

MY PHOTOGRAPHS – William Grant



Taken in 1988

This photo is of the church, sort of, back top left. In reality it was a slate miners retreat. That only entrance was not in the film but I think hidden around the side of the extended rounded frontage. When Tony and I walked passed, it appeared to open facing the rock but in the film it appears to be facing the rock and the keep. Due to the rather explosive exit of the priest and dog, when door was opened I could see the sloping slate roof of the inner slate retreat. He and the dog had to stand to the right of the open door and turn at 90 deg. When the door was moved and the rounded frontage was extended, both had more room to exit the door more gracefully. My square shows where the door was.



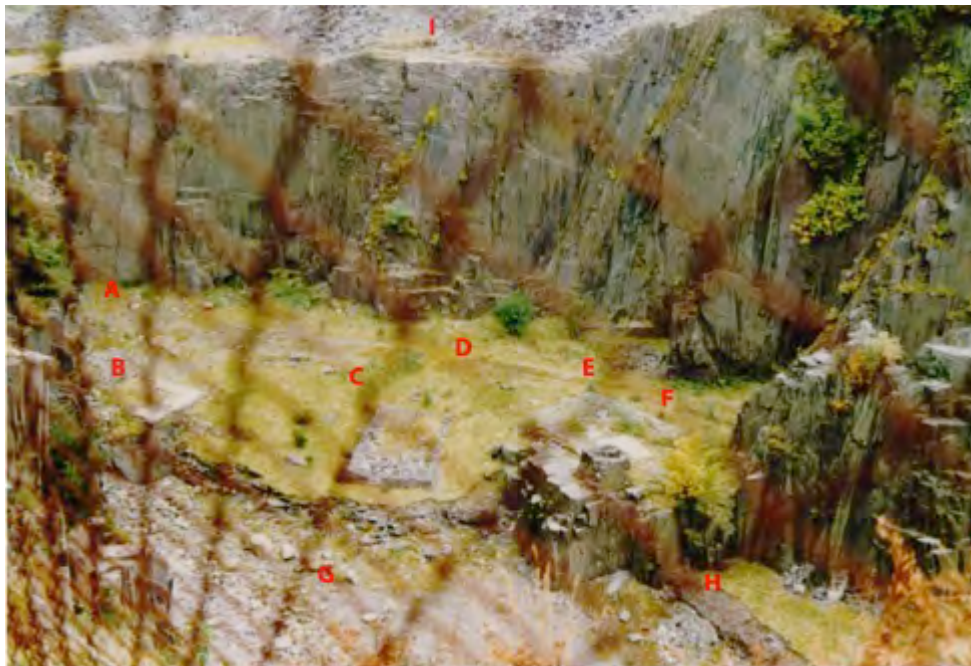
Taken in 1988 – Photo 1

Where did some of Paramount's money go?

The crash barrier, the old half meter thick wall removed and replaced with a new properly built nearly 1m thick one! Chain linked fence, no ordinary one. This is a luxury one, green plastic covered wire mesh

with a woven wire built in. Even a tank would have a problem with this one! Same for the tank proof gates. All this replaced rotted MoD 2nd World War fences! The crash barrier was added after Paramount had left. Looked to me like a safety feature protecting people from falling debris.

Go to the top of the green tree at the end of the fence you can see another green tree on the opposite side of the quarry. That straight edge is where the 2nd crane was perched. The platform it was on had to be cleared of debris as well as the rubbish tip of slate that had to be graded slightly back to stop any from sliding down. If the crane had fallen over the edge it would of landed on the rock slope to the left of the Pub. The planners of the quarry set had really put a lot of thought into all this!



Taken in 1988 – Photo 2

A: Behind the tree on the left is the lift coloured blue, the crane directly above lowered the vehicles, including the German half-track

B: 1st foundation home, or toilet?

C: 2nd foundation

D: The road

E: The barn without sides

F: 3rd home

G: The bottomless ravine, 2m deep

H: The hut in which was stored either the fan or the search light depending, on what was required on the day.

I: For every 5 tons of slate 4 tons was discarded. To clear just 1m wide strip as can be seen would have been a monumental task. Slate slag heaps move. Before Paramount arrived the slate was on the edge!



Taken in 1988 – Photo - 3

- A: The foundations of that lean-to, shed, in which were kept a 4ft dia. Fan,[which I got stuck behind trundling down Llanberis Pass on the 1st day of my holiday for 1hr, I was not amused in the baking hot sun], and a flood light-but not at the same time.
- B: The position of the Howitzer gun
- C: The flattened steps I walked up, into the pub!
- D: The church
- E: The concrete beam that led from the bridge into the keep.



Taken in 1994

This photo shows the rear of my car. On the right is the gate that led into the Keep's lift. The old Paramount gate is on the left hand other side by that heap. This heap, one year earlier, before

Paramount arrived, was higher and very dangerous with steep sides. Paramount spent money removing a lot of slate and so made it safe, as it looks in this photo. Today (2020), on Google Earth, not paid for by Paramount, but hydroelectric companies, it has completely gone!



Courtesy Google Earth View 2020 – Imagery Date June 2011

The exit of “Paramount Road” is approximately half a mile from Llanberis leading out on to the A4086. Today, the gate is closed and overgrown.



Courtesy Google Earth View 2020 – Imagery Date September 2018



Taken in 1994

The tree in the foreground is really covering the scenery and when I returned in 1995 it had me meet with an accident.

When Paramount left the quarry, they were expecting the film to be a success with people eventually locating the spot and wanting to go down into it. There is no safe way into it, so Llanberis Council used some of the money given by Paramount to buy 'fast growing bushes and trees'. One of these bushes was placed directly in front of the triangular shaped slate miners hut that was used as the church in the film. So today, when viewed from above and the road the entire quarry cannot be seen and no doubt should have been thirty years ago.

In the film the beautiful green grass is about 3 inches thick including the soil, under that is rock, as is the entire floor of the quarry.

To the right, the pathway that used to down the left side of the pub can still be seen. There are two dark green bushes growing where the pub used to be. To the right of that, is the specially crafted rock directly below the crane (just in case it decided to jump off the cliff!). The flat top part would then absorb the impact.

The odd looking white 'cliff' with moss growing out of it is actually 2 metres away from where I am standing to take the shot. Also, just under 1 metre wide, a flat slate wall can be seen at the bottom of the photo. It may look nice, but there are several vertical metal rods imbedded in it. Made better than a motorway crash barrier!

And that iconic bridge going from nowhere to nowhere, over which I stood off and on for a whole week of enthralling, excitement and entertainment. Tony told me that the bridge was strong enough to take the weight of:

A real German half track including its armour plating, my knuckles had bruises for several days, I expected plywood!

Mr Prochnow's vehicle fiberglass body and chassis from a Renault lorry

A normal troop carrier lorry

The tank aluminium body attached to a 2nd World War Jeep



Photo A

Mr Mann in yellow, walking passed the SS troop lorry. One person trying to start it. Other people coming along to help push it, [they had 15 people trying to push the half track when it broke down!]. When it did start, it vanished behind the rock and that was the last I saw of it.

Two sheep can be seen tied to a pole, to the left corner of the 3rd home.

The large tree to the right of the 3rd home is in a large pot, which had a hole specially drilled into the slate rock. Hole can be seen in one of my photos!

Wherever Mr Mann went, Mr Golding was just behind him! The person in white coat, I think, is Mr Thompson ,[who was on the table on other side of camera, in my photo above], was a very imposing person with his white coat on!

There was a lot of activity from the crew etc for half an hour, here and the other side of the rock, where the two soldiers stood, in their capes, in the film.



Photo B

I had to force my auto camera to take this photo due to thick cloud. A very dull day.

In the doorway of the church is the black robed vicar, standing to the left of the doorway. He is dressed in black, the door is a lighter black, with his dog. To the right of him is a boy with a black lamb on a lead.

To the left of the church, is I believe, one of the crew In a red jacket talking to two Nazi soldiers. Two more soldiers in capes are walking down to Mr Prochnow's jeep. Mr Golding in the blue coat, is standing behind Mr Mann, in yellow, who is talking to someone in the back of the jeep with two peasant boys, in blue anoraks, [it was very cold!], below them.

Another person in blue coat with a white collar is walking up towards them, with I think, a blue cap. The last person, who had been working on the camera under the yellow sheet, is walking up the road. The 3 rocks by the bridge are real and I think they are still there today. The white blobs on the ground are ducks and the white blobs flying around, are Doves.

On the veranda of the pub can just be seen the lady thumping away on the typewriter. Trying to keep track of that schedule? Just under the balcony where she was sitting is a large square grating. When it rained this was flung open to let the crew or actors rush in for shelter. It was also used for the storage of one of the cameras on a trolley.

A few minutes after I took this, everyone cleared off, including the soldiers, "ACTION" was called, Mr Prochnow, stepped out of the jeep with his machine gun and walked slowly down the slope followed by the jeep and into the Keep, [under my feet!]. While this was happening white doves were flying around.

As far as I can remember there were no other vehicles involved. I had seen the half track complaining somewhat as it disappeared behind the rock, it must have given up, along with the SS troop lorry and the tank. With clouds gathering they just made do, with what they had. The camera was on a walkway, just to the left of the bridge, below where I am standing.

If you look at the profile of the rock to the left of the jeep, from top to bottom, that is what you see in the film, using the 3rd frontage [looking the other way] ,up against the buttress of the grey frontage as tank rolls down the hill into THE Keep.

In the foreground you can see in the corner-netting that was covering the black plastic sheet, which extended all the way passed the front of the keep entrance and onto the ground.



Photo C

Standing in a circle of Nazi soldiers, actors, crew etc in the middle of which in a bright red coat was? To the right is Mr Mann in his bright yellow coat, telling something to the peasant lady standing at the corner of the home number three and the shepherd below her, with one sheep, grazing at his feet and with the other sheep attached to a stick to the left of him. This is the opening shot of the film. Directly above the man in red coat over the fence, is a peasant walking towards the barn. In the barn, were two cows and four sheep. I saw them before the group of people, gathered. The white blob that

looks part of the front left corner of the roof, of home three is the back end of a white horse! All the pine trees are in pots! Tony Oliver told me all the potted trees had to be taken back to the nursery, from whence they came! The tree outside the third home was to be a Christmas tree for Llanberis. I hope they didn't specify which year looking at the schedule!

From the notes that I made at the time Mr Mann, in yellow coat, was telling the lady and the man with the sheep, what was needed. But also standing behind and to the right of him is another man, who I saw at the time, but I had forgotten. He is holding a clip board and telling the old man and woman, dressed in traditional clothing and sitting on the seat just out of sight what they should do when Mr Prochnow drives in.



Photo 4

Under the scaffolding to the left of the church, is a camera, remember the profile of that rock and the buttress in the film.

See also the first photograph in **The Memories of William Grant and His Visits to The Keep (1983)**
Filming Location.

As far as I can make out the toasting etc was from Unit 1, the English crew who had a fixed contract and schedule set out by Paramount. Then Mr Mann turned up.....!

Unit 1, crew gathered together around the church. In this photo they were all toasting with Champagne, Mr Mann, in yellow coat, who is standing by the back edge to the right of the church. The man in a flat cap and cravat(?) standing half way down the road to the Keep is taking a photo, of them. I heard a person to my right whisper, "he has arrived", into his walkie talkie. Then in one go the whole crowd, as well as the person in the flat cap and those around me, turned away from Mr Mann and looked up to face Mr Golding who had just arrived to the left of me. I knew what was happening and I started to move away, but a hand gently pushed me back to where I was, in front of them, I don't know why, for it was his day not mine, (at the time I thought he was Mr Mann). All together, the crew raised their glasses to toast and three cheers him! Mr Mann didn't receive the three cheers!

I am still mystified by Mr Golding's expression, or the lack of it. Reading between the lines I think he had to do jobs that no one at that time could do or had the time to do. Mr Golding can be seen shadowing Mr Mann, e.g. Photo B above, and trying to work out the jobs Mr Mann wanted him to do. Mr Mann was being harassed by bad weather, tight schedule, Paramount, money, his own expectations etc and the people who just could not understand what he wanted. Having regard to what Mr Mann must have had in his mind when he first arrived at the quarry and at Stewart's photos, I can quite see why they couldn't see, what he wanted!

I have a feeling Mr Golding showed he knew what Mr Mann wanted and was called in to do them, whilst Mr Mann went off to do other things. It may well have been that the crew were saluting Mr Golding. Hence the face of a person who wanted out and the expressionless face.

Looking back, I think the look was controlled anger.

Also, the group of four people around me were a puzzle, why weren't they down in the quarry with the rest?

There followed a quarter of an hour of scurrying around. Mr Byrne, standing in his tank, with arms out holding on tightly as far as I could tell, didn't cheer or toast either of them, but took up his position, at the top of the slope. **ACTION!** This, I have just realised, may have been the actual take in the film, looking from behind, with no other vehicles or peasants behind him he steadily drove down the slope and into The Keep below my feet.

A thought has just hit me. Mr Byrne didn't move at all, was it a dummy? The road down to the keep is not without bumps and he was as solid as a rock. I was too far away to see if he had any facial expressions. Also, he was looking in opposite direction when the toasting of Mr Mann was going on. May be as a protest?

So it looks as though Unit 1 included Mr Thompson and Mr Golding, may well of left at that point. A bit of movement around the camera for a few minutes, then nothing, no movement or people, anywhere on the set, as a slight drizzle started.

I was alone on the road, I had been so engrossed in what was going on, that I didn't see the people around me go. It was a shame because I would of liked to at least say hello.

However, I was not totally alone, for my dog Pip, was looking at me through the back window of my car, as he had done every time I visited, **The Keep**.