

n°6 Bourrache Malcotte

The **Bourrache-Malcotte** concession lies along the Belgian border, following the course of the Alyse stream. Like other mines on either side of the stream, the mine was established to work the so-called **Belle Joyeuse** slate seam: **Jaffe, Sauveur, Ardoisières d'Oignies, Bourrache**.

The mine saw at least two periods of production. During the first period, which dates back to the 1840s, it was known as the **Chevalise** mine. Very few written traces of its history can be found today, the exception being an application to build a mill along the stream. Its industrial history fell into oblivion until 1921, when Auguste Martin Coupaye undertook new exploratory surveys. While he may have gone down in history as the mine operator, he is best known locally as the trade union leader who united the Ardennes slate trade unions, before playing a key role in grouping them at national level to strengthen their influence.

The articles of association of the **Société Anonyme des Ardoisières du Francois de Fumay** were filed in Reims on 17 May 1922 by four partners: Auguste Martin Coupaye, mine contractor, Louis Martin Lorent, former slate mine foreman, Joseph Martin Joris, engineer and Paul Herbin, merchant.

Reconstruction was underway after the Great War and roofing materials were in high demand, which may have prompted the reopening of the mine. However, the company failed to take off and ceased trading in 1925. The auction held on 19 October 1925 listed the equipment in place: four buildings, two of them timber, a winch, a traction engine and its accessories, 1,500kg of coal, two centrifugal pumps with electric motors, 1.5kg of black powder and 62.5kg of dynamite, along with slate cutting tools.

The flooded galleries of the slate mine



The commemorative bust of Martin Coupaye, place d'Auchel in Fumay