

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

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**Group Chaplain, Historian, and Archivist to Aggregate Industries**

Bardon Hill  
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Aggregate Industries' Ronez quarry in the parish of St John occupies the most northerly point in the island of Jersey. In 1831 Samuel Lewis noted in his *Topographical Dictionary*<sup>1</sup> that the parish

is characterized by the same bold line of coast that distinguished the northern side of the island, and is chiefly noted for its extensive quarries of a fine kind of sienite, much resembling granite in appearance and hardness, and highly esteemed for architectural purposes; it is procured from a cliff, called Mont Mado, which is entirely composed of it.

There is evidence for the granitic rocks from Mount Mado having been worked in Neolithic times, but it was not until the late 18th century that recognisable quarries in the modern sense come into existence hereabouts. Lewis tells how the commercial and military development of St Helier made heavy demands of the quarries of St Johns:

St Helier: The commercial intercourse with other countries having greatly increased, it became necessary for the protection of the vessels frequenting the harbour [of St Helier] which carry an aggregate burden of twenty thousand tons, to enlarge the pier, which was accordingly accomplished, at an expense of £61,000: it is entirely constructed of the sienite rock from the quarries of St John's, and is faced with blocks weighing nearly two tons each.

The successful commercial exploitation of St John's granite required financial investment beyond local means and by 1869 the Jersey Granite Company had commenced operations on Ronez, formerly known as La Houle, for by the will of Jean Jeune of St Brelade, Vingtaire de Noirment, made on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1869, the interest on a bond of £600 of the Jersey Granite Company was, bequeathed to Esther Duval<sup>2</sup>.

By 1897 the quarry belonged to Philip Baudains<sup>3</sup> who was born in St John's parish in 1837 at Les Mouriers. He became an advocate with chambers in St Helier in Halkett Place and made his home in Elizabeth Place. A keen though controversial Freemason, in 1873 he was one of the founding members of the Société Jersiaise.

Baudains was for fifteen years Constable of St Helier and when in 1896 he retired through ill health a statue was erected in his honour, the plinth for which was formed from an immense boulder

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of England*, London, 1831.

<sup>2</sup> Jersey Archives: D/Y/A/41/96. Esther Elizabeth Duval was born in 1822 and in 1881 was living at Bel Air House, St Helier.

<sup>3</sup> Whose surname is sometimes as *Baudins*.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

in weight some 3½ tons, was found in the form of an immense boulder lying on the sea-shore about 200 feet from the quarry at Ronez owned by ex-Constable Baudins<sup>4</sup>.

It was considered to be 'far superior to any granite hitherto found in the Channel Islands', and whilst it had 'all the characteristics of the best of the celebrated Dumfries granite' it surpassed it in beauty<sup>5</sup>. The statue proved to be something of a restorative and he lived another twelve years, dying in 1908, aged 72<sup>6</sup>.

The 1881 Census names three quarry masters living in the parish of St Johns. The oldest was Joseph Barrette, 65, and born in the parish. He is described as 'landowner, farmer, stone merchant & quarryman, employing 14 Men. John Dolbel, 60, is a quarry master at Mont Mado, and has two boarders who were stone cutters: Philip Le Masurier, 56, a widower, born St Johns, and his son, also Philip Le Masurier, 20, also born St Johns. 1901 Le Masurier, now 76, is still a quarry man! On the other hand, Philip Le Masurier, junior, appears to have retired and is 'living on own means'<sup>7</sup>. The third quarry master is Josué Sarre, 38, of Mont Mado, St John. In 1901 he is a granite quarry owner<sup>8</sup>. In 1881 nine quarrymen are listed, one of whom, John Fudge, 28, has come over from Portland in Dorset, and another, Jean Hillion, 36, was born in France<sup>9</sup>; five stone cutters, three stone dressers, and a stone cracker. In five instances sons follow their fathers into the quarries, and work alongside them. In 1881 there is one stone mason listed, Thomas Renault, 22, who lived at 'White House on top of hill, St Johns'. Four quarry workers, whose ages in 1881 ranged from 17 to 44, are still working at St Johns in 1901.

Nicolas Jouault has extracted the names of 83 men connected with quarrying living in the parish of St John in 1851. In addition one came from England, one from France, and one from Malta. Half a century later, in 1901 73 men were engaged in quarrying, of whom none came from England, one from America, and sixteen, 22%, from France. In 1851 one was nine years old and one was ten: at the other extreme one was 79. In 1901 the age range extended from 15 to 67.

In 1902 the Jersey Granite Quarries Ltd (not to be confused with the by now defunct Jersey Granite Company) secured the suspension of the licence granted to an oyster fishery in 1882 in order to exploit Ronez quarry<sup>10</sup>. A jetty was built at a cost of £1,000 sea<sup>11</sup> and the first vessel to load stone at the jetty was the German SS *Senator Kruger*. The event was witnessed by the Constable of St Helier, Mr Philip Baudins, whose statue was set up in St Helier in 1896, Mr Sibon, the Managing Director of the quarry, and Mr Bellingham the shipping agent:

Coloured flags were flying from the jetty and the quarry presented an animated scene, loading was started at once, the splendid blue stone, in spawls of from six to ten lbs in

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<sup>4</sup> *Jersey Evening Post* 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1897.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> There is handsome portrait in A Biographical Dictionary of Jersey.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly's 1927 *Channel Islands Directory* suggests the possibility of some upward spiralism. A Philippe Le Masurier appears in the private residents' list as living at 'The Oaks, Nord' and a John Le Masurier lives at Century House.

<sup>8</sup> In 1927 it is Joshua Sarre, junior, who is the master of Mont Mado quarry.

<sup>9</sup> Both he and William Toms, 33, another quarryman, lived at London House, St Johns.

<sup>10</sup> Jersey Archives: D/AP/U/79.

<sup>11</sup> It was begun in 1901 and completed in 1903. It is said that J.J. Renouf piloted the first vessel through the treacherous rocks, and because he refused payment the company presented him with an inscribed barometer which is still in the family. Later, divers were used to blow up the rocks to create a safer passage.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

weight, were carried in trucks which were pushed by hand along the narrow rail network that had been laid down onto the jetty where a steam crane lifted the truck bodily into the hold of the ship, where they were quickly overturned. It was hoped that the steamer could be loaded in time for her to leave for her destination that night<sup>12</sup>.

The *Jersey Times* was less enthusiastic:

The *Senator Kruger*, Captain Schultz, which arrived here during the week to take on the first shipment of granite from Ronez Quay left yesterday at 6.30 with 375 ton for the Surrey Docks. The loading facilities were not of the highest efficiency, but we are assured that this will be remedied for the next consignment which will be at the end of the year<sup>13</sup>.

In 1903 Kelly's *Channel Islands Directory*, whilst making no mention of the Jersey Granite Quarries, does mention Ronez Granite Quarries Limited, with offices at 11 Halkett Street, St Helier<sup>14</sup>. This latter company was still in its infancy and it was only in April 1902 that Philip Baudains, still basking in the glory of his 1897 St Helier statue, with his fellow directors Charles Sibun and William Milner, petitioned the Island's Lieutenant Governor, Major General Henry Richard Abadie<sup>15</sup>, and its Bailiff, William Henry Venables Vernon<sup>16</sup> for a licence to extract stone at Ronez. They were successful and a lease was granted at £3 per annum. This was seen as setting something of a precedent and in May 1902 the Alderney granite merchants and contractors, Matthew Rowe and Thomas Mitchell, used terms of the Ronez lease as a reason why the crown should grant them favourable terms in Alderney. Ronez Granite Quarries Limited did not, however, prosper, and in December 1907, with Philip Baudains in the chair, the company was wound up<sup>17</sup>.

The liquidated Ronez Granite Quarries gave way to a reborn Jersey Granite Quarries Ltd, who also sought, and received, the suspension of the 1882 oyster fishery licence which Ronez Granite Quarries had obtained in 1902<sup>18</sup>. This was granted by the States in 1908. New names appear, with William Henry Sommerfield as chairman of the new board of directors.<sup>19</sup> There was something of the new broom about the Jersey Granite Quarries Ltd, who had capital at their disposal to invest and in their hands the quarry developed. Bonsor<sup>20</sup> refers to contemporary photographs showing a network of narrow gauge railway lines leading from the jetty, a steam locomotive, and trucks.

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<sup>12</sup> John Jean, *Stories of Jersey Ships*, pp. 92, 93.

<sup>13</sup> The *Jersey Times*, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1903.

<sup>14</sup> The 1903 directory noted that:

Bonne Nuit bay in this parish are the Mont Mado quarries from which a pink granite of great hardness is obtained and near Sorel Point are quarries of blue granite (diorite)<sup>2</sup>,

but Kelly fails to mention the owner of either quarry.

<sup>15</sup> Major General Henry Richard Abadie, 1841-1915, distinguished himself militarily in Abyssinia and Afghanistan, and was Lt-Governor of Jersey 1900-1904.

<sup>16</sup> Sir William Henry Venables, 1852-1934, was educated as a lawyer both in England and France. He served as Bailiff and President of the Royal Court and States of the Island of Jersey 1988-1931 and was knighted in 1903, becoming a KBE in 1921.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Sibun, a director and quarry manager was not present and Frederick C Sibun acted as his proxy. Another Sibun present was Edgar Stanley Sibun. William Milner, another director, and, Miss Marguerite Baudins, the chairman's daughter, were also present at the meeting. The liquidator was Charles Henry Brockhurst whose office was in Hill Street, St Helier.

<sup>18</sup> Jersey Archives: D/AP/U/79.

<sup>19</sup> Another name to appear is that of Leopold Bernhardt Sommerfield.

<sup>20</sup> NRP Bonsor, *The Jersey Eastern Railway and the Occupation Lines in Jersey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford, 1977, pp. 139, 140.

The locomotive had been recently acquired and was an 0-4-0 saddle tank built by WG Bagnall, Ltd, of Stafford.

At this time the demand for stone on the British mainland was such that large quantities were exported from Jersey as a whole for building and for use as setts, kerbstones, and road metal, and for ease of shipping, coastal quarries had an obvious advantage.

In January 1911 orderly quarrying was interrupted by tragedy which was reported by the *Jersey Evening Post*<sup>21</sup>. Auguste Marie Perrot, a 28 year old Frenchman from the Cotes-du-Nord, was working with another man, surnamed Le Maistre. According to the quarry manager, Mr Howard, they were:

dislodging stones at the top of the quarry. For this work a rope was attached to some portion of the rock which they grasped with one hand, whilst with the other they loosened the stones with an iron bar. Suddenly a quantity of rock became loose, and struck Perrot in the chest, which caused him to release his hold of the rope, and he fell to the bottom of the quarry. He had received severe injuries to the head; there was a fracture of the skull; his legs were broken, the left foot being almost torn from the leg. Deceased was most likely insensible before he reached the bottom.

Perrot left a widow and 2 children and Mr Howard the quarry manager having expressed company's sympathy with the widow and family informed the inquest

he was authorised to say that the Company would undertake to assist the widow.

In 1911 the company went into liquidation which enabled the Croft Granite, Brick, and Concrete Company of Leicestershire to acquire the Ronez Quarry for £4,800. Why or how a Leicestershire company should have become interested in the commercial potential of a quarry in the Channel Islands is an interesting question. The quality of Channel Island granite was well known and the Pochins had West Country interests in Cornish china clay and Cornwall was far nearer to Jersey than Leicestershire.

A new company meant a new foreshore lease. Its local legal representatives were two solicitors who had recently entered into professional partnership, the senior being Edward Binet Renouf, 1863-1929<sup>22</sup>, and the junior Albert Edward Ereat. Their office was at 15 Royal Square, St Helier. Renouf became a practising solicitor in 1887 and soon after, became Deputy of St Helier in the island's Legislative Assembly, with an established reputation as 'a finished and telling orator'. This however did not prevent him from losing his seat in 1900 on account of his support for the controversial Militia Bill. In

The Croft Granite, Brick, and Concrete Company, however, were unwilling to accept a lease on the terms laid down by the Treasury and by 25<sup>th</sup> March 1913 foreshore rental of £16 3s 10d was owing for 224 days. A law suit ensued which was decided by in favour of the Crown, though the company was allowed a lease to work the stone and, no doubt, it was Ronez granite which was used in 1913 for building the parish hall at St John's.

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<sup>21</sup> *Jersey Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1911.

<sup>22</sup> He was also American Vice-Consul in St Helier.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

At this time an official of the parish of St John's kept a record of the quantities of stone exported from Ronez and they illustrate the impact made upon the quarries by the change of ownership in 1911. The figures were supplied by the quarry manager to the Constable:

1906 - 3626 tons	1911 - 9466 tons
1907 - 1706	1912 - 16315
1908 - 7136	1913 - 29555
1909 - 8148	1914 - 30943
1910 - 4696	

The outbreak of the Great War, however, in August 1914 caused the company to suspend its plans for the further development of the quarries for the duration of hostilities. Renouf, the company lawyer, was 51 and too old for active service but went about the island making 'stirring recruiting speeches', for he was

Strongly Imperialistic in his ideals and was of a mind which would never understand the temperament of a man who stood aloof while his country waged war<sup>23</sup>.

Fluent in French and knowledgeable in French law, his skills were used in France on behalf of the British government. In his absence Ronez's fortunes went into serious decline and in March 1916 the Island's Receiver General<sup>24</sup> having been instructed by the Treasury to do so, put the Vicomte of Jersey<sup>25</sup> possession of Quarries in the presence of Croft's Manager.

Hostilities over, those who fell from the parish of St John in the Great War were commemorated by a granite monolith erected near the parish church<sup>26</sup>. There was peace at home, too, and a stable symbiosis between Crown and quarry was at last established at Ronez when in July 1921 the Royal Court of Jersey gave its approval to a lease granted by the Attorney General and Receiver General on behalf of the Crown to the Company, again represented by EB Renouf. For a term of ten years the Company was to pay £10 rent per annum and a royalty of 1d a ton. The Company was also granted the option of renewing the lease, if the conditions were observed, for a further ten or twenty years.

To facilitate Croft's working on the Channel Islands, and out of respect for local loyalties, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1921 a wholly owned subsidiary bearing the familiar name of the Jersey Granite and Concrete Co Ltd was registered under the Companies Act (Jersey) 1861. Edward Renouf, now influential in Jersey life both as a lawyer and a politician, was made a director and chairman of the Board. Thomas David Thomas, though he was imported from England was also made a director, and was also to be the resident quarry manager with a yearly salary of £410, paid monthly<sup>27</sup>.

Mr William John Chapman was to be Secretary at a yearly salary of £225, also payable monthly, and the public offices of the Company were to be at Ronez. Overall control of the new company was maintained from Croft in the person of Mr NF

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<sup>23</sup> Obituary notice in the *Jersey Evening Post* 15<sup>th</sup> July 1929.

<sup>24</sup> Lt Col Edward Charles Malet de Carteret, 1838-1914, Receiver of His Majesty's Revenues. He served in the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny and was a prominent Free Mason.

<sup>25</sup> Reginald Raoul Lemprière, MA, 1851-1931, Viscount of Jersey 1894-1917, educated at Winchester, Hertford College, Oxford, and the Inner Temple, and became CBE in 1929. His London club was the Athenaeum.

<sup>26</sup> It was erected in 1923 at a cost of £300.

<sup>27</sup> The Manager could enter into contracts for the purchase of materials to an amount not exceeding £50 in each case.

Spence<sup>28</sup> who had the title of Technical Adviser, though the observance of his advice by the two island directors seems to have been mandatory:

As the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks.

The Cornish Mines Supplies Company was to be the new company's agents.

The dominance of the parent company is reflected in the initial allocation of the new company's shares:

1-3 The Hon Henry Duncan McLaren<sup>29</sup>  
4-6 Mr Horace Stanley Pochin<sup>30</sup>  
7-9 Mr Norman Findley Spence  
10-12 Mr Frederick Herbert Middleton  
13-15 Mr Thomas David Thomas  
16-18 Mr Edward Binet Renouf  
19-21 Mr Albert Edward Ereaut

Only Renouf and Ereaut were Jerseymen<sup>31</sup>.

The new company's articles of association took effect on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1921 and it acquired the Ronez quarries from the Croft Granite Brick & Concrete Co Ltd for £50,000 of which £29,979 was paid for by the issue of 29,979 shares of £1, and the balance of £20,021 was paid in cash. A contract was entered into for the sale of crushed stone and other material to the parent Company:

broken granite at 11/6 per ton FOB<sup>32</sup>  
granite chippings at 8/6d a ton FOB.  
chippings mixed with dust at 5/- per ton FOB.

It was also hoped to develop local sales by placing advertisements in local papers:

with regard to the sale locally of crushed stone for road making and repairing and for building purposes at priced to be determined by the Manager.

In the three months ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1921 6.048 tons of stone were exported from Ronez upon which the Company paid HM's Receiver General a royalty of 1d per ton which amounted to £25 4s 0d. In the first fortnight of 1922 wages amounted to £300 16s 0d and 1,800 tons of stone was shipped, valued at £1,035 0s 0d. There were no local sales to date and the estimated profit for the whole month of January was a modest £33 14s 11d. Ten tons of stone were sold locally. Progress was slow and the first six months of 1922 showed a net loss of £1,264 5s 10d which generated the suggestion that

the Press might be invited to visit the Quarry with a view to commenting in the papers on the various productions of this Company for local use.

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<sup>28</sup> Mr NF Spence, President of the Institute of Quarrying 1948-49. His remuneration of £100 pa seems disproportionate to his authority.

<sup>29</sup> Henry Duncan McLaren, 1879-1953, the second Lord Aberconway,

<sup>30</sup> Horace Stanley Pochin, 1877-1935, JP, of Croft House, Leicestershire, son of Alfred Pochin

<sup>31</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:1-7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ie*, 'delivered free on board'.

But nothing definite was agreed and improving the quarry's internal narrow gauge network was seen as a more pressing priority.

The Board approved of the supply of Rails, Sleepers, &c and that the Technical Adviser be asked to send over a skilled Platelayer, the rails etc being at the present time on order<sup>33</sup>.

By the end of March 1922 plans had been drawn up for new quarry buildings at Ronez and submitted to the Board and approved, but there was a local shortage of the necessary skills, and the Secretary was directed to ask the Technical Adviser to arrange for a suitable man to come over to supervise the ir erection. On the other hand,

progress with the new plant was being rapidly made and completion is expected within the coming week.

Moreover, though no progress had yet been made over the roller for producing chippings, the Manager informed the Board that

a Mechanic is expected next week who will be out on this work<sup>34</sup>.

At the first AGM in December 1922 the Profit and Loss Account showed a deficit of £2,108 16s 11d. In explanation it was said that the company's operations had been directed mainly

to the repair and reconstruction of the Company's machinery at considerable cost. The development of the Company's profitability has been hampered by these Works but it is anticipated that exploitation of a profitable character will take place in the early future. The Staff is showing energy & keenness.

To facilitate Company growth the Directors were authorized to raise loans of £5,000 from the Croft Company at 5%.

Mr Thomas did not survive long as quarry manager and in April 1922:

tendered his resignation as Manager to take effect as from this date, salary to be paid him for the months of April & May 1922, he to reserve a claim for expenses for himself & his family & which claim he will submit in due course. Mr Thomas likewise resigns his position as a Director of the Company to take effect as from the close of this meeting. The Board duly accepted both resignations<sup>35</sup>.

The pre-eminent position of Mr Spence is reflected in the next Ronez minute:

The Secretary was instructed to notify the Technical Adviser by telegram of the above resignations & the Board's acceptance thereof<sup>36</sup>.

Renouf's, solicitor partner, Mr AE Ereaut was appointed a Director in succession to Thomas, once again reflecting Renouf's influence in the early development of the Company. .

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<sup>33</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:46, 25.3.1922.

<sup>34</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:46. 25.3.1922.

<sup>35</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:51. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1922.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

Why did Thomas depart do abruptly after so short a tenure of office? The answer may lie in a minute made in the previous January:

Whereas during the period of the War & until recently the work of exploitation of the Quarries at Ronez was to all intents & purposes suspended, and where as active operations are now contemplated, the Manager was directed forthwith to inspect the Quarries & to report thereon in writing, from the point of view of safety to the workers, no work to be undertaken meanwhile in any portion of doubtful safety. The Manager was also to report as to the efficiency of the machinery & plant generally, also from the point of view of safety<sup>37</sup>.

Thomas's report has not survived, but its contents may well have suggested to him that the task was beyond his resources. An agreed valuation of the quarry had been made in the previous August:

Minerals and freehold		£1,000	
Machinery:			
Big Engine & Dynamo Switchboard & Plant	7,000		
Small	5,500		
Compressor, Receiver & pipe line	750		
Motors, say 300 HP @ £7, including wiring etc	2,100		
Locomotive	600		
Loco Crane	1,500		
Portable Engine	500		
Crushers & Rolls, each set at £1,250	2,500		
Elevators & Screening Plant	1,750		
Loading Conveyors	2,000		
Pier Crane	500		
Crushing Plant [top of incline]	2,000	26,700	
Moorings		750	
Tramways etc, General Plant			
Railway & Tram lines	1,250		
Wagons &c	750		
Fitters & Smiths Shops, Machinery			
Lathes, Drills, Anvils, Vices, Forges, Tools, &c	1,500	3,500	
			31,950
4 cottages <sup>38</sup> @ £350	1,400		
Engine House & Gas Plant House	3,000		
Offices & Stores	250		
Magazine	250		
New Smith Shop, Fitters & Loco Crane Sheds	500		
Crushing Machinery Sheds	2,500		
Portable Engine Shed, Carpenter's Shop &c	1,450		
Conveyor Roofs	200		
Concrete Storage Bins	7,000		
Pier	2,500	18,050	
	Total		50,000

Stocks of Stone, Coal, Oil, & Powder shall be taken as on 1<sup>st</sup> January next ensuing at fair valuation between the two Companies.

<sup>37</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:21.14<sup>th</sup> January 1922.

<sup>38</sup> George De Carteret, the Quarry Foreman occupied Cottages No 1 & 2 and 'has a large family', Cottage No 3 was occupied by an employee & has a wife and sister in law, the widow of a former employee. Cottage No 4 had three quarrymen are in occupation and arrangements were being made to accommodate another man.

A temporary manager, Mr John Charles Baker, was lent by Croft and commenced his duties on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1922 with a salary of £23 per month and 35/- weekly for expenses, presumably his lodgings.

This was far less than the £410 per annum paid Thomas but Baker seems to have given satisfaction and in October 1922 his salary was raised to £360 per annum, 'from the date he took up residence in the Island'<sup>39</sup>. But not for long and on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1923 tendered his resignation which the Board accepted, paying him a month's salary in lieu of notice. Mr Chapman, the Company Secretary, was to carry out the Manager's duties until the arrival in Jersey of Baker's successor which was expected on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

The expected successor was Mr Arthur Abbott of Middleton by Wirksworth in Derbyshire. His salary was to be £364 per annum, 'plus a bonus on output to be arranged at a later date'. There was to be three month's notice from either side and the Board was to pay reasonable removal expenses from Derbyshire<sup>40</sup>.

There was no official manager's house at Ronez and Baker had leased Caen Lodge from Mr Alex Rayworth, FZS, of St John's Manor, the Seigneur de St Jean. Mr Rayworth, however, could not offer the house to the Company again because Baker still maintained his lease after he had left the company and sub-let it to Mr Abbott. Mr Rayworth's offer of another property to the company, St Mary's Lodge, for a tenant without children was declined, despite the fact further accommodation was needed because more staff was going to be brought over from England. Meanwhile the Board decided that:

The Manager Mr Abbott should devote his whole attention to the running of the machinery until an efficient man could be obtained to ably superintend the running of the machinery, particularly the No 1 Mill<sup>41</sup>.

In March 1924 Abbott, after only five months with the company, tendered his resignation, which the board accepted with a measure of enthusiasm, giving him three month's salary in lieu of notice and paying £42 to have his furniture transported back to England. Mr Chapman, the versatile company secretary, once again took over the duties of manager, *pro temp*<sup>42</sup>. By the end of the month the board decided to appoint Charles Blackburn, the company engineer, as manager, his 'salary to be determined'<sup>43</sup>.

Charles Blackburn, who figures prominently in Ronez's history over the next thirty years, was born in March, 1880 at Whitby. A year later his mother was described as a 'sailor's widow'. She had four children in all, and her 14 year old sister also lived with them. Mrs Blackburn, it was noted in the 1881 census, 'keeps a mangle'<sup>44</sup>. Her son came over to Jersey from Leicester in March 1922, as 'a skilled foreman' and was

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<sup>39</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> October 1922.

<sup>40</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 125, 126, 127, 130, 1. 8.1923.

<sup>41</sup> Ronez Minutes 1: 146, 11.12.1923.

<sup>42</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:151, 6.2.1924 and 1:159, 22.3.1924.

<sup>43</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:162, 22.3.1924.

<sup>44</sup> 'The possession of a mangle, for the use of which a small sum was charged, is among the poorer class of English cottagers, a common means of earning money'. *OED*.

one of the Technical Adviser's more successful appointments<sup>45</sup>. Blackburn gave satisfaction, promotion ensued, and six months later the Minutes recorded that:

Mr Blackburn was appointed Mechanical Engineer in charge of the plant at a commencing salary of £5 a week, the Company to pay his removal expenses from Leicester, such wages to run from the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1922<sup>46</sup>.

Though his title was Mechanical Engineer, he was really Quarry , and Charles Blackburn soon found himself in conflict with the unions which were well established in the quarry. In 1886<sup>47</sup> the *Stone Crackers' Union*, later superseded by the United Union of Quarrymen and Settmakers, was formed to defend the interests of quarries<sup>48</sup>. Locally, this union was centred on Guernsey, though it had members at Ronez where the newly founded Transport and General Workers Union was trying to establish pre-eminence and in August 1922 it was involved in a dispute with the company, when Charles Baker was the temporary manager.

A special Board meeting was called and the Technical Adviser's opinion sought by letter from Croft:

This special meeting was called to consider correspondence which had passed between Mr Hardman, district Secretary of the Transport & General Workers Union and Mr Baker, the Company's Manager on the subject of revision of wages of some of the men at Ronez Quarries. The Board considered the matter, also the Technical Adviser's letter on the subject dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1922. It was decided that the Secretary should invite Mr Hardman to meet Mr Renouf, the Chairman of the Company at 11 am, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1922. The Secretary immediately telephoned Mr Hardman and this interview was arranged<sup>49</sup>.

The interview, however, seems not to have taken place and in October the Company Secretary informed the Board that nothing more had been heard from either union<sup>50</sup>, and Renouf as Company Chairman eventually met the representatives of one union on 24<sup>th</sup> October:

The Chairman reported that on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1922 he had had a conference with Messrs Millman & Hardman of the transport & General Workers Union, the Company's Manager & Secretary being present. After a lengthy discussion on matters arising out of difficulties being encountered by this Union & the Guernsey Branch of the Quarrymen's Union as to the presence of each at Ronez Quarries, the following agreement was arrived at:

*The official representative of the Transport & General Workers Union is free at all times to discuss with the Management questions affecting the interests of the men of his Union, subject to the stability of the existing agreement with the Quarrymens Union as to conditions and rates of pay*<sup>51</sup>.

Four days later that month the Technical adviser arrived on Jersey:

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<sup>45</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:46. 25.3.1922.

<sup>46</sup> Ronez Minutes.1:86, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1922.

<sup>47</sup> The 1881 census mentions Thomas Esnouf, 58, of St John, *a stone cracker*, handicapped by deafness.

<sup>48</sup> Incorporated in 1937 into the General and Municipal Workers Union.

<sup>49</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:84. 30.8.1922.

<sup>50</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:92. 13.9.1922.

<sup>51</sup> Ronez Minutes 1: 96, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1922.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

remaining a few days for the purpose of dealing with matters in connection with production etc at the Quarries<sup>52</sup>.

Perhaps as much as a reminder to the Union of his authority as a response to economic pressure, at the December Board Meeting Baker successfully proposed the postponement of building a mess room for the Quarry's workmen<sup>53</sup>. A few weeks later the Company was attempting to reduce the wage rates of its workers. The meeting took place at Renouf's offices at 12 Royal Square, St Helier: There were present:

Mr Hardman and Mr FJ Nicolle for the Transport Workers.

Mr Baker for the Jersey Granite and Concrete Co Ltd.

Mr Renouf, Chairman of the Company.

Mr Hardman and Mr Nicolle argued that the revised scale of wages which it was intended to bring into effect as from 15<sup>th</sup> December 1922 under the Guernsey Agreement should be held up till the second week in January.

The appeal was made not as a matter of right but [was sought] as a concession to the men at a period of the year when the reduction would affect them & their families adversely.

The Company agreed to postpone the reduction in wages for three weeks, until 7<sup>th</sup> January 1923, but sought a *quid pro quo*:

The representative of the Transport Workers in appreciation of this concession undertook to urge upon the men the advisability of continuous service with the Company during the potato and tomato seasons, as it was acknowledged that concession should not all be one-sided. If this can be done, the Company agree to provide as much overtime as the output of the Quarry would justify<sup>54</sup>.

The Union's members, 'after careful consideration', ratified the agreement on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1923. Peace, however, was not restored for long and by April the Transport & General Workers Union wanted to negotiate a separate wages agreement from the Guernsey Quarryman's Union. The Company refused and pointed out to the District Secretary of the Transport & General Workers Union

the fact that the conditions in the quarrying trade at the present time do not justify an increase in wages, but rather tend in the other direction<sup>55</sup>.

A meeting between Company and Union took place on 28<sup>th</sup> April and agreement, which involved a reduction in wages, was reached. However, the Union membership rejected it and went on strike. An appropriate entry was made in the Company's minutes:

With reference to matters arising out of labour questions with the Transport and General Workers Union, it is here recorded that on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1923, the men employed at Ronez Quarries went on strike owing to non union men being employed. A conference was held in the afternoon of the same date at St Helier. The conference resulted in the following decision being arrived at:

*That if the men returned to work within 48 hours, the Board would consider the men's grievances, but not otherwise.*

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<sup>52</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:92, 28.10. 1922.

<sup>53</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:107, 12. 12. 1922.

<sup>54</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:112, 7.2. 1923.

<sup>55</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:114, 7.4. 1923.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

The men returned to work on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June 1923 & the Chairman arranged a further conference on the following day 9<sup>th</sup> June which was duly held at the Halkett Hotel at 3 30 pm.

The main questions at issue, ie preferential treatment & employment of non-Union men, were discussed at great length & the allegations & contentions by the Unionists were found to be groundless<sup>56</sup>.

By the Autumn of 1923 falling demand caused the Company to go on to the reduced working of the Quarries which brought a prompt riposte from Mr Hardman, the local Secretary of the Transport Workers Union:

A letter of complaint dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 1923 was received by the Chairman from Mr Hardman stating that the Management by closing down the Works two or three days a week, were acting in a disloyal manner towards the men. This charge of disloyalty was explained to the Chairman by the Company's Manager dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 1923.

29<sup>th</sup> October 1923 the Chairman called upon the Union Secretary to withdraw the charge of lack of loyalty by the Management towards the men. In reply Mr Hardman not only charged the Company with disloyalty but 'breach of good faith'.

9<sup>th</sup> November 1923 Chairman said he greatly resented the charges made by Mr Hardman & the latter was asked to withdraw these charges so that friendly relations might be continued.

The charges were withdrawn 10<sup>th</sup> November 1923<sup>57</sup>.

In July 1924 Mr Blackburn's salary was increased by £100 a year, and that of the Secretary, WJ Chapman, by £50<sup>58</sup>, both to be backdated to the previous February. Blackburn repaid this generosity by rather tactlessly suggesting that the workforce should work longer and harder, and do so without any increase in reward:

The Manager suggested that the ordinary working week should consist of 55 hours for at least the next two months, instead of 50 hours as at present. The Wages Agreement was referred to & which does not specify the number of hours for an ordinary working week & the chairman suggested that the Management should meet the men to amicably arrange the increase in working hours<sup>59</sup>.

The workmen refused to recognize the 55 hour working week and there was a meeting with Union on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1924. Matters were exacerbated by it being reported that:

several of the workmen were inclined to disobey the orders of the Quarry Foreman<sup>60</sup>.

In response:

The Board decided that any workman disobeying the orders of the Management should be instantly dismissed.

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<sup>56</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:119, 16.6.1923.

<sup>57</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:137, 17.11.1923.

<sup>58</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:175, 2.8.1924. In 1928 Blackburn received a further £75 pa, and Chapman, the Company Secretary £24, 1:325, 28.7.1928.

<sup>59</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:177, 2.8.1924.

<sup>60</sup> Ronez Mintes 1:178, 30.8.1924.

The Board was however somewhat troubled by the lack of facilities afforded by Company accommodation, though it was also felt that external authorities could do more for the Company's employees:

To provide ample washing facilities the management to consider the question of reserving part of the Barracks for recreation & provide a few periodicals & generally to make the men as comfortable as possible. It was also suggested that the Rector of St John's might interest himself in the men or that the local Branch of the YMCA might provide suitable accommodation<sup>61</sup>.

The Barracks, wherein unmarried men were accommodated, were built in concrete and the Company probably took more pride in their mode of construction than in the comfort they offered their inhabitants. At a Board Meeting back in 1922:

A short discussion took place as to the advisability of keeping various costs of the erection of the Barracks at Ronez so as to be in a position to quote in future for similar work on the Island & that these Barracks may serve as an example of the concrete work produced by the Company<sup>62</sup>.

Certainly the Board did not rush things when it came to improvements. A month later it was still a matter that action *was being taken*, rather than action *had been taken*

Action is being taken with regard to providing the additional facilities in the Barracks<sup>63</sup>.

Improvements to the Barracks little to remove discontent over wages, and in December 1924, with a disregard for the oncoming season of goodwill, Blackburn suggested the abolition of the bonus clause in the Company's wages agreement. Fortunately, wiser counsels prevailed and the matter was deferred<sup>64</sup>, and when it was raised again it was the Chairman who offered to negotiate with the Union<sup>65</sup>. It was now the Manager who

considered it was not appropriate to open negotiations at present.

Which was just as well, because in March there was a complaint from the Union about men being put off in February. Bad weather required it, said Company, adding that all the men during this period were put on to unproductive work at a loss to the Company<sup>66</sup>. Union concern however made the Company more aware of the legal requirements for the safety of its employees. In December 1924 the Board resolved that suitable fencing was to be provided to guard machinery and belts and the necessary book for reporting machinery inspections to be obtained<sup>67</sup>. List of rules drawn up based on Quarries Act of 1894 were also to be displayed<sup>68</sup>.

The likelihood of further wage reductions was implied by a letter to the Board from the Technical Adviser in March 1925:

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 79, 1.7.1922.

<sup>63</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:184, 27.9. 1924.

<sup>64</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:192, 1.12.1924.

<sup>65</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 196. 9.12.1924.

<sup>66</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 213, 14.3.1925.

<sup>67</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:197, 17.1.1925.

<sup>68</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1;189, 22.11.1924.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

The prices in England have been so reduced by keen competition amongst home producers and by the low prices of material from the Continent, due to depreciated exchange and other causes of which the Board is no doubt aware, that it will I fear be necessary for the Company to reduce its FOB prices to meet competition or it will be impossible for a market for the out-put to be found.. Without maximum production from the Quarry and machinery the costs cannot be kept at a low level and in order that the sales may enable this to be done, I would recommend the Board to agree to the prices suggested which compare satisfactorily with the general price level prevailing for the current year's Contracts<sup>69</sup>.

In response to Mr Spence's letter the Board agreed to reduce broken granite to 8/- a ton, and chippings of all sizes to 7/- a ton. Ronez, however, remained heavily overstocked and in January 1926 a telegram was sent to Croft, urging the Technical Adviser to make immediate price reductions to maintain output<sup>70</sup>.

In 1928 there was a further tightening up of safety and the Board's instructions 'regarding safety fences etc' were to receive the urgent attention of the Manager<sup>71</sup>. A month later more directions followed:

Further to the safety of men working at the Quarries the Management in conjunction with the Technical Adviser have framed special rules to be observed by the Quarrymen & which rules are to be exhibited in the Quarry. The attention of all men interested in the work has been drawn to them by the Quarry Foreman<sup>72</sup>.

The short-lived General Strike on the mainland had some effect upon Ronez and Blackburn reported to Board that

that the existing General Strike had had the effect of curtailing shipments. Also owing to the congested state of the storage bins, these conditions had resulted in the men being put on short time<sup>73</sup>.

The Jersey Electricity Company was established in April 1924 and began to supply St Helier with electricity in 1925 at 4d a unit, but it was not until 1935 that the company began to extend its supply to the whole island<sup>74</sup>. The delay in an adequate electricity supply coming to Ronez led the Board to consider alternatives and in April 1928:.

it was decided that greater use should be made of oil in the continuing unavailability of electricity. Oil should be delivered direct to Ronez Quarries & put into storage tanks there. Problems of suitable weather for the discharge which could be done in a few hours<sup>75</sup>.

Disputes over the import duty on oil delayed things and it was not until January 1931 that it was reported to the Board that preparations were in hand for increasing the storage of oil at Ronez<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 215. 21.3.1925.

<sup>70</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 250, 9.1.1926.

<sup>71</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 325, 28.7.1928.

<sup>72</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 328, 25.8.1928.

<sup>73</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 263, 15.5.1926.

<sup>74</sup> Ward Rutherford, *Jersey*, Newton Abbot, 1976, p.140.

<sup>75</sup> Ronez Minutes, I, 14. 4.1928

<sup>76</sup> Ronez Minutes, I, 1:10.1931.

The Quarry had a Sick Club to which both men and company subscribed, and in 1922 it had £75 on deposit. Company also donated an annual subscription of £10 10s to the General Hospital and to the Dispensary in St Helier. This was reduced to £5 in 1928 and the balance of £5 10 handed to the Quarry's Sick Club. The annual subscription to the Playing Fields was reduced from £10 to £5 at the same time. On the other hand on August Bank Holiday that year an outing was arranged for the workmen and

The Board authorized an amount not exceeding £10 to be spent for the entertainment<sup>77</sup>.

The minutes do not mention any more outings, but a photograph, taken in 1929, has survived of the Ronez Tug of War team, and the Championship Cup they had just won, the robust quarryman physique of its members ensuring their success in local competitions. In 1937, when the Technical Adviser mentioned in a letter the forthcoming Coronation celebrations, it was agreed by the Board that, as nothing was known about the business houses in Jersey doing anything regarding their employees, it had no recommendation to make in reply to the letter<sup>78</sup>. Charitable donations, unless to objects immediately connected to the Company, were rare and it was something of an exception when in September 1935 a £3-3-0 donation was made to the restoration fund of Trinity parish church<sup>79</sup>.

Blackburn achieved the summit of his ambition's greasy pole in September 1929, when he was chosen to fill the vacancy on the Board by the death of its chairman Mr EB Renouf<sup>80</sup>. On 12<sup>th</sup> July he had been taken ill suddenly on Les Minquiers<sup>81</sup>, a favourite resort of his, and was brought on Lady Trent's yacht to St Helier. Surgery followed at St Mark's Nursing Home. Complications set in and he died on the Sunday morning, only three days after leaving Les Minquiers<sup>82</sup>. Aged 66, he was a widower with five grown up children.

Lady Trent's solicitude for Renouf is interesting. As Florence Rowe, the daughter of a St Helier book seller, she had married Jesse Boot, a Nottingham chemist, in 1886 and ten years later a Boots branch was opened in St Helier in Queen Street. Jesse Boot was created a baronet in 1917 and ennobled in 1929. In 1934 his granddaughter, Barbara, married Willoughby Rollo Norman who was to become Chairman of the Boots Co, Ltd, and, more significantly for this narrative, Deputy Chairman of English China Clays Ltd.

But to return to the events of July 1929: Albert Edward Ereat. Renouf's partner, became the new Company chairman at a time when public relations were not high among the Company's business skills, as is illustrated by the saga of Mr Coutanche's field. On 29<sup>th</sup> December 1928 Mr Charles Coutanche, an elderly farmer of Le Grand Mourier, called on the Company Chairman and complained about the dust from the crusher at the works at Ronez which had been blown over his field of between three

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<sup>77</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 326, 28.7.1928.

<sup>78</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2; 287, 24.4.1937.

<sup>79</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 337, 7.9.1935.

<sup>80</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:367, 21.9.1929.

<sup>81</sup> Les Minquiers, an inhabitable off-shore reef to the south of the island, half way to St Malo

<sup>82</sup> Jersey Evening Post, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1929.

and four vergées<sup>83</sup>, thereby rendering, it in his opinion, unfit for cultivation and pasturage<sup>84</sup>.

Mr Blackburn and the Company Secretary visited Mr Coutanche and offered him £150 for the field, which adjoined to the Company's premises, and on instructions from the Board made enquiries as to whether further complaints were likely from other local farmers. Mr Coutanche refused the £150 as being inadequate, wanting what he paid for the field. Blackburn suggested a cheaper solution to the Board:

The Manager reported that the screens of No 2 Plant could be cased in at a cost from £30 to £40 so as to prevent the dust blowing over the field<sup>85</sup>.

The Board doubted the efficacy of the screens and instructed Blackburn to try and lease the field. Coutanche refused to consider a lease and in May the Company solicitor was instructed to value the field. As a result it was decided to offer Coutanche £200, and to go up to £210, 'if he insists', the original price asked<sup>86</sup>.

Coutanche accepted £200, but the Company was not prepared to leave it at that, and in August 1930 he was asked to lease the field from the Company, 'no claims whatever to arise from dust, etc'. In September the Company learned, but hardly to its surprise, that Coutanche was totally opposed to the idea<sup>87</sup>, and there the matter rested until January 1933 when the Board decided, keeping things in the family as it were, that dust extracting plant should be purchased from the Standard & Pochin Bros Ltd at approximately £270<sup>88</sup>.

Eight years later, in May 1941, during the German occupation, Blackburn, at a Board Meeting, showed a copy of a letter he had written to Deputy Le Quesne, President of the Department of Labour, protesting against the cutting up of the Company's land at Ronez to build a roadway. The land concerned was the field which the Company had purchased from Coutanche in 1930. Blackburn wanted to know the position with regard to compensation and why no notification of any kind had been given to the Company.

Blackburn had an interview with Le Quesne who stated

the work was being carried out under powers given by recent legislation and that he regretted that due notice had not been given the Company, which he thought it would have been done by the States Engineer's Department.

There was a second meeting between Blackburn and Le Quesne in June at which the Manager learned that:

The property was being surveyed and an offer of purchase would be made to the Company shortly, and, failing acceptance, the Department would have recourse to the recent Expropriation Law<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Two Jersey virgées and one quarter make an English acre. *OED*.

<sup>84</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 1:347, 12.1.1929.

<sup>85</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 1:351, 9.2.1929.

<sup>86</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 2:23, 9.6.1930.

<sup>87</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 2:24, 12.7. 1930; 2:28, 23.8. 1930; 2:34, 27.9.1930.

<sup>88</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 2; 157. 28.1.1933.

<sup>89</sup> *Ronez Minutes*, 32.5.1941; 28. 6. 1941.

The new road, of course, was part of a German scheme for developing the island's defences against Allied attack.

## II

On Christmas Day 1921 the SS *Bass Rock*, the first vessel to do so under the new management, arrived at Ronez but was unable to load because of unfavourable weather. Indeed this was not effected until Epiphany, 6<sup>th</sup> January, when 900 tons were put on board and the ship sailed the same day at 4 30 pm. The same steamer loaded again on 13<sup>th</sup> January and sailed for London at 3.30 pm with another 900 tons of broken granite<sup>90</sup>.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1922 the SS *Bass Rock* was back at Ronez and loading was arranged for the following day, a Sunday<sup>91</sup>. It was, it will be remembered, the weather, not the fact that it was Christmas Day which had prevented loading four months earlier. Jersey seems not to have been particularly Sabbatharian: maintenance work was done on Sundays and in 1928 an inquest was held on a Sunday, but by November 1933 the commercial potential of Sunday working for higher charges was realized:

The question having been raised by the Manager regarding the amount to be charged to steamers loading on Sundays, it was agreed, in the suggestion of Mr HS Pochin, to charge as follows:

15/- per 100 tons up to 300 tons  
10/- per 100 tons over 300 tons (to the nearest 50 tons)<sup>92</sup>.

Access by sea to Ronez was always difficult and often dangerous, and in April 1939 the skill needed in berthing was described for the readers of the *Jersey Evening News*:

The Glasgow steamer *Topaz*, well-known here in the potato season, was warping in to the jetty as we came down the cliff. She had come from Dublin to load stone for England, and slowly she came alongside what is one of the trickiest berths imaginable. The sea was calm but it is not always so at Ronez and not infrequently the swell causes vessels to break their mooring ropes as they strain on the surges. At times they even have to cast off and stand out to sea till the weather moderates and it has been known for the ship to have her screw going astern to keep her alongside while the last 100 tons has been put aboard. Nothing unusual happened on this occasion and with a minimum of fuss the *Topaz* came alongside and soon stone was roaring into her hold in an unending stream

When a ship is alongside the stone is shovelled on to the conveyor once more, it travels from its bin, over an ingenious automatic weigher, through an iron pipe and falls with a roar into the gaping holds of the ship alongside at the rate of 200 tons an hour. As many as three ships have been loaded in a day, and the biggest ever loaded was a 1,100 tonner<sup>93</sup>..

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<sup>90</sup> Ronez Minutes 1: 24, 14.1.1922.

<sup>91</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:54, 22.4.1922. Of 628 gross tons, and built in France at Nantes in 1889 as the *Bercy* for French owners, she was sold in 1896 to Norwegian owners. She was wrecked at Cap d'Erquy. However, she was salvaged and sold to Beliard and Fletcher of Antwerp and repaired. In February 1901 she was registered in Liverpool as the *Bass Rock*, her new owners being the Bass Rock Co, Ltd, and was managed by Alfred Rowland & Co of Liverpool. In October 1923 she passed to James Kell of Sunderland and then to Viktor Schuppe of Berlin. She was finally broken up in 1926 or 27. [I am indebted to Mr David Hecquard for much of this information]

<sup>92</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 182, 14.11.1933.

<sup>93</sup> The *Jersey Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

In December 1926 the SS *Ribbledale* from London, dragged her anchor outside Ronez waiting permission to dock, and, drifting broadside onto the rocks, became a total loss<sup>94</sup>.

Once docked, the actual process of loading was also accident prone. This was the case in December 1938 when a mishap, the nature of which is unspecified in the minutes, occurred in loading the SS *Parkhill*. In consequence the Company was moved to declare that it:

would not accept any responsibility for any accident which may occur, should the ship's crew be absent from the deck when the vessel is being moored & afterwards loading. The London charterers to be so informed<sup>95</sup>.

The Ronez mooring buoy as well was a constant source of anxiety and its efficient maintenance all the more important when, as was not infrequently the case, more than one vessel was waiting to load. So at the monthly board meeting in May 1931:

A report from the Manager was not available today owing to two steamers being loaded at the Quarry this morning<sup>96</sup>.

Board meetings often considered the condition of the Ronez mooring buoys and on occasion sought the assistance of the States President of the Piers & Harbours Committee and the Harbour Master of St Helier, as in February 1937 when the latter agreed:

they would supply a buoy but all labour in connection with the laying of the buoy would be chargeable to the company<sup>97</sup>.

Perhaps, however, when, on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1941, the manager reported that:

the mooring buoy at Ronez had sunk and the States Piers Harbours Committee would be notified and asked to do what was necessary in due course,

sabotage rather than bad weather was the cause of the trouble.

The occasional disorderliness of ships' crews could disrupt quarry working. This was the case in March 1939 whilst the MV *N'Gakoa* was berthed at Ronez. St John's Centenier was telephoned from the quarry with the news that there was trouble on board the *N'Gakoa*., a not infrequent visitor to Ronez. On the Centenier's arrival at the ship, the Master, Mr Frederick William King, informed him that one of the crew, John Cameron, aged 38, of Tyree, in the Inner Hebrides, had struck the chief engineer and the cook, broken a quantity of crockery, and had then punched him in the face, cutting his lip and nose, and inflicting upon him the indignity of breaking his dentures in the process. Captain King deemed Cameron to be a danger to the ship and refused to put to sea with him on board. On the other hand, the Centenier informed King that if Cameron was arrested, charged, and taken into custody, King could not sail because he would also have appear in court next morning, which would be Saturday, and give evidence. Cameron was taken to the police station and the *N'Gakoa* unexpectedly set

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<sup>94</sup> David Couling, *Wrecked on the Channel Islands*, London, 1982.

<sup>95</sup> Ronet Minutes, 2: 320, 10.12.1938.

<sup>96</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:111, 7.5.1931.

<sup>97</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2:280, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1937.

sail for London, the Master leaving a letter with Lloyd's agent giving an account of events and an assurance that he and the *N'Gakoa* would be back on Monday<sup>98</sup>..

Cameron, now sober, appeared in Court on Saturday morning, but in King's absence the case was put back to the following Tuesday. When King eventually arrived in court he was rebuked by the magistrate:

You are several days late, captain, you should have been here on Saturday, but we will let that pass<sup>99</sup>. In his evidence King told the court that when he went into the ship's galley he had remarked to Cameron that this was a sorry mess, Cameron had replied: 'Yes, and I'll do the same to you', and assaulted him. The magistrate suggested that instead of troubling the local Centenier, King could have tied Cameron up and put to sea, a suggestion which King treated with the disdain it deserved:.

If I had, sir, a friend of his would have let him go most probably<sup>100</sup>.

In reply to the magistrate Cameron said:

he remembered nothing of what happened on Thursday. All he knew of it was what he had heard from the witness in the evidence. He had been a sailor since the age of 14, and had not been trouble aboard ship before.

Impressed by Cameron's penitence, the magistrate offered to let him go, if King would have him back which King with a degree of magnanimity agreed to do:

I will take him, he is as good as a mate aboard, although he is only an A.B<sup>101</sup>.

The episode thereupon ended happily:

Magistrate: Then I must record a conviction, but after the plea your captain has put in for you, I will sentence you to four days imprisonment, Cameron, to date from the date of arrest. Now you go with your captain and leave drink alone.

Cameron: Thank you, sir, I will<sup>102</sup>.

In 1927 Kelly's *Directory* painted an idyllic picture of Jersey industry:

There is a considerable export trade in early potatoes which is really the staple industry; flowers and tomatoes are also largely exported, as well as apples, pears, cider, cattle, and granite.

The export of Jersey potatoes was more important to the Island's economy than the export stone and the Colorado beetle was given to using steamers from France as a means of invading the Island. Mr Spence, the Jersey Company's all-powerful Technical Adviser, from his Croft vantage point was not always sensitive to the consequences for the Island's market gardeners of a serious beetle infestation and, in March 1935, wanted the Jersey Board to influence the States in modifying the

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<sup>98</sup> *The Jersey Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1939.

<sup>99</sup> *The Jersey Evening Post*, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

shipping regulations, but in a rare moment of spirit the Board informed their Technical Director that they considered:

very little could be done to alter in any way the existing regulations for steamers coming from France<sup>103</sup>.

A week later the Board was even more resolute and warned Mr Spence that:

It would not be in the interests of the Company to attempt to obtain any further concession regarding the Colorado beetle question & the shipping laws relating thereto<sup>104</sup>.

From the outset the Board sought work with commendable energy. Thus in October 1922 the

The Chairman reported that he understood it was contemplated to build a stand at a race course in Jersey & the Manager was asked to enquire further into the matter with a view to offering the productions of the Quarries for the building<sup>105</sup>.

1925 was the high water for the production of stone on Jersey as a whole and nearly 300,000 tons were quarried. Confidence in the future encouraged the Company to develop its plant. The Crossley gas engine was extensively restored in May 1924 by its manufacturer at a cost of £359 10s<sup>106</sup>, there being

no probability of our utilizing power from the Jersey Electricity Co Ltd for three or four years<sup>107</sup>.

Later in the year a new screen was installed for No 2 Plant, a new generator acquired for the Power House, the storage bins were enlarged, and two new Broadbent crushers purchased at £371 each<sup>108</sup>. In April 1925 a new 20 ton weighbridge was ordered from Ashworth & Son for £278<sup>109</sup>.

But it was a false dawn and from 1925 onwards there was a rapid decline in the mainland market for granite setts, the major pre-war export, and this was accompanied by growing mainland competition, particularly from Cornwall. To maintain demand and output in August 1925 2 inch stone was reduced to 3s 6d a ton and ½ inch stone was reduced by 2s a ton. In January 1926 granite dust was reduced by 2s a ton and in October that year a concrete mixer was purchased for £35. By January 1927 chippings and macadam were now 7s 6s a ton, and in July macadam was further reduced to 6s 6d a ton<sup>110</sup>.

New markets had to be sought on the Island itself and the Company joined the Jersey Chamber of Commerce<sup>111</sup>. Allegations of short weight of deliveries of granite to St Brelades and other parishes were to be investigated promptly, and 'Estimated weight only' labels to be used in future<sup>112</sup>. An application was made for floor space at the

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<sup>103</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 220, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1935.

<sup>104</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 222, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1935.

<sup>105</sup> Ronez Minutes 1: 97, 28.10.1922.

<sup>106</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:142, 29.5.1924.

<sup>107</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:232, 29.8.1925.

<sup>108</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:185, 27.9.1924.

<sup>109</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:216, 1.4.1925.

<sup>110</sup> Ronez Minutes.

<sup>111</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:170, 24.5. 1924.

<sup>112</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:205, 14.2.1925.

Jersey Industries and Trades Exhibition in the Agricultural Hall, St Helier, in November 1927 at a cost to the Company of £7 10s 0d<sup>113</sup> Declining custom did not prevent the Company from seeing itself as Jersey's leading supplier of granite and *Granite, Jersey* was its telegraphic address<sup>114</sup>. Neither of the other two quarries in the parish listed in the *Kelly's* was sufficiently forward thinking to have a telegraphic address.

The future was seen to lie in the internal market for concrete and road chippings. So it was resolved that a shed should be erected adjoining the Power House

for the purpose of manufacturing Concrete Blocks etc at the approximate cost of £25<sup>115</sup>.

An additional granulator was acquired for £200<sup>116</sup> and cheered by the news in March 1928 that

Plenty of orders were now being received.

the Board went ahead and converted Ronez's No 2 plant into a chippings plant 'because of the demand'<sup>117</sup>. In October 1930 an offer was made to the States of Jersey to lay an experimental section of road<sup>118</sup>. In September 1931 Mr Blackburn illustrated his commercial diligence to the Board:

The Manager produced correspondence from the States Main Roads Committee in connection with the supply of Granite Chippings. The Company had not supplied any chippings for three years & had not been asked to submit a tender. The Company to write to the President of the Main Roads Committee to quote our lowest price for the supply of chippings<sup>119</sup>.

The concrete side of the business was nurtured by the purchase of a concrete block making machine at £160 and an engine to power it for £50<sup>120</sup>. Later a salesman was appointed for the Company's Concrete Department at a salary of £4 a week, payable monthly<sup>121</sup>. Perhaps it was due to his success as a salesman that in December 1932 the Board gave its approval for the

Concrete department to erect an additional Building & to purchase Block-making machines, Mixer, etc at approximate cost of £150<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Ronez Minutes 1:294, 9.7.1927.

<sup>114</sup> Kelly's *Channel Islands Directory* for 1927. Its telephone number is St John's 9, whereas the number of 'Charles J Le Quesne, quarry owner' is 2, suggesting he was rather more forward thinking about installing the telephone as a commercial aid. Joshua Sarre, junior, owner of Mont Mado Quarry, is a very modest 32. The Sarre family, however, may have felt the telephone was no substitute for word of mouth. Their quarrying activities are well evidenced in St Johns and the 1901 Census tells of:

Harry Sarre, 19, b. St Johns, living at St Johns, stone cutter.

Walter Sarre, 23, b.Trinity, living at St Johns, stone dresser.

Josue Sarre, 58, b. St Johns, living at St Johns, granite quarry owner.

While most of the Island's older quarries were relatively small, covering less than 0.25ha and providing only local building needs, Mount Mado (5ha) was quite large and supplied much of the granite dimension stone used for pre-20th century buildings on the Island.

<sup>115</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 207, 1.4. 1925.

<sup>116</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:216. 5.1 1927

<sup>117</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1: 321, 19.5.1928.

<sup>118</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2:38, 25.10.1930.

<sup>119</sup> Ronez Minutes 2:79, 19.9. 1931.

<sup>120</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:94, 18.12.1931.

<sup>121</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:84, 24.10. 1931.

<sup>122</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2:153, 5.12.1932.

As local trade developed, road transport became increasingly important to the Company. In 1922 a steam wagon was hired from Croft at £100 per annum and served its purpose until October 1925<sup>123</sup>. In May 1929 the Board accepted Mr Pochin's offer to sell them his

Morris Oxford car for the sum of £85<sup>124</sup>.

In July 1930 it was reported that a lorry had been purchased and was now in use<sup>125</sup>, two years later the Board considered it desirable to purchase another 'Motor Lorry' as early as possible<sup>126</sup>. In May 1942 the process was in reverse and

The Manager reported that he had disposed of a motor lorry for £40<sup>127</sup>.

This transaction is interesting. Ronez had been in German hands since October 1941, so to whom did Blackburn sell the vehicle? His 1941 Ronez inventory mentions a 'motor garage', but no occupants.

On a Sunday morning in March 1928 there occurred what the *Jersey Evening Post* described as 'another terrible fatality at Ronez'<sup>128</sup>, the implication being that terrible fatalities were not uncommon at Ronez. The victim was Walter Henry Audrain, a 26 years old bachelor from the neighbouring parish of Trinity who worked in the quarry with his brother, Francis Audrain.

It appears that it is the usual custom when blasting had taken place for special men to clear the overburdening land and rubble. For that purpose they get over the top of the cliff by means of a stout rope securely attached to a large peg in the ground above, and to which they attach themselves securely.

Unfortunately, young Audrain was shifting from one position to another and unfastened his rope thinking he was on a solid ledge. Suddenly some rubble gave way under his feet, and before he had time to secure himself, he fell, receiving terrible injuries, which must have caused instantaneous death.

Immediately help was rendered, but to no purpose. The body was carried into the canteen, some way up the hill side, until the doctor's arrival, when the worst fears were confirmed.

An inquest was held next morning, Monday, at Ronez before Mr Edwin Toulmin Nicolle, the Viscount<sup>129</sup>, a Jury, and in the presence of the Island's Attorney-General<sup>130</sup>. The proceedings began with the jury first inspecting the body, which had been taken to the canteen, and then scene of the accident. No mention is made of safety helmets or steel capped boots and the evidence of Dr Arthur Heys, who had been called to the quarry, from Millbrook, was gruesome:

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<sup>123</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:66, 22.4.1922, 1:245, 8.12.1925.

<sup>124</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:361, 11.5.1929.

<sup>125</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 25, 12. 7.1930

<sup>126</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 106, 5.3.1932.

<sup>127</sup> Ronez Minutes, 30.5.1942.

<sup>128</sup> *Jersey Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1928.

<sup>129</sup> 'In Jersey there is an officer called Vicomte, or Viscount, who represents the High Sheriff of an English county'. *OED*. Toulmin Nicolle was a St Helier lawyer.

<sup>130</sup> Mr CE Malet de Carteret, another St Helier lawyer.

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

Audrain was already dead when he arrived. The head and face were covered with blood. There was still blood oozing from both ears. The lower jaw was badly fractured and there was injury to the right eye. Death was due to a fracture of the base of the skull.

It was Charles Blackburn, the quarry manager, who reported the accident to Mr J Masurier, one of the two Centeniers<sup>131</sup> for the parish of St John who went at once to the quarry and

saw Audrain lying on a stretcher in one of the sheds at the bottom. The man was dead.

According to the *Jersey Evening Post* it appeared that Audrain and the other men

were working on Sunday as safety men; they were bringing down loose stuff from the surface of the quarry. They were tied around the waist, but deceased had just unfastened the rope to move his position when he fell, a height of from 180 to 200 feet.

George Anderson, the quarry foreman, informed the court that the working party had been barring or knocking down the overburden of the quarry since 8 am that morning Audrain was working at the top of the quarry face and Anderson and another quarryman, Winter Vibert, were knocking down some loose stone some 40 feet below him:

When they had finished there they went up to give the top men a hand. [Audrain] went up to have a cup of tea; for that purpose he untied himself and tied himself when he came down again. Later he changed his position and untied himself to come down. This was usually done. [Audrain] was still holding on to the rope when the gravel gave way under him, and he was pushed over the side.

Audrain had been at this particular work for about 6 years and was just beginning to be a good workman.

Anderson, though a British subject, had been born in France, and in reply to a question from the Viscount admitted that

he had not worked in an English quarry.

Then, anticipating perhaps that he might be asked why safety harnesses were not being worn, he continued:

Safety belts had been ordered a fortnight ago, but not because the ropes were unsafe. As a matter of fact the present system of ropes was quite safe unless the rope broke. The rope [Audrain] was tied by would have held a ship. As soon as [he] noticed a rope was frayed he had it changed.

Audrain's brother, Francis, next gave evidence, relating how they were working together:

when all of a sudden he saw him disappear over the side of the cliff. They were barring at the time, when the ground gave way and carried deceased with it. [He] went to his rescue

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<sup>131</sup> 'A police-officer in Jersey. Each parish has also two centeniers, except St Helier's where there are six [1862]', *OED*.

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

and lifted him up in his arms; he spoke to [him], but received no reply; he was bleeding from both ears.

In reply to the Attorney-General, Francis said

he saw his brother untie himself and he fell before he could tie himself up again. What [he] did was nothing unusual.

Two other workmen added their accounts of events. Winter Vibert was also working with Audrain, and

simply saw him go down the slide, [he] did not call out.

The other workman, Louis Rousseau

saw Audrain untie himself and place his bar alongside him. He came towards the foreman, apparently a bit too far, for the gravel gave way, and about a ton of stuff fell on to his arms, and pushed him down over the side of the cliff. The fall of earth did not cover him. Audrain clung on to the rope until he came to the edge: it pulled through his hand.

Like Vibert, Rousseau did not hear Audrain call out, and it was he, Rousseau, who informed the Manager what had happened.

Charles Blackburn next gave evidence and over one matter, for a quarry manager, showed a surprising inability to unlock his memory, and perhaps appropriate records were not kept:

about Tuesday or Wednesday of last week they had a big blast at that particular spot, and it was customary to send safety men to clear the upper part of the quarry.

This vagueness of recollection appears all the more remarkable for blasting like this

was only done about once a year. The men went to do the clearing until 6 o'clock on Saturday and asked to be allowed to finish the work on Sunday. He was in the quarry up till about 11 15 when all appeared in order. He was later informed of the accident and went down again. The body was transferred to the canteen.

In reply to the Viscount, Blackburn considered Audrain

was a very able man, indeed, one of the best men they had. Special men were selected for that particular class of work, and he was specially adaptable to it because he was lightly built.

Then, rather defensively, Blackburn, continued his evidence by saying

All the ropes were good.

To which the Viscount replied, with a hint of impatience:

that point was not in question.

Blackburn, who had English quarrying experience, concluded by assuring the court that

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

the men tied themselves very securely. Safety belts had been ordered but not as used in English quarries. As a matter of fact he would rather rely on a rope than a belt because it would not give way no matter how much fell. This was the most dangerous class of work in the quarry.

Later, in reply to a question from the Attorney-General said he had been in charge of Ronez for six years and that

this sort of work had been regularly done<sup>132</sup>.

Then, after Blackburn had made a formal expression of the Company's sincere sympathy to the bereaved family,

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

It was noted in the Ronez minutes that the inquest found the 'company not to blame', that there were no dependants and the company had assured the court that it 'will pay for the funeral'<sup>133</sup>.

Even when not fatal, quarry accidents could be serious, and the *Jersey Evening Post* was always the pen of a ready writer:

*Rolling Stone Strikes Worker  
One leg broken, other badly torn*

While engaged in work at Ronez quarries about noon today an employee of the company Mr Richard Henry Watson [26], a native of Aldershot living at Le Douet Farm, St John, received injury to his legs and was taken to the General Hospital.

Mr Watson was engaged in quarrying when a large stone suddenly started to roll and struck him on both legs. He was immediately assisted by his workmates and the ambulance telephoned for. After having been conveyed with all possible speed up the cliff he was rushed to the General Hospital. Examination at the Hospital revealed that he is suffering from a fracture of the left leg and severe lacerations of the right<sup>134</sup>.

But by the time the 1921 lease was due for renewal there was an air of confidence in the quarry and in November 1931 the board agreed with HM Treasury to extend its lease for a further 20 years. In December that year in a final burst of confidence the board spent £210 in renewing machinery. In January 1933 dust extracting plant was purchased for £270. Nevertheless Jersey as a whole exported only 100,000 tons per annum in the years 1933-8 in comparison with the 300,000 tons of 1925.

Granite shipped from Ronez during 3 months ending June 30<sup>th</sup> 1936

April	7 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Stronsa Firth</i>	520 tons	
	17 <sup>th</sup>	MV <i>Mies</i>	350 tons	
	17 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Moray Firth</i>	616 tons	
	21 <sup>st</sup>	SS <i>Moray Firth</i>	625 tons	
	25 <sup>th</sup>	MV <i>Ngaroma</i>	610 tons	
	29 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Lappen</i>	500 tons	
May	3 <sup>rd</sup>	SS <i>Border Firth</i>	580 tons	
	8 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Beaully Firth</i>	420 tons	
	9 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Avanville</i>	800 tons	

<sup>132</sup> Which seems to conflict with his earlier statement that this operation 'was only done about once a year'.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1928.

<sup>134</sup> The *Jersey Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1939.

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

	13 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>New Verdun</i>	375 tons	
	15 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Tora</i>	720 tons	
	25 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>River Avoca</i>	470 tons	
	28 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Border Firth</i>	510 tons	
	29 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Pylades</i>	700 tons	
	29 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Harptree Combe</i>	460 tons	
	30 <sup>th</sup>	MV <i>Noordzee</i>	320 tons	
	30 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Border Firth</i>	600 tons	
June	10 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Brightside</i>	520 tons	
	10 <sup>th</sup>	MV <i>Innishannon</i>	305 tons	
	18 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Lisa</i>	450 tons	
	19 <sup>th</sup>	MV <i>Apollinaris</i>	240 tons	
	19 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Tora Elise</i>	850 tons	
	20 <sup>th</sup>	SS <i>Murrayfield</i>	700 tons	
	21 <sup>st</sup>	SS <i>Stronsa Firth</i>	525 tons	
		Total	12,766 tons	

The imbalance, however, between the amounts of stone exported from Ronez and the amounts sold on the island itself was a cause of complaint by the Jersey Granite & Concrete Co. Ltd and the assistance of the local press was sought. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1939 the *Jersey Evening Post* ran an extensive article on Ronez Quarries:

*A visit to Ronez Quarries. Why can't they get local orders?  
Yet Britain buys 50,000 tons a year!*

In a good year Ronez Quarries export 50,000 tons of road stone to England; It is used extensively along the coast from Southampton to Hull and much of it finds its way up the Thames to London. But these are hard times, the September crisis, hit the trade badly and subsequent events of recent date have done nothing to steady the export trade. The result is that the men who man Ronez Quarry, most of them Jersey men living at St John and neighbouring parishes with their families are on short time.

The *Evening Post's* correspondent asked some of the Ronez workmen for their opinions which were willingly expressed:

'Ronez stone is as good, if not better, than any in the island for its purpose', said one of the men working in the quarry when I asked him for his opinion on the stone, 'I have worked in other local quarries', he continued, 'and can fairly state that our stone here is much harder and better for road purposes'. 'We cannot understand why we should be on short time here while other quarries in the island are working overtime to as late as 11 pm to deal with their orders for road stone-stone which is not as good as ours', remarked another man who has worked several years at Ronez 'We do not regard it as fair that this quarry apparently cannot get a look-in in the local trade'.

Mr. Blackburn gave his opinion with equal readiness:

We have tendered time and again at a price that is right, yet we seldom get a look-in. Why, I am not prepared to say. The stone is as good, many say it is better than other local stone which gets the road contracts. Our stone: here is suitable only for macadam and general road making, it is too hard for building or ornamental work. We have two main kinds, the blue and the red granite. English buyers always demand the blue, and the red which is very little if any softer, is used locally when it is used at all which is seldom. I have at least 10,000 tons of stone chippings and dust ready stacked for use, yet I cannot get rid of it here. My problem is what to do with it. I want to keep my men employed as far as I can, but I shall soon be faced with the problem of where to dump the stuff, for we are overcrowded now. I have tried my utmost to get a market locally. I do not want or

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

expect a monopoly, but I do hope for a share of the local contracts, but apparently I cannot get that. My men are talking about it: they are a good lot of lads, but it is unfair to them to be always on short time when they know very well others are better off. We have to rely on our export trade, and that is not at all what it ought to be.

The *Evening Post's* correspondent claimed to have come away from the quarry

as puzzled as Mr Blackburn and his men are at the reason why Ronez, which employs Jersey men and is quarrying good Jersey stone is cold-shouldered as it is alleged to be by those who have the handling of contracts for road-stone in the island. I am no expert in these matters, but it does seem to me that stone which is considered good enough for English roads, and been good enough for Jersey roads in the past should be good enough for them now. There may be a very good reason for the alleged treatment of which Mr. Blackburn complains, and perhaps one of these days some explanation may be vouchsafed him. In the meantime he has to keep his men employed to the best of his ability, and it is rather ironical to think that he has actually to pay a lorry to cart stone from his crusher to dump nearby while other quarries cannot deal with all their orders.

It was not long, however, before the veracity of the article was questioned, and on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1939 the letter of '*Interested*' was published. It had a different perspective:

I would like to rectify a few mistakes which, in my opinion, crept into your statements. What I am about to write is not intended to reflect on any of the men working there, but they comprise of Guernsey, Alderney, English, Frenchmen and only a sprinkling of Jerseymen. As regards other quarries working till 11 pm I have no knowledge of that in the last 10 years, but I have known Ronez to work day and night and also on Sundays. Another item which struck me was the 50.000 tons of crushed stone which they export. Ronez Quarry' is the only quarry in the island which can command an export trade, and that by reason of its ideal situation. Other quarries have to depend entirely on local work There is not another Quarry in the island which deals with anywhere near 50.000 tons per year, so why the complaint?.

In April 1935 the Company placed on record

its deep regret on the untimely death of Mr HS Pochin who was a director of the Croft Granite, Brick and Concrete Company His visits to the works on Jersey were always looked forward to with much pleasure and he will be greatly missed by the company's officials here<sup>135</sup>.

Certainly his interest in the Company was more than academic and this was illustrated eighteen months before his death when it was agreed

on the suggestion of Mr HS Pochin that a hand rail be fixed at the lower part on the incline leading to the Quarry for the purpose of making conditions safer than at present<sup>136</sup>.

Mortality and illness focussed the Board's attention on its arrangements for these contingencies. Serious illness often meant time on the French or English mainlands for specialist treatment and Mr Ereat's health was not as robust as that of his predecessor. Appointed in July 1929, he was absent through illness for the Board

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<sup>135</sup> Company minutes. Horace Stanley Pochin, 1877-1935, JP, of Croft House, Leicestershire, son of Alfred Pochin, a Leicester hosiery manufacturer who in 1901 was living in Leicestershire at Narborough on his own means.

<sup>136</sup> Ronez Minutes 2:183. 14.12. 1933.

meeting of the following November. In 1938 illness took him to France for prolonged treatment and later in the year the Board

resolved that Mr E Ereat, in the event of his illness or absence at any time from the Channel Islands and the United Kingdom for a period of one month be authorized to appoint Mr Gordon LeBrocq Gibaut, Solicitor to be his substitute on the Board of Directors during such illness or absence<sup>137</sup>.

The Board's major preoccupation at this time of economic depression was with bad debts, of which, though not of great size, there were many. Positive handling of the problem was perhaps inhibited by the island being a relatively small and close knit community. Early in 1930

The Secretary submitted to the Board a book containing a list of outstanding accounts.

At later meetings the Chairman reported that 'two customers had been approached for prompt payment'; it was decided 'to give special attention to one account at the next Meeting'; two other customers were to receive letters 'pressing for immediate settlement' and after much procrastination, it was decided to instruct the Company's solicitors to issue a summons against another customer.

The summons at long last having been served it was discovered that the customer concerned had gone bankrupt. Weeks later the Board was informed:

This matter is still in hand & it is likely a very small dividend will be received as his property has now been disposed of.

In another case it was found that

.the sale of his effects did not produced sufficient to pay the amount due to us. Steps were to be taken to arrest his wages wherever he may be employed.

This proved effective. The debtor's employer was approached and an 'arrest of wages effected'. The amount due, £3 15s. 10d, 'was to be recovered at the rate of 3/- a week' The sale of another debtor's property was 'postponed until next month, when it is considered, will be a more favourable time'. A dividend of 10s in the £ was eventually received. This particular customer, despite his long term status as a debtor, eventually turned to the Company for its assistance in enabling him to become a discharged bankrupt, which it gave. He had acted as a manager of a local company for several years with which

It was thought by adopting this course it would induce further business.

.A Jersey builder owed the Company a substantial sum:

This builder has paid us £1400 during the past four years but there was always a balance of £200 to £300 due which appeared difficult to obtain. Secretary suggested that further deliveries of materials be withheld until our account of £360 to January 30<sup>th</sup> be settled.

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<sup>137</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:312, 25.6.1938.

This was in June 1935 and it was not until the end of October 1936 that it was reported to the Board that debt had been paid in full.

### III

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1939 at 3pm there was a Board meeting at, as usual, 15 Royal Square, St Helier, at which the Company Chairman, the Quarry Manager, and the Company Secretary were present. But little business was discussed, the Manager and Secretary made their monthly reports and there was a brief discussion of bad debts. The next meeting was arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> October 1939, at 2.30 pm. It was as if the Company was in some kind of denial: here was certainly no anticipation of what was about to happen and that next day, Sunday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939 the Second World War would begin. It was little different at the next monthly meeting, on 7<sup>th</sup> October. The same trio, the same concern with bad debts, three of which were referred to the Company solicitor. At the next meeting

The Board approved the payment of a donation of £5 to the Jersey Dispensary and Infirmary<sup>138</sup>.

At the November meeting there were only two members present and they

expressed their deep regret at the death of Mr WJ Chapman who for many years had been Secretary to the Company. Mrs Chapman to be informed of their sincere sympathy in her bereavement<sup>139</sup>.

William John Chapman, whose home in St Helier was at 61 New St John's Road, had been Company Secretary since its inception in 1921 and often served deputised in other offices when vacant.

At the December meeting, perhaps with little else to do,

The Manager undertook to make personal calls on various customers whose accounts were in arrears<sup>140</sup>.

At the their first meeting in 1940, on 28<sup>th</sup> January

the question of the appointment of a Secretary to replace the late Mr Chapman was discussed, and it was considered that for the present the existing staff could deal with the secretarial work.<sup>141</sup>

A month later, business men to end, it was decided that the Chairman should communicate with the Constable of St John's with a view to obtaining a rates reduction in respect of the Company's war time loss of trade. The reduction was obtained<sup>142</sup>.

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<sup>138</sup> Ronez Minutes, 1:346, 28.10.1939.

<sup>139</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2, 25.11.1939.

<sup>140</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2, 30.12.1939.

<sup>141</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2, 27.1.1940.

<sup>142</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2, 24.2.1940 and 27.4.1940.

Mr Spence, the Technical Adviser could no longer visit the Island, but in May 1940 still sought information from Mr Blackburn by post about Ronez's activities<sup>143</sup> and his letter occupied the Chairman and the Manager at their May meeting.. Outside the Board room the situation, as described by LP Sinel, was becoming frenetic:

On June 15th troops and stores began to arrive from England for the Island's defence; this went on for three days, and some of the equipment was brought by train-ferry. Meanwhile, air raid precautions were put into effect; a curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. went into operation; women and children were being evacuated from St. Helier, and schools were closed until further notice.

Wednesday, June 19th was a day of wild rumours. The States met in special session in the afternoon, after Jurat Dorey had returned from the mainland, and it was announced that the British Government had come to the decision that the Channel Islands were to be declared a demilitarised zone. In accordance with this decision all troops and military equipment had to be withdrawn, and a voluntary evacuation was announced. The decision flung the Island into a panic, and people stood for hours in long queues waiting to register at the Town Hall for accommodation on the boats<sup>144</sup>.

Two days later, the Island's Lieutenant-Governor, Major-General JMR Harrison, CB, DSO left, as did the last civilian plane. The Bailiff was sworn in as the Civil Governor and it was reported that over 5,000 cats and dogs had been destroyed, their owners being unable to take them with them to England on the desperately overcrowded evacuation ships.

Perhaps heartened by the message of assurance sent to Islanders by the King, published in the Royal Square on 24<sup>th</sup> June, and no doubt read by Ereat and Blackburn on their way to their office at No 15 two days later to attend the Company's nineteenth AGM. But there were insufficient present for a quorum, and the meeting was adjourned for a week. Meanwhile events intervened:

July 1. Early in the morning German planes flew low over the Island and dropped messages to the local authorities. These called upon the Island to surrender peacefully. White flags had to be flown from all buildings as a sign of surrender, and a white cross had to be painted in the middle of the Royal Square; if this were done, the 'life, property and liberty of all peaceful citizens' was guaranteed. A German airman arrived at the Airport in the afternoon, having seen the signs of surrender, and was told the Island was ready to comply with the terms. He flew off, and later in the afternoon about a hundred German troops and officials arrived; these were under Hauptmann (Cap- tain) Gussek, and were met at the Airport by the Bailiff; the Government Secretary and the Attorney-General. After that, soldiers were billeted at various hotels, anti-aircraft and machine-gun posts established, and many public buildings visited. The German Occupation of Jersey had commenced. During the day the German ultimatum was printed and published throughout the Island<sup>145</sup>.

One wonders whether a white flag hung from Mr Ereat's office at 15 Royal Square. The adjourned meeting, no better attended, took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1940, and Ereat, as Chairman declared, by virtue of Article 36 of the Company's Articles of Association, that the two members present constituted a quorum and business was transacted. The two surviving directors were reappointed, their remuneration settled, and auditors appointed.

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<sup>143</sup> Ronez Minutes 25.5.1940.

<sup>144</sup> LP Sinel, *The German Occupation of Jersey*, London, 1969, p.9.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

At the August Board meeting Blackburn reported that only 4 men were now employed in the Quarries in addition to the Manager. He went on to say that

Windows and window frames of the engine house had been broken by unknown persons, also several locks, and that some steel shafting and rail sleepers had been requisitioned by the German military authorities in occupation of the Island<sup>146</sup>.

The Germans seem, even at this early stage of the occupation to have needed stone and a letter written on 15th July 1940 from Edward Le Quesne of Champs Génets, President of the Department of Labour, to the Bailiff requesting the use of two large motor lorries to transport quarried stone<sup>147</sup>. In September the German Field Command, perhaps anticipating sabotage, was seeking information about any works on the Island having explosives at their disposal<sup>148</sup>. Later that month a permit was issued to a St Helier building contractor for 56 pounds of black powder for use in blasting operations at Mount Mado Quarry in St John parish<sup>149</sup>. In October Blackburn informed the Board that though he still had only 4 men employed at the Quarries, there was a fair amount of local business, in the circumstances, and that most of the outstanding accounts had been collected as far as possible.

However, by the February Board meeting of 1941 the German grip on Ronez quarry was tightening:

The Manager submitted a letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> February 1941, received from the Greffier of the States, on behalf of the Department of Essential Commodities, informing the Company that, by virtue of regulation 53 of the Defence [Jersey] Regulations 1939 they had requisitioned for the requirements of the Department of Essential Services, all the fuel oil now in the Company's possession or at its disposal. The manager was instructed to give the matter attention<sup>150</sup>.

When it came to the Company's twentieth AGM in July 1941, again there were insufficient shareholders personally present to form a quorum and again the meeting was adjourned for a week. When it did meet there was little to discuss and the two directors present tactfully decided to leave the amount of their remuneration in abeyance<sup>151</sup>. At the August meeting Blackburn reported that

that substantial supplies of stone from the quarry were being purchased by the German Authorities<sup>152</sup>.

But at the October meeting Eraut told Blackburn, the other Director, of a conversation he had had with the island's Bailiff

warning him of the contents of a letter he had received from the Field Commandant at College House to the effect that the German Command was requisitioning Ronez

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<sup>146</sup> Ronez Minutes 2: 31.8.1940.

<sup>147</sup> Jersey Archives: B/A/W33/2. The Department of Labour was set up in the occupation to undertake works that did not directly benefit the Germans, they widened several roads, and, it is said, worked on the North Marine Drive.

<sup>148</sup> Jersey Archives: B/A/W47/1.

<sup>149</sup> Jersey Archives: B/A/W47/3.

<sup>150</sup> Ronez Minutes, 25.2.1941

<sup>151</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2:30.7.1941.

<sup>152</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2:30.8.1941.

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

Quarries and intimating that henceforth neither Mr Blackburn nor his son must go on the quarry premises without permission<sup>153</sup>.

Rather courageously Eraut and Blackburn now sought an interview with Dr Brosch, the German Commandant

who would give no satisfactory information, referring him to the Bailiff

So it was back to the Bailiff

who then permitted Mr Eraut to take a copy translation of the letter received from the Commandant.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October Eraut and Mr Blackburn called on Dr Brosch again and asked to see the order formally requisitioning Ronez and for permission

to make an Inventory of the Company's effects on the premises and to move the Company's books.

But Dr Brosch was not available, being about to depart from Jersey on leave, and eventually they were asked to call again on the 17<sup>th</sup> when, they were assured, the Commandant would be back in the island. However, when Eraut and Blackburn returned to College House on the 17<sup>th</sup> it was probably no surprise to learn that Dr Brosch had not yet returned from Germany and they were referred to his deputy Dr Wilhelm Kasper who promised to send them 'a requisition order, etc.'...

Dr Casper was as good as his word and Eraut duly received a letter dated that very day, the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1941, the translation of which read:

the quarry belonging to the Ronez Quarries, has in accordance with the Order to the Bailiff of Jersey dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1941, been taken over by the German Forces as from 6<sup>th</sup> October 1941, and this is hereby confirmed.

As yet, however, no permit has been received to enable Blackburn to make his inventory and remove the Company's books, and Eraut undertook to write to the German Commandant on the matter.

At the November Board meeting Eraut announced permission had been granted for an inventory to be made to be made 'with the co-operation of a representative of the Unit Busse', though.

the books and business documents cannot yet be released as they must first be examined. They will be released later, in due course.

Blackburn made his inventory and a copy of it is the Ronez Minutes.

*Inventory of Ronez Quarries, St John, Jersey*

No 1 Plant (Power House)

1 320 H.P. Blackstone Oil Engine

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<sup>153</sup> Ronez Minutes, 2: 25.10.1941.

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

1 12 H.P.  
1 Electric Generator B.T.H.  
1 Compressor  
1 Water Pump  
5 Driving ropes  
1 Receiver  
1 Switch-board  
1 Tank  
1 Water-cooling plant  
1 Ventilating fan and motor  
1 Vokes air filter  
4 runways & chain blocks  
4 Fitters vices

No 1 Mill:

2 25 x 12 Broadbent Crushers  
2 21 x 10 Broadbent Crushers  
1 17 x 8 Broadbent Crusher  
1 No. 25 Kennedy Chipping Crusher  
3 21" Elevators with buckets complete  
2 Cylinder Screens  
1 Niagra Screen  
6 Conveyors  
1 90 H.P. Motor  
1 Switch-board  
1 New motor and starter (unpacked)  
Line shafts, pulleys, clutches and belts  
1 Pump  
1 Girder runway with 2 ton-blocks  
2 Cranes  
6 New crusher-jaws  
2 Forges  
1 Anvil  
1 Electric Blower  
1 Starter  
1 Oil Furnace  
1 Drill Sharpener  
6 dozen pop-hole drills  
2 sets large drills  
2 dozen hammers  
1 Motor  
1 Starter  
1 Concrete Mixer

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1 Line Shaft  
4 Block-making machines  
1 Large Water-tank

No. 2 Mill

1 120 H.P. Oil Engine  
1 3 H.P. Petrol Engine  
1 Compressor  
1 Receiver  
1 Winch  
1 21 x 10 Broadbent Crusher  
1 Addfield dix-crusher  
1 Conveyor  
1 18" Elevator with buckets  
1 Screen  
Line shafts, pulleys & belts  
1 spare 90 H.P. motor  
1 20 ton Weighbridge

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

1	Roller	
1	Robey Engine & Compressor	
3	Receivers	
1	Water Pump	
4	Lathes	
2	Drilling machines	
1	Emery-wheel	
1	Planing machine	1
	Welding plant	
1	20 H.P. motor	
2	large rock-drills	
4	Pop-hole machines	
1	small compressor	
1	Pipe-screwing machine	
2	Shaft-lines, pulleys and belts	
6	Wheel-barrows	8
	Wagons	
1	Weighbridge	
26	New forks	
20	S.H. Forks	
30	S.H. Shovels	
3	miles of rails and sleepers	
1	Steam Jib Crane	
<hr/>		
1	Boat	
1	Weighbridge	
1	40 H.P. vertical Oil Engine	1 50
	H.P. motor & starter	
4	large conveyors	
	Line shaft with clutches, chain, wheels and belts	
1	4½" Oil pipe-line	2
	Shipping wire-ropes	
Office:		
3	Desks	
4	Chairs	
6	new Chain-Wheels	
4	new Chain-Wheels	
1	Coil 8" belt	
1	Coil 6" belt	
20	new Chipping cylinder plates	
½	ton 7" drill steel	
½	ton flat shute plates	
3	Sets Chain-blocks	
	Spare parts for Engines, Compressors & Crushers	½ ton mixed bolts & nuts
200	lbs Explosives	
3	new coils quarry-rope	
1	Spring-water pump & motor	
5	tons of crude-oil	
Buildings		
1	Office	
1	Engine House	
1	Crushing plant building	
1	Motor Garage	
1	Concrete block building	
2	Magazines	

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

4 Cottages  
1 Barracks  
Concrete storage bins  
1 Large mill building  
1 Engine House  
1 Fitters Shop  
1 Blacksmiths Shop  
2 Weighbridge buildings  
1 Mess room  
1 Office  
1 Oil fuel Storage tank

Stock in trade	£ 2215. 6. 0
Explosives Stores etc	272. 12. 7
	<hr/>
	£ 2487. 18. 7

Ronez was operating under German control early in 1942 and in April that year the Jersey Electricity Company was instructed by the Organization Todt to supply Ronez with electricity by a new overhead line from the Island's Queen's Road power station, causing the company to protest to the German civilian administration about the consequences this would have on the fuel estimates recently agreed for ensuing twelve months<sup>154</sup>.

It seems that under Germans control Blackburn did not loose all contact with Ronez, perhaps he had some consultative function. But be that as it may, at the May Board meeting, [yes, with no quarry to direct or manage, Eraunt and Blackburn still held their monthly Board meetings],

The Manager submitted a report on a recent visit which with the consent of the German authorities he had made to the Quarry. The Manager also reported that he had disposed of a motor lorry for £40<sup>155</sup>.

[Again, to whom did he sell the lorry, the Germans?]

Ronez, and the other requisitioned quarries, at first came under the control of the Construction Battalions of the German army. Then the Organization Todt took over, a civilian organization formed to supply labour for military construction work. It was notorious for its harsh treatment of its workers which included 18,000 slave workers were brought to Jersey some of whom worked at Ronez. There were Frenchmen, Dutchmen, and Belgians, as well as Russian prisoners of war, one of whom was Peter Bokatenko, a 17 year old Ukrainian cinema projectionist and tractor driver. Imprisoned in 1942 at St Ouen:

He escaped, was recaptured and beaten. He escaped again, was given the birch and sent to work in the quarries. He knew that there were minefields nearby but he ran away for a third, then a fourth and a fifth time. For five months he was hidden by Mr W Sarre.

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<sup>154</sup> Archives of the Jersey Branch of the Occupation Society, 10th April 1942. Jersey Electricity Company to Field Command 515.

<sup>155</sup> Ronez Minutes II, 30.5.1942.

Mr Sarre's widow still alive to authenticate Peter Bokatenko's experiences<sup>156</sup>. It is an unhappy thought that he was usually recaptured as a result of being betrayed to the German authorities.

Under the Organization Tod the Island's quarries were controlled by the Westdeutsche Steinindustrie<sup>157</sup>. At Ronez local labour<sup>158</sup> worked under Irish foremen<sup>159</sup>, and to increase production the German company importing some of its own machinery and crushers.

There was, it will be recollected, a stone crusher on the quayside from which crushed stone could be loaded directly into ships berthed along side. There was another crusher at the cliff summit, served by a two foot tramway which was linked by a net work of lines giving access to the quarry face. The loaded trams were pushed manually on the level and then hauled by cable to the cliff top, 250 feet above. The stone was carried thence on rubber conveyors to two gyratory crushers and screened into various sizes. Overhead storage bins had traps underneath by which the aggregate could be loaded direct into railway trucks.

The pressure for increased output led to the neglect of safety and it was German practice to winch up from the quarry three stone filled trams at a time, rather than one by one which had been the practice heretofore. On one occasion when the cable snapped the trams careered back down to the quarry, through a shed, and seriously injured three Germans<sup>160</sup>.

So that history should not repeat itself, the Germans installed what had the appearance of a standard gauge cliff railway, the rear wheels being on legs, which kept the platform, on which two side tipping trams travelled at a time, level as it went up and down from the quarry floor<sup>161</sup>. Not all the Germans were familiar with working granite quarries and one at Ronez used a technique more appropriate for sandstone with dramatic consequences.

The requisition, reopening, and general resurgence of the Island's quarries was a result of Hitler's decision that the Channel Islands should become the centre piece of his Atlantic Wall with its watch towers, bunkers, gun emplacements, and underground tunnels, all of which required immense amounts of concrete<sup>162</sup> and stone for their construction. Stone from Ronez was used for these works and for the refortification of Elizabeth castle, the sixteenth century island fortress in St Aubin's Bay which assumed new importance in the defence of St Helier. One of the new roads built by the local workforce was *North Marine Drive*, now known as *La Route du Nord*<sup>163</sup>.

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<sup>156</sup> Mrs Sarre, now well into her 90s, is Nicolas Jouault's landlady.

<sup>157</sup> The [West German Stone Industry](#).

<sup>158</sup> One of whom was Alfred Allenet, Ronez blacksmith, already mentioned.

<sup>159</sup> The Irish Republic being neutral during war, those sympathetic to the German cause, were particularly welcome by the Germans as they had the advantage of speaking English to the workforce.

<sup>160</sup> Bonsor, *op.cit.*, p.122, implies the possibility of sabotage.

<sup>161</sup> Ronez used the system for several years after the war.

<sup>162</sup> There are those at Ronez who hold that German cement was superior to its British equivalent. Limestone which Jersey lacks was imported from France, probably by way of Granville.

<sup>163</sup> The stone yielded by Ronez is diorite and gabbro and is instantly recognisable by virtue of its blue/grey veining. It can be found in practically every German-built fortification. Ronez diorite can also be seen in the concrete used in widely scattered points. Even in St Ouen's Bay, where other sources were used, a couple of 4.7 cm anti tank gun casements have diorite in the concrete.

To facilitate the movement of building materials a railway line was built from the Ronez quarries through the parishes of St John, St Mary, and St Peter to join the reactivated Corbiere line at Pont Marquet, and so on to St Helier. Further extensions linked various other quarries to the network for the same purpose.

The opening of part of the railway on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1942 was duly reported in the official German newspaper, the *Deutsche Inselzeitung*<sup>164</sup>. Bonsor gives a partial translation<sup>165</sup>:

It was practical rather than historical considerations that induced the German commandant of Jersey and the commander of the fortress-building pioneers to draw up plans for an Island railway and, after many initial difficulties had been overcome, arrange for it to be brought into operation by the Organisation Todt. The need for transporting building materials and guaranteeing supplies for the troops stationed in the more distant parts of the Island were the principal reasons for proceeding with the scheme.

The town and the harbour of St. Helier have been brought nearer to the far-away spots. What that means can only be appreciated by those who, during the course of route marches, have actually had experience of distances in Jersey which, on the other hand seems to be a mere pin-point on the map of Europe. Although at first traffic would be confined in the main to the transport of materials and troop supplies, and although the country terminus at present bears the name St. Aubin, the day will come when it will be possible to travel by train from the outlying parts in the north, west and east of the Island to St. Helier with its exciting city life (*sic*), and after a comfortable railway journey reach the harbour and the ship in readiness for a spell of home leave.

That the railway development of Jersey is making rapid progress will be apparent from the fact that the line to St. Aubin, after overcoming serious difficulties in a stretch of some 120 metres, will reach Corbiere within a fortnight; that completion of the section from Ronez to St. Mary's Church can be expected at the end of next week, and that another stretch from La Pulente to Thiebaut will soon connect the entire west coast with the interior<sup>166</sup>.

According to Bonsor it was the German intention that Ronez Quarry should supply the greater part, if not all, of the crushed granite they needed, and that it should be transported by rail. This made Ronez second only to St Helier in importance in the Island's railway system.

Built to a metre gauge, the railway started at Ronez, beneath the crushers and bins, as a double line. There were also some sidings at Ronez for the accommodation of trucks carrying the stone, but with the exception of occasional passing loops, it was a single line which in the course of six miles dropped from 250 feet above sea level at Ronez to 150 feet at Pont Marquet. Thus the loaded trains from Ronez, usually consisting of some twenty trucks, had a mainly downhill run and two locomotives had to be used to provide adequate braking. On the return journey, at least from St Aubin to Ronez, long trains, even if empty, were assisted by a rear banking engine<sup>167</sup>. One of the locomotives was an imported 2-6-0 tank engine built in 1913 for the French *Chemins de fer du Rhone et Loire*<sup>168</sup>.

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<sup>164</sup> *Deutsche Inselzeitung*, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1942.

<sup>165</sup> Bonsor, *op.cit.*, p.120.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p.132.

The metre gauge rolling stock consisted of 312 open trucks, which were commandeered by the Germans in Normandy from a French contractor, and handed over to a Polish firm working on Jersey for the Germans. 225 of the trucks had a capacity of four cubic metres and the remaining 87 had a capacity of three cubic metres. Those which survived were returned to France in 1946<sup>169</sup>. Unfortunately, the Ronez line was responsible for at least one fatality: on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1943 a train ran down a stone deaf farmer and killed him<sup>170</sup>.

In due course it was realised that Ronez had insufficient capacity to supply all the crushed granite needed by the German requirements and the quarries at L'Etacq and La Thiebaut were re-opened and German built crushing and screening plant installed<sup>171</sup>. In May 1942 the quarry at Les Maltieres was reopened and extended with a crushing plant<sup>172</sup>.

On 15<sup>th</sup> September 1942 it was announced that:

By order of higher authorities, the following British subjects will be evacuated and transferred to Germany.

(a) Persons who have their permanent residence not on the Channel Islands, for instance, those who have been caught here by the outbreak of the war;

(b) All those men not born on the Channel Islands and 16 to 70 years of age who belong to the English people, together with their families.

Detailed instructions will be given by the Feldkommandantur 515.

Der Feldkommandant Knackfuss, Oberst<sup>173</sup>.

Those selected for deportation were given printed instructions:

In pursuance of a Higher Command, British subjects are to be evacuated and brought to Germany.

You have to appear, therefore on 16-9-42 not later than 4 o'clock at the Garage, Weighbridge, St. Helier, wife and minor children.

You have to take with you all papers proving your identity. It is necessary to outfit yourself with warm clothes, strong boots, and provisions for two days, meal dishes, drinking bowl, and, if possible, with a blanket.

Your luggage must not be heavier than you can carry and must bear a label with your full address.

It is further left to you to place ready, for each person, a trunk packed with clothes to be sent afterwards, labelled with full address.

It is also left to you to take with you an amount of money not exceeding RM10 in German notes for each person in Reich credit notes.

All valuables (jewels) must be deposited as far as possible with the banks. Keys of the houses are to be handed over to the Constables.

Should you fail to obey the order sentence by court martial shall be effected.

Der Feldkommandant:

gez. Knackfuss, Oberst<sup>174</sup>.

1200 British subjects were eventually identified for deportation to Germany, and two of these were John Andrew Blackburn, who went on the 16<sup>th</sup> September in the first

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p.133.

<sup>170</sup> Bonsor, *op.cit.*, p.134. He was the grandfather of Brian Coutanche who worked in the Ronez office.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p.125.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>173</sup> LP Sinel, *The German Occupation of Jersey*, London, 1969, p.87.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88.

batch, and Charles Blackburn, his father. He was deported on the 29<sup>th</sup> September in the third batch<sup>175</sup>.

Heart-breaking scenes were witnessed all over the Island today as friends said good-bye to one another. Many of the Germans themselves expressed their sympathy for those affected by the latest order; it is felt also that the German authorities at College House are not at all happy in carrying out their instructions, for they know as well as we do that there is not the slightest excuse. The deportees themselves were magnificent, and England can be proud of them; they sang and joked....<sup>176</sup>

Even the resilient Mr Ereat had not the heart for solo Board meetings, and none took place for the last three months of 1942. But with the New Year Ereat took heart and at his lonely January Board meeting he caused this poignant entry to be made in the minutes:

Owing to his having been deported to Germany by the German Authorities in September last [under the order for the compulsory evacuation of certain British subjects] Mr Blackburn, the other Director of the Company, was unable to be present. Mr Ereat thus being at present, the only Director and shareholder in the Island<sup>177</sup>.

The tide of events, however, was changing. In December 1944 the plant installed by the Germans at Ronez, together with that of C H Le Quesne, Ltd's nearby Mont Mado Quarries, was dismantled and taken by the Germans by train to St Helier for shipment to St Malo. Its final destination was intended to be Cherbourg where it was to be used for building new fortifications against the Allied invasion of Europe which was now being seen as becoming imminent<sup>178</sup>. It is uncertain whether it ever arrived there.

Interestingly the Germans also took with them spare parts from Ronez's own equipment, and Major Helder, the Platzkommandant, notified the Bailiff of what they had done and how much compensation they had paid into the Company's bank.

Platzkommandantur                      3<sup>rd</sup> December 1944

The Bailiff of Jersey

Requisitions from Ronez Quarry. Jersey

The following have been requisitioned for the German forces from Ronez Quarry, Jersey:-

5 old driving belts (valuation)	RM 150.00
35 old conveyor tumblers (valuation as old material)	70.00
2 small belt pulleys (valuation)	40.00
2 pair of bearings (scrap value)	20.00
	<hr/>
	RM 280.00

The equivalent of RM 280 will be credited to the Enemy Property Account of Ronez Quarries Jersey, account 15 at Barclay's Bank, St Helier.

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<sup>175</sup> Single men were sent on from Biberach to Laufen, in Bavaria on the Austrian border near Salzburg. Jersey Archives: D/S/A/13/A95 and D/S/A/13A/B89. Charles Blackburn was born 5<sup>th</sup> March 1880 and John on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1921.

<sup>176</sup> Sinel, *op.cit.*, p.88.

<sup>177</sup> Ronez Minutes, II:29.1.1943.

<sup>178</sup> Jersey Archives: [B/A/W40/8/370](#) and [B/A/W40/8/352](#).

*The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

The Platzkommandant,  
Helder, Major

Copy to Essential Commodities Finance<sup>179</sup>

Despite the Normandy invasions of June 1944, the liberation of Jersey tarried, and it was not until 2.41 am on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1945 that the Germans unconditionally surrendered to the allies at General Eisenhower's headquarters. On the afternoon of 9th May British troops began coming ashore and the liberation of Jersey, which was near to starvation, had begun<sup>180</sup>.

#### IV

Happily Charles Blackburn and his son survived the bleakness of Biberach and Laufen and returned to Jersey where found that

During the Occupation the Germans destroyed everything that was destroyable at Ronez; they blew up the jetty and plant, the cranes were toppled over into the deep water berth and the rails were taken up. Nothing was left which could be of any use<sup>181</sup>.

At the August Board meeting with Mr Eraut and Mr G ed B Gibaut in attendance as Directors, and Mr Blackburn, who though restored as manager had not yet regained his directorship, they considered the report they had received from Mr NT Spence who had resumed his role as the Company's Technical Adviser. He had recently come over from Croft to inspect

the buildings, machinery, and plant at Ronez Quarries with regard to the damage done to the Company's property during the German occupation.

They heard again from Mr Spence at the end of October and his news was very welcome, for it had been decided

by the Parent Company to reconstruct the plant at Ronez<sup>182</sup>.

In January 1946 Mr Spence authorized the Company to lodge an application under the Channel Islands [Property] Rehabilitation Scheme for damage and loss sustained arising out of the German occupation of the Company's property. These losses Spence estimated at £72,806 9s 6d:

land and buildings	£21, 409 14 6.
business equipment	£46, 020 7 6
stock in trade	£5, 376 7 6 <sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Jersey Archive W40/8/352.

<sup>180</sup> From 17<sup>th</sup> March-19<sup>th</sup> May 1945, the weekly food ration was 7 oz flour; 2 oz meat; 4 oz bread; allocations of butter, sugar, and salt had been suspended. Sinel, *op.cit.*, p. 318.

<sup>181</sup> This interview given to the *Jersey Evening Post* is not entirely accurate. The Ronez Minutes III 14.3.1949 refer to a letter of 18<sup>th</sup> February 1949 from Mr Spencer 'with regard to the breakdown of the German secondary crusher and the replacement of the same by a new crusher' It would seem that the Germans did leave behind some workable machinery.

<sup>182</sup> Ronez Minutes. II: 14.11.1945.

<sup>183</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 30.1.1946.

At the same time, normality further returned to the Company by Charles Blackburn's resumption of his duties as manager and director. The possibility was also considered of appointing a Company Secretary with offices in St Helier. In the event the Board leased a tea shop and the accommodation above in Newtown Buildings, in David Place, St Helier and appointed Mr J Le Couteur as Secretary-Accountant at £350 pa<sup>184</sup>..

In June 1946 the first AGM was held since 1942 and

the minutes of the adjourned meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July and the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1942 were read, approved, and signed by the Chairman. Mr Blackburn was appointed as an additional director. It was [also] resolved that in view of the special reconstruction being carried on at Ronez Quarries Mr Blackburn's salary as manager be temporarily increased as from 31<sup>st</sup> December last to £650 per annum<sup>185</sup>..

The reinstatement of the jetty at Ronez was a priority and Ereaut was happy to report that in this respect the President of the Piers and Harbours Committee had promised

all assistance which might be required would be given to the Company for laying the mooring and removing the jetty crane which was tipped into the loading berth at Ronez by the Germans during the occupation of the Island<sup>186</sup>.

Suspecting once again that Jersey was not self-sufficient in the necessary talent, just as Mr Spence had been appointed in 1921 by the parent company to be the Jersey Granite and Concrete Company's technical adviser, so now his father-in-law, Mr JE Carlton, was loaned by Croft in December 1946 to supervise the reconstruction of Ronez<sup>187</sup>. It was now time for Mr Blackburn to retire from being manager and Mr JE Hughes became his successor at £350 pa and a rent free company house, having been employed as engineer for a three month trial period. New ground was broken in his appointment by its carrying a £25 pa entertainment allowance, and his wife received a £10 gratuity for assisting her husband with typing and clerical work<sup>188</sup>. Another innovation was the post of General Manager, its first occupant being the academically well qualified Mr TES Bell, BSc(Eng), MIMechE, but Mr Bell did not stay in the post long, and appointed in November 1950 with an annual salary of £1500, his resignation was 'accepted with regret' thirteen months later.

Mr Bell's successor as General Manager was Mr James Forshaw, another importation from Leicester. Perhaps it was thought Mr Bell had been over paid, for Mr Forshaw was appointed at £1250, though he had a house at Ronez rent free<sup>189</sup>. He was something of a new broom and seems to have unearthed scandal at Ronez and he submitted a confidential report on the matter:

The Board gave very careful consideration to this report and the recommendations contained therein.

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<sup>184</sup> From Mrs Peggy Alexandra Hodges for £130 pa for 5 years. Ronez Minutes, III:19.9.1946 and III: 14.12.1946.

<sup>185</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 28.6.1946.

<sup>186</sup> Ronez Minutes. III: 19.9.1946.

<sup>187</sup> Ronez Minutes. III:14.12.1946.President of the Institute of Quarrying 1962-64. He later became Managing Director of the Croft Granite, Brick, and Concrete Company.

<sup>188</sup> Ronez Minutes. III:1.4.1947 and 31.1.1949.

<sup>189</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 4.2.1952.

Consequently it was decided to dispense with the individual concerned 'as soon as possible'. He was

immediately offered a month's salary un lieu of notice, and to be informed that, as his occupancy of Bonne Nuit Lodge formed part of his conditions of employment, the said accommodation must be vacated by him within a period of one month from this date, due consideration to an extension of this period for, say, from eight to ten days, to be left to the discretion of the General Manager.

It was further resolved that, should [he] accept, in writing the specific condition that he leave the Island within the period or periods above referred to, the company would pay reasonable removal expenses, together with salary for a further period of four months<sup>190</sup>.

The times were changing and Mr Spence was anxious that the Jersey Granite and Concrete Company should change with them, so it was on his recommendation, for example, that it was resolved to have cheques specially printed with the Company's name<sup>191</sup>. Such changes may have influenced Charles Blackburn in his decision, made in May 1948, to resign his directorship. With an unusual show of sentiment this was accepted by the Chairman with regret, the other directors

expressing their keen appreciation of the past valuable services rendered to the Company<sup>192</sup>.

At Mr Spence's behest the parent company recommended

that on account of the long service Mr Blackburn had given both to that Company and its Jersey subsidiary a retirement allowance of Two hundred Pounds per annum.

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It was also part of Mr Spence's recommendation that the 'retirement allowance' should be paid by the Jersey Company and not by Croft and that it should be on a grace and favour basis which could be terminated at the Company's will. Pension *rights* were still things for the future<sup>193</sup>.

The Crown lease to Ronez of the jetty and foreshore was due to expire on Lady Day 1951 and the company sought its renewal on the same terms and conditions as before, ie.£10 0s 0d annual rental and a royalty of 1d per ton on all stone exported from Ronez, payable quarterly, and to run for 25 years. Messrs Ereaut and Spence had an unsatisfactory interview with the Receiver General and the Board resolved that the two men should

endeavour to have a further interview with the Receiver General for the purpose of completing negotiations *on the best terms possible*<sup>194</sup>.

This time the encounter was totally satisfactory and the lease was renewed on the same terms as had prevailed previously.

Mr Ereaut, who as Chairman of the Jersey company, led these negotiations, had for some time been in failing health and in June 1951 at a meeting held at his home,

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<sup>190</sup> Ronez Minutes, III:5.5.1952.

<sup>191</sup> Ronez Minutes. III: 28.7.1947.

<sup>192</sup> Ronez Minutes. III; 5.5.1948.

<sup>193</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 30.1.1950.

<sup>194</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 1.5.1950. My italics.

*Betteville*, in St Saviour's Road, he announced that he was soon to absent himself from the Island due to illness and that he had appointed Mr Herbert Frank Cobbold, an advocate, of 15 Royal Square, St Helier, to be an alternate Director. Continuing ill health forced Ereat to resign in October 1952, Mr AV Nicolle succeeded to the Chairmanship and Mr Guy Malet de Carteret of St Ouen's, a kinsman of a former bailiff of Jersey, became a director<sup>195</sup>. Technology made its mark in the secretariat at this time, too, and with Mr Frank Rumfitt as Company Secretary, in succession to Mr James Le Couteur, Board meeting minutes were typed for the first time.

In April 1950, on Mr Spence's recommendation, the Board decided to purchase a new compressor for £1500, vibratory screen for £385; and a conveyor and bins for about £600<sup>196</sup>. However, a year later there was a change of policy and it was decided from Croft that the Jersey company should hire plant and machinery from the parent rather than purchase it on its own behalf. The initial transaction was for seven years at a yearly rent of 4% of the capital value, which was on this occasion £5,285 17s 4d<sup>197</sup>. The equipment it replaced was sold to Messrs TW Ward Ltd, of Albion Works, Sheffield. for £8,906<sup>198</sup>.

A spectacular demonstration of how things were changing at Ronez was offered to the Island in December 1952, when there took place what the local press was happy to record as the biggest quarry explosion on the Channel Islands ever. Twelve thousand pounds of explosives brought down 100,000 tons of rock before an invited audience of the Jersiaise good and great. This was all done under the supervision of Mr Forshaw the success of whose stewardship was acknowledged by the Board in July 1953 when he was made a Director. He succeeded Mr AV Nicolle in 1970 as Company Chairman, the first time that the Chairman was not a Jerseyman.

The progressive mechanization of the quarry extended the scope for accidents and the protective legislation was still in its infancy. Thus on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1949 the *Jersey Evening Post*<sup>198</sup> carried the news that:

A shocking accident occurred at the Jersey Granite and Concrete Company's premises, Ronez quarries, St John's, shortly after 11 o'clock this morning when a young man was crushed to death between the rollers of a conveyor machine.

The victim, Mr Frank Gotel, was 28 and lived at Springfield House in Trinity parish. The Company offered his widow an *ex gratia* payment without accepting liability to meet her immediate needs and those of her family. But she declined,

fearing she might prejudice her position in regard to Parish Relief and payments which she is at present receiving from Social Assurance Committee she wished to take advice on the matter<sup>199</sup>.

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1957 the *Jersey Evening Post* told of another quarryman being crushed to death at Ronez:

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<sup>195</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 3.6.1951 and 6.10.1952. 9.10.1951.

<sup>196</sup> Ronez Minutes, III:3.4.1950.

<sup>197</sup> Ronez Minutes, III: 30.4.1951.

<sup>198</sup> Ronez Minutes, III:7.8.1951.

<sup>199</sup> Ronez Minutes, III; 8.12.1949.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

Shortly before 10 o'clock this morning a man who had only been employed at Ronez Quarries for 10 days was run over by a mechanical dumper and crushed to death. He was 60-year-old Mr Reginald Charles Robins, of 5 Prospect Place, Grève d'Azette.

The tragedy occurred at the bottom of the quarry behind the jetty. The dumper, which carries a high load, was driven by Mr André Jézéquel of 5 Grève de Lecq Barracks. Mr Robins was standing at the rear of this machine when he was hit. It was understood that the noise in the vicinity was such that he would not have heard the dumper approaching. It is stated that the driver was under the impression that he was running over rocky ground.

Dr DNM Scott Warren was called but could only confirm that the man was dead. His injuries are stated to include a fracture of the skull and fractures of the ribs and other bones. The dumper passed completely over his body....He leaves a widow and grown up family.

After negotiations between lawyers, the company paid his widow £1217 15s 6d in compensation and damages<sup>200</sup>.

Happily not all accidents were fatal, but they could, none the less, be serious. Such was the case in November 1951 then two quarrymen, J Breteche and M Dano, were taken to hospital with fractured skulls. The Company Minutes were dishearteningly aseptic in their account of what happened:

A movement of earth, etc., due to wet weather, was the cause of this regrettable happening<sup>201</sup>

The manufacture of precast concrete was started at Croft as early as 1870 and by the 1950s it was one of the largest producers in Britain. Ronez now began to produce faced concrete blocks in February 1953 when the decision made to purchase a Winget block machine. More machinery was bought in February 1954 at £4,000. These blocks were very popular in Jersey for building, the traditional building granite having become too expensive. Faced blocks were used on the Island for public buildings and blocks of flats and for the new wing of the Jersey General Hospital which opened in 1959. Crushed stone, however, for building and road making remained Ronez's mainstay<sup>202</sup>.

The tradition of quarries having their own vessels revived at Ronez in 1957 when the MV *Marshlea*, a coaster of 760 tons, and built in Scandinavia, took on board her first load of stone from the jetty at St John. She loaded her last cargo of stone in 1971. Originally sailing under lease, in 1972 she was purchased by the company for £46,000, and was converted into a bulk cement tanker for £300,000. She was broken up at Rotterdam, and was succeeded in 1982 by the patriotically named, though Dutch-built, MV *Ronez*, 1,000 ton, state of the art, self-discharging, bulk freighter, a far cry from the little SS *Bass Rock* lost in 1921. In 2003 the *Ronez* was refitted at Penzance at the cost of some £3m and now has an expectation of life of a further ten years. The Jersey Granite Company entirely ceased to export stone in 1978 and the

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200 Ronez Minutes, III, 14.4.1958. Other fatalities mentioned in Ronez Minutes III are 'the tragic loss of Mr GS Crane. *Ex gratia* payment *pro tem* to his widow of £6 10. 0d weekly. [7.1.1951] and 'the tragic death of Mr Boulaire', [7.4.1952]

201 Ronez Minutes, III; 12.11.1951.

202 Kenneth Hudson, *History of the Quarries of English China Clays*, p.123.

*Ronez* plies between Penzance and St Helier, the jetty at Ronez being no longer in use, the demands made by the larger size of the *Ronez* on seamanship being excessive.

In March 1959 the Croft Granite, Brick & Concrete Company, parent of the Jersey Granite and Concrete Company, joined English China Clays and was fully merged with ECC Quarries in October 1962, thereafter it operated as the Croft Granite Division of ECC Quarries. Thus, by now the wheel had gone full circle, for Croft was established by Samuel Davenport Pochin, 1826-1904, in 1865 and he was joined by his elder brother Henry Davis Pochin, 1824-1897, in 1868. In 1877, Laura, Henry Pochin's daughter, married Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren, 1850-1934, and they made their home in Leicestershire at Croft House. McLaren had a successful political career as a Liberal, for which he was created a baronet in 1901 and ennobled as Lord Aberconway in 1911. He was also chairman of the Croft Granite Company when it bought Ronez Quarry in 1913 and his son, Henry Duncan McLaren, 1879-1953, the second Lord Aberconway, brought about the amalgamation of several china clay companies to form English Clays Lovering Pochin and Co, Ltd of which he was chairman. The third Lord Aberconway, Charles Melville McLaren, b.1913, succeeded in 1953 and it was whilst he was a director of the company,<sup>203</sup> which became known as English China Clays, Ltd<sup>204</sup>, that it became the parent company of the Jersey Cement and Granite Co, Ltd.

In March 1962 the Jersey Cement and Granite Co, Ltd commenced operations on Guernsey, entering into an agreement with A & F Manuelle to lease Les Vardes quarry, full of water, and over looked by four former German gun emplacements, and to bring it back into use. The quarry was purchased in 1969 as were in the same year WM Griffiths' Bordeaux quarry, and Mont Cuet quarry<sup>205</sup>. Thereby a supply of aggregate was obtained for making concrete blocks and asphalt.

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1963 ownership of the Jersey Cement and Granite Co Ltd was transferred from the Croft Granite, Brick, and Concrete Company, to English China Clays Limited. Investment followed and in December £12,500 was spent on a new concrete plant, and £7,500 on 36 inch crusher. Then in March 1966 the Western and L'Etacq quarries were purchased for a total of £19,000<sup>206</sup>. In September 1966 the Company extended its interests to Alderney, leasing land there at the Arsenal.

It was now that the time was thought appropriate for a new company image and on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1967 the rather ponderously titled Jersey Cement and Granite Co, Ltd changed its name to the crisper Ronez Ltd..

In May 1968 the London and Home Counties branch of the Institute of Quarrying organized a study tour of quarrying on the Channel Islands. They visited Ronez on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> May and in March 1969 *The Quarry Managers' Journal* carried a professional description of the quarry for its readers:

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<sup>203</sup> 1935-1987.

<sup>204</sup> Of which he was Chairman 1963-84 and President Emeritus in 1984.

<sup>205</sup> Mont Cuet Quarry was sold to the Bailiwick of Guernsey in April 1995.

<sup>206</sup> The disused Western quarry at L'Etacq was sold to the States for £5,000 in December 1983.

## *The History of Ronez Quarry, St John's, Jersey*

The quarry face has, in recent years, been benched so that there is now an efficient and much safer face. Drilling is done with a Halco unit and blasting by means of gelignite. Secondary breakage is achieved by pop-holes, plaster shots and drop-balling.

At the face loading is carried out by means of a 38-RB excavator and a Caterpillar 977 end loader into 20-ton Euclid dump trucks. The primary crusher is a Pegson 25B set at 5in; the secondary machine is a 48in Pegson unit, and third-stage crushing is carried out by two 4ft short head Nordbergs.

Storage bins on the jetty can store up to 15,000 tons at any one time. From these bins the aggregate travels by conveyor belt either to the Top Works at the quarry crest or into boats from the jetty. The loading rate into boats, via a chute handled by a jib crane, is in the region of 500 tons/h. The total crushing capacity for aggregates is in excess of 200,000 tons/year, with roughly a quarter of this going for export.

From extra storage bins at the Top Works the aggregates, go by conveyor to the asphalt, ready-mixed concrete, block, and precast plants. The coating plant is a Parker Starmix 7, with a capacity 90 tons/h. The product goes the company's own road contracting unit.

The ready-mixed concrete plant is also by Parker and can produce 80-90 tons/h. Concrete blocks are manufactured with Zenith machines filled from a no. 6 Cumflow mixer.

Precast products are obtained mainly from two Henke presses, producing a wide range of slabs, blocks etc.<sup>207</sup>.

Though in 1968 Ronez's business was considered to be 'balanced between internal use and export requirements'<sup>208</sup>, it was soon to become largely domestic. Then in 1996 *Construction Aggregate Materials and Services*, CAMAS, the demerged aggregates division of English China Clays, took over the Croft Granite, Brick, and Concrete Company, and thereby acquired Ronez Limited. A year later, in 1997, CAMAS and Bardon Aggregates merged to form Aggregate Industries, employing 180 on Jersey and 140 on Guernsey<sup>209</sup>. In March 2005 Ronez Limited, as part of Aggregate Industries, merged with the Holcim Group, an enterprise of Swiss origin which since it began in 1912 has achieved global status.

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<sup>207</sup> *The Quarry Managers' Journal*, March 1969, p.104.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252, July 1968.

<sup>209</sup> Now, in 2005, the figure is 160 for Jersey, but for Guernsey remains at 140.