewed round. On the jib being moved back he fell or slipped under the railings into the quarry below.

There are several stone quarries on the northern side of the Speech House Road down Howlers Slade, to the south of Worcester Lodge. It is probable that the fatal accident occurred in one of these. They include Oak Quarry (SO 594 114) and Beech Quarry (SO 597 115) which, like quarries in Bixslade (to the south) and Wimberry Slade (to the north), worked the Pennant Sandstone (Upper Coal Measures or Westphalian). Most of these quarries have been infilled and Oak Quarry is now a Council recycling depot. The above photograph was taken at SO 596 114, looking NE.

The area was a major source of stone for building and other purposes in the 18 and 19th centuries, and there were quarries in Worcester Walk in 1787. A tramroad from Howlers Slade to May Hill, near Monmouth, was opened by the Monmouth Railway in 1812, and a branch from the Severn & Wye Railway's Lydney to Lydbrook line was opened about the same time. In the mid-1800s Trotter, Thomas & Co had 20 quarries in Dean and later established a stoneworks on the Speech House Road near the junction with the S&WR's

Howlers Slade Branch. The company became part of David & Sant Ltd in 1892, which had 41 quarries by 1899, but further amalgamations resulted in formation of the Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd in 1900. E.R. Payne & Son also had quarries in Howlers Slade, but both firms became part of the United Stone Firms Co Ltd, formed in 1910 to operate all the major stone quarries in the Forest. This went into liquidation in 1913, was re-organised in 1926, but went into receivership again in 1931. Work continued under the receiver until 1939, when the firm was acquired by a new Forest of Dean Stone Firms Ltd. However, the Howlers Slade quarries went into decline after World War 1, and the tramroad was abandoned.