

BOOM, BANG A BANG!



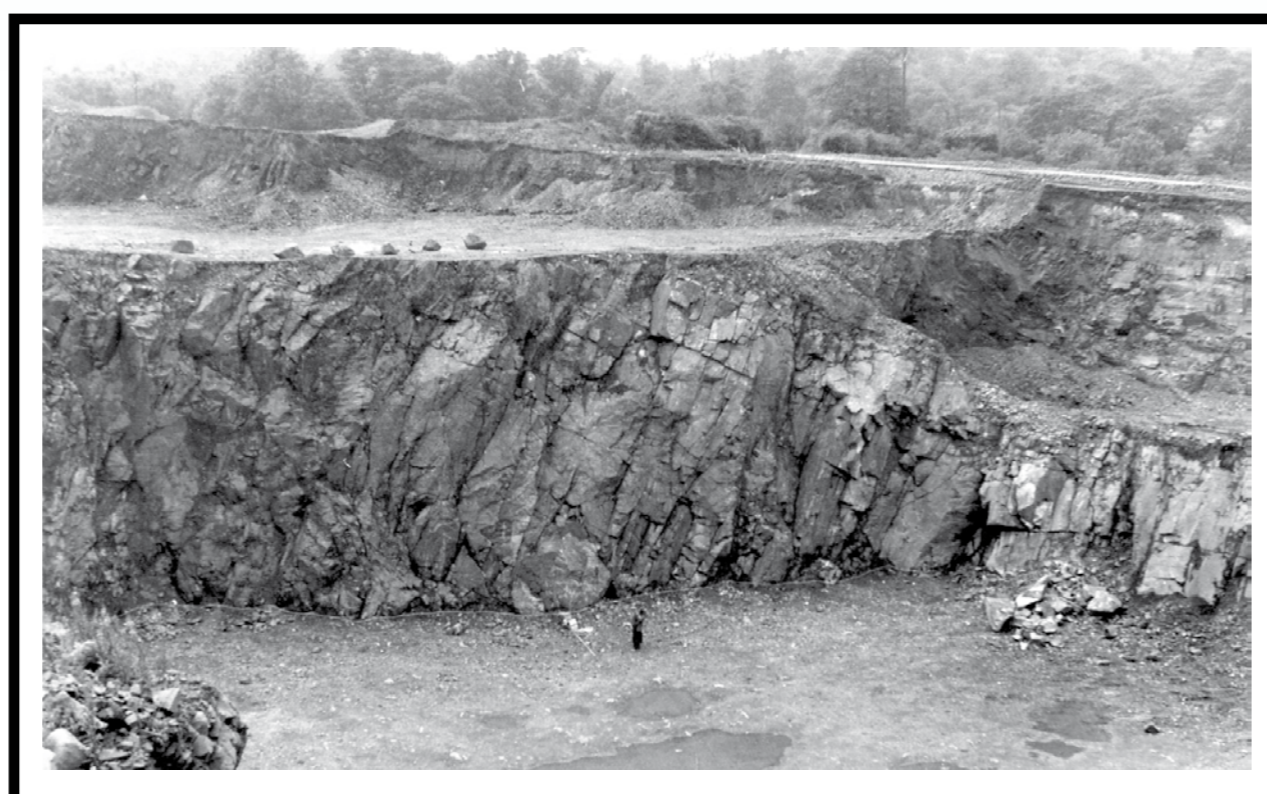
◀ This pneumatic drill was used for making a row of vertical holes above the quarry face for the loading of dynamite. This method of blasting often left lumps sticking out of the rock face. It had a tendency to leave a crumbling surface, which was dangerous for those men working below.

Similar drilling took place at the base of the rock to ensure that the rock face shattered and broke away cleanly.



▲ Here we see men packing the dynamite into the holes at the base of the face. It appears the dynamite is carried around in cardboard boxes!!

▼ The long white threads visible here are the detonating cords. These would be lit at a safe distance to set off the dynamite.



▲ Finally we see the quarry face ready for detonation with a lone figure making the final checks.



Detonation!

▶ The blasting leaves a huge pile of broken stone. Special machinery, like this extractor, load the stone into transporters.



▶ Some stone lumps were too large to be taken away and needed to be drilled manually.

It was even known for dynamite to be wrapped around a large lump to break it, a technique which would have violently thrown rock in all directions.



As soon as the last of the blasted material is picked up, the men can move in and begin planting more dynamite, and so the process continues. Over the years the blasting process has changed greatly. Nowadays the holes are drilled from the top only and are filled with explosive. Modern technology is used to decide where holes are placed and how much explosive is used. This process is very controlled and safe.



These two pictures from 20 years ago show there are still dangers involved with quarrying. In the second photograph a large stone is visible on the skyline. This stone, weighing approximately 2 tonnes, or the same as 2 new minis, was blown 40 metres into the air by the blast.

