



ABOVE: A worker shovelling sand into a trolley just behind the working face.

LEFT: The air-conditioning pump, constructed mainly of wood, with tubes consisting of dried-milk tins fitted together. The bellows were made of two kit bags, on runners.

BELOW: A box of sand from the working face arrives at the tunnel entrance, having been hauled by ropes.



found Harry's modest portals. They were underneath the stove in a corner of the room; we had taken a square of tiles out of the floor there, fitted them into a concrete tray, so that the whole lot lifted out cleanly in one piece—and it was so well done that you could not see the edges.

Under this we dug a shaft that dropped straight down for 30 feet. It was all wood-lined and shored, and so, incidentally, was the tunnel. To do that we stripped every bed in the camp of some of its cross slats—there were about 1,500 beds in the camp, and we stripped certain other places, too. It made for rather uncomfortable sleeping, but what of that?

Air-Conditioning and a Railway

Thirty feet down, we dug out an underground pumping chamber, designed and built an air pump, and smuggled it down. From old tins we made an air pipe-line, that had a secret intake in a disused chimney, and was taken along with a transferable nozzle, foot by foot as the tunnel progressed, buried under the railway tracks on the tunnel floor.

Oh, yes, about this railway. We also dug an underground workshop where we assembled wooden frames for shoring the tunnel, and built wooden railway lines and trollies with flanged and metal tyred wheels for tunnel transport. It was in three sections—you had to change trucks twice to go the full length of the tunnel—the trucks were hauled backwards and forwards by a rope.

The tunnel itself was about two feet square—pretty cramped for working in—and the boys digging used to work naked, or in the hated long underpants. Clothes would have hampered them, and dirt stains would have given the show away, but it was easy to slip round to a bathroom where we had rigged up a shower, and wash the sand off our bodies and out of our hair.

One lad, lying full length, hacked away at the sand, while his No. 2 lying just behind, passed it back on the railway. Nearly every day, owing to the loose sand, there were dangerous falls at the face which held up work badly. The only warning would be a slight rustle and then No. 1 digger would be buried under feet of suffocating sand, fallen from the roof. Our home-made

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